

The Higher Evolution of Man

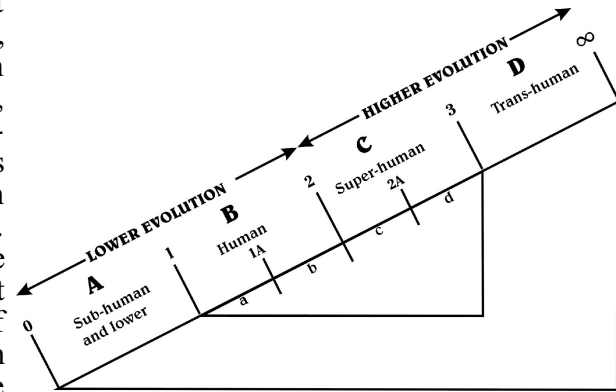
Tape 76: The Axial Age and the Emergence of the New Man

Everybody knows, I think, already that in the present course of lectures we are concerned with the Higher Evolution of Man, which means that we are not concerned with anything merely historical, merely scientific or even merely religious; not in fact concerned with anything outside of ourselves.

We are, in fact, when we concern ourselves with Man, concerning ourselves with ourselves. We are being concerned with ourselves as living, as growing, as continually evolving beings, entities; as beings capable not just of a finite development but even capable of an infinite development. Capable of a development that one day culminates only with our awakening to what we sometimes call the One Mind, Mind Transcendent, Mind Universal, Cosmic Mind, Cosmic Consciousness, or our own realisation of our oneness with, our non-difference from, Ultimate, Absolute Reality. We made a start last week by distinguishing between what we have come to call the lower evolution and the higher evolution. But before going into that distinction or difference, we had quite a lot to say about evolution in general. And we saw that the concept of evolution is in many ways perhaps, absolutely the most important, the most relevant, the most significant concept in the whole range, the whole sweep of modern thought. And we saw that this concept, this vast general idea of evolution, enabled us to understand the whole of existence, both cosmic, planetary, human, as consisting of one gigantic process of development, a development from lower to higher levels of existence and organisation. We further saw, and this point was emphasised, that Man himself is included in this process of development, in this evolution. Which means that we ourselves are included, that we ourselves as we sit here are the products of billions of years of cosmic evolution, products of half a million years of human evolution, ten thousand years of cultural evolution, 2,500 years of religious evolution and about half a century of electronic evolution. However, we are going ahead a little too rapidly; we are already in the middle of this week's lecture - which is much too sudden. We are really still concerned with last week's lecture, in which we also tried to understand what evolution really is. We asked ourselves the question: What actually happens when a lower develops into a higher organism? And we saw that there are two views, two explanations, two philosophies of this: the Mechanistic² and the Vitalist³. We saw that the mechanistic view tries to explain evolution in terms of a more and more complex arrangement or re-arrangement of existing material, particles, elements. We saw also that the vitalist view disagrees with this mechanistic explanation. The vitalist view says that evolution is not completely explicable in terms of physics and chemistry alone. Vitalism maintains that there exists what is sometimes called the Life Force, a force which is not physical or material; a force which obeys its own laws which are not the laws of physics and chemistry. A life force which is self-determining, which has its own way of doing things, which has its own goal. But we saw that neither of these two views of evolution is satisfactory. We saw that the mechanistic view is entirely unsatisfactory and we saw that even the vitalist view is rather vague, even though it is capable of clarification and enlargement. We tried to see last week that we could perhaps best think of the whole course of evolution, both cosmic and human, as consisting in the progressive manifestation in time and through time of an Absolute, Transcendent Reality, and that it was in fact the presence of such a reality back of the whole evolutionary process which made possible the emergence of new and ever newer qualities and characteristics in that evolutionary process. We saw that that reality, as it were, standing or lying [at the]back of this evolutionary process, this vast process of cosmic development, was like a great reservoir on which evolution, especially human evolution, continually draws.

Having dealt with these considerations which are fundamental to our whole course of lectures, we went on to the special subject matter for the week - to distinguish between the lower evolution and the higher evolution - and we saw that we can study Man, ourselves, in two ways: in terms of what we, Man, has developed out of, and also in terms of what Man will develop into, in fact is already developing into. And the first, we saw, constitutes the lower evolution, and the second constitutes the higher evolution. The lower, we further saw, is dealt with by the sciences, by physics, chemistry and especially biology; and the higher evolution is dealt with by what has been termed by one modern thinker, the metabiological⁴ sciences, i.e. psychology and what we cannot help calling, even though the term is unsatisfactory, religion.

And we saw, referring to our *chart* [which can be found in a larger format on the second page of this volume], that the whole process of the lower evolution is covered by the section marked, on the hypotenuse, zero to 2; and we saw that the higher evolution, in the same way, is covered by the section 2 to infinity. We saw also that the zero point represents the starting point of the whole evolutionary process. We saw that Point 1 represents the point at which consciousness, in the sense of specifically human consciousness, emerges. Point 2, we saw, represents the point at which self-consciousness or awareness emerges; whereas Point 3 represents the point at which transcendental awareness emerges, i.e. awareness of Reality, of the Ultimate, of the Transcendent, of the One Mind. And the last point, of infinity, represents the point of Nirvana, or Full Enlightenment, of what in Buddhism is called Buddhahood. And these



points divide the whole evolutionary process into four great segments, sections, or progressive stages which are marked off by letters on the chart. Section A is the Infra-human, i.e. mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. Section B is the Human Stage, both primitive and civilised. Section C is the Ultra-human and D is the Supra- or Trans-human. And in this way last week we saw that the whole process of evolution is covered. Which means that we can see just where we stand. Man at the best at which we usually know him, aware, responsible, intelligent, sensitive, - man in this sense stands in the middle of the evolutionary process, at or on the watershed dividing the lower from the higher evolution. In other words he stands on point 2. And most of us, as we saw, rather regrettably, are considerably below this point; Many of us are barely above point 1. And when I say 'we' and 'us' I'm not referring just to people in this room. I'm sure they are quite exceptional - as we always say - present company excepted. Now one of the points that we did emphasise very much last week and which needs to be emphasised so far as most people are concerned, is that humanity is something yet to be achieved. We are not yet by any means fully human. We like to think of ourselves as being human, as human beings, as leading human life, existence, but there is still a very great deal of animality ingrained in our nature, and only too often it is that animality which takes over, which is in control even most of the time, which is most triumphant. Other points were covered but I won't recapitulate them all.

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The Axial Age and the Emergence of the New Man

We are concerned with that most crucial period of human history in which the whole process of the Higher Evolution of Man begins. We shall also be concerned tonight with some of the special characteristics of that higher evolution. As we approach this subject we are conscious of a very drastic reduction of perspective. Last week we were concerned with the whole evolutionary process, lower and higher. We were concerned with the whole process ranging in terms of our chart from zero to infinity. And that means that in terms of time, if we can even take in this conception, can take in these vast figures, these magnitudes involved, that we were imaginatively concerned with a period covering hundreds upon hundreds of millions of years, right from the beginning to the end of the evolutionary process. This week, by way of contrast, we are concerned essentially with a period lasting a bare few hundred years. So to make the transition less abrupt, less terrible, shocking, we shall deal with the Axial Age as, in a way, the most important part of the general history of Man.

The history of Man, of anything really recognisably human, covers in good round figures a period of half a million years. Scientists of various kinds, anthropologists, geologists, quarrel about the exact figure but plus or minus a few tens of thousands of years, it doesn't matter. Roughly 500,000 years. This is the period of human history with which to begin we shall be concerned. In terms of our chart, we shall be dealing tonight with the evolutionary process from point 1 upwards, with the human, ultra- and supra-human stages of the evolutionary process, excluding the infra-human. I should point out that our chart is not drawn to scale in terms of time. The

whole chart covers a period of hundreds of millions of years; but the period with which we are concerned tonight, comprising three-quarters of the chart (point 1 to infinity) covers only the last half-million years of the evolutionary process. So that if the chart were drawn to scale, this period of human history would be represented by a mere point right at the top of the hypotenuse, just next to the infinity point itself. The half-million years of the history of Man fall into *four main segments* of very unequal length, and it is with the third of these, the Axial Age, that we are mainly concerned tonight.

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The *First Segment* of human history comprises what is termed in scientific language the Eolithic⁵ and Palaeolithic⁶ periods of the stone age. More poetically this could be called the Promethean⁷ Age. It is the age of primitive man, the period when human consciousness emerged, when Man became Man as distinct from a purely biologically defined human species. It is during this period that fire was discovered, hence the 'Promethean Age' because in the Greek myth it was the titan, the demi-god, Prometheus⁸ who brought fire to humanity, to mankind. It is also the period in which language was developed. Animals, we know, do communicate in a fashion, with grunting noises, squeaks, squeals, cries. Dolphins, we know, have some sort of conversational powers, but language in the more developed sense developed during this period, the age of primitive man. This is the age also when flint tools were made and used, and during this period, we know, Man was a cave-dweller, agriculture was not yet known, a state of affairs we can hardly conceive of. Man, during the whole of this period, was a food gatherer - fruits, seeds, berries, etc. - and in the later stages a hunter of game. During this period we see, especially towards the end of the period, the first crude beginnings of art and of religion. It was during this period also that the great cosmic myths or nature myths, the cosmogonic myths, originated. Evidently, life during this Promethean Age was very different from anything that we are accustomed to or familiar with. There were very very few people compared with the number of human beings that exist today. Just scattered family groups, tribes roaming much of the time the vastness, what must have seemed to them the terrifying vastness, of nature. Wandering in primeval forests, finding their lodging at the foot of trees, living in caves, in holes in the ground, etc. In those centuries there were no houses, not even huts perhaps. There were certainly no cities, not even any villages, no roads, perhaps not even any paths or lanes through the forests, no bridges. And of course there was no law, no government - you might think it quite an ideal state of affairs. The only force you had to reckon with was the head of the family or the head of the tribe, the old man, the patriarch who could on occasions be rather irascible. There was no work, nobody went to work in the morning or had to come home from work in the evening. And there was no sense of mechanical time, of clock time. You saw the sun rise and set, and you watched the procession of the seasons, you saw the leaves turning yellow and fluttering to the ground, and you must have remarked that sometimes it was hotter and sometimes colder. But apart from that you knew nothing of time and you knew nothing of history. You knew your parents and grandparents, your children and grandchildren, but beyond that nothing, just mist, just cloud, stretching back into the past and forward into the future. You had no sense of history. You knew nothing about other human beings living far away, distant in space or time. And there was no literature, nothing to read, no books or newspapers, no alphabet, not even any scratchings on bone or stone at that time. And of course there was no 'knowledge' in our sense at all. Primitive man was ignorant, and as far as we know happily ignorant. And we can hardly imagine such a state of affairs. To us, perhaps here in London, the Promethean Age seems very very remote but in a sense it isn't remote at all, because in a sense we can say that we are still living at least on the fringes of the Promethean Age. We've hardly emerged from it really. The Promethean Age lasting for half a million years is practically conterminous⁹ with the history of Man itself. Modern man has been in existence only 10,000 years, out of 500,000, or at the most 15-20,000 years, which means that for by far the greater part of his history of 500,000 years, Man has been Primitive Man. And primitive, underneath the surface, we still are to a very great extent.

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The *Second Segment* of history could be called the Age of Divine Kingship, the River Valley Age, the Age of Agriculture. It corresponds in scientific terminology to the Neolithic¹⁰ period of the Stone Age¹¹ plus the Bronze¹² and Iron¹³ Ages. And it is during this period that Man

discovered or invented agriculture, learned to till the soil, to sow and to reap, to bake bread and other simple things of that kind. And it is during this period, also, that Man began to settle down, to give up his nomadic life, to settle in villages, towns and even cities. And he tended, we find, especially to settle down in the great river valleys of the world, especially in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, the Nile, the Indus, the Ganges, the Huang-Ho and the Yangtse-Kiang. This age was also the age in the course of which the alphabet was invented, and with it came literature, practically as we know it today, history, and other forms of knowledge such as geometry, astronomy, etc. During this period we also tend to find that administration and government were very much developed, even great empires came into existence and with them, the states, the armies, the rulers, there came into existence war and peace. There also came into existence during this period law and the administration of law, commerce, finance etc. And of course art and religion, known even during the primitive period, were further developed and elaborated. Especially, we find, in this Age, the agricultural myths and fertility myths originated. All this happened, let us not forget, very very recently, within the last 10,000-20,000 years of human history out of 500,000 years.

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With the *Third Segment*, we come onto the Axial Age. This is the 600-year period centring roughly on the year 500 BC, and it is during this period that there begins the whole course of the higher evolution of Man. This is the period of the emergence of self-consciousness, of awareness, individuality in the true sense of the term; of the emergence of the New Man. And it is with this Axial Age that we are principally concerned this evening. It is important that we should see the Axial Age in its full historical and evolutionary context.

Before dealing with the Axial Age at some length we must enumerate the *Fourth* and the last of the great segments of human history, and this is, of course, the Age of Science and Technology, sometimes also known as the Age of Anxiety. It is the Age in which we are at present living. This age began perhaps 500 years ago and I need not say anything more about it.

So back to the Axial Age. This term was coined by that very great modern existentialist philosopher, Karl Jaspers. In a sense, though, he borrowed the term from Hegel,¹⁴ who speaks in his philosophy of history of an axis of history, by which he means a point in history towards which or from which everything in history moves. And for Hegel, this axis is the appearance on the stage of history of Christ. But Jaspers objects to this; he takes a much wider view. He says that such an interpretation of history, i.e. making the appearance of Christ the axis of history, can have meaning only for the believing Christian. And he says that if there is an axis in history, we must find it empirically in profane history as a set of circumstances significant for all men, including Christians. He says that this must carry conviction for all men whether Westerners or Asians, without the support of any particular content of faith. If the axis of history is ascertained in this way, it will provide all men with a common historical frame of reference. Now the spiritual process that took place between 800 and 200 BC seems to Jaspers to constitute such an axis of history. Like other students of history, comparative religion and comparative culture, Jaspers is very much struck by the intense spiritual ferment and upheaval, which characterises this period; a ferment which seems to have been absolutely decisive, crucial for humanity. And this period, therefore, 800-200 BC, Jaspers designates the Axial Age, because it is as though all over the world, certainly in all civilised areas, Man during this period seems to have awakened as though from the sleep of ages. In half a dozen countries of the world men were born whose achievements influenced, either directly or indirectly, almost the whole of the human race in one way or another since; men at whom we still look up after all these hundreds and thousands of years in admiration; men in fact so well known that one need do hardly more than just mention their names like a sort of incantation.

In China, we have the name of the very great figure of Confucius,¹⁵ born about 550 BC. Confucius, I think we may say, is the greatest single influence on the most populous country in the world. Also during this period in China there was Lao Tzu⁽¹⁶⁾, who according to tradition, though not according to modern scholarship, was an elder contemporary of Confucius. And in addition to these two resplendent figures, there was Meng-tzu¹⁷, Chuang-tzu¹⁸, and a host of lesser names, lesser only in comparison with the towering figures of Confucius and Lao-Tzu.

If we turn to India, we see the great galaxy of the Upanishadic¹⁹ sages, some of them unfortunately for us anonymous. Great sages like Yajnavalkya, who enunciated the great spiritual truths which are found in the Upanishads of Hinduism, especially the earlier Upanishads. Moving on a little we find the even greater, the even more brilliantly shining figure of Gautama The Buddha,²⁰ and we find also Mahavira,²¹ the founder of Jainism. The Buddha of course is the founder of the great world teaching that still bears his name, a teaching which has probably been a greater force for good in the world than any other.

If we come nearer home, to Persia, we find the eminent figure of Zoroaster²² or Zarathustra, the founder of what nowadays we know as Zoroastrianism or sometimes as Parseeism. This subsequently became the religion of the great Persian Empire, which at the height of its power and influence rivalled the empires of Rome and of China. Zoroastrianism also, we know, very importantly influenced all three semitic monotheisms; influenced Judaism²³ at the time of the Exilic²⁴ period especially, and through Judaism influenced Christianity and subsequently Islam²⁵.

If we look at a much smaller area, at Palestine, we find there the great figures of the Jewish Prophets, Amos,²⁶ Isaiah,²⁷ Jeremiah,²⁸ Isaiah II, and a number of others. These prophets enunciated sublime moral ideas which reappeared later in the teachings of Christ²⁹.

Then in Greece we find an absolutely extraordinary outburst of spiritual and artistic genius. In the world of philosophy we find the great figures of Socrates³⁰ and Plato³¹. I think Whitehead³² remarked that the whole of Western philosophy is just a series of footnotes to Plato. And Plato lived during this period as also did Aristotle³³. And we find in addition to these three, a whole host of what are called the Pre-Socratic philosophers who are of lesser importance only in comparison with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. In the field of poetry, we find Homer,³⁴ Pindar,³⁵ and in the poetic drama, tragedy, we find Aeschylus,³⁶ Sophocles³⁷, Euripides³⁸; and in sculpture we find people like Phidias,³⁹ Praxiteles;⁴⁰ as well as historians and scientists almost innumerable. So therefore ancient Greece, we may say, represents one of the most highly concentrated outbursts of especially philosophical and artistic creativity in the whole history of the human race, of mankind.

Now the names I have just mentioned, few and shining though they are, summarise perhaps three-quarters between them of all the higher culture of humanity. And they all appeared in that crucial 600-year period. And this period most correctly we term the Axial Age. Now the men whose names I've mentioned appeared in widely separated parts of the world, China, India, Palestine, Persia, Greece, elsewhere too, but they all have something in common, one great characteristic in common, they are all individuals, they all stand out from the mass. They are taller, as it were, than other men, they are all 'New Men'. They have all started to a greater or lesser degree on the process of the higher evolution of Man. So that the Axial Age is therefore the age of the emergence of the 'New Man'. And we are going to close this evening by studying some of the characteristics of that New Man.

But before doing this, I want to read Jaspers' general account or summary of the Axial Age, because this is quite a vivid, powerful piece of writing and not untypical of his style. I am going to read from *The Way to Wisdom*, starting at page 100:

The new element in this Age is that Man everywhere became aware of being as a whole, of himself and his limits. He experienced the horror of the world and his own helplessness. He raised radical questions, approached the abyss in his drive for liberation and redemption and in consciously apprehending his limits he set himself the highest aims. He experienced the Absolute in the depths of selfhood and in the clarity of transcendence. Conflicting possibilities were explored. Discussion, partisanship, intellectual schisms, though within a common frame of reference, gave rise to movement and unrest bordering on spiritual chaos. This era produced the basic categories in which we still think, and created the world's religions out of which men still live. The opinions, customs, conditions, which had hitherto enjoyed unconscious acceptance, came to be questioned. The world was thrown into turmoil. The mythical age with its peace of mind and self-evident truths, was ended. This was the beginning of the struggle, based on rationality

and empirical experience, against the myth of the battle against the demons for the transcendence of the one God. Ethical indignation waged war on false gods. Myths were transformed and infused with deep meaning in the very moment when the myth as such was destroyed. Man was no longer self-contained. He was uncertain of himself, hence open to new and boundless possibilities. For the first time, there were philosophers. Men dared to stand upon their own feet as individuals. Hermits and wandering thinkers in China, ascetics in India, philosophers in Greece, prophets in Israel, may be grouped together - greatly as they differ in faith, ideas and inner attitude. Man opposed his own inwardness to the whole world. He discovered in himself the primal source by virtue of which he might rise above himself and the world. And in that same age, Man gained awareness of history. It was an age of extraordinary beginnings; but men felt and knew that an infinite past had gone before. Even in this first awakening of the truly human spirit, Man was sustained by memory, he had consciousness of lateness, even of decadence. Men strove to plan and control the course of events, to restore desirable conditions or produce them for the first time. Thinkers speculated as to how men might best live together, as to how they might best be administered and governed. It was an age of reform and the sociological conditions of all three regions reveal analogies, innumerable petty states and cities, a struggle of all against all and yet at first an astonishing prosperity. But these centuries, in which so much happened, were not characterised by a simple, ascending development. There was destruction and creation at once. And there was no fulfilment. The supreme potentialities realised in individuals did not become a common heritage. What started out as freedom of movement became anarchy in the end. Once the era lost its creative impetus, ideas congealed into dogmas, and a levelling occurred in all three spheres. As the disorder grew intolerable, men sought new bonds and new stability. The end was first characterised by political developments: vast despotic empires arose almost simultaneously in China (Tsin, Shai, Quan-ti); in India, the Maurya dynasty⁴¹; in the West, the hedonistic empires and the Imperium Romanum. Everywhere systematic order and technical organisation emerged from the collapse.

Now, after that rather colourful account of the Axial Age, Jaspers goes on to point out that the spiritual life of Man is still oriented towards the Axial Age. Whether you are a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Christian, a Jew, a Humanist,⁴² an Agnostic,⁴³ you look back to it, you orient yourself towards the Axial Age. Jaspers also goes on to look into the future and he ventures to make a few predictions but here it is not possible for us to follow him.

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It's time, I think, that we got back to the 'New Man', got back to the type of man or rather species of man that started to emerge during the Axial Age, whose emergence indeed constitutes the Axial Age. Now the New Man, by very definition, is not the Old Man. The New Man differs, radically, from the Old Man; differs, that is to say, from primitive man, differs even from civilised man, that is to say from City Man from the Age of Divine Kingship and Agriculture. So in what way does he differ? What are the special characteristics, the special features, the special qualities of the New Man? We are going to conclude for this week by touching upon just four or five of these characteristics or qualities of the New Man. There is no time, I'm afraid, for a detailed discussion, but we shall be referring back to some of these characteristics in future lectures in the series.

The New Man, we may say, is distinguished from the Old Man

- by self-consciousness or awareness,
- by true individuality,
- by creativity,
- by the fact that he stands alone,
- by the fact that he is often unpopular.

Now first of all, *self consciousness or awareness*. Primitive man, man living in the forests, in caves, gathering food, lighting fires for the first time, primitive man is conscious but he is not self-conscious, he is not aware. He doesn't really reflect upon himself or reflect upon the world in which he finds himself. And the same applies to civilised man also, as such. But the New Man, on the contrary, is intensely, luminously aware. He is aware of himself. He feels, as it were, his own individual existence vibrating. He is aware of himself as sharply distinguished, sharply differentiated from the whole of the rest of nature. He is aware of his own uniqueness, of his own absolute unrepeatability, how in the course of ages, hundreds and millions of ages though there may be, there will never be anybody else like him. There is only one of him, he is unique, he is individual. He is also aware of the nature of existence as standing over against him, as Hegel would say, as something in a sense completely other, not himself, even though he has, in a sense, grown out of that nature, grown out of that objective existence. The New Man, too, is aware of other people, especially of those who, like himself, are not just parts of nature, not just material objects but who are themselves New Men. And above all, we may say, the New Man is aware of that mysterious, that very difficult to detect, that elusive thread of unity that runs through the whole of the vast fabric of things. That is to say, he is aware in varying degrees, in various ways, in varying measures, of Absolute Reality, of the Transcendent, of the One Mind itself. And because he is aware, aware in these various ways, the New Man knows what he is doing. He knows where he is going. He is not impelled, not driven, not dragged along by blind instinct. His behaviour is not reactive, not mechanical. He is spontaneous and he is free.

Secondly, *true individuality*. This characteristic, we may say, is closely connected with the previous one. It's on account of his awareness that the New Man is set apart from, not to say above, the mass. He is not merged or submerged in the group, in the species. He is an individual. He is himself. In a way, we may say, each New Man constitutes a distinct species. This characteristic of the New Man, that he is truly an individual, separate from the mass, is referred to in the Tibetan *Rosary of Precious Gems or Precepts of the Gurus*. This is a work divided into 28 sections or categories of yogic precepts; and section 16 gives the 10 signs of the superior man. The superior man, equals for all practical purposes, the New Man. And the 9th precept in this section says:

To differ from the multitudes in every thought and action is a sign of a superior man.

Not that the superior man goes out of his way to differ. He doesn't as it were say: 'Let me see how different I can be from everybody else'. That is the eccentric, not the New Man. But the New Man differs from others, differs from the multitude, simply by being himself. He doesn't even think about the multitude, doesn't even think about differing from them. Incidentally, we have to distinguish between true individuality and false. False individuality, we may say, is merely quantitative. It means that one who is only statistically an individual is able to assert himself on account of superior strength, superior power, i.e. material strength, material power. People like kings, presidents, politicians in general, the wealthy, and so on. Such individuals are merely the strongest members of the herd, but they are not different in kind from other members of the herd. True individuality is qualitative, consisting in the development of awareness and the other special characteristics of the New Man with which we are just now concerned.

Thirdly, *creativity*. The New Man is the creative man. Primitive man is not creative, he is not even productive, really. On the whole, primitive man is only reproductive. Civilised man is productive, that is to say he produces material things, produces food, clothing, ornaments, dwellings, even works of art - at least artefacts. The New Man, however, is creative, and his creativity is spiritual. That is to say the New Man produces things which, even when material in

form, possess a spiritual significance. It is the New Man who produces music, poetry, sculpture, paintings, philosophy, religion; and above all the New Man produces himself. The New Man creates himself. He is his own greatest work of art; and we see this especially in the case of the great spiritual teachers of humanity; men like Confucius, the Buddha, Socrates. In much later times we see it, perhaps on a diminished scale, in the case of the great poet, Goethe⁴⁴. Goethe's life, we may say, is his greatest poem because quite consciously, with awareness, he worked on his own life, his own character, his own personality, his own individuality, in the same way, in the same spirit, that he worked on some epic, or drama. This comes out very well in Goethe's *Conversation with Eckerman*. The same sort of idea is expressed by the modern French - I was going to say writer but he is very much more than that, Artaud,⁴⁵ in one of his Points, which I am going to read just a few verses (his language, by the way, is rather strong, I must warn you of this):

I hate and renounce as a coward every being who consents to having been created and does not wish to have recreated himself, i.e. who agrees with the idea of a God as the origin of his being, as of the origin of his thought.

I hate and renounce as a coward every being who agrees not to have been self-created and who consents to and recognises the idea of a matrix nature of the world as his already created body.

I do not consent to having not created my body myself and I hate and renounce as a coward every being who consents to live without first having recreated himself.

I hate and renounce as a coward every being who does not recognise that life is given to him only to recreate and reconstitute his entire body and organism.

Now we come on to *Aloneness*. To be alone or to be aware is to be an individual. To be an individual in the midst of people who are not individuals, is to be alone. To create, in the midst of people who merely produce or reproduce, is to be alone. The New Man, therefore, is characterised by aloneness. And he often feels this very intensely. And very often he doesn't know whether to be glad that he is alone or sorry. In a sense he is both glad and sorry together, at the same time. He is glad because as a New Man he experiences something he had never experienced before. But he is sorry because the greater the experience, the more difficult it is to share it with other people. The Buddha himself, we may say, no doubt experienced aloneness, especially during the period between leaving home at the age of 29 and gaining Enlightenment at the foot of the Bodhi Tree at the age of 35. Now this evening, I am going to do something which throughout our courses of lectures so far is, I think, unprecedented. I am going to read one of my own poems. It is a poem that was written many years ago, in India. And it deals with this question of aloneness and the compensations of aloneness. And it deals with the question in the context of the Life of the Buddha. And this poem expresses what I am trying to convey just now better than any prose. The poem is called *The Quest* (it is of course a poem about the Buddha):

*He could not find it with his wife and child,
Nor yet beneath dark-fronded forest boughs
Where peaceful hermits grazed their placid cows
Round quiet hermitage in pastures mild;
Something they lacked, though living undefiled
By aught sublunar; bright their anchorite brows
With prescience wreathed, and yet, for all their vows
That which He sought He found not in the wild.*

*Six years of penance till His eyes were dim,
And shrivelled skin clung round the brittle bone,
Wondering the Band of Five saw then befall:
He found it not with them, nor they with Him.
But when they left Him He fared on alone
And in that loneliness He found the All.*

Now fifthly and lastly, *unpopularity*. This is not really a characteristic of the New Man, it is just something he often experiences. The Buddha, as we can gather even from that poem, was not very popular with the band of five, who expected great things from him, thought you gained Enlightenment by self-torture, by asceticism, and when he gave up self-torture realising it was useless and started taking a few morsels of food they left him in disgust. So he became unpopular with them. And even after the Enlightenment we find that the Buddha was frequently criticised by all sorts of people. You might think that with someone who gains Enlightenment and starts teaching the Way to Enlightenment, they would be pleased and happy, but not at all, some people were most annoyed, most offended by this and the Buddha was not at all popular with them. It was lucky for the Buddha that the Indians on the whole are a rather tolerant people, rather more tolerant than we are in the West. So the Buddha was not actually killed, unpopular though he was in certain quarters. But Socrates *was* killed, was forced to drink hemlock. Confucius, another New Man, was chased from state to state, and on one occasion he almost died of starvation by the roadside, in a ditch. Zoroaster had to struggle, as the Buddha did, with the vested interests of entrenched hereditary priesthood. And as for the prophets of Israel, they were frequently stoned. And in modern times even, the comparatively harmless and innocent artist or writer is not always popular. In modern times, he has in fact been known to rouse the mob to a state of frenzy and fury.

However, this all brings us to the verge of next week's lecture when we shall be dealing with Art and the Spiritual Life. And in that lecture, we shall be having something to say about the New Man as artist - if you like, as artistic genius - as well as about the place apart in the spiritual life, in fact its place in the whole course of the higher evolution of man. But it is time to close for this week, and I hope that I have been able to give you some idea of the Axial Age, the period when the Higher Evolution of Man begins, the period of the emergence of the New Man.

Revised May 2002

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NOTES - Tape 76
(mostly taken from Collins English Dictionary)

1. **Jaspers**, Karl, 1883-1969, German existentialist philosopher.
2. **Mechanism**: the attempt to explain phenomena in mechanical terms. Compare **Dynamism** (any of several theories that attempt to explain phenomena in terms of an immanent force or energy) and **Vitalism**.
3. **Vitalism**: the doctrine that phenomena cannot be explained in purely mechanical terms because their existence depends upon a vital life-giving principle.
4. **Meta-** : prefix meaning transcending or going beyond.
5. **Eolith**: denoting, relating to or characteristic of the early part of the Stone Age, characterised by the use of crude stone tools.
6. **Palaeolithic**: the period of the emergence of primitive man and the manufacture of unpolished chipped stone tools, about 2.5 to 3 million years ago until about 12,000 BC.
(Lower Palaeolithic: the earliest of the 3 sections of the Palaeolithic, beginning about 3 million years ago and ending about 70,000 BC with the emergence of Neanderthal man. Middle Palaeolithic: the period between Lower and Upper Palaeolithic, usually taken as equivalent to the Mousterian, which was a culture characterised by flint flake tools and associated with Neanderthal man, found throughout Europe, North Africa and the Near East, dating from before 70,000 - 32,000 BC. Upper Palaeolithic: the latest of the 3 periods of the Palaeolithic, beginning about 40,000 BC and ending in Europe about 12,000 BC, characterised by the emergence of modern man, Homo Sapiens.)
7. **Promethean**: 1. of or relating to Prometheus; 2. creative, original or life-enhancing.
8. **Prometheus**: (*Greek Myth*), a Titan who stole fire from Olympus to give to mankind and in punishment was chained to a rock, where an eagle tore at his liver until Hercules freed him.
(Titan/Titaness: 1. Any of family of primordial gods, the sons and daughters of Uranus [sky] and Gaea [earth], his wife and mother; 2. any of the offspring of the children of Uranus and Gaea.)
(Mount Olympus: a mountain in NE Greece, on the border between Thessaly and Macedonia: the highest mountain in Greece, believed in Greek mythology to be the dwelling place of the greater gods. Also a poetic word for 'heaven'.)
(Hercules/Heracles/Herakles/Alcides: 1. (classical mythology), a hero noted for his great strength and courage and for the performance of 12 immense labours; 2. a man of outstanding strength or size.)
9. **Conterminous/co-terminous**: 1. enclosed within a common boundary; 2. meeting at the ends without a break or interruption.
10. **Neolithic**: the cultural period that lasted in SW Asia from about 9,000 to 6,000 BC, and in Europe from about 4,000 to 2,400 BC, and was characterised by primitive crop-growing and stock-rearing, and the use of polished stone and flint tools and weapons.
11. **Stone Age**: a period of human culture identified by the use of stone implements and usually divided into the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic stages.
(Mesolithic: the period between the Palaeolithic and Neolithic, in Europe from about 12,000 to 3,000 BC, characterised by the appearance of microliths, small hafted flint tools.)
12. **Bronze Age**: a technological stage between the Stone and Iron Ages, beginning in the Middle East about 4,000 BC and lasting in Britain from about 2,000 to 500 BC, during which weapons and tools were made of bronze and there was intensive trading.

13. **Iron Age:** the period following the Bronze Age, characterised by the extremely rapid spread of iron tools and weapons, which began in the Middle East about 1100 BC.
14. **Hegel,** Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 1770-1831, German philosopher who created a fundamentally influential system of thought. His view of man's mind as the highest expression of the Absolute is expounded in *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), and he developed his concept of dialectic in *Science of Logic* (1812-16).
15. **Confucius:** Chinese name K'ung Fu-Tze, 551-479 BC. Chinese philosopher and teacher of ethics. His doctrines were compiled after his death under the title *The Analects of Confucius*.
16. **Lao Tzu/lao Tze:** ?604-?531 BC, Chinese philosopher traditionally regarded as the founder of Taoism and the author of the *Tao-te Ching*.
17. **Meng-tzu** (Mencius): circa ?372-?289 BC; Chinese philosopher who propounded the ethical system of Confucius.
18. **Chuang Tzu,** circa 350-275 BC.
19. **Upanishad:** any of a class of the Sanskrit sacred books of Hinduism, probably composed between 400 and 200 BC, and embodying the mystical and esoteric doctrines of ancient Hindu philosophy.
20. **Gautama:** the Sanskrit form of the name assumed by Siddhartha, the future Buddha, when he became a monk.
21. **Vardhamana Mahavira:** Jainism comes from *jina* meaning the Victor, the title given to Mahavira; in the 6th to 5th centuries BC he was responsible for the reforming and dissemination of a religion believed to date from much more ancient times.

(**Jainism:** an ancient Hindu sect which has its own scriptures and believes that the material world is eternal, progressing endlessly in a series of vast cycles.)
22. **Zoroaster:** Avestan name Zarathustra, ?628-?551 BC. Persian prophet, founder of Zoroastrianism. (Avestan: oldest recorded language of the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family.)
23. **Judaism:** the religion of the Jews, based on the Old Testament and the Talmud, and having as its central point a belief in the one God as transcendent creator of all things and the source of all righteousness.
24. **Exilic:** of Exile (banishment from home or country).
25. **Islam:** the religion of Muslims, having the Koran as its sacred scripture and teaching that there is only one God and that Mohammed is his prophet.
26. **Amos:** a Hebrew prophet of the 8th century BC.
27. **Isaiah:** the first of the major Hebrew prophets, who lived in the 8th century BC.
28. **Jeremiah:** a major prophet of Judah from about 626-587 BC.
29. **Christ:** Jesus of Nazareth, regarded by Christians as fulfilling Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah.

30. **Socrates:** ?470-399 BC, Athenian philosopher, whose beliefs are known only through the writings of his pupils, Plato and Xenophon. He taught that virtue was based on knowledge, which was attained by a dialectical process that took into account many aspects of a stated hypothesis. He was indicted for impiety and corruption of youth (399) and was condemned to death. He refused to flee and died by drinking hemlock.

(Socratic irony: a means of exposing inconsistencies in a person's opinions by close questioning and the admission of one's own ignorance.)

(Socratic method: the method of instruction by question and answer used by Socrates in order to elicit from his pupils truths he considered to be implicitly known by all rational beings.)

31. **Plato:** ?427-?347 BC, Greek philosopher: with his teacher Socrates and his pupil Aristotle, he is regarded as the initiator of western philosophy. His influential theory of ideas, which makes a distinction between objects of sense perception and the universal ideas or forms of which they are an expression, is formulated in such dialogues as *the Phaedo*, *the Symposium* and *the Republic*. Other works include *the Apology* and *the Laws*.

(Platonism: 1. the teachings of Plato and his followers; 2. the philosophical theory that the meanings of general words are real existing abstract entities (forms) and describe particular objects, etc. by virtue of some relationship of these to the form. Compare Nominalism: the philosophical theory that the variety of objects to which a single general word, such as dog, applies have nothing in common but the name; Conceptualism: the philosophical theory that the application of general words to a variety of objects reflects the existence of some mental entity through which the application is mediated; Intuitionism: the theory that general terms are used of a variety of objects in accordance with perceived similarities.)

32. **Whitehead**, Alfred North, 1861-1947. English mathematician and philosopher, who collaborated with Bertrand Russell in writing *Principia Mathematica* (1910-13).

33. **Aristotle:** 384-322 BC. Greek philosopher; pupil of Plato, tutor of Alexander the Great, and founder of the Peripatetic school at Athens; author of works on logic, ethics, politics, poetics, rhetoric, biology, zoology, and metaphysics. His works influenced Muslim philosophy and science and medieval scholastic philosophy.

34. **Homer:** circa 800 BC. Greek poet to whom are attributed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Almost nothing is known of him, but it is thought that he was born on the island of Chios and was blind.

35. **Pindar:** ?518-?438 BC. Greek lyric poet, noted for his *Epinikia*, odes commemorating victories in the Greek games.

35. **Sophocles:** ?496-406 BC. Greek dramatist; author of seven extant tragedies: *Ajax*, *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*, *Trachiniae*, *Electra*, *Philoctetes* and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

36. **Aeschylus:** ?525-?456 BC; Greek dramatist, regarded as the father of Greek tragedy. Seven of his plays are extant, including *Seven Against Thebes*, *Prometheus Bound*, and the trilogy of the *Oresteia*.

37. **Euripides:** ?480-?406 BC. Greek tragic dramatist. His plays, 18 of which are extant, include *Alcestis*, *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Hecuba*, *The Trojan Women*, *Electra*, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, *Iphigeneia in Aulis* and *The Bacchae*.

39. **Phidias:** 500-432 BC, Athenian sculptor, (in Greek, *Pheidias*)

40. **Praxiteles:** 4th-century BC Greek sculptor; his works include statues of Hermes at Olympia, which survives, and of Aphrodite at Cnidus.

41. **Maurya Dynasty:** circa 321 - circa 185 BC. It united most of the Indian subcontinent and presided over a great flowering of Indian civilisation.

42. **Humanism**: school of philosophy that believes in human effort and ingenuity rather than religion.

43. **Agnostic**: person who holds that only material phenomena can be known and knowledge of a Supreme Being, ultimate cause, etc. is impossible.

44. **Goethe**, Johann Wolfgang von, 1749-1832, German poet, novelist and dramatist, who settled in Weimar in 1775. His early works of the *Sturm und Drang* period include the play *Gotz von Berlichingen* (1773) and the novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). After a journey to Italy (1786-88) his writings, such as the epic play *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1787) and the epic idyll *Hermann und Dorothea* (1797), showed the influence of classicism. Other works include the *Wilhelm Meister* novels (1796-1829) and his greatest masterpiece *Faust* (1808; 1832).

45. **Artaud**, Antonin, 1896-1948, French stage director and dramatist, whose concept of the theatre of cruelty is expounded in *Manifeste du théâtre de la cruauté* (1932) and *Le Théâtre et son double* (1938).

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