

from being 'born'; the fact of his not having awakened prevents him from 'dying'; and should he be born without having died he is prevented from 'being.'

"We have already spoken enough about the meaning of being 'born.' This relates to the beginning of a new growth of essence, the beginning of the formation of individuality, the beginning of the appearance of one indivisible I.

"But in order to be able to attain this or at least begin to attain it, a man must die, that is, he must free himself from a thousand petty attachments and identifications which hold him in the position in which he is. He is attached to everything in his life, attached to his imagination, attached to his stupidity, attached even to his sufferings, possibly to his sufferings more than to anything else. He must free himself from this attachment. Attachment to things, identification with things, keep alive a thousand useless I's in a man. These I's must die in order that the big I may be born. But how can they be made to die? They do not want to die. It is at this point that the possibility of awakening comes to the rescue. To awaken means to realize one's nothingness, that is to realize one's complete and absolute mechanicalness and one's complete and absolute helplessness. And it is not sufficient to realize it philosophically in words. It is necessary to realize it in clear, simple, and concrete facts, in one's own facts. When a man begins to know himself a little he will see in himself many things that are bound to horrify him. So long as a man is not horrified at himself he knows nothing about himself. A man has seen in himself something that horrifies him. He decides to throw it off, stop it, put an end to it. But however many efforts he makes, he feels that he cannot do this, that everything remains as it was. Here he will see his impotence, his helplessness, and his nothingness; or again, when he begins to know himself a man sees that he has nothing that is his own, that is, that all that he has regarded as his own, his views, thoughts, convictions, tastes, habits, even faults and vices, all these are not his own, but have been either formed through imitation or borrowed from somewhere ready-made. In feeling this a man may feel his nothingness. And in feeling his nothingness a man should see himself as he really is, not for a second, not for a moment, but constantly, never forgetting it.

"This continual consciousness of his nothingness and of his helplessness will eventually give a man the courage to 'die,' that is, to die, not merely mentally or in his consciousness, but to die in fact and to renounce actually and forever those aspects of himself which are either unnecessary from the point of view of his inner growth or which hinder it. These aspects are first of all his 'false I,' and then all the fantastic ideas about his 'individuality,' 'will,' 'consciousness,' 'capacity to do,' his powers, initiative, determination, and so on.

"But in order to see a thing *always*, one must first of all see it even if

only for a second. All new powers and capacities of realization come always in one and the same way. At first they appear in the form of flashes at rare and short moments; afterwards they appear more often and last longer until, finally, after very long work they become permanent. The same thing applies to awakening. It is impossible to awaken completely all at once. One must first begin to awaken for short moments. *But one must die all at once and forever* after having made a certain effort, having surmounted a certain obstacle, having taken a certain decision from which there is no going back. This would be difficult, even impossible, for a man, were it not for the slow and gradual awakening which precedes it.

"But there are a thousand things which prevent a man from awakening, which keep him in the power of his dreams. In order to act consciously with the intention of awakening, it is necessary to know the nature of the forces which keep man in a state of sleep.

"First of all it must be realized that the sleep in which man exists is not normal but hypnotic sleep. Man is hypnotized and this hypnotic state is continually maintained and strengthened in him. One would think that there are forces for whom it is useful and profitable to keep man in a hypnotic state and prevent him from seeing the truth and understanding his position.

"There is an Eastern tale which speaks about a very rich magician who had a great many sheep. But at the same time this magician was very mean. He did not want to hire shepherds, nor did he want to erect a fence about the pasture where his sheep were grazing. The sheep consequently often wandered into the forest, fell into ravines, and so on, and above all they ran away, for they knew that the magician wanted their flesh and skins and this they did not like.

"At last the magician found a remedy. He *hypnotized* his sheep and suggested to them first of all that they were immortal and that no harm was being done to them when they were skinned, that, on the contrary, it would be very good for them and even pleasant; secondly he suggested that the magician was a *good master* who loved his flock so much that he was ready to do anything in the world for them; and in the third place he suggested to them that if anything at all were going to happen to them it was not going to happen just then, at any rate not that day, and *therefore* they had no need to think about it. Further the magician suggested to his sheep that they were not sheep at all; to some of them he suggested that they were *lions*, to others that they were *eagles*, to others that they were *men*, and to others that they were *magicians*.

"And after this all his cares and worries about the sheep came to an end. They never ran away again but quietly awaited the time when the magician would require their flesh and skins.

"This tale is a very good illustration of man's position.

"In so-called 'occult' literature you have probably met with the expression 'Kundalini,' 'the fire of Kundalini,' or the 'serpent of Kundalini.' This expression is often used to designate some kind of strange force which is present in man and which can be awakened. But none of the known theories gives the right explanation of the force of Kundalini. Sometimes it is connected with sex, with sex energy, that is with the idea of the possibility of using sex energy for other purposes. This latter is entirely wrong because Kundalini can be in anything. And above all, Kundalini is not anything desirable or useful for man's development. It is very curious how these occultists have got hold of the word from somewhere but have completely altered its meaning and from a very dangerous and terrible thing have made something to be hoped for and to be awaited as some blessing.

"In reality Kundalini is the power of imagination, the power of fantasy, which takes the place of a real function. When a man dreams instead of acting, when his dreams take the place of reality, when a man imagines himself to be an eagle, a lion, or a magician, it is the force of Kundalini acting in him. Kundalini can act in all centers and with its help all the centers can be satisfied with the imaginary instead of the real. A sheep which considers itself a lion or a magician lives under the power of Kundalini.

"Kundalini is a force put into men in order to keep them in their present state. If men could really see their true position and could understand all the horror of it, they would be unable to remain where they are even for one second. They would begin to seek a way out and they would quickly find it, because there is a way out; but men fail to see it simply because they are hypnotized. Kundalini is the force that keeps them in a hypnotic state. 'To awaken' for man means to be 'dehypnotized.' In this lies the chief difficulty and in this also lies the guarantee of its possibility, for there is no organic reason for sleep and man can awaken.

"Theoretically he can, but practically it is almost impossible because as soon as a man awakens for a moment and opens his eyes, all the forces that caused him to fall asleep begin to act upon him with tenfold energy and he immediately falls asleep again, very often *dreaming* that he is awake or is awakening.

"There are certain states in ordinary sleep in which a man wants to awaken but cannot. He tells himself that he is awake but, in reality, he continues to sleep—and this can happen several times before he finally awakes. But in ordinary sleep, once he is awake, he is in a different state; in hypnotic sleep the case is otherwise; there are no objective characteristics, at any rate not at the beginning of awakening; a man cannot pinch himself in order to make sure that he is not asleep. And if, which God forbid, a man has heard anything about *objective characteristics*, Kundalini at once transforms it all into imagination and dreams.

"Only a man who fully realizes the difficulty of awakening can understand the necessity of long and hard work in order to awake.

"Speaking in general, what is necessary to awake a sleeping man? A good shock is necessary. But when a man is fast asleep one shock is not enough. A long period of continual shocks is needed. Consequently there must be somebody to administer these shocks. I have said before that if a man wants to awaken he must hire somebody who will keep on shaking him for a long time. But whom can he hire if everyone is asleep? A man will hire somebody to wake him up but this one also falls asleep. What is the use of such a man? And a man who can really keep awake will probably refuse to waste his time in waking others up; he may have his own much more important work to do.

"There is also the possibility of being awakened by mechanical means. A man may be awakened by an alarm clock. But the trouble is that a man gets accustomed to the alarm clock far too quickly, he ceases to hear it. Many alarm clocks are necessary and always new ones. Otherwise a man must surround himself with alarm clocks which will prevent him sleeping. But here again there are certain difficulties. Alarm clocks must be wound up; in order to wind them up one must remember about them; in order to remember one must wake up often. But what is still worse, a man gets used to all alarm clocks and after a certain time he only sleeps the better for them. Therefore alarm clocks must be constantly changed, new ones must be continually invented. In the course of time this may help a man to awaken. But there is very little chance of a man doing all the work of winding up, inventing, and changing clocks all by himself, without outside help. It is much more likely that he will begin this work and that it will afterwards pass into sleep, and in sleep he will dream of inventing alarm clocks, of winding them up and changing them, and simply sleep all the sounder for it.

"Therefore, in order to awaken, a combination of efforts is needed. It is necessary that somebody should wake the man up; it is necessary that somebody should look after the man who wakes him; it is necessary to have alarm clocks and it is also necessary continually to invent new alarm clocks.

"But in order to achieve all this and to obtain results a certain number of people must work together.

"One man can do nothing.

"Before anything else he needs help. But help cannot come to one man alone. Those who are able to help put a great value on their time. And, of course, they would prefer to help, say, twenty or thirty people who want to awake rather than one man. Moreover, as has been said earlier, one man can easily deceive himself about his awakening and take for awakening simply a new dream. If several people decide to struggle together against sleep, they will wake each other. It may often happen that

twenty of them will sleep but the twenty-first will be awake and he will wake up the rest. It is exactly the same thing with alarm clocks. One man will invent one alarm clock, another man will invent another, afterwards they can make an exchange. Altogether they can be of very great help one to another, and without this help no one can attain anything.

"Therefore a man who wants to awake must look for other people who also want to awake and work together with them. This, however, is easier said than done because to start such work and to organize it requires a knowledge which an ordinary man cannot possess. The work must be organized and it must have a leader. Only then can it produce the results expected of it. Without these conditions no efforts can result in anything whatever. Men may torture themselves but these tortures will not make them awake. This is the most difficult of all for certain people to understand. By themselves and on their own initiative they may be capable of great efforts and great sacrifices. But because their first effort and their first sacrifice ought to be obedience nothing on earth will induce them to obey another. And they do not want to reconcile themselves to the thought that all their efforts and all their sacrifices are useless.

"Work must be organized. And it can be organized only by a man who knows its problems and its aims, who knows its methods; by a man who has in his time passed through such organized work himself.

"A man usually begins his studies in a small group. This group is generally connected with a whole series of similar groups on different levels which, taken together, constitute what may be called a 'preparatory school.'

"The first and most important feature of groups is the fact that groups are not constituted according to the wish and choice of their members. Groups are constituted by the teacher, who selects types which, from the point of view of his aims, can be useful to one another.

"No work of groups is possible without a teacher. The work of groups with a wrong teacher can produce only negative results.

"The next important feature of group work is that groups may be connected with some *aim* of which those who are beginning work in them have no idea whatever and which cannot even be explained to them until they understand the essence and the principles of the work and the ideas connected with it. But this aim towards which without knowing it they are going, and which they are serving, is the necessary balancing principle in their own work. Their first task is to understand this aim, that is, the aim of the teacher. When they have understood this aim, although at first not fully, their own work becomes more conscious and consequently can give better results. But, as I have already said, it often happens that the aim of the teacher cannot be explained at the beginning.

"Therefore, the first aim of a man beginning work in a group should be *self-study*. The work of self-study can proceed only in properly or-

ganized groups. One man alone cannot see himself. But when a certain number of people unite together for this purpose they will even involuntarily help one another. It is a common characteristic of human nature that a man sees the faults of others more easily than he sees his own. At the same time on the path of self-study he learns that he himself possesses all the faults that he finds in others. But there are many things that he does not see in himself, whereas in other people he begins to see them. But, as I have just said, in this case he knows that these features are his own. Thus other members of the group serve him as mirrors in which he sees himself. But, of course, in order to see himself in other people's faults and not merely to see the faults of others, a man must be very much on his guard against and be very sincere with himself.

"He must remember that he is not one; that one part of him is the man who wants to awaken and that the other part is 'Ivanov,' 'Petrov,' or 'Zakharov,' who has no desire whatever to awaken and who has to be awakened by force.

"A group is usually a pact concluded between the I's of a certain group of people to make a common struggle against 'Ivanov,' 'Petrov,' and 'Zakharov,' that is, against their own 'false personalities.'

"Let us take Petrov. Petrov consists of two parts—'I' and 'Petrov.' But 'I' is powerless against 'Petrov.' 'Petrov' is the master. Suppose there are twenty people; twenty 'I's' now begin to struggle against one 'Petrov.' They may now prove to be stronger than he is. At any rate they can spoil his sleep; he will no longer be able to sleep as peacefully as he did before. And this is the whole aim.

"Furthermore, in the work of self-study one man begins to accumulate material resulting from self-observation. Twenty people will have twenty times as much material. And every one of them will be able to use the whole of this material because the exchange of observations is one of the purposes of the group's existence.

"When a group is being organized its members have certain conditions put before them; in the first place, conditions general for all members, and secondly, individual conditions for individual members.

"General conditions at the beginning of the work are usually of the following kind. First of all it is explained to all the members of a group that they must keep secret everything they hear or learn in the group and not only while they are members of it but forever afterwards.

"This is an indispensable condition whose idea should be clear to them from the very beginning. In other words, it should be clear to them that in this there is no attempt whatever to make a secret of what is not essentially a secret, neither is there any deliberate intention to deprive them of the right to exchange views with those near to them or with their friends.

"The idea of this restriction consists in the fact that *they are unable to*

transmit correctly what is said in the groups. They very soon begin to learn *from their own personal experience* how much effort, how much time, and how much explaining is necessary in order to grasp what is said in groups. It becomes clear to them that they are unable to give their friends a right idea of what they have learned themselves. At the same time also they begin to understand that by giving their friends *wrong ideas* they shut them off from any possibility of approaching the work at any time or of understanding anything in connection with the work, to say nothing of the fact that in this way they are creating very many difficulties and even very much unpleasantness for themselves in the future. If a man in spite of this tries to transmit what he hears in groups to his friends he will very quickly be convinced that attempts in this direction give entirely unexpected and undesirable results. Either people begin to argue with him and without wanting to listen to him expect him to listen to *their* theories, or they misinterpret everything he tells them, attach an entirely different meaning to everything they hear from him. In seeing this and understanding the uselessness of such attempts a man begins to see one aspect of this restriction.

"The other and no less important side consists in the fact that it is very difficult for a man to keep silent about things that interest him. He would like to speak about them to everyone with whom he is accustomed to share his thoughts, as he calls it. This is the most mechanical of all desires and in this case silence is the most difficult abstinence of all. But if a man understands this or, at least, if he follows this rule, it will constitute for him the best exercise possible for self-remembering and for the development of will. Only a man who can be silent when it is necessary can be master of himself.

"But for many people it is very difficult to reconcile themselves to the thought that one of their chief characteristics consists in undue talkativeness, especially for people who are accustomed to regard themselves as serious or sound persons, or for those who regard themselves as silent persons who are fond of solitude and reflection. And for this reason this demand is especially important. In remembering about this and in carrying it out, a man begins to see sides of himself which he never noticed before.

"The next demand which is made of the members of a group is that they must tell the *teacher* of the group the whole truth.

"This also must be clearly and properly understood. People do not realize what a big place in their lives is occupied by lying or even if only by *the suppression of the truth*. People are unable to be sincere either with themselves or with others. They do not even understand that to learn to be sincere *when it is necessary* is one of the most difficult things on earth. They imagine that to speak or not to speak the truth, to be or not to be sincere, depends upon them. Therefore they have to learn this and learn

it first of all in relation to the *teacher* of the work. Telling the teacher a deliberate lie, or being insincere with him, or suppressing something, makes their presence in the group completely useless and is even worse than being rude or uncivil to him or in his presence.

"The next demand made of members of a group is that they must *remember why they came to the group*. They came to learn and to work on themselves and to learn and to work not as they understand it themselves but as they are told to. If, therefore, once they are in the group, they begin to feel or to express mistrust towards the teacher, to criticize his actions, to find that they understand better how the group should be conducted and especially if they show lack of external considering in relation to the teacher, lack of respect for him, asperity, impatience, tendency to argument, this at once puts an end to any possibility of work, for work is possible only as long as people remember that they have come to learn and not to teach.

"If a man begins to distrust the teacher, the teacher becomes unnecessary to him and he becomes unnecessary to the teacher. And in this event it is better for him to go and look for another teacher or try to work without one. This will do him no good, but in any case it will do less harm than lying, suppression, or resistance, or mistrust of the teacher.

"In addition to these fundamental demands it is of course presumed that the members of the group must work. If they merely frequent the group and do no work but merely imagine that they are working, or if they regard as work their mere presence in the group, or, as often happens, if they look upon their presence in the group as a pastime, if they make pleasant acquaintances, and so on, then their presence in the group likewise becomes completely useless. And the sooner they are sent away or leave of their own accord the better it will be for them and for the others.

"The fundamental demands which have been enumerated provide the material for rules which are obligatory for all members of a group. In the first place rules help everyone who wants to work to avoid everything that may hinder him or do harm to his work, and secondly *they help him to remember himself*.

"It very often happens that at the beginning of the work the members of a group do not like some or other of the rules. And they even ask: *Can we not work without rules?* Rules seem to them to be an unnecessary constraint on their freedom or a tiresome formality, and to be reminded about rules seems to them to be ill will or dissatisfaction on the part of the teacher.

"In reality rules are the chief and the first *help* that they get from the work. It stands to reason that rules do not pursue the object of affording them amusement or satisfaction or of making things more easy for them. Rules pursue a definite aim: to make them behave as they would behave *'if they were,'* that is, if they remembered themselves and realized how

they ought to behave with regard to people outside the work, to people in the work, and to the teacher. If they remembered themselves and realized this, rules would not be necessary for them. But they are not able to remember themselves and understand this at the beginning of work, so that rules are indispensable, although rules can never be either easy, pleasant, or comfortable. On the contrary, they ought to be difficult, unpleasant, and uncomfortable; otherwise they would not answer their purpose. Rules are the alarm clocks which wake the sleeping man. But the man, opening his eyes for a second, is indignant with the alarm clock and asks: *Can one not awaken without alarm clocks?*

"Besides these general rules there are certain individual conditions which are given to each person separately and which are generally connected with his 'chief fault,' or chief feature.

"This requires some explanation.

"Every man has a certain feature in his character which is central. It is like an axle round which all his 'false personality' revolves. Every man's personal work must consist in struggling against this chief fault. This explains why there can be no general rules of work and why all systems that attempt to evolve such rules either lead to nothing or cause harm. How can there be general rules? What is useful for one is harmful for another. One man talks too much; he must learn to keep silent. Another man is silent when he ought to talk and he must learn to talk; and so it is always and in everything. General rules for the work of groups refer to everyone. Personal directions can only be individual. In this connection again a man cannot find his own chief feature, his chief fault, by himself. This is practically a law. The teacher has to point out this feature to him and show him how to fight against it. No one else but the teacher can do this.

"The study of the chief fault and the struggle against it constitute, as it were, each man's individual path, but the aim must be the same for all. This aim is the realization of one's nothingness. Only when a man has truly and sincerely arrived at the conviction of his own helplessness and nothingness and only when he feels it constantly, *will he be ready for the next and much more difficult stages of the work.*

"All that has been said up till now refers to real groups connected with real concrete work which in its turn is connected with what has been called the 'fourth way.' But there are many imitation ways, imitation groups, and imitation work. These are not even 'black magic.'

"Questions have often been asked at these lectures as to what is 'black magic' and I have replied that there is neither red, green, nor yellow magic. There is mechanics, that is, what 'happens,' and there is 'doing.' 'Doing' is magic and 'doing' can be only of one kind. There cannot be two kinds of 'doing.' But there can be a falsification, an imitation of the outward appearance of 'doing,' which cannot give any objective results

but which can deceive naïve people and produce in them faith, infatuation, enthusiasm, and even fanaticism.

"This is why in true work, that is, in true 'doing,' the producing of infatuation in people is not allowed. What you call black magic is based on infatuation and on playing upon human weaknesses. Black magic does not in any way mean magic of evil. I have already said earlier that no one ever does anything for the sake of evil, in the interests of evil. Everyone always does everything in the interests of good *as he understands it.* In the same way it is quite wrong to assert that black magic must necessarily be *egoistical*, that in black magic a man strives after some results for himself. This is quite wrong. Black magic may be quite altruistic, may strive after the good of humanity or after the salvation of humanity from real or imaginary evils. But what can be called black magic has always one definite characteristic. This characteristic is the tendency to use people for some, even the best of aims, *without their knowledge and understanding*, either by producing in them faith and infatuation or by acting upon them through fear.

"But it must be remembered in this connection that a 'black magician,' whether good or evil, has at all events been at a school. He has learned something, has heard something, knows something. He is simply a 'half-educated man' who has either been turned out of a school or who has himself left a school having decided that he already knows enough, that he does not want to be in subordination any longer, and that he can work independently and even direct the work of others. All 'work' of this kind can produce only subjective results, that is to say, it can only increase deception and increase sleep instead of decreasing them. Nevertheless something can be learned from a 'black magician' although in the wrong way. He can sometimes by accident even tell the truth. That is why I say that there are many things worse than 'black magic.' Such are various 'occult' and theosophical societies and groups. Not only have their teachers never been at a school but they have never even met anyone who has been near a school. Their work simply consists in aping. But imitation work of this kind gives a great deal of self-satisfaction. One man feels himself to be a 'teacher,' others feel that they are 'pupils,' and everyone is satisfied. No realization of one's nothingness can be got here and if people affirm that they have it, it is all illusion and self-deception, if not plain deceit. On the contrary, instead of realizing their own nothingness the members of such circles acquire a realization of their own importance and a growth of false personality.

"At first it is very difficult to verify whether the work is right or wrong, whether the directions received are correct or incorrect. The theoretical part of the work may prove useful in this respect, because a man can judge more easily from this aspect of it. He knows what he knows and what he does not know. He knows what can be learned by ordinary means

and what cannot. And if he learns something new, something that cannot be learned in the ordinary way from books and so on, this, to a certain extent, is a guarantee that the other, the practical side, may also be right. But this of course is far from being a full guarantee because here also mistakes are possible. All occult and spiritualistic societies and circles assert that they possess a new knowledge. And there are people who believe it.

"In properly organized groups no faith is required; what is required is simply a little trust and even that only for a little while, for the sooner a man begins to verify all he hears the better it is for him.

"The struggle against the 'false I,' against one's chief feature or chief fault, is the most important part of the work, and it must proceed in deeds, not in words. For this purpose the teacher gives each man definite tasks which require, in order to carry them out, the conquest of his chief feature. When a man carries out these tasks he struggles with himself, works on himself. If he avoids the tasks, tries not to carry them out, it means that either he does not want to or that he cannot work.

"As a rule only very easy tasks are given at the beginning which the teacher does not even call tasks, and he does not say much about them but gives them in the form of hints. If he sees that he is understood and that the tasks are carried out he passes on to more and more difficult ones.

"More difficult tasks, although they are only subjectively difficult, are called 'barriers.' The peculiarity of barriers consists in the fact that, having surmounted a serious barrier, a man can no longer return to ordinary sleep, to ordinary life. And if, having passed the first barrier, he feels afraid of those that follow and does not go on, he stops so to speak between two barriers and is unable to move either backwards or forwards. This is the worst thing that can happen to a man. Therefore the teacher is usually very careful in the choice of tasks and barriers, in other words, he takes the risk of giving definite tasks requiring the conquest of inner barriers only to those people who have already shown themselves sufficiently strong on small barriers.

"It often happens that, having stopped before some barrier, usually the smallest and the most simple, people turn against the work, against the teacher, and against other members of the group, and accuse them of the very thing that is becoming revealed to them in themselves.

"Sometimes they repent later and blame themselves, then they again blame others, then they repent once more, and so on. But there is nothing that shows up a man better than his attitude towards the work and the teacher *after he has left it*. Sometimes such tests are arranged intentionally. A man is placed in such a position that he is *obliged* to leave and he is fully justified in having a grievance either against the teacher or against some other person. And then he is watched to see how he will behave. A decent man will behave decently even if he thinks that he has been

treated unjustly or wrongly. But many people in such circumstances show a side of their nature which otherwise they would never show. And at times it is a necessary means for exposing a man's nature. So long as you are good to a man he is good to you. But what will he be like if you scratch him a little?

"But this is not the chief thing; the chief thing is his own personal attitude, his own *valuation* of the ideas which he receives or has received, and his keeping or losing this valuation. A man may think for a long time and quite sincerely that he wants to work and even make great efforts, and then he may throw up everything and even definitely go against the work; justify himself, invent various fabrications, deliberately ascribe a wrong meaning to what he has heard, and so on."

"What happens to them for this?" asked one of the audience.

"Nothing—what could happen to them?" said G. "*They are their own punishment*. And what punishment could be worse?"

"It is impossible to describe in full the way work in a group is conducted," continued G. "One must go through it. All that has been said up to now are only hints, the true meaning of which will only be revealed to those who go on with the work and learn from experience what 'barriers' mean and what difficulties they represent.

"Speaking in general the most difficult barrier is the conquest of lying. A man lies so much and so constantly both to himself and to others that he ceases to notice it. Nevertheless lying must be conquered. And the first effort required of a man is to conquer lying in relation to the teacher. A man must either decide at once to tell him nothing but the truth, or at once give up the whole thing.

"You must realize that the teacher takes a very difficult task upon himself, the cleaning and the repair of human machines. Of course he accepts only those machines that are within his power to mend. If something essential is broken or put out of order in the machine, then he refuses to take it. But even such machines, which by their nature could still be cleaned, become quite hopeless if they begin to tell lies. A lie to the teacher, even the most insignificant, concealment of any kind such as the concealment of something another has asked to be kept secret, or of something the man himself has said to another, at once puts an end to the work of that man, especially if he has previously made any efforts.

"Here is something you must bear in mind. Every effort a man makes increases the demands made upon him. So long as a man has not made any serious efforts the demands made upon him are very small, but his efforts immediately increase the demands made upon him. And the greater the efforts that are made, the greater the new demands.

"At this stage people very often make a mistake that is constantly made. They think that the efforts they have previously made, their former merits, so to speak, give them some kind of rights or advantages, *diminish* the

demands to be made upon them, and constitute as it were an excuse should they not work or should they afterwards do something wrong. This, of course, is most profoundly false. Nothing that a man did yesterday excuses him today. Quite the reverse, if a man did nothing yesterday, no demands are made upon him today; if he did anything yesterday, it means that he must do more today. This certainly does not mean that it is better to do nothing. Whoever does nothing receives nothing.

"As I have said already, one of the first demands is sincerity. But there are different kinds of sincerity. There is clever sincerity and there is stupid sincerity, just as there is clever insincerity and stupid insincerity. Both stupid sincerity and stupid insincerity are equally mechanical. But if a man wishes to learn to be *cleverly sincere*, he must be sincere first of all with his teacher and with people who are senior to him in the work. This will be 'clever sincerity.' But here it is necessary to note that sincerity must not become 'lack of considering.' Lack of considering in relation to the teacher or in relation to those whom the teacher has appointed, as I have said already, destroys all possibility of any work. If he wishes to learn to be *cleverly insincere* he must be insincere about the work and he must learn to be silent when he ought to be silent with people outside it, who can neither understand nor appreciate it. But sincerity in the group is an absolute demand, because, if a man continues to lie in the group in the same way as he lies to himself and to others in life, he will never learn to distinguish the truth from a lie.

"The second barrier is very often the conquest of fear. A man usually has many unnecessary, imaginary fears. Lies and fears—this is the atmosphere in which an ordinary man lives. Just as the conquest of lying is individual, so also is the conquest of fear. Every man has fears of his own which are peculiar to him alone. These fears must first be found and then destroyed. The fears of which I speak are usually connected with the lies among which a man lives. You must realize that they have nothing in common with the fear of spiders or of mice or of a dark room, or with unaccountable nervous fears.

"The struggle against lying in oneself and the struggle against fears is the first positive work which a man begins to do.

"One must realize in general that positive efforts and even sacrifices in the work do not justify or excuse mistakes which may follow. On the contrary, things that could be forgiven in a man who has made no efforts and who has sacrificed nothing will not be forgiven in another who has already made great sacrifices.

"This seems to be unjust, but one must understand the law. There is, as it were, a separate account kept for every man. His efforts and sacrifices are written down on one side of the book and his mistakes and misdeeds on the other side. What is written down on the positive side can never atone for what is written down on the negative side. What is recorded on the negative side can only be wiped out by the truth, that

is to say, by an instant and complete confession to himself and to others and above all to the teacher. If a man sees his fault but continues to justify himself, a small offense may destroy the result of whole years of work and effort. In the work, therefore, it is often better to admit one's guilt even when one is not guilty. But this again is a delicate matter and it must not be exaggerated. Otherwise the result will again be lying, and lying prompted by fear."

On another occasion, speaking of groups, G. said:

"Do not think that we can begin straight away by forming a group. A group is a big thing. A group is begun for definite *concerted* work, for a definite aim. I should have to trust you in this work and you would have to trust me and one another. Then it would be a group. Until there is general work it will only be a preparatory group. We shall prepare ourselves so as in the course of time to become a group. And it is only possible to prepare ourselves to become a group by trying to imitate a group such as it ought to be, imitating it inwardly of course, not outwardly.

"What is necessary for this? First of all you must understand that in a group all are responsible for one another. A mistake on the part of one is considered as a mistake on the part of all. This is a law. And this law is well founded for, as you will see later, what one acquires is acquired also by all.

"The rule of common responsibility must be borne well in mind. It has another side also. Members of a group are responsible not only for the mistakes of others, but also for their failures. The success of one is the success of all. The failure of one is the failure of all. A grave mistake on the part of one, such as for instance the breaking of a fundamental rule, inevitably leads to the dissolution of the whole group.

"A group must work as one machine. The parts of the machine must know one another and help one another. In a group there can be no personal interests opposed to the interests of others, or opposed to the interests of the work, there can be no personal sympathies or antipathies which hinder the work. All the members of a group are friends and brothers, but if one of them leaves, and especially if he is sent away by the teacher, he ceases to be a friend and a brother and at once becomes a stranger, as one who is cut off. It often becomes a very hard rule, but nevertheless it is necessary. People may be lifelong friends and may enter a group together. Afterwards one of them leaves. The other then has no right to speak to him about the work of the group. The man who has left feels hurt, he does not understand this, and they quarrel. In order to avoid this where relations, such as husband and wife, mother and daughter, and so on, are concerned, we count them as one, that is, husband and wife are counted as one member of the group. Thus if one of them cannot go on with the work and leaves, the other is considered guilty and must also leave.

"Furthermore, you must remember that I can help you only to the extent that you help me. Moreover your help, especially at the beginning, will be reckoned not by actual results which are almost certain to be nil, but by the number and the magnitude of your efforts."

After this G. passed to individual tasks and to the definition of our "chief faults." Then he gave us several definite tasks with which the work of our group began.

Later, in 1917, when we were in the Caucasus, G. once added several interesting observations to the general principles of the formation of groups. I think I must quote them here.

"You take it all too theoretically," he said. "You ought to have known more by now. There is no particular benefit in the existence of groups in themselves and there is no particular merit in belonging to groups. The benefit or usefulness of groups is determined by their results."

"The work of every man can proceed in three directions. He can be useful to the work. He can be useful to me. And he can be useful to himself. Of course it is desirable that a man's work should produce results in all three directions. Failing this, one can be reconciled to two. For instance, if a man is useful to me, by this very fact he is useful also to the work. Or if he is useful to the work, he is useful also to me. But if, let us say, a man is useful to the work and useful to me, but is not able to be useful to himself, this is much worse because it cannot last long. If a man takes nothing for himself and does not change, if he remains such as he was before, then the fact of his having by chance been useful for a short time is not placed to his credit, and, what is more important, his usefulness does not last for long. The work grows and changes. If a man himself does not grow or change he cannot keep up with the work. The work leaves him behind and then the very thing that was useful may begin to be harmful."

I return to St. Petersburg, in the summer of 1916.

Soon after our group, or "preparatory group," had been formed, G. spoke to us about efforts in connection with the tasks he set before us.

"You must understand," he said, "that ordinary efforts do not count. Only super-efforts count. And so it is always and in everything. Those who do not wish to make super-efforts had better give up everything and take care of their health."

"Can not super-efforts be dangerous?" asked one of the audience who was usually particularly careful about his health.

"Of course they can," said G., "but it is better to die making efforts to awaken than to live in sleep. That's one thing. For another thing it is not so easy to die from efforts. We have much more strength than we think. But we never make use of it. You must understand one feature of the organization of the human machine.

"A very important role in the human machine is played by a certain kind of accumulator. There are two small accumulators near each center filled with the particular substance necessary for the work of the given center.

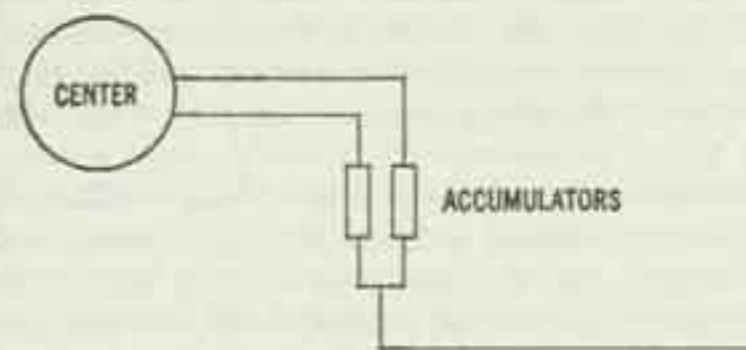


FIG. 41

"In addition, there is in the organism a large accumulator which feeds the small ones. The small accumulators are connected together, and further, each of them is connected with the center next to which it stands, as well as with the large accumulator."

G. drew a general diagram of the "human machine" and pointed out the positions of the large and small accumulators and the connections between them.

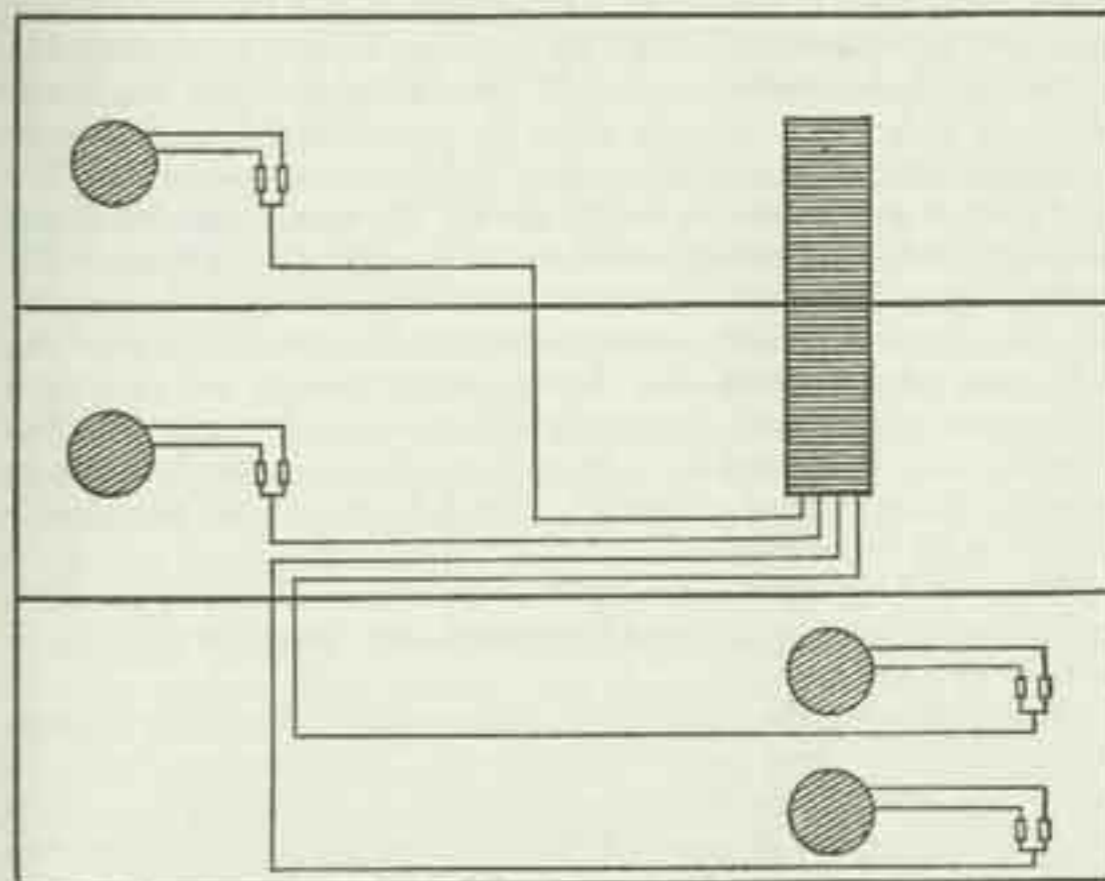


FIG. 42

"Accumulators work in the following way," he said. "Let us suppose that a man is working or is reading a difficult book and trying to understand it, in which case several 'rolls' revolve in the thinking apparatus in his head. Or let us suppose that he is walking up a hill and is getting tired, in which case the 'rolls' revolve in the moving center.

"In the first instance the intellectual center, and in the second the moving center, draw the energy necessary for their work from the small accumulators. When an accumulator is nearly empty a man feels tired. He would like to stop, to sit down if he is walking, to think of something else if he is solving a difficult problem. But quite unexpectedly he feels an inflow of strength, and he is once more able to walk or to work. This means that the center has become connected with the second accumulator and is taking energy from it. Meanwhile the first accumulator is refilling with energy from the large accumulator. The work of the center goes on. The man continues to walk or to work. Sometimes a short rest is required to insure this connection. Sometimes a shock, sometimes an effort. Anyway, the work goes on. After a certain time the store of energy in the second accumulator also becomes exhausted. The man again feels tired.

"Again an external shock, or a short rest, or a cigarette, or an effort, and he is connected with the first accumulator. But it may easily happen that the center has drawn energy from the second accumulator so quickly that the first one has had no time to refill itself from the large accumulator, and has taken only half the energy it can hold; it is only half full.

"Having become reconnected with the first accumulator the center begins to draw energy from it, while the second accumulator becomes connected with and draws energy from the large accumulator. But this time the first accumulator was only half full. The center quickly exhausts its energy, and in the meantime the second accumulator has succeeded in getting only a quarter full. The center becomes connected with it, swiftly exhausts all its energy, and connects once more with the first accumulator, and so on. After a certain time the organism is brought to such a state that neither of the small accumulators has a drop of energy left. This time the man feels really tired. He almost falls down, he almost drops asleep, or else his organism becomes affected, he starts a headache, palpitations begin, or he feels sick.

"Then suddenly, again a short rest, or an external shock, or an effort, brings a new flow of energy and the man is once more able to think, to walk, or to work.

"This means that the center has become connected directly to the large accumulator. The large accumulator contains an enormous amount of energy. Connected with the large accumulator a man is literally able to perform miracles. But of course, if the 'rolls' continue to turn and energy which is made from air, food, and impressions continues to pour out

of the large accumulator faster than it pours in, then there comes a moment when the large accumulator is drained of all energy and the organism dies. But this happens very seldom. Usually the organism automatically stops working long before this. Special conditions are necessary to cause the organism to die exhausted of all its energy. In ordinary conditions a man will fall asleep or he will faint or he will develop some internal complication which will stop the work a long time before the real danger.

"One need not, therefore, be afraid of efforts; the danger of dying from them is not at all great. It is much easier to die from inaction, from laziness, and from the fear of making efforts.

"Our aim, on the contrary, is to learn to connect the necessary center with the large accumulator. So long as we are unable to do this, all our work will be wasted because we shall fall asleep before our efforts can give any kind of results.

"Small accumulators suffice for the ordinary, everyday work of life. But for work on oneself, for inner growth, and for the efforts which are required of a man who enters the way, the energy from these small accumulators is not enough.

"We must learn how to draw energy straight from the large accumulator.

"This however is possible only with the help of the emotional center. It is essential that this be understood. The connection with the large accumulator can be effected only through the emotional center. The instinctive, moving, and intellectual centers, by themselves, can feed only on the small accumulators.

"This is precisely what people do not understand. Therefore their aim must be the development of the activity of the emotional center. The emotional center is an apparatus much more subtle than the intellectual center, particularly if we take into consideration the fact that in the whole of the intellectual center the only part that works is the formatory apparatus and that many things are quite inaccessible to the intellectual center. If anyone desires to know and to understand more than he actually knows and understands, he must remember that this new knowledge and this new understanding will come through the emotional center and not through the intellectual center."

In addition to what he had said about accumulators G. made some very interesting remarks about yawning and about laughter.

"There are two incomprehensible functions of our organism inexplicable from the scientific point of view," he said, "although naturally science does not admit them to be inexplicable; these are yawning and laughter. Neither the one nor the other can be rightly understood and

explained without knowing about accumulators and their role in the organism.

"You have noticed that you yawn when you are tired. This is especially noticeable, for instance, in the mountains, when a man who is unaccustomed to them yawns almost continually while he is ascending a mountain. Yawning is the pumping of energy into the small accumulators. When they empty too quickly, that is, when one of them has no time to fill up while the other is being emptied, yawning becomes almost continuous. There are certain diseased conditions which can cause stoppage of the heart when a man wishes but is not able to yawn, and other conditions are known when something goes wrong with the pump, causing it to work without effect, when a man yawns the whole time, but does not pump in any energy.

"The study and the observation of yawning from this point of view may reveal much that is new and interesting.

"Laughter is also directly connected with accumulators. But laughter is the opposite function to yawning. It is not pumping in, but pumping out, that is, the pumping out and the discarding of superfluous energy collected in the accumulators. Laughter does not exist in all centers, but only in centers divided into two halves—positive and negative. If I have not yet spoken of this in detail, I shall do so when we come to a more detailed study of the centers. At present we shall take only the intellectual center. There can be impressions which fall at once on two halves of the center and produce at once a sharp 'yes' and 'no.' Such a simultaneous 'yes' and 'no' produces a kind of convulsion in the center and, being unable to harmonize and digest these two opposite impressions of one fact, the center begins to throw out in the form of laughter the energy which flows into it from the accumulator whose turn it is to supply it. In another instance it happens that in the accumulator there has collected too much energy which the center cannot manage to use up. Then every, the most ordinary, impression can be received as double, that is, it may fall at once on the two halves of the center and produce laughter, that is, the discarding of energy.

"You must understand that I am only giving you an outline. You must remember that both yawning and laughter are very contagious. This shows that they are essentially functions of the instinctive and the moving centers."

"Why is laughter so pleasant?" asked someone.

"Because," G. answered, "laughter relieves us of superfluous energy, which, if it remained unused, might become negative, that is, poison. We always have plenty of this poison in us. Laughter is the antidote. But this antidote is necessary only so long as we are unable to use all the energy for useful work. It is said of Christ that he never laughed. And indeed you will find in the Gospels no indication or mention of the fact

that at any time Christ laughed. But there are different ways of *not laughing*. There are people who do not laugh because they are completely immersed in negative emotions, in malice, in fear, in hatred, in suspicion. And there may be others who do not laugh because they cannot have negative emotions. Understand one thing. In the higher centers there can be no laughter, because in higher centers there is no division, and no 'yes' and 'no.'"

Chapter Twelve

BY THAT time, midsummer 1916, work in our groups began to take new and more intensive forms. G. spent most of the time in St. Petersburg, only going to Moscow for a few days and coming back again generally with two or three of his Moscow pupils. Our lectures and meetings had by that time already lost their formal character; we had all begun to know one another better and, though there was a little friction, we represented on the whole a very compact group united by interest in the new ideas we were learning and the new possibilities of knowledge and self-knowledge which had been opened out before us. At that time there were about thirty of us. We met almost every evening. Several times, on arriving from Moscow, G. arranged excursions into the country for large parties, and picnics where we had *shashlik*, which were somehow totally out of keeping with St. Petersburg. There remains in my memory a trip to Ostrovki up the river Neva, more particularly because I suddenly realized on this trip why G. arranged these seemingly quite aimless amusements. I realized that he was all the time observing and that many of us on these occasions showed entirely new aspects of ourselves which had remained well hidden at the formal meetings in St. Petersburg.

My meetings with G.'s Moscow pupils were at that time quite unlike my first meeting with them in the spring of the preceding year. They did not appear to me now to be either artificial or to be playing a role which had been learned by heart. On the contrary, I always eagerly awaited their coming and tried to find out from them what their work consisted of in Moscow and what G. had said to them that we did not know. And I found out from them a great deal which came in very useful to me later in my work. In my new talks with them I saw the development of a very definite plan. We were not only learning from G. but we had also to learn one from another. I was beginning to see G.'s groups as a "school" of some medieval painter whose pupils lived with him and worked with him and, while learning from him, taught one another. At the same time I understood why G.'s Moscow pupils could not answer my questions at our first meeting. I realized how utterly naive my questions had been: "On what is based their work on themselves?" "What

constitutes the system which they study?" "What is the origin of this system?" And so on.

I understood now that these questions could not be answered. One must *learn* in order to begin to understand this. And at that time, a little over a year ago, I had thought I had the right to ask such questions just as the new people who now came to us began with precisely the same kind of questions and were surprised we did not answer them, and, as we were already able to see, regarded us as artificial or as playing a part which we had learned.

But new people appeared only at large meetings at which G. took part. Meetings of the original group were at that time held separately. And it was quite clear why this should have been so. We were already beginning to get free from the self-confidence and the knowing of everything with which people approach the work and we could already understand G. better than before.

But at general meetings it was extraordinarily interesting for us to hear how new people asked the same questions we used to ask in the beginning and how they did not understand the same elementary, simple things that we had been unable to understand. These meetings with new people gave us a certain amount of self-satisfaction.

But when we were alone again with G. he often with one word destroyed everything that we had built up for ourselves and forced us to see that actually we did not as yet know anything or understand anything, either in ourselves or in others.

"The whole trouble is that you are quite sure that you are always one and the same," he said. "But I see you quite differently. For instance, I see that today one Ouspensky has come here, whereas yesterday there was another. Or the doctor—before you came we were sitting and talking here together; he was one person. Then you all came. I happened to glance at him and I see quite another doctor sitting there. And the one I see when I am alone with him you very seldom see.

"You must realize that each man has a definite repertoire of roles which he plays in ordinary circumstances," said G. in this connection. "He has a role for every kind of circumstance in which he ordinarily finds himself in life; but put him into even only slightly different circumstances and he is unable to find a suitable role and *for a short time he becomes himself*. The study of the roles a man plays represents a very necessary part of self-knowledge. Each man's repertoire is very limited. And if a man simply says 'I' and 'Ivan Ivanich,' he will not see the whole of himself because 'Ivan Ivanich' also is not one; a man has at least five or six of them. One or two for his family, one or two at his office (one for his subordinates and another for his superiors), one for friends in a restaurant, and perhaps one who is interested in exalted ideas and likes intellectual conversation. And at different times the man is fully identified with one

of them and is unable to separate himself from it. To see the roles, to know one's repertoire, particularly to know its limitedness, is to know a great deal. But the point is that, outside his repertoire, a man feels very uncomfortable should something push him if only temporarily out of his rut, and he tries his hardest to return to any one of his usual roles. Directly he falls back into the rut everything at once goes smoothly again and the feeling of awkwardness and tension disappears. This is how it is in life; but in the work, in order to observe oneself, one must become reconciled to this awkwardness and tension and to the feeling of discomfort and helplessness. Only by experiencing this discomfort can a man really observe himself. And it is clear why this is so. When a man is not playing any of his usual roles, when he cannot find a suitable role in his repertoire, he feels that he is undressed. He is cold and ashamed and wants to run away from everybody. But the question arises: What does he want? A quiet life or to work on himself? If he wants a quiet life, he must certainly first of all never move out of his repertoire. In his usual roles he feels comfortable and at peace. But if he wants to work on himself, he must destroy his peace. To have them both together is in no way possible. A man must make a choice. But when choosing the result is very often deceit, that is to say, a man tries to deceive himself. In words he chooses *work* but in reality he does not want to lose his *peace*. The result is that he sits between two stools. This is the most uncomfortable position of all. He does no work at all and he gets no comfort whatever. But it is very difficult for a man to decide to throw everything to the devil and begin real work. And why is it difficult? Principally because *his life is too easy* and even if he considers it bad he is already accustomed to it. It is better for it to be bad, yet known. But here there is something new and unknown. He does not even know whether any result can be got from it or not. And besides, the most difficult thing here is that it is necessary to obey someone, to submit to someone. If a man could invent difficulties and sacrifices for himself, he would sometimes go very far. But the point here is that this is not possible. It is necessary to obey another or to follow the direction of general work, the control of which can belong only to one person. Such submission is the most difficult thing that there can be for a man who thinks that he is capable of deciding anything or of doing anything. Of course, when he gets rid of these fantasies and sees what he really is, the difficulty disappears. This, however, can only take place in the course of work. But to begin to work and particularly to continue to work is very difficult and it is difficult because life runs too smoothly."

On one occasion, continuing this talk about the work of groups, G. said:

"Later on you will see that everyone in the work is given his own individual tasks corresponding to his type and his chief feature or his chief fault, that is, something that will give him an opportunity of struggling more intensively against his chief fault. But besides individual tasks there are general tasks which are given to the group as a whole, in which case the whole group is responsible for their execution or their non-execution, although in some cases the group is also responsible for individual tasks. But first we will take general tasks. For instance, you ought by now to have some understanding as to the nature of the system and its principal methods, and you ought to be able to pass these ideas on to others. You will remember that at the beginning I was against your talking about the ideas of the system outside the groups. On the contrary there was a definite rule that none of you, excepting those whom I specially instructed to do so, should talk to anyone either about the groups or the lectures or the ideas. And I explained then why this was necessary. You would not have been able to give a correct picture, a correct impression. Instead of giving people the possibility of coming to these ideas you would have repelled them for ever; you would have even deprived them of the possibility of coming to them at any later time. But now the situation is different. You have already heard enough. And if you really have made efforts to understand what you have heard, then you should be able to pass it on to others. Therefore I give you all a definite task.

"Try to lead conversations with your friends and acquaintances up to these subjects, try to prepare those who show interest and, if they ask you to, bring them to the meetings. But everyone must realize that this is his own task and not expect others to do it for him. The proper performance of this task by each of you will show first, that you have already assimilated something, understood something, and second, that you are able to appraise people, to understand with whom it is worth while talking and with whom it is not worth while, because the majority of people cannot take in any of these ideas and it is perfectly useless to talk to them. But at the same time there are people who are able to take in these ideas and with whom it is worth while talking."

The next meeting after this was very interesting. Everyone was full of impressions of talks with friends; everyone had a great many questions; everyone was somewhat discouraged and disappointed.

It proved that friends and acquaintances asked very shrewd questions to which most of our people had no answers. They asked for instance what we had got from the work and openly expressed doubts as to our "remembering ourselves." On the other hand others had themselves no doubt whatever that *they* "remembered themselves." Others found the "ray of creation" and the "seven cosmoses" ridiculous and useless; "What has 'geography' to do with this?" very wittily asked one of my friends parody-

ing a sentence from an amusing play which had been running shortly before this; others asked who had seen the centers and how they could be seen; others found absurd the idea that we could not "do." Others found the idea of esotericism "entertaining but not convincing." Others said that this idea in general was a "new invention." Others were not prepared to sacrifice their descent from apes. Others found that there was no idea of the "love of mankind" in the system. Others said that our ideas were thorough-going materialism, that we wanted to make people machines, that there was no idea of the miraculous, no idealism, and so on, and so on.

G. laughed when we recounted to him our conversations with our friends.

"This is nothing," he said. "If you were to put together everything that people are able to say about this system, you would not believe in it yourselves. This system has a wonderful property: even a mere contact with it calls forth either the best or the worst in people. You may know a man all your life and think that he is not a bad fellow, that he is even rather intelligent. Try speaking to him about these ideas and you will see at once that he is an utter fool. Another man, on the other hand, might appear to have nothing in him, but speak to him on these subjects and you find that he thinks, and thinks very seriously."

"How can we recognize people who are able to come to the work?" asked one of those present.

"How to recognize them is another question," said G. "To do this it is necessary to a certain extent 'to be.' But before speaking of this we must establish what kind of people are able to come to the work and what kind are not able.

"You must understand that a man should have, first, a certain preparation, certain luggage. He should know what it is possible to know through ordinary channels about the ideas of esotericism, about hidden knowledge, about possibilities of the inner evolution of man, and so on. What I mean is that these ideas ought not to appear to him as something entirely new. Otherwise it is difficult to speak to him. It is useful also if he has at least some scientific or philosophical preparation. If a man has a good knowledge of religion, this can also be useful. But if he is tied to religious forms and has no understanding of their essence, he will find it very difficult. In general, if a man knows but little, has read but little, has thought but little, it is difficult to talk to him. If he has a good essence there is another way for him without any talks at all, but in this case he has to be obedient, he has to give up his will. And he has to come to this also in some way or other. It can be said that there is one general rule for everybody. In order to approach this system seriously, people must be *disappointed*, first of all in themselves, that is to say, in their powers, and secondly in all the old ways. A man cannot feel what

is most valuable in the system unless he is disappointed in what he has been doing, disappointed in what he has been searching for. If he is a scientist he should be disappointed in his science. If he is a religious man he should be disappointed in his religion. If he is a politician he should be disappointed in politics. If he is a philosopher he should be disappointed in philosophy. If he is a theosophist he should be disappointed in theosophy. If he is an occultist he should be disappointed in occultism. And so on. But you must understand what this means. I say for instance that a religious man should be disappointed in religion. This does not mean that he should lose his faith. On the contrary, it means being 'disappointed' in the teaching and the methods only, realizing that the religious teaching he knows is not enough for him, can lead him nowhere. All religious teachings, excepting of course the completely degenerated religions of savages and the invented religions and sects of modern times, consist of two parts, the visible and the hidden. To be disappointed in religion means being disappointed in the visible, and to feel the necessity for finding the hidden and unknown part of religion. To be disappointed in science does not mean losing interest in knowledge. It means being convinced that the usual scientific methods are not only useless but lead to the construction of absurd and self-contradictory theories, and, having become convinced of this, to begin to search for others. To be disappointed in philosophy means being convinced that ordinary philosophy is merely—as it is said in the Russian proverb—pouring from one empty vessel into another, and that people do not even know what philosophy means although true philosophy also can and should exist. To be disappointed in occultism does not mean losing faith in the miraculous, it is merely being convinced that ordinary, accessible, and even advertised occultism, under whatever name it may pass, is simply charlatanism and self-deception and that, although *somewhere something* does exist, everything that man knows or is able to learn in the ordinary way is not what he needs.

"So that, no matter what he used to do before, no matter what used to interest him, if a man has arrived at this state of disappointment in ways that are possible and accessible, it is worth while speaking to him about our system and then he may come to the work. But if he continues to think that he is able to find anything on his former way, or that he has not as yet tried all the ways, or that he can, by himself, find anything or do anything, it means that he is not ready. I do not mean that he must throw up everything he used to do before. This is entirely unnecessary. On the contrary, it is often even better if he continues to do what he used to do. But he must realize that it is only a profession, or a habit, or a necessity. In this case it is another matter; he will then be able not to 'identify.'

"There is only one thing incompatible with work and that is 'professional occultism,' in other words, professional charlatanism. All these

spiritualists, healers, clairvoyants, and so on, or even people closely connected with them, are none of them any good to us. And you must always remember this and take care not to tell them much because everything they learn from you they might use for their own purposes, that is, to make fools of other people.

"There are still other categories which are no good but we will speak of them later. In the meantime remember one thing only: A man must be sufficiently disappointed in ordinary ways and he must at the same time think or be able to accept the idea that there may be something—somewhere. If you should speak to such a man, he might discern the flavor of truth in what you say no matter how clumsily you might speak. But if you should speak to a man who is convinced about something else, everything you say will sound absurd to him and he will never even listen to you seriously. It is not worth while wasting time on him. This system is for those who have already sought and have burned themselves. Those who have not sought and who are not seeking do not need it. And those who have not yet burned themselves do not need it either."

"But this is not what people begin with," said one of our company. "They ask: Do we admit the existence of the ether? Or how do we look on evolution? Or why do we not believe in progress? Or why do we not think that people can and should organize life on the basis of justice and the common good? And things of this sort."

"All questions are good," said G., "and you can begin from any question if only it is sincere. You understand that what I mean is that this very question about ether or about progress or about the common good could be asked by a man simply in order to say something, or to repeat what someone else has said or what he has read in some book, and on the other hand he could ask it because this is the question with which he aches. If it is an aching question for him you can give him an answer and you can bring him to the system through any question whatever. But it is necessary for the question to be an aching one."

Our talks about people who could be interested in the system and able to work, involuntarily led us towards a valuation of our friends from an entirely new point of view. In this respect we all experienced bitter disappointment. Even before G. had formally requested us to speak of the system to our friends we had of course all tried in one way or another to talk about it at any rate with those of them whom we met most often. And in most cases our enthusiasm in regard to the ideas of the system met with a very cold reception. They did not understand us; the ideas which seemed to us new and original seemed to our friends to be old and tedious, leading nowhere, and even repellent. This astonished us more than anything else. We were amazed that people with whom we had felt an inner intimacy, with whom in former times we had been

able to talk about all questions that worried us, and in whom we had found a response, could fail to see what we saw and above all that they could see something quite opposite. I have to say that, in regard to my own personal experience, it gave me a very strange even painful impression. I speak of the absolute impossibility of making people understand us. We are of course accustomed to this in ordinary life, in the realm of ordinary questions, and we know that people who are hostile to us at heart or narrow-minded or incapable of thought can misunderstand us, twist and distort anything we say, can ascribe to us thoughts we never had, words which we never uttered, and so on. But now when we saw that all this was being done by those whom we used to regard as *our kind of people*, with whom we used to spend very much of our time, and who formerly had seem to us to understand us better than anyone else, it produced on us a discouraging impression. Such cases of course constituted the exceptions; most of our friends were merely indifferent, and all our attempts to infect them with our interest in G.'s system led to nothing. But sometimes they got a very curious impression of us. I do not remember now who was the first to notice that our friends found we had begun to change for the worse. They found us less interesting than we had been before; they told us we were becoming colorless, as though we were fading, were losing our former spontaneity, our former responsiveness to everything, that we were becoming "machines," were ceasing to think originally, were ceasing to feel, that we were merely repeating like parrots what we heard from G.

G. laughed a great deal when we told him about this.

"Wait, there is worse to come," he said. "Do you understand what this really means? It means that you have stopped lying; at any rate you don't lie so well, that is, you can no longer lie in so interesting a way as before. He is an interesting man who lies well. But you are already ashamed of lying. You are now able to acknowledge to yourselves sometimes that there is something you do not know or do not understand, and you cannot talk as if you knew all about everything. It means of course that you have become less interesting, less original, and less, as they say, *responsive*. So now you are really able to see what sort of people your friends are. And on their part they are sorry for you. And in their own way they are right. You have already begun to *die*." He emphasized this word. "It is a long way yet to complete death but still a certain amount of silliness is going out of you. You can no longer deceive yourselves as sincerely as you did before. You have now got the taste of truth."

"Why does it seem to me sometimes now that I understand absolutely nothing?" said one of those present. "Formerly I used to think that sometimes at any rate there were some things I understood but now I do not understand anything."

"It means you have begun to understand," said G. "When you under-

stood nothing you thought you understood everything or at any rate that you were able to understand everything. Now, when you have begun to understand, you think you do not understand. This comes about because the *taste of understanding* was quite unknown to you before. And now the taste of understanding seems to you to be a lack of understanding."

In our talks we often returned to the impressions our friends had of us and to our new impressions of our friends. And we began to realize that, more than anything else, these ideas could either unite people or separate them.

There was once a very long and interesting talk about "types." G. repeated everything he had said before about this together with many additions and indications for personal work.

"Each of you," he said, "has probably met in life people of one and the same type. Such people often even look like one another, and their inner reactions to things are exactly the same. What one likes the other will like. What one does not like the other will not like. You must remember such occasions because you can study the *science of types* only by meeting types. There is no other method. Everything else is imagination. You must understand that in the conditions in which you live you cannot meet with more than six or seven types although there are in life a greater number of fundamental types. The rest are all combinations of these fundamental types."

"How many fundamental types are there in all?" asked someone.

"Some people say twelve," said G. "According to the legend the twelve apostles represented the twelve types. Others say more."

He paused.

"May we know these twelve types, that is, their definitions and characteristics?" asked one of those present.

"I was expecting this question," said G. "There has never been an occasion when I have spoken of types when some clever person has not asked this question. How is it you do not understand that if it could be explained it would have been explained long ago. But the whole thing is that types and their differences cannot be defined in ordinary language, and the language in which they could be defined you do not as yet know and will not know for a long time. It is exactly the same as with the 'forty-eight laws.' Someone invariably asks whether he may not know these forty-eight laws. As if it were possible. Understand that you are being given everything that can be given. With the help of what is given to you, you must find the rest. But I know that I am wasting time now in saying this. You still do not understand me and will not understand for a long time yet. Think of the difference between knowledge and being. There are things for the understanding of which a different being is necessary."

"But if there are no more than seven types around us, why can we not know them, that is, know what is the chief difference between them, and, when meeting them, be able to recognize and distinguish them?" said one of us.

"You must begin with yourself and with the observations of which I have already spoken," said G., "otherwise it would be knowledge of which you would be able to make no use. Some of you think you can see types but they are not types at all that you see. In order to see types one must know one's own type and be able to 'depart' from it. In order to know one's own type one must make a good study of one's life, one's whole life from the very beginning; one must know why, and how, things have happened. I want to give you all a task. It will be a general and an individual task at one and the same time. Let every one of you in the group tell about his life. Everything must be told in detail without embellishment, and without suppressing anything. Emphasize the principal and essential things without dwelling on trifles and details. You must be sincere and not be afraid that others will take anything in a wrong way, because everyone is in the same position; everyone must strip himself; everyone must show himself as he is. This task will once more show you why nothing must be taken outside the groups. Nobody would dare to speak if he thought or suspected that what he said in the group would be repeated outside. But he ought to be fully and firmly convinced that nothing will be repeated. And then he will be able to speak without fear with the understanding that others must do the same."

Soon afterwards G. went to Moscow and in his absence we tried in various ways to carry out the tasks allotted to us. First of all, in order to put G.'s task more easily into practice, some of us, at my suggestion, tried telling the story of our lives not at the general group meeting but in small groups composed of people they knew best.

I am bound to say that all these attempts came to nothing. Some said too much, others said too little. Some went into unnecessary details or into descriptions of what they considered were their particular and original characteristics; others concentrated on their "sins" and errors. But everything taken together failed to produce what G. evidently expected. The result was anecdotes, or chronological memoirs which interested nobody, and family recollections which made people yawn. Something was wrong, but what exactly was wrong even those who had tried to be as sincere as they could were unable to determine. I remember my own attempts. In the first place I tried to convey certain early childhood impressions which seemed to me psychologically interesting because I remembered myself as I was at a very early age and was always myself astonished by some of these early impressions. But nobody was interested in this and I quickly saw that this was certainly not what was required of us. I proceeded

further but almost immediately I felt a certainty that there were many things that I had no intention whatever of telling. This was a quite unexpected realization. I had accepted G.'s idea without any opposition and I thought I would be able to tell the story of my life without any particular difficulty. But in reality it turned out to be quite impossible. Something in me registered such a vehement protest against it that I did not even attempt to struggle and in speaking of certain periods of my life I tried to give only the general idea and the significance of the facts which I did not want to relate. In this connection I noted that my voice and intonations changed when I talked in this way. This helped me to understand other people. I began to hear that, in speaking of themselves and their lives, they also spoke in different voices and different intonations. And there were intonations of a particular kind which I had first heard in myself and which showed me that people wanted to hide something in what they were talking about. But intonations gave them away. Observation of intonations afterwards made it possible for me to understand many other things.

When G. next came to St. Petersburg (he had been in Moscow this time for two or three weeks) we told him of our attempts; he listened to everything and merely said that we did not know how to separate "personality" from "essence."

"Personality hides behind essence," he said, "and essence hides behind personality and they mutually screen each other."

"How can essence be separated from personality?" asked one of those present.

"How would you separate your own from what is not your own?" G. replied. "It is necessary to think, it is necessary to know where one or another of your characteristics has come from. And it is necessary to realize that most people, especially in your circle of society, have very little of their own. Everything they have is not their own and is mostly stolen; everything that they call ideas, convictions, views, conceptions of the world, has all been pilfered from various sources. And all of it together makes up personality and must be cast aside."

"But you yourself said that work begins with personality," said someone there.

"Quite true," replied G. "Therefore we must first of all establish of what precisely we are speaking—of what moment in a man's development and of what level of being. Just now I was simply speaking of a man in life who had no connection whatever with the work. Such a man, particularly if he belongs to the 'intellectual' classes, is almost entirely composed of personality. In most cases his essence ceases to develop at a very early age. I know respected fathers of families, professors full of various ideas, well-known authors, important officials who were almost

ministers, whose essence had stopped developing approximately at the age of twelve. And that is not so bad. It sometimes happens that certain aspects of essence stop at five or six years of age and then everything ends; all the rest is not their own; it is repertoire, or taken from books; or it has been created by imitating ready-made models."

After this there were many conversations, in which G. took part, during which we tried to find out the reason for our failure to fulfill the task set by G. But the more we talked the less we understood what he actually wanted from us.

"This only shows to what extent you do not know yourselves," said G. "I do not doubt that at least some of you sincerely wished to do what I said, that is, to relate the story of their lives. At the same time they see that they cannot do it and do not even know how to begin. But remember that sooner or later you will have to go through this. This is, as it is called, one of the first tests on the way. Without going through this no one can go further."

"What is it we do not understand?" asked someone.

"You do not understand what it means to be sincere," said G. "You are so used to lying both to yourselves and to others that you can find neither words nor thoughts when you wish to speak the truth. To tell the complete truth about oneself is very difficult. But before telling it one must know it. And you do not even know what the truth about yourselves consists of. Some day I will tell every one of you his chief feature or chief fault. We shall then see whether you will understand me or not."

One very interesting conversation took place at this time. I felt very strongly everything that took place at that time; especially strongly did I feel that in spite of every effort I was unable to remember myself for any length of time. At first something seemed to be successful, but later it all went and I felt without any doubt the deep sleep in which I was immersed. Failures in attempts to relate the story of my life, and especially the fact that I even failed to understand clearly what G. wanted, still further increased my bad mood which, however, as always with me, expressed itself not in depression, but in irritation.

In this state I came once to lunch with G. in a restaurant on the Sadovaya opposite the Gostinoy Dvor. I was probably very curt or on the contrary very silent.

"What is the matter with you today?" asked G.

"I myself do not know," said I, "only I am beginning to feel that with us nothing is being achieved, or rather, that I am achieving nothing. I cannot speak about others. But I cease to understand you and you no longer explain anything as you used to explain it in the beginning. And I feel that in this way nothing will be achieved."

"Wait a little," said G. "Soon conversations will start. Try to under-

stand me; up to now we have been trying to find each thing's place. Soon we shall begin to call things by their proper names."

G.'s words remained in my memory, but I did not go into them, and continued my own thoughts.

"What does it matter," I said, "how we shall call things when I can connect nothing together? You never answer any questions I ask."

"Very well," said G., laughing. "I promise to answer now any question you care to ask, as it happens in fairy tales."

I felt that he wanted to draw me out of my bad mood and I was inwardly grateful to him, although something in me refused to be mollified.

And suddenly I remembered that I wanted above all to know what G. thought about "eternal recurrence," about the repetition of lives, as I understood it. I had many times tried to start a conversation about this and to tell G. my views. But these conversations had always remained almost monologues. G. had listened in silence and then begun to talk of something else.

"Very well," I said, "tell me what you think of recurrence. Is there any truth in this, or none at all. What I mean is: Do we live only this once and then disappear, or does everything repeat and repeat itself, perhaps an endless number of times, only we do not know and do not remember it?"

"This idea of repetition," said G., "is not the full and absolute truth, but it is the nearest possible approximation of the truth. In this case truth cannot be expressed in words. But what you say is very near to it. And if you understand why I do not speak of this, you will be still nearer to it. What is the use of a man knowing about recurrence if he is not conscious of it and if he himself does not change? One can say even that if a man does not change, repetition does not exist for him. If you tell him about repetition, it will only increase his sleep. Why should he make any efforts today when there is so much time and so many possibilities ahead—the whole of eternity? Why should he bother today? This is exactly why the system does not say anything about repetition and takes only this one life which we know. The system has neither meaning nor sense without striving for self-change. And work on self-change must begin today, immediately. All laws can be seen in one life. Knowledge about the repetition of lives will add nothing for a man if he does not see how everything repeats itself in one life, that is, in this life, and if he does not strive to change himself in order to escape this repetition. But if he changes something essential in himself, that is, if he attains something, this cannot be lost."

"Is the conclusion right that all the tendencies that are created or formed must grow?" I asked.

"Yes and no," said G. "This is true in most cases, just as it is true in

one life. But on a big scale new forces may enter. I shall not explain this now; but think about what I am going to say: Planetary influences also can change. They are not permanent. Besides this, tendencies themselves can be different; there are tendencies which, once they have appeared, continue and develop by themselves mechanically, and there are others which need constant pushing and which immediately weaken and may vanish altogether or turn into dreaming if a man ceases to work on them. Moreover there is a *definite* time, a definite term, for everything. Possibilities for everything" (he emphasized these words) "exist only for a definite time."

I was extremely interested in everything G. said. Much of this I had "guessed" before. But the fact that he recognized my fundamental premises and all that he brought into them had for me a tremendous importance. Everything began immediately to become connected. I felt that I saw the outline of the "majestic building" which was spoken of in the "Glimpses of Truth." My bad mood vanished, I did not even notice when.

G. sat there smiling.

"You see how easy it is to *turn* you; but perhaps I was merely *romancing* to you, perhaps there is no recurrence at all. What pleasure is it when a sulky Ouspensky sits there, does not eat, does not drink. 'Let us try to cheer him up,' I think to myself. And how is one to cheer a person up? One likes funny stories. For another you must find his hobby. And I know that Ouspensky has this hobby—'eternal recurrence.' So I offered to answer any question of his. I knew what he would ask."

But G.'s chaff did not affect me. He had given me something very substantial and could not take it back. I did not believe his jokes and did not believe that he could have invented what he had said about recurrence. I also learned to understand his intonations. The future showed that I was right, for although G. did not introduce the idea of recurrence into his exposition of the system, he referred several times to the idea of recurrence, chiefly in speaking of the lost possibilities of people who had approached the system and then had drawn away from it.

Conversations in groups continued as usual. Once G. said that he wanted to carry out an experiment on the separation of personality from essence. We were all very interested because he had promised "experiments" for a long time but till then we had seen nothing. I will not describe his methods, I will merely describe the people whom he chose that first evening for the experiment. One was no longer young and was a man who occupied a fairly prominent position in society. At our meetings he spoke much and often about himself, his family, about Christianity, and about the events of the moment connected with the war and with all possible kinds of "scandal" that had very much disgusted

him. The other was younger. Many of us did not consider him to be a serious person. Very often he played what is called the fool; or, on the other hand, entered into endless formal arguments about some or other details of the system without any relation whatever to the whole. It was very difficult to understand him. He spoke in a confused and intricate manner even of the most simple things, mixing up in a most impossible way different points of view and words belonging to different categories and levels.

I pass over the beginning of the experiment.

We were sitting in the big drawing room.

The conversation went on as usual.

"Now observe," G. whispered to us.

The older of the two who was speaking heatedly about something suddenly became silent in the middle of a sentence and seemed to sink into his chair looking straight in front of him. At a sign from G. we continued to talk without looking at him. The younger one began to listen to the talk and then spoke himself. All of us looked at one another. His voice had become different. He told us some observations about himself in a clear, simple, and intelligible manner without superfluous words, without extravagances, and without buffoonery. Then he became silent; he smoked a cigarette and was obviously thinking of something. The first one sat still without moving, as though shrunken into a ball.

"Ask him what he is thinking about," said G. quietly.

"I?" He lifted his head as though waking up when he was questioned. "About nothing." He smiled weakly as though apologizing or as though he were surprised at anyone asking him what he was thinking about.

"Well, you were talking about the war just now," said one of us, "about what would happen if we made peace with the Germans; do you still think as you did then?"

"I don't know really," he said in an uncertain voice. "Did I say that?"

"Yes, certainly, you just said that everyone was obliged to think about it, that no one had the right not to think about it, and that no one had the right to forget the war; everyone ought to have a definite opinion; yes or no—for or against the war."

He listened as though he did not grasp what the questioner was saying.

"Yes?" he said. "How odd. I do not remember anything about it."

"But aren't you interested in it?"

"No, it does not interest me at all."

"Are you not thinking of the consequences of all that is now taking place, of the results for Russia, for the whole of civilization?"

He shook his head as though with regret.

"I do not understand what you are talking about," he said, "it does not interest me at all and I know nothing about it."

"Well then, you spoke before of your family. Would it not be very

much easier for you if they became interested in our ideas and joined the work?"

"Yes, perhaps," again in an uncertain voice. "But why should I think about it?"

"Well, you said you were afraid of the gulf, as you expressed it, which was growing between you and them."

No reply.

"But what do you think about it now?"

"I am not thinking about it at all."

"If you were asked what you would like, what would you say?"

Again a wondering glance—"I do not want anything."

"But think, what would you like?"

On the small table beside him there stood an unfinished glass of tea. He gazed at it for a long time as though considering something. He glanced around him twice, then again looked at the glass, and said in such a serious voice and with such serious intonations that we all looked at one another:

"I think I should like some raspberry jam."

"Why are you questioning him?" said a voice from the corner which we hardly recognized.

This was the second "experiment."

"Can you not see that he is asleep?"

"And you yourself?" asked one of us.

"I, on the contrary, have woken up."

"Why has he gone to sleep while you have woken up?"

"I do not know."

With this the experiment ended.

Neither of them remembered anything the next day. G. explained to us that with the first man everything that constituted the subject of his ordinary conversation, of his alarms and agitation, was in personality. And when his personality was asleep practically nothing remained. In the personality of the other there was also a great deal of undue talkativeness but behind the personality there was an essence which knew as much as the personality and knew it better, and when personality went to sleep essence took its place to which it had a much greater right.

"Note that contrary to his custom he spoke very little," said G. "But he was observing all of you and everything that was taking place, and nothing escaped him."

"But of what use is it to him if he also does not remember?" said one of us.

"Essence remembers," said G., "personality has forgotten. And this was necessary because otherwise personality would have perverted everything and would have ascribed all this to itself."

"But this is a kind of black magic," said one of us.

"Worse," said G. "Wait and you will see worse than that."

When speaking of "types" G. once said:

"Have you noticed what a tremendous part 'type' plays in the relationship between man and woman?"

"I have noticed," I said, "that throughout his whole life every man comes into contact with women of a definite type and every woman comes into contact with men of a definite type. As though the type of woman for every man had been predetermined and the type of man predetermined for every woman."

"There is a good deal of truth in that," said G. "But in that form it is, of course, much too general. Actually you did not see types of men and women but types of events. What I speak of refers to the real type, that is to say, to essence. If people were to live in essence one type would always find the other type and wrong types would never come together. But people live in personality. Personality has its own interests and its own tastes which have nothing in common with the interests and the tastes of essence. Personality in our case is the result of the wrong work of centers. For this reason personality can dislike precisely what essence likes—and like what essence does not like. Here is where the struggle between essence and personality begins. Essence knows what it wants but cannot explain it. Personality does not want to hear of it and takes no account of it. It has its own desires. And it acts in its own way. But its power does not continue beyond that moment. After that, in some way or other, the two essences have to live together. And they hate one another. No sort of acting can help here. In one way or another essence or type gains the upper hand and decides.

"In this case nothing can be done by reason or by calculation. Neither can so-called love help because, in the real meaning of the word, mechanical man cannot love—with him *it loves* or *it does not love*.

"At the same time sex plays a tremendous role in maintaining the mechanicalness of life. Everything that people do is connected with 'sex': politics, religion, art, the theater, music, is all 'sex.' Do you think people go to the theater or to church to pray or to see some new play? That is only for the sake of appearances. The principal thing, in the theater as well as in church, is that there will be a lot of women or a lot of men. This is the center of gravity of all gatherings. What do you think brings people to cafés, to restaurants, to various fêtes? One thing only. Sex: it is the principal motive force of all mechanicalness. All sleep, all hypnosis, depends upon it.

"You must try to understand what I mean. Mechanicalness is especially dangerous when people try to explain it by something else and not by what it really is. When sex is clearly conscious of itself and does not

cover itself up by anything else it is not the mechanicalness about which I am speaking. On the contrary sex which exists by itself and is not dependent on anything else is already a great achievement. But the evil lies in this constant self-deception!"

"What then is the deduction; should it be so or should it be changed?" asked someone.

G. smiled.

"That is something people always ask," he said. "Whatever they may be speaking about, they ask: Ought it to be like that and how can it be changed, that is, what ought to be done in such a case? As though it were possible to change anything, as though it were possible to do anything. You at least ought to have realized by now how naïve such questions are. Cosmic forces have created this state of affairs and cosmic forces control this state of affairs. And you ask: Can it be left like that or should it be changed! God himself could change nothing. Do you remember what was said about the forty-eight laws? They cannot be changed, but liberation from a considerable portion of them is possible, that is to say, there is a possibility of changing the state of affairs *for oneself*, it is possible to escape from the general law. You should understand that in this case as well as in all others the general law cannot be changed. But one can change one's own position in relation to this law; one can escape from the general law. The more so since in this law about which I speak, that is, in the power of sex over people, are included many different possibilities. It includes the chief form of slavery and it is also the chief possibility of liberation. This is what you must understand.

"'New birth,' of which we have spoken before, depends as much upon sex energy as do physical birth and the propagation of species.

"'Hydrogen' si 12 is the 'hydrogen' which represents the final product of the transformation of food in the human organism. This is the matter with which sex works and which sex manufactures. It is 'seed' or 'fruit.'

"'Hydrogen' si 12 can pass into do of the next octave with the help of an 'additional shock.' But this 'shock' can be of a dual nature and different octaves can begin, one outside the organism which has produced si, and the other in the organism itself. The union of male and female si 12 and all that accompanies it constitutes the 'shock' of the first kind and the new octave begun with its help develops independently as a new organism or a new life.

"This is the normal and natural way to use the energy of si 12. But in the same organism there is a further possibility. And this is the possibility of creating a new life within the actual organism, in which the si 12 has been manufactured, without the union of the two principles, the male and the female. A new octave then develops within the organism, not outside it. This is the birth of the 'astral body.' You must understand that the 'astral body' is born of the same material, of the same matter, as the

physical body, only the process is different. The whole of the physical body, all its cells, are, so to speak, permeated by emanations of the matter *si 12*. And when they have become sufficiently saturated the matter *si 12* begins to crystallize. The crystallization of this matter constitutes the formation of the 'astral body.'

"The transition of matter *si 12* into emanations and the gradual saturation of the whole organism by it is what alchemy calls 'transmutation' or transformation. It is just this transformation of the physical body into the astral that alchemy called the transformation of the 'coarse' into the 'fine' or the transformation of base metals into gold.

"Completed transmutation, that is to say, the formation of the 'astral body,' is possible only in a healthy, normally functioning organism. In a sick, or a perverted, or a crippled organism, no transmutation is possible."

"Is complete sexual abstinence necessary for transmutation and is sexual abstinence, in general, useful for work on oneself?" we asked him.

"Here there is not one but a number of questions," said G. "In the first place sexual abstinence is necessary for transmutation only in certain cases, that is, for certain types of people. For others it is not at all necessary. And with yet others it comes by itself when transmutation begins. I will explain this more clearly. For certain types a long and complete sexual abstinence is necessary for transmutation to *begin*; this means in other words that without a long and complete sexual abstinence transmutation will not begin. But once it has begun abstinence is no longer necessary. In other cases, that is, with other types, transmutation can begin in a normal sexual life—and on the contrary, can begin sooner and proceed better with a very great outward expenditure of sex energy. In the third case the beginning of transmutation does not require abstinence, but, having begun, transmutation takes the whole of sexual energy and puts an end to normal sexual life or the outward expenditure of sex energy.

"Then the other question—'Is sexual abstinence useful for the work or not?'"

"It is useful if there is abstinence in all centers. If there is abstinence in one center and full liberty of imagination in the others, then there could be nothing worse. And still more, abstinence can be useful if a man knows what to do with the energy which he saves in this way. If he does not know what to do with it, nothing whatever can be gained by abstinence."

"Speaking in general, what is the most correct form of life in this connection from the point of view of the work?"

"It is impossible to say. I repeat that while a man *does not know* it is better for him not to attempt anything. Until he has new and *exact* knowledge it will be quite enough if his life is guided by the usual rules and principles. If a man begins to theorize and invent in this sphere, it will lead to nothing except psychopathy. But it must again be remembered

that only a person who is completely normal as regards sex has any chance in the work. Any kind of 'originality,' strange tastes, strange desires, or, on the other hand, fears, constantly working 'buffers,' must be destroyed from the very beginning. Modern education and modern life create an enormous number of sexual psychopaths. They have no chance at all in the work.

"Speaking in general, there are only two correct ways of expending sexual energy—normal sexual life and transmutation. All inventions in this sphere are very dangerous.

"People have tried abstinence from times beyond memory. Sometimes, very rarely, it has led to something but in most cases what is called abstinence is simply exchanging normal sensations for abnormal, because the abnormal are more easily hidden. But it is not about this that I wish to speak. You must understand where lies the chief evil and what makes for slavery. It is not in sex itself but in the *abuse of sex*. But what the abuse of sex means is again misunderstood. People usually take this to be either excess or perversion. But these are comparatively innocent forms of abuse of sex. And it is necessary to know the human machine very well in order to grasp what abuse of sex in the real meaning of these words is. It means the wrong work of centers in relation to sex, that is, the action of the sex center through other centers, and the action of other centers through the sex center; or, to be still more precise, the functioning of the sex center with energy borrowed from other centers and the functioning of other centers with energy borrowed from the sex center."

"Can sex be regarded as an independent center?" asked one of those present.

"It can," said G. "At the same time if all the lower story is taken as one whole, then sex can be regarded as the neutralizing part of the moving center."

"With what 'hydrogen' does the sex center work?" asked another.

This question had interested us for a long time but we had not previously been able to answer it. And G., when he had been asked before, had never given a direct reply.

"The sex center works with 'hydrogen' *12*," he said on this occasion, "that is to say, it ought to work with it. This is *si 12*. But the fact is that it very rarely works with its proper hydrogen. Abnormalities in the working of the sex center require special study.

"In the first place it must be noted that *normally* in the sex center as well as in the higher emotional and the higher thinking centers, there is no negative side. In all the other centers except the higher ones, in the thinking, in the emotional, in the moving, in the instinctive, in all of them there are, so to speak, two halves—the positive and the negative; affirmation and negation, or 'yes' and 'no,' in the thinking center, pleasant and unpleasant sensations in the moving and instinctive centers. There is

no such division in the sex center. There are no positive and negative sides in it. There are no unpleasant sensations or unpleasant feelings in it; there is either a pleasant sensation, a pleasant feeling, or there is nothing, an absence of any sensation, complete indifference. But in consequence of the wrong work of centers it often happens that the sex center unites with the negative part of the emotional center or with the negative part of the instinctive center. And then, stimulation of a certain kind of the sex center, or even any stimulation at all of the sex center, calls forth unpleasant feelings and unpleasant sensations. People who experience unpleasant feelings and sensations which have been evoked in them through ideas and imagination connected with sex are inclined to regard them as a great virtue or as something original; in actual fact it is simply disease. Everything connected with sex should be either pleasant or indifferent. Unpleasant feelings and sensations all come from the emotional center or the instinctive center.

"This is the 'abuse of sex.' It is necessary, further, to remember that the sex center works with 'hydrogen' 12. This means that it is stronger and quicker than all other centers. Sex, in fact, governs all other centers. The only thing in ordinary circumstances, that is, when man has neither consciousness nor will, that holds the sex center in submission is 'buffers.' 'Buffers' can entirely bring it to nought, that is, they can stop its normal manifestation. But they cannot destroy its energy. The energy remains and passes over to other centers, finding expression for itself through them; in other words, the other centers rob the sex center of the energy which it does not use itself. The energy of the sex center in the work of the thinking, emotional, and moving centers can be recognized by a particular 'taste,' by a particular fervor, by a vehemence which the nature of the affair concerned does not call for. The thinking center writes books, but in making use of the energy of the sex center it does not simply occupy itself with philosophy, science, or politics—it is always fighting something, disputing, criticizing, creating new subjective theories. The emotional center preaches Christianity, abstinence, asceticism, or the fear and horror of sin, hell, the torment of sinners, eternal fire, all this with the energy of the sex center. . . . Or on the other hand it works up revolutions, robs, burns, kills, again with the same energy. The moving center occupies itself with sport, creates various records, climbs mountains, jumps, fences, wrestles, fights, and so on. In all these instances, that is, in the work of the thinking center as well as in the work of the emotional and the moving centers, when they work with the energy of the sex center, there is always one general characteristic and this is a certain particular vehemence and, together with it, the *uselessness* of the work in question. Neither the thinking nor the emotional nor the moving centers can ever create anything *useful* with the energy of the sex center. This is an example of the 'abuse of sex.'

"But this is only one aspect of it. Another aspect consists in the fact that, when the energy of the sex center is plundered by the other centers and spent on useless work, it has nothing left for itself and has to steal the energy of other centers which is much lower and coarser than its own. And yet the sex center is very important for the general activity, and particularly for the inner growth of the organism, because, working with 'hydrogen' 12, it can receive a very fine *food of impressions*, such as none of the ordinary centers can receive. The fine food of impressions is very important for the manufacture of the higher 'hydrogens.' But when the sex center works with energy that is not its own, that is, with the comparatively low 'hydrogens' 48 and 24, its impressions become much coarser and it ceases to play the role in the organism which it could play. At the same time union with, and the use of its energy by, the thinking center creates far too great an imagination on the subject of sex, and in addition a *tendency to be satisfied with this imagination*. Union with the emotional center creates sentimentality or, on the contrary, jealousy, emultery. This is again a picture of the 'abuse of sex.'"

"What must be done to struggle against the 'abuse of sex?'" asked somebody present.

G. laughed.

"I was just waiting for that question," he said. "But you already ought to understand that it is just as impossible to explain to a man who has not yet begun to work on himself and does not know the structure of the machine what the 'abuse of sex' means, as it is to say what must be done to avoid these abuses. Right work on oneself begins with the creation of a *permanent center of gravity*. When a permanent center of gravity has been created everything else begins to be disposed and distributed in subordination to it. The question comes to this: From what and how can a permanent center of gravity be created? And to this may be replied that only a man's attitude to the work, to school, his valuation of the work, and his realization of the mechanicalness and aimlessness of everything else can create in him a permanent center of gravity.

"The role of the sex center in creating a general equilibrium and a permanent center of gravity can be very big. According to its energy, that is to say, if it uses its own energy, the sex center stands on a level with the higher emotional center. And all the other centers are subordinate to it. Therefore it would be a great thing if it worked with its own energy. This alone would indicate a comparatively very high level of being. And in this case, that is, if the sex center worked with its own energy and in its own place, all other centers could work correctly in their places and with their own energies."

Chapter Thirteen

THIS period, the middle of the summer of 1916, has remained in the memory of all the members of our groups as a time of very great inner intensity in our work. We all felt that we had to hurry, that we were doing too little compared with the immensity of the task we had set ourselves. We realized that our chance of knowing more might go just as suddenly as it had come and we tried to increase the pressure of work in ourselves and to do all that we could while conditions were favorable.

I began a series of experiments or exercises, making use of a certain experience in this direction that I had acquired earlier. I carried out a series of short but very intensive fasts. I call them "intensive" because I did not take them at all from the hygienic point of view but tried, on the contrary, to give the strongest possible shocks to the organism. In addition to this I began to "breathe" according to a definite system which, together with fasting, had given me interesting psychological results before; and also "repetition" on the method of the "*prayer of the mind*" which had helped me very much before to concentrate my attention and to observe myself. And also a series of mental exercises of a rather complicated kind for the concentration of the attention. I do not describe these experiments and exercises in detail because they were, after all, attempts to feel my way, without having exact knowledge of possible results.

But all these things taken together, as well as our talks and meetings, kept me in a state of unusual tension and to a great extent, of course, prepared me for the series of extraordinary experiences which I had to go through in August, 1916, because G. kept his word and I saw *facts* and at the same time understood what G. meant when he said that many other things are necessary before facts.¹

These other things consisted in preparation, in understanding certain ideas, and in being in a certain state. This state, which is emotional, is exactly what we do not understand, that is, we do not understand that it is indispensable and that facts are not possible without it.

¹ Chap. I, page 23.

I now come to a most difficult thing because there is no possibility whatever of describing the facts themselves.

Why?

I have often put this question to myself. And I could only answer that there was far too much in them of what was personal for them to be made common property. And I think that it was so not only in my case but that it always is so.

I remember that assertions of this kind always made me indignant when I came across them in the memoirs or the notes of people who had passed through any sort of extraordinary experiences and afterwards refused to describe them. They had sought the miraculous and, in one form or another, they thought they had found it. But when they had found what they sought they invariably said: "I have found it. But I cannot describe what I have found."—It always seemed to me to be artificial and invented.

And now I found myself in exactly the same position. I had found what I sought. I saw and observed facts that entirely transcended the sphere of what we consider possible, acknowledged, or admissible, and I can say nothing about them.

The principal part of these experiences was in their inner content and in the new knowledge which came with them. But even the outer aspect could be described only very approximately. As I have already said, after all my fasts and other experiments I was in a rather excited and nervous state and physically less steady than usual. I arrived at the country house of E. N. M. in Finland, at whose house in St. Petersburg we had of late often had our meetings. G. and about eight of our people were there. In the evening the talk went on our attempts to tell about our lives. G. was very harsh and sarcastic, as though he was trying to provoke now one, now another of us, and in particular he emphasized our cowardice and the laziness of our thought.

I was particularly affected when he began to repeat in front of everyone something I had told him in absolute confidence, what I thought of Dr. S. What he said was very unpleasant for me principally because I had always condemned such talk in others.

I think it was at about ten o'clock that he called me, Dr. S., and Z. into a small separate room. We sat on the floor "Turkish fashion" and G. began to explain and to show us certain postures and physical movements. I could not help noticing that there was an astonishing assurance and precision in all his movements although the movements and postures themselves did not present any particular problem and a good gymnast could have done them without exceptional difficulty. I had never had any pretensions to the role of an athlete but I could imitate them outwardly. G. explained that although a gymnast could of course do

these movements the gymnast would do them in a different way from him and that he did them in a special way with muscles relaxed.

Afterwards G. again passed to the question why we could not tell the story of our lives.

And with this the miracle began.

I can say with complete assurance that G. did not use any kind of external methods, that is, he gave me no narcotics nor did he hypnotize me by any of the known methods.

It all started with my beginning to *hear his thoughts*. We were sitting in a small room with a carpetless wooden floor as it happens in country houses. I sat opposite G., and Dr. S. and Z. at either side. G. spoke of our "features," of our inability to see or to speak the truth. His words perturbed me very much. And suddenly I noticed that among the words which he was saying to us all there were "thoughts" which were intended for me. I caught one of these thoughts and replied to it, speaking aloud in the ordinary way. G. nodded to me and stopped speaking. There was a fairly long pause. He sat still saying nothing. After a while I heard his voice inside me as it were in the chest near the heart. He put a definite question to me. I looked at him; he was sitting and smiling. His question provoked in me a very strong emotion. But I answered him in the affirmative.

"Why did he say that?" asked G., looking in turn at Z. and Dr. S. "Did I ask him anything?"

And he at once put another still more difficult question to me in the same way as before. And I again answered it in a natural voice. Z. and S. were visibly astonished at what was taking place, especially Z. This conversation, if it can be called a conversation, proceeded in this fashion for not less than half an hour. G. put questions to me without words and I answered them speaking in the usual way. I was very agitated by the things G. said to me and the things he asked me which I cannot transmit. The matter was concerned with certain conditions which I had either to accept or *leave this work*. G. gave me a month's time. I refused the time and said that no matter how difficult what he demanded was I would carry it out at once. But G. insisted on the month's time.

At length he got up and we went out on the veranda. On the other side of the house was another large veranda where the rest of our people were sitting.

What transpired after this I can say very little about, although the chief things happened after. G. was speaking with Z. and S. Then something he said about me affected me very strongly and I sprang up from my chair and went into the garden. From there I went into the forest. I walked about there for a long time in the dark, wholly in the power of the most extraordinary thoughts and feelings. Sometimes it seemed to me that I had found something, at other times I lost it again.

This went on for one or two hours. Finally, at the moment of what felt like the climax of contradictions and of inner turmoil, there flashed through my mind a thought following which I very quickly came to a clear and right understanding of all G. had said and of my own position. I saw that G. was right; that what I had considered to be firm and reliable in myself in reality did not exist. But I had found something else. I knew that he would not believe me and that he would laugh at me if I showed him this other thing. But for myself it was indubitable and what happened later showed that I was right.

For a long time I sat and smoked in some kind of glade. When I returned to the house it was already dark on the small veranda. Thinking that everyone had gone to bed I went to my own room and went to bed myself. As a matter of fact G. and the others were at that time having supper on the large veranda. A little while after I had gone to bed a strange excitement again began in me, my pulse began to beat forcibly, and I again heard G.'s voice in my chest. On this occasion I not only heard *but I replied mentally* and G. heard me and answered me. There was something very strange in this conversation. I tried to find something that would confirm it as a fact but could find nothing. And after all it could have been "imagination" or a waking dream, because although I tried to ask G. something of a concrete nature that would have left no doubt about the conversation or his participation in it, I could not invent anything weighty enough. And certain questions I asked him and which he answered I could have asked and answered myself. I even had the impression that he avoided concrete answers which later might serve as "proofs," and to one or two of my questions he intentionally gave indefinite answers. But the *feeling that it was a conversation* was very strong and entirely new and unlike anything else.

After one long pause G. asked me something that at once put me all on the alert, then stopped as if waiting for an answer.

What he said suddenly put a stop to all my thoughts and feelings. It was not fear, at least not a conscious fear when one knows that one is afraid, but I was all shivering and something literally paralyzed me completely so that I could not articulate a single word although I made terrible efforts, wishing to give an affirmative reply.

I felt that G. was waiting and that he would not wait long.

"Well, you are tired now," he said at last, "we will leave it till another time."

I began to say something, I think I asked him to wait, to give me a little time to get accustomed to this thought.

"Another time," said his voice. "Sleep." And his voice stopped.

I could not go to sleep for a long time. In the morning as I came out onto the little terrace where we had sat the evening before, G. was sitting

in the garden twenty yards away near a round table; there were three of our people with him.

"Ask him what happened last night," said G.

For some reason this made me angry. I turned and walked towards the terrace. As I reached it I again heard G.'s voice in my chest.

"Stop!"

I stopped and turned towards G. He was smiling.

"Where are you going, sit down here," he said in his ordinary voice.

I sat with him but I could say nothing, nor did I want to talk. At the same time I felt a kind of extraordinary clarity of thought and I decided to try to concentrate on certain problems which had seemed to me to be particularly difficult. The thought came to my mind that in this unusual state I might perhaps find answers to questions which I could not find in the ordinary way.

I began to think about the first triad of the ray of creation, about the three forces which made one force. What could they mean? Can we define them? Can we realize their meaning? Something began to formulate itself in my head but just as I tried to translate this into words everything disappeared.—*Will, consciousness . . .* and what was the third? I asked myself. It seemed to me that if I could name the *third* I would at once understand everything else.

"Leave it," said G. aloud.

I turned my eyes towards him and he looked at me.

"That is a very long way away yet," he said. "You cannot find the answer now. Better think of yourself, of your work."

The people sitting with us looked at us in perplexity. G. had answered my thoughts.

Then something very strange began that lasted the whole day and afterwards. We stayed in Finland three days longer. During these three days there were very many talks about the most varied subjects. And I was in an unusual emotional state all the time which sometimes began to be burdensome.

"How can this be got rid of? I cannot bear it any more," I asked G.

"Do you want to go to sleep?" said G.

"Certainly not," I said.

"Then what are you asking about? This is what you wanted, make use of it. *You are not asleep at this moment!*"

I do not think that this was altogether true. I undoubtedly "slept" at some moments.

Many things that I said at that time must have surprised my companions in this strange adventure very much. And I was surprised at many things myself. Many things were like sleep, many things had no relation whatever to reality. Undoubtedly I invented a lot. Afterwards it was very strange for me to remember the things I had said.

At length we went to St. Petersburg. G. went to Moscow and we went to the Nikolaievsky Station straight from the Finland Station.

A fairly large company had met together to see him off. He went.

But the miraculous was still far from ended. There were new and very strange phenomena again late in the evening of that day and I "conversed" with him *while seeing* him in the compartment of the train going to Moscow.

After this there followed a strange period of time. It lasted about three weeks. And during this period from time to time I saw "sleeping people."

This requires a particular explanation.

Two or three days after G.'s departure I was walking along the Troitsky street and suddenly I saw that the man who was walking towards me was *asleep*. There could be no doubt whatever about this. Although his eyes were open, he was walking along obviously immersed in dreams which ran like clouds across his face. It entered my mind that if I could look at him long enough I should see his dreams, that is, I should understand what he was seeing in his dreams. But he passed on. After him came another also sleeping. A sleeping *izvostchik* went by with two sleeping passengers. Suddenly I found myself in the position of the prince in the "Sleeping Princess." Everyone around me was asleep. It was an indubitable and distinct sensation. I realized what it meant that many things could be seen with our eyes which we do not usually see. These sensations lasted for several minutes. Then they were repeated very weakly on the following day. But I at once made the discovery that *by trying to remember myself* I was able to intensify and prolong these sensations for so long as I had energy enough not to be diverted, that is, not to allow things and everything around me to attract my attention. When attention was diverted I ceased to see "sleeping people" because I had obviously gone to sleep myself. I told only a few of our people of these experiments and two of them when they tried to remember themselves had similar experiences.

Afterwards everything became normal. I could not give myself a clear account of what exactly had taken place. But everything in me had been turned upside down. And there is no doubt that in the things I said and thought during these three weeks there was a good deal of fantasy.

But I had seen myself, that is, I had seen things in myself that I had never seen before. There could be no doubt about it and although I afterwards became the same as I had been before I could not help *knowing* that this had been and I could forget nothing.

One thing I understood even then with undoubted clarity, that no phenomena of a higher order, that is, transcending the category of ordinary things observable every day, or phenomena which are sometimes called "metaphysical," can be observed or investigated by *ordinary means*, in an ordinary state of consciousness, like physical phenomena. It is a

complete absurdity to think that it is possible to study phenomena of a higher order like "telepathy," "clairvoyance," foreseeing the future, mediumistic phenomena, and so on, in the same way as electrical, chemical, or meteorological phenomena are studied. There is something in phenomena of a higher order which requires a particular emotional state for their observation and study. And this excludes any possibility of "properly conducted" laboratory experiments and observations.

I had previously arrived at the same conclusions after experiments of my own described in the *New Model of the Universe* in the chapter "Experimental Mysticism," but now I understood the reason why this was impossible.

The second interesting conclusion that I came to is much more difficult to describe. It relates to a change which I noticed in certain of my views, in certain formulations of my aims, desires, and aspirations. Many aspects of this became clear to me only afterwards. And afterwards I saw clearly that it was at this time that certain very definite changes began in my views on myself, on those around me, and particularly on "methods of action," if this can be said without more precise definition. To describe the changes themselves is very difficult. I can only say that they were not in any way connected with what was said in Finland but that they had come as a result of the emotions which I had experienced there. The first thing I could record was the weakening in me of that extreme individualism which up to that time had been the fundamental feature in my attitude to life. I began to see people more, to feel my community with them more. And the second thing was that somewhere very deep down inside me I understood the esoteric principle of the impossibility of violence, that is, the uselessness of violent means to attain no matter what. I saw with undoubted clarity, and never afterwards did I wholly lose this feeling, that violent means and methods in anything whatever would unfailingly produce negative results, that is to say, results opposed to those aims for which they were applied. What I arrived at was like Tolstoi's non-resistance in appearance but it was not at all non-resistance because I had reached it not from an ethical but from a practical point of view; not from the standpoint of what is better or what is worse but from the standpoint of what is more effective and expedient.

The next time G. came to St. Petersburg was in the beginning of September. I tried to question him about what had actually occurred in Finland—was it true that he had said something that had frightened me, and why had I been frightened?

"If that was the case it means you were not ready," said G.

He explained nothing further.

On this visit the center of gravity of the talks was in the "chief feature" or "chief fault" of each one of us.

G. was very ingenious in the definition of features. I realized on this occasion that not everyone's chief feature could be defined. With some people this feature can be so hidden beneath different formal manifestations as to be almost impossible to find. And then a man can consider himself as his chief feature just as I could call my chief feature "Ouspensky" or, as G. always called it, "Piotr Demianovich." Mistakes there cannot be because the "Piotr Demianovich" of each person forms so to speak "round his chief feature."

Whenever anyone disagreed with the definition of his chief feature given by G. he always said that the fact that the person disagreed with him showed that he was right.

"I disagree only with what you say is actually my chief feature," said one of our people. "The chief feature which I know in myself is very much worse. But I do not dispute that people may see me as you describe."

"You know nothing in yourself," G. told him; "if you knew you would not have that feature. And people certainly see you in the way I told you. But you do not see how they see you. If you accept what I told you as your chief feature you will understand how people see you. And if you find a way to struggle with this feature and to destroy it, that is, to destroy its involuntary manifestation" (G. emphasized these words), "you will produce on people not the impression that you do now but any impression you like."

With this began long talks about the impressions that a man produces on other people and how he can produce a desirable or an undesirable impression.

Those around him see a man's chief feature however hidden it may be. Of course they cannot always define it. But their definitions are often very good and very near. Take nicknames. Nicknames sometimes define chief features very well.

The talk about impressions brought us once more to "inner" and "outward considering."

"There cannot be proper outward considering while a man is seated in his chief feature," said G. "For instance So-and-So" (he named one of our party). "His feature is that he is never at home. How can he consider anything or anybody?"

I was astonished at the artistic finish of the feature that was represented by G. It was not psychology even, it was art.

"And psychology ought to be art," G. replied, "psychology can never be simply a science."

To another of our party he said on the question of feature that his feature was that he did not exist at all.

"You understand, I do not see you," said G. "It does not mean that

you are always like that. But when you are like you are now, you do not exist at all."

He said to another that his chief feature was a tendency always to argue with everybody about everything.

"But then I never argue," the man very heatedly at once replied.

Nobody could help laughing.

G. told another of our party—it was the middle-aged man on whom he had carried out the experiment of dividing personality from essence and who asked for raspberry jam—that his feature was that he had *no conscience*.

The following day the man came and said that he had been in the public library and had looked through the encyclopedic dictionaries of four languages for the meaning of the word "conscience."

G. merely waved his hand.

To the other man, his companion in the experiment, G. said that he had *no shame*, and he at once cracked a rather amusing joke against himself.

On this occasion G. stopped in quarters on the Liteiny near the Nevsky. He had caught a severe chill and we met at his place in small groups.

He said once that there was no sense in our going on any further in this way and that we ought to make a definite decision whether we wanted to go on with him, wanted to work, or whether it was better to abandon all attempts in this direction, because a half-serious attitude could give no results whatever. He added that he would continue the work only with those who would make a definite and serious decision to struggle with mechanicalness in themselves and with sleep.

"You already know by this time," he said, "that nothing terrible is demanded of you. But there is no sense in sitting between two stools. Whoever does not want to wake up, at any rate let him sleep well."

He said that he would talk to each of us separately and that each of us must show him sufficient reason why he, that is, G., should trouble about him.

"You think perhaps that this affords me a great deal of satisfaction," he said. "Or perhaps you think that there is nothing else that I could do. If so you are very gravely mistaken in both cases. There are very many other things that I could do. And if I give my time to *this* it is only because I have a definite aim. By now you ought better to understand in what my aim consists and by now you ought to see whether you are on the same road as I am or not. I will say nothing more. But in the future I shall work only with those who can be useful to me in attaining my aim. And only those people can be useful to me who have firmly decided to struggle with themselves, that is, to struggle with mechanicalness."

With this the talk ended. G.'s talks with members of the group lasted

about a week. With some he spoke for a very long time, with others not so long. Finally almost everybody stayed on.

P., the middle-aged man whom I have mentioned in connection with experiments in dividing personality from essence, came out of the situation with honor and quickly became a very active member of our group, only on occasions going astray into a formal attitude or in "literal understanding."

Only two people dropped off who, exactly as though through some kind of magic as it seemed to us, suddenly ceased to understand anything and saw in everything that G. said *misunderstanding on his part*, and, on the part of the rest, a lack of sympathy and feeling.

This attitude, at first mistrustful and suspicious and then openly hostile to almost all of us, coming from nobody knew where and full of strange and quite unexpected accusations, astonished us very much.

"We made everything a secret"; we failed to tell them what G. had spoken of in their absence. We told tales about them to G., trying to make him distrust them. We recounted to him all talks with them, leading him constantly into error by distorting all the facts and striving to present everything in a false light. *We had given G. wrong impressions about them*, making him see everything far from as it was.

At the same time G. himself had "completely changed," had become altogether different from what he used to be before, had become harsh, requiring, had lost all feeling and all interest for individual people, had ceased to demand the truth from people; that he preferred to have round him people such as were afraid to tell him the truth, who were hypocrites, who threw flowers at one another and at the same time spied on the others.

We were amazed at all these and similar talks. They brought with them immediately a kind of entirely new atmosphere which up to this time we had not had. And it was particularly strange because precisely at this time most of us were in a very emotional state and were particularly well disposed towards these two protesting members of our group.

We tried many times to talk to G. about them. He laughed very much when we told him that in their opinion we always gave him "wrong impressions" of them.

"How they value the work," he said, "and what a miserable idiot I am from their point of view; how easily I am deceived! You see that they have ceased to understand the most important thing. In the work the teacher of the work cannot be deceived. This is a law which proceeds from what has been said about knowledge and being. I may deceive you if I want to. But you cannot deceive me. If it were otherwise you would not learn from me and I would have to learn from you."

"How must we speak to them and how can we help them to come back to the group?" some of us asked G.

"Not only can you do nothing," G. said to them, "but you ought not to try because by such attempts you will destroy the last chance they have of understanding and seeing themselves. *It is always very difficult to come back.* And it must be an absolutely voluntary decision without any sort of persuasion or constraint. You should understand that everything you have heard about me and yourselves are attempts at self-justification, endeavors to blame others in order to feel that they are in the right. It means more and more lying. It must be destroyed and it can only be destroyed through suffering. If it was difficult for them to see themselves before, it will be ten times more difficult now."

"How could this have happened?" others asked him. "Why did their attitude towards all of us and towards you change so abruptly and unexpectedly?"

"It is the first case for you," said G., "and therefore it appears strange to you, but later on you will see that it happens very often and you will see that it always takes place in the same way. The principal reason for it is that it is impossible to sit between two stools. And people usually think that they can sit between two stools, that is, that they can acquire the new and preserve the old; they do not think this consciously of course but it comes to the same thing.

"And what is it that they most of all desire to preserve? First the right to have their own valuation of ideas and of people, that is, that which is more harmful for them than anything else. They are fools and they already know it, that is to say, they realized it at one time. For this reason they came to learn. But they forget all about this the next moment; they are already bringing into the work their own paltry and subjective attitude; they begin to pass judgment on me and on everyone else as though they were able to pass judgment on anything. And this is immediately reflected in their attitude towards the ideas and towards what I say. Already 'they accept one thing' and 'they do not accept another thing'; with one thing they agree, with another they disagree; they trust me in one thing, in another thing they do not trust me.

"And the most amusing part is that they imagine they are able 'to work' under such conditions, that is, without trusting me in everything and without accepting everything. In actual fact this is absolutely impossible. By not accepting something or mistrusting something they immediately invent something of their own in its place. 'Gagging' begins—new theories and new explanations which have nothing in common either with the work or with what I have said. Then they begin to find faults and inaccuracies in everything that I say or do and in everything that others say or do. From this moment I now begin to speak of things about which I have no knowledge and even of things of which I have no conception, but which *they* know and understand much better than I do; all the other members of the group are fools, idiots. And so on, and

so on, like a barrel organ. When a man says something on these lines I already know all he will say later on. And you also will know by the consequences. And it is amusing that people can see this in relation to others. But when they themselves do crazy things they at once cease to see it in relation to themselves. This is a law. It is difficult to climb the hill but very easy to slide down it. They even feel no embarrassment in talking in such a manner either with me or with other people. And chiefly they think that this can be combined with some kind of 'work.' They do not even want to understand that when a man reaches this notch his little song has been sung.

"And note one thing more. They are a pair. If they were separate, each one by himself, it would be easier for them to see their situation and come back. But they are a pair, they are friends, and one supports the other precisely in his weaknesses. Now one cannot return without the other. And even if they wanted to come back, I would just take one of them and not take the other."

"Why?" asked one of those present.

"That is another question entirely," said G., "in the present case simply in order to enable the other to ask himself who is the most important for him, I or his friend. If he is the most important, then there is nothing to talk about, but if I am the most important, then he must leave his friend and come back alone. And then, afterwards, the other may come back. But I tell you that they cling to one another and hinder one another. This is an exact example of how people do the very worst thing they possibly can for themselves when they depart from what is good in them."

In October I was with G. in Moscow.

His small apartment on the Bolshaya Dmitrovka, all the floors and walls of which were covered in the Eastern style with carpets and the ceilings hung with silk shawls, astonished me by its special atmosphere. First of all the people who came there—who were all G.'s pupils—were *not afraid to keep silent.* This alone was something unusual. They came, sat down, smoked, they often did not speak a single word for hours. And there was nothing oppressive or unpleasant in this silence; on the contrary, there was a feeling of assurance and of freedom from the necessity of playing a forced and invented role. But on chance and curious visitors this silence produced an extraordinarily strange impression. They began to talk and they talked without stopping as if they were afraid of stopping and feeling something. On the other hand others were offended, they thought that the "silence" was directed against them in order to show them how much superior G.'s pupils were and to make them understand that it was not worth while even talking to them; others found it stupid, amusing, "unnatural," and that it showed our worst features, particularly

our weakness and our complete subordination to G. who was "oppressing us."

P. even decided to make notes of the reactions of various types of people to the "silence." I realized in this place that people feared silence more than anything else, that our tendency to talk arises from self-defense and is always based upon a reluctance to see something, a reluctance to confess something to oneself.

I quickly noticed a still stranger property of G.'s apartment. *It was not possible to tell lies there.* A lie at once became apparent, obvious, tangible, indubitable. Once there came an acquaintance of G.'s whom I had met before and who sometimes came to G.'s groups. Besides myself there were two or three people in the apartment. G. himself was not there. And having sat a while in silence our guest began to tell how he had just met a man who had told him some extraordinarily interesting things about the war, about possibilities of peace and so on. And suddenly quite unexpectedly for me I felt *that he was lying.* He had not met anybody and nobody had told him anything. He was making it all up on the spot simply because he could not endure the silence.

I felt awkward looking at him. It seemed to me that if I looked at him he would realize that I saw that he was lying. I glanced at the others and saw that they felt as I did and were barely able to repress their smiles. I then looked at the one who was talking and I saw that he alone noticed nothing and he continued to talk very rapidly, becoming more and more carried away by his subject and not at all noticing the glances that we unintentionally exchanged with one another.

This was not the only case. I suddenly remembered the attempts we made in the summer to describe our lives and the "intonations" with which we spoke when we tried to hide facts. I realized that here also the whole thing was in the intonations. When a man is chattering or simply waiting for an opportunity to begin he does not notice the intonations of others and is unable to distinguish lies from the truth. But directly he is quiet himself, that is, awakes a little, he hears the different intonations and begins to distinguish other people's lies.

We spoke several times with G.'s pupils on this subject. I told them what had happened in Finland and about the "sleeping people" I had seen on the streets of St. Petersburg. The feeling of mechanical lying people here in G.'s apartment reminded me very much of the feeling of "sleeping people."

I wanted very much to introduce some of my Moscow friends to G., but from among all those whom I met during these days only one, my old newspaper friend V. A. A., produced the impression of being sufficiently alive, although he was as usual overloaded with work and rushing from one place to another. But he was very interested when I told him about G. and with G.'s permission I invited him to have lunch at G.'s place.—

G. summoned about fifteen of his people and arranged a lunch which, at that time, was luxurious, with *zakuski*, pies, *shashlik*, Khagheta wine, and so on, in a word it was one of those Caucasian lunches that begin at midday and last until the evening.—He seated A. near him, was very kind to him, entertained him all the time, and poured out wine for him. My heart suddenly fell when I realized to what a test I had brought my old friend. The fact was that everyone kept silence. A. held out for five minutes. Then he began to talk. He spoke of the war, of all our allies and enemies together and separately; he communicated the opinions of all the public men of Moscow and St. Petersburg upon all possible subjects; then he talked about the desiccation of vegetables for the army (with which he was then occupied in addition to his journalistic work), particularly the desiccation of onions, then about artificial manures, agricultural chemistry, and chemistry in general; about "melioration"; about spiritism, the "materialization of hands," and about what else I do not remember now. Neither G. nor anyone else spoke a single word. I was on the point of speaking fearing that A. would be offended, but G. looked at me so fiercely that I stopped short. Besides, my fears were in vain. Poor A. noticed nothing, he was so carried away by his own talk and his own eloquence that he sat on happily at the table and talked without stopping for a moment until four o'clock. Then with great feeling he shook hands with G. and thanked him for his "very interesting conversation." G., looking at me, laughed slyly.

I felt very ashamed. They had made a fool of poor A. He certainly could not have expected anything of the kind, so he was caught. I realized that G. had given a demonstration to his people.

"There, you see," he said, when A. had gone. "He is called a clever man. But he would not have noticed it even if I had taken his trousers off him. Only let him talk. He wants nothing else. And everybody is like that. This one was much better than many others. He told no lies. And he really knew what he talked about, in his own way of course. But think, what use is he? He is no longer young. And perhaps this was the one time in his life when there was an opportunity of hearing the truth. And he talked himself all the time."

Of the Moscow talks with G. I remember one which is connected with another talk in St. Petersburg I have already given.

This time G. himself began to speak.

"What do you find is the most important thing of all you have learned up to now?" he asked me.

"The experiences, of course, which I had in August," I said. "If I were able to evoke them at will and use them, it would be all that I could wish for because I think that then I should be able to find all the rest. But at the same time I know that these 'experiences,' I choose this word

only because there is no other, but you understand of what I speak"—he nodded—"depended on the emotional state I was in then. And I know that they will always depend on this. If I could create such an emotional state in myself I should very quickly come to these experiences. But I feel infinitely far from this emotional state, as though I were asleep. This is 'sleep,' that was being awake.—How can this emotional state be created? Tell me."

"There are three ways," said G. "First, this state can come by itself, accidentally. Second, someone else can create it in you. And third, you can create it yourself. Which do you prefer?"

I confess that for a second I had a very strong desire to say that I preferred someone else, that is, him, to create in me the emotional state of which I was speaking. But I at once realized that he would say that he had already done it once and that now I ought either to wait until *this* came itself or that I ought to do something myself to get it.

"I want of course to create it myself," I said. "But how can it be done?"

"I have already said before that sacrifice is necessary," said G. "Without sacrifice nothing can be attained. But if there is anything in the world that people do not understand it is the idea of sacrifice. They think they have to sacrifice something that they have. For example, I once said that they must sacrifice 'faith,' 'tranquillity,' 'health.' They understand this literally. But then the point is that they have not got either faith, or tranquillity, or health. All these words must be taken in quotation marks. In actual fact they have to sacrifice only what they imagine they have and which in reality they do not have. They must sacrifice their fantasies. But this is difficult for them, very difficult. It is much easier to sacrifice real things.

"Another thing that people must sacrifice is *their suffering*. It is very difficult also to sacrifice one's suffering. A man will renounce any pleasures you like but he will not give up his suffering. Man is made in such a way that he is never so much attached to anything as he is to his suffering. And it is necessary to be free from suffering. No one who is not free from suffering, who has not sacrificed his suffering, can work. Later on a great deal must be said about suffering. Nothing can be attained without suffering but at the same time one must begin by sacrificing suffering. Now, decipher what this means."

I stayed in Moscow about a week and returned to St. Petersburg with a fresh store of ideas and impressions. Here a very interesting occurrence took place which explained many things to me in the system and in G.'s methods of instruction.

During the period of my stay in Moscow G.'s pupils had explained to me various laws relating to man and the world; among others they showed me again the "table of hydrogens," as we called it in St. Petersburg, but

in a considerably expanded form. Namely, besides the three scales of "hydrogens" which G. had worked out for us before, they had taken the reduction further and had made in all twelve scales. (See Table 4.)

In such a form the table was scarcely comprehensible. I was not able to convince myself of the necessity of reduced scales.

"Let us take for instance the seventh scale," said P. "The Absolute here is 'hydrogen' 96. Fire can serve as an example of 'hydrogen' 96. Fire then is the Absolute for a piece of wood. Let us take the ninth scale. Here the Absolute is 'hydrogen' 384 or *water*. Water will be the Absolute for a piece of sugar."

But I was unable to grasp the principle on the basis of which it would be possible to determine exactly when to make use of such a scale. P. showed me a table made up to the fifth scale and relating to parallel levels in different worlds. But I got nothing from it. I began to think whether it was not possible to unite all these various scales with the various cosmoses. And having dwelt on this thought I went in an absolutely wrong direction because the cosmoses of course had no relation whatever to the division of the scale. It seemed to me at the same time that I had in general ceased to understand anything in the "three octaves of radiations" from which the first scale of "hydrogens" was deduced. The principal stumbling block here was the relation of the three forces 1, 2, 3 and 1, 3, 2 and the relations between "carbon," "oxygen," and "nitrogen."

At the same time I realized that this contained something important. And I left Moscow with the unpleasant feeling that not only had I not acquired anything new but that I seemed to have lost the old, that is, what I thought I had already understood.

We had an agreement in our group that whoever went to Moscow and heard any new explanations or lectures must, on his arrival in St. Petersburg, communicate it all to the others. But on the way to St. Petersburg while going carefully in my head through the Moscow talks, I felt that I would not be able to communicate the principal thing because I did not understand it myself. This irritated me and I did not know what I was to do. In this state I arrived at St. Petersburg and on the following day I went to our meeting.

Trying to draw out as much as possible the beginning of the "diagrams," as we called a part of G.'s system, dealing with general questions and laws, I began to convey the general impressions of my journey. And all the time I was saying one thing, in my head another thing was running: How shall I begin—what does the transition 1, 2, 3 into 1, 3, 2 mean? Can an example of such a transition be found in the phenomena we know?

I felt that I must find something now, immediately, because unless I found something myself first I could say nothing to the others.

Chapter Fourteen

HERE were certain points to which G. invariably used to return in all his talks with us after the formal lectures, to which outside people were admitted, were over. The first was the question of self-remembering and the necessity of constant work on oneself in order to attain this, and the second was the question of the imperfection of our language and of the difficulty of conveying "objective truths" in our words.

As I have already mentioned before, G. used the expressions "objective" and "subjective" in a special sense, taking as a basis the divisions of "subjective" and "objective" states of consciousness. All our ordinary knowledge which is based on ordinary methods of observation and verification of observations, all scientific theories deduced from the observation of facts accessible to us in subjective states of consciousness, he called *subjective*. Knowledge based upon ancient methods and principles of observation, knowledge of things in themselves, knowledge accompanying "an objective state of consciousness," *knowledge of the All*, was for him *objective* knowledge.

I will try to convey what followed as far as I remember it, making use partly of notes made by some of G.'s Moscow pupils and partly of notes of my own on the Petersburg talks.

"One of the most central of the ideas of objective knowledge," said G., "is the idea of the unity of everything, of unity in diversity. From ancient times people who have understood the content and the meaning of this idea, and have seen in it the basis of objective knowledge, have endeavored to find a way of transmitting this idea in a form comprehensible to others. The successive transmission of the ideas of objective knowledge has always been a part of the task of those possessing this knowledge. In such cases the idea of the unity of everything, as the fundamental and central idea of this knowledge, had to be transmitted first and transmitted with adequate completeness and exactitude. And to do this the idea had to be put into such forms as would insure its proper perception by others and avoid in its transmission the possibility of

distortion and corruption. For this purpose the people to whom the idea was being transmitted were required to undergo a proper preparation, and the idea itself was put either into a logical form, as for instance in philosophical systems which endeavored to give a definition of the 'fundamental principle' or ἀρχή from which everything else was derived, or into religious teachings which endeavored to create an element of faith and to evoke a wave of emotion carrying people up to the level of 'objective consciousness.' The attempts of both the one and the other, sometimes more sometimes less successful, run through the whole history of mankind from the most ancient times up to our own time and they have taken the form of religious and philosophical creeds which have remained like monuments on the paths of these attempts to unite the thought of mankind and esoteric thought.

"But objective knowledge, the idea of unity included, belongs to objective consciousness. The forms which express this knowledge when perceived by subjective consciousness are inevitably distorted and, instead of truth, they create more and more delusions. With objective consciousness it is possible to see and feel the unity of everything. But for subjective consciousness the world is split up into millions of separate and unconnected phenomena. Attempts to connect these phenomena into some sort of system in a scientific or a philosophical way lead to nothing because man cannot reconstruct the idea of the whole starting from separate facts and they cannot divine the principles of the division of the whole without knowing the laws upon which this division is based.

"None the less the idea of the unity of everything exists also in intellectual thought but in its exact relation to diversity it can never be clearly expressed in words or in logical forms. There remains always the insurmountable difficulty of language. A language which has been constructed through expressing impressions of plurality and diversity in subjective states of consciousness can never transmit with sufficient completeness and clarity the idea of unity which is intelligible and obvious for the objective state of consciousness.

"Realizing the imperfection and weakness of ordinary language the people who have possessed objective knowledge have tried to express the idea of unity in 'myths,' in 'symbols,' and in particular 'verbal formulas' which, having been transmitted without alteration, have carried on the idea from one school to another, often from one epoch to another.

"It has already been said that the higher psychic centers work in man's higher states of consciousness: the 'higher emotional' and the 'higher mental.' The aim of 'myths' and 'symbols' was to reach man's higher centers, to transmit to him ideas inaccessible to the intellect and to transmit them in such forms as would exclude the possibility of false interpretations. 'Myths' were destined for the higher emotional center; 'symbols' for the higher thinking center. By virtue of this all attempts to