

COURSE SYNTHESIS NO. 45

CONDITIONS FOR ENTERING THE FOURTH WAY

These conditions are absolute. Whether they are internal or external, passive or dynamic, the failure to respect them prevents one from entering the Fourth Way.

Knowing one's possibilities. This is a dynamic condition. It is related to the notion of self-knowledge. To acquire this knowledge, personal work and an exchange with other people or the instructor are necessary. This condition is accessible to everybody.

Understanding one's own difficulties, also a dynamic condition. To fulfil this condition, we not only need to recognise our difficulties, but to accept them as well. And for this all we need is a bit of will and intelligence.

Having a real desire to change one's current state. This condition is already somewhat more difficult. Before we can fulfil it, we need to know our current state, our current level, and have the will to attain a higher level. To do so we need to change, but not simply what we feel like changing. On the one hand, we are not conscious at first of the most important things that need to be changed, and on the other, we need to change precisely what is most difficult to change.

Having a certain level of knowledge and cultivation. This can be acquired simply by being present at the School regularly, where the necessary knowledge is transmitted.

Understanding the Teaching. To understand the Teaching, we need to be motivated and set aside a sufficient amount of time for study, alone and with other people. It is necessary to know and understand the basic notions, if only in order to speak the same language, but also to carry them within ourselves, to have them constantly present to our mind. Studying with other people is conducive to the acquisition of living knowledge.

Having enough time at our disposal for study. The amount of time necessary varies according to the speed with which we learn.

Living in an environment in which study is possible. When efforts of study are rendered impossible by an unfavorable or hostile environment, even when we have a strong desire to progress, it is impossible for us to be engaged on the Fourth Way.

Leading a more or less regulated life. In order to be able to progress, it is necessary to introduce a rhythm into our life. This rhythm creates a structure and becomes a veritable aid. Nothing creative can be accomplished from a state of chaos.

Having a sufficient amount of freedom. Externally, this means there must not be any insurmountable constraints preventing one from studying or attending the courses – for example a spouse who does not allow one to come to the courses, or being unable to find someone to take care of one's young children during the courses.

Innerly, it is necessary to progressively acquire, through work on oneself and with other people, non-attachment with respect to the Teaching, its external forms, or the person who transmits the Teaching. The important thing is the spirit, everything else, the books, for example, or the person who transmits the Teaching, is just the vessel.

Not comparing oneself to other people in the work. We all have different possibilities according to our life experience and karma. Each person has a different path to travel. This path is intended to lead us to ourselves. When someone compares himself to someone else, he is no longer acting according to who he is, according to his own needs, and he thereby loses his freedom. When we do what we have to do, in our own Work, we haven't got the time to worry about the Work that other people are doing. This does not mean that we do not work with other people, but the moment comparison enters in, we introduce a negative element, such as frustration, jealousy, a feeling of inferiority or superiority, or guilt.

Abandoning all personal desire. This is not in relation to everyday life, but to Work at the School. On the Path, we learn to work against our egoistic will. This means doing the Work not because we like it, but because it is necessary, which does not mean that we need to stop doing what we enjoy doing, or what we are good at doing. But it is the higher goal that we have set for ourselves that is most important. This is a difficult condition, and it needs to be applied with much common sense.

Finally, it is necessary to be active in the Work on oneself, with other people, and for the School.

If we want to enter the Fourth Way, we need to become aware of these rules and, once we have understood the spirit that is behind them, to follow them. This means that we decide to apply them, and accept when the Instructor signals to us our lapses, as a reminder, without making compromises for our touchiness or reactivity.

If someone does not respect these rules at the School, he places himself outside of the inner or outer conditions that are necessary for progress, and accordingly outside of the Fourth Way, since these conditions are a "technical" necessity, as it were, and not of a moral nature.