

## PREAMBLE

I think it only fair to the reader to say where I am coming from. This statement should enable you to decide whether you want to bother reading any further.

The first and most important thing to say is that my own understanding of where I am coming from is only partial and hopefully still in development. The second is that I am making no claims whatsoever to having been vouchsafed some revelation about the truth of higher intelligence, which I am about to let you in on. There are innumerable books around claiming all kinds of 'truths' about our situation, but this is not one of them. Nevertheless, parts of this book might come over as didactic. These I have tried to minimize, or simply point to some other author as their origin. The third thing is that I do believe that higher intelligence, insofar as it is real, or the concept at all meaningful, will be something that pervades all aspects of human experience and culture. Consequently, I have ranged wide in my discourse. But even this range is woefully inadequate.

One of the elusive themes that plays throughout this book is that of 'illusion'. I tend to adopt the position that things are not what they seem to be. This idea is to be found in innumerable areas of human experience and action. It is found in mysticism in such terms as 'penetrating the veils' of ordinary experience. It is also found in science, where it is now common for physicists to state that the universe we see is only a projection or partial aspect of a totality that extends into other dimensions, or rests on a reality we can barely conceive. Again, it is found in contemporary psychology, where studies have shown that not only do people not see what is front of their eyes, but that 'decisions' to act arise before we are aware of them. Another example can be found in the realm of politics, where conspiracy theories abound, claiming that we are subject to kinds of mind control.

An important influence on me has been the ideas of the 'wild' spiritual teacher G. I. Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff first taught in Russia, in a period including the Bolshevik revolution, when his radical assertions that we are just machines, we are asleep, we cannot do and so on were being exemplified all around. Writing today, in the time of the war in Iraq and the plight of the Palestinians, I find myself in deep sympathy with such ideas. It seems very clear that something is wrong with us. Everyone considers themselves to be conscious and good beings, but the evidence on the world stage is that this is a cruel illusion.

To even begin to speak of higher intelligence today must raise many people's hackles, because this implies that we cannot get out of our malaise (assuming there is a malaise in the first place) without help. This can be taken as an affront. In a very honest way, it can be claimed that just the suggestion that there is higher intelligence makes us weaker and less responsible because, if we imagine such an intelligence exists, we might just sit back and hope it will sort things out for us. What is very hard to grasp is that there might be a higher intelligence of a kind that requires our *co-operation*. This relates to the original idea of 'synergy'. In the twelfth century, it was a heresy, because it meant that man could co-operate with God in his salvation, which was contrary to the orthodox dogma that only God could save us from ourselves. In our own time, it is turned upside down: now most people have the dogma that we do not need any help at all. Even though the Buddha told us, 'work out your own salvation with diligence' Buddhist religion developed all kinds of helping agencies and embraced the concept of higher interventions.

I freely admit that individuals have done remarkable things, hardly possible for anyone else in their position. By way of examples from science and mathematics I can cite Dirac who spent four years contemplating the nature of fundamental particles and Wiles, who spent seven years in his attic to prove Fermat's Last Theorem. Significantly, these cases remind me of the labours of individuals who, like the Tibetan Buddhist of the twelfth century, Milarepa, shut themselves up in caves for

years or the Shivapuri Baba, who spent thirty years in the forest alone, to reach what is sometimes called 'self-realization'. Part of my approach is to suggest that it does not matter what the enterprise is called, it has much the same characteristics, one of these being extraordinary concentration but another being a venture into the unknown. It is 'all the same', an attempt to pierce the veils. Here I also invoke the anonymous 14<sup>th</sup> century mystical classic, *The Cloud of Unknowing* as an inspiration.

On a more practical plane, I think of people such as J. F. Kennedy who had to deal with an impossible situation in the Cuban missile crisis. No one can doubt the extraordinary level of operation he must have been operating on, even though he like everyone else was in a haze of uncertainty. A friend of mine, John Kirby, has written about this event in terms of an intervention of higher intelligence, but makes it clear that this in no way detracts from the merits of those involved. To think that higher intelligence can just intervene to put things right is childish. Not least amongst the arguments against such a prospect is that it would effectively annihilate us. The kind of higher intelligence that concerns me requires us to play our part, which includes discovering what our 'part' consists of.

Modern science since the sixteenth century has increasingly produced a vista of the universe in which we humans appear less and less significant. Certainly, in terms of cosmic time and space, but also in terms of the underlying structure of matter, we exist in a tiny region or thin slice of reality. But we have still clung to the idea that in terms of *intelligence* we are supreme. In this respect, we are still Medieval. Prospects of other kinds of intelligence capable of observation are restricted to such speculations as that of 'Boltzman observers' (named after the physicist Ludwig Boltzman) that one interpretation of quantum theory says must arise.

I make extensive reference to modern physics throughout the book, but am well aware that a lay man has to tread carefully in 'high-jacking' physics to argue a point with mystical overtones. Part of where I am coming from is the attitude that science itself has taken on the role of religion in our times and I tend to think of scientific discoveries as 'revelations'. Who knows what may be in sight five hundred years from now? I believe that this will include a further displacement of human significance, this time in terms of intelligence. We may well be on the threshold of uncovering an 'x' behind the capacity of discovery.

One of Gurdjieff's pupils, John Bennett had considerable influence on me. I studied and worked with him for fifteen years. He was unique in having a solid background in science and technology as well as a fascination with the contributions of insights that came from special intentional practices that could enter into the workings of our 'subjectivity'. Wolfgang Pauli, a major contributor to our understanding of quantum mechanics, spent a great deal of time in association with the psychologist Carl Jung, an essential part of which was concerned with an exploration of his dreams; but he lacked experience of practical methodologies. In my own more modest life, I studied physics and the philosophy of science and was privileged to have many conversations with David Bohm both as an undergraduate and afterwards. I well remember my first conversation with him, which ranged widely, embracing painting as well as physics, leaving me shaking with joy, partly out of relief of being saved from the desert of triviality I felt at University.

I have intimated my urge to range as widely as possible over as many aspects of human experience as I can manage (however poorly). Does this lead into chaos? Yes, it does; but the hope in following this urge is that it opens doors for you, gives you a choice, instead of insisting that one door only is the portal of the truth. Whatever higher intelligence might be (and it may not *be* anything in the sense of an entity like an organism) it does not deal in single tracks or openings but in something like *what comes before discovery*. We can only connect with this if we are making discoveries. Whatever we happen to believe is a much lesser thing. I mention 'belief'

because of the sub-title of this book: A Gymnasium of Belief. I am citing many sources, which can only appear as beliefs or points of view but, by exercising yourself to move in and out of them, and even enjoying when they clash, a ground might be prepared for making discoveries of your own. It is only then that higher intelligence might have some kind of practical relevance.

Bohm influenced me a lot in this approach, especially when he insisted on the qualitative infinity of the universe and sometimes argued against the idea that there should only be one 'true' theory. So did Bennett, when he proposed the way to develop intelligence was by 'integration without rejection'.

To help you find your way through a veritable maze of ideas, I have provided a skeletal structure of twelve hypotheses about where higher intelligence 'comes from'. The tissues attached to the skeleton have their own logic, so that sometimes the neat categories disappear from sight. Nevertheless, I hope the skeletal structure does some good in enabling you to keep it all together, as it helped me.

One last batch of comments needs to be made. These revolve around the ideas that 'things are not what they seem to be' and 'man is half-baked'. The latter requires explanation. It is the idea that we are in development. An archetypal adjunct to this is that we are half way through some process of transformation. We can look back over so many years – over the thousands of years of history, over the tens of thousands of years of 'modern man', over the hundreds of thousands of years of our species, over the millions of years of our lineage, and so on, over the billions of years of life on the earth and the life of the universe – but also forward in speculation. When I say that something may be 'wrong with us' this may only be due to a sense of future possibilities.

There are two main aspects. Firstly, that we can 'look within' and, secondly, that we can 'look amongst' ourselves. Some people say we cannot in fact look within at all, that this is just another illusion; but most accept that it is in some sense a possibility. The issue becomes a practical one if we consider that might require a special training or insight to do so. After all, this is the inherent claim of mystics through the ages. We can no more claim to be able to look within without method and training than we can claim to do mathematics or athletics. When people try to look within just by wishing to, this can be just an extension of ordinary day-dreaming, and will provide no new information. The second idea of 'looking amongst' means all to do with the meeting of our diverse minds (or content of minds). Here, I must refer to *hate*.

Another major influence on me has been due to Patrick de Mare, the 'godfather' of dialogue in the UK. De Mare was Bohm's therapist for a while and brought to him his rich insights, derived from then fifty years of experience, into the dialogue process. His book on the subject is called *From Hate through Dialogue to Culture in the Larger Group*. He makes no apology for using the harsh word 'hate', using it in a technical sense associated with frustration. We can see hatred everywhere and also understand that it is a phenomenon of *mind*. People experience hatred of each others' minds, which then turns into violence, but very few admit to this. It is necessary to suspend any moves towards violence, including rejection, in order to understand (through dialogue). Understanding means enabling one's own mind to change, something that is largely considered to be undesirable because most people feel they are in the right and any admission otherwise would be weakness. The history of science is full of examples of men cruelly rejecting the original ideas of others: Cantor was driven into a lunatic asylum and Boltzmann into suicide. Science is highly competitive and, in an article I wrote many years ago about the history of science, I placed polemics at the centre. The competitive and Darwinian nature of science distressed Bohm a great deal and was one of the reasons he devoted many

years to fostering the idea of dialogue as an alternative; needless to say, having almost no effect on the conduct of science.

It is one of the hardest things to allow a point of view contrary to one's own into one's mind. There is, at root, some kind of survival instinct at work, or some equivalent to the immune system. At the same time, at least in principle, only some such move makes it possible for the mind to change. No system can evolve in isolation. This might explain why most of us cease to develop at all on reaching what we call 'maturity'.

So, I rather hope that you will hate some of the ideas that appear in this book. Hate is an energy looking for a new outlet and might turn into discovery. Complacency and shallow agreement will do nothing.