

COURSE SYNTHESIS NO. 15

THE ENERGIES AND MAN

Man takes himself to be a unity, whereas he is actually composed of three systems, physical, emotional, and intellectual, which are relatively autonomous and often in contradiction with each other. It is thus possible to think in a certain way but to do the exact opposite, in other words to be incapable of acting according to how we think it is right to act.

These systems are able to function very well in spite of the contradictions due to buffers, which serve to mask our contradictions, and to justifications, which permit us to do the opposite of what we know to be right.

These three systems are a mechanism in us, and we need to have observed this mechanism in order to have access to a higher dimension through the awakening of our higher centers. Then each time we are able to activate our centers voluntarily, we stop being mechanical.

Like everything that exists in the universe, man requires energy in order to function, and he receives this energy through the three foods that he takes in, transforms, and assimilates: ordinary food through his digestive tract, air through his lungs, and impressions through his sense organs. Without these three foods, he cannot live.

In the ray of creation, which extends symbolically from the moon to the Absolute, there is at each level a material space and a spiritual space occupied by spiritual entities. Man is situated on the earth, where he forms part of the biosphere along with the plants and animals. The biosphere is an interface between the mineral world and the higher worlds. Insofar as he is a component of the biosphere, man participates in organic life, producing energy through his birth, growth, suffering, aging, and death. In contrast to the plants and animals, he has the possibility, if he so decides, of going beyond the material sphere and of participating, through his engagement on a spiritual path, in a spiritual sphere. In the place where he is situated in the ray of creation, he has the choice between merging himself with the material sphere (and returning to dust) and raising himself toward the spirit.

He has the choice between dying like the animals (“dying like a dog,” to use Gurdjieff’s words), or detaching himself from this cycle of birth, life, suffering, and death, and becoming an individualised entity, through an inner path – since in every human being there exists an element that is not of an earthly, but of a higher, solar, divine nature.

To each level of the ray of creation there correspond material substances and specific energies called hydrogens. Man has a relationship with the hydrogens of the earth and of the planets.

At the level of the earth we have the mineral world H 3072, wood H 1536, solid food H 768, and liquids H 384. At the level of the planets there is air H 192 and the etheric force or prana H 96. Below the earth there is the world of sub-matter, which is even denser than the mineral world. The further we elevate ourselves in the ray of creation, the subtler the energies become.

The hydrogens are the constituents of each of the three foods and have a particular affinity for one of the centers: food H 768 for the physical body, air H 192 for the emotional center, and impressions H 48 for the intellectual center.

We saw earlier that each food must undergo a transformation in order for it to be assimilated; when this is not the case, it becomes a poison.

This transformation takes place according to the law of the octave. For the food we eat, transformation is a nearly automatic process; the food is transformed at each stage, producing hydrogens.

At the physical stage, DO, the food enters us in solid form H 768 and subsequently becomes liquid at RE, H 384. At the emotional stage MI, it enters the bloodstream and joins to air H 192, and then at FA it liberates its vital or etheric force H 96. At the intellectual stage SOL, it is transformed into H 48, the hydrogen of thought. At the stage LA it redescends to the emotional stage H 24. At SI it returns to the physical stage. Of the food, nothing remains but H 12, pure vital energy.

When we eat, we are not only nourishing our physical body, but exercising an action upon our thoughts and emotional life as well. This is why spiritual teachings place such emphasis on the importance of a healthy diet.

The food octave arrives at its conclusion naturally, and it requires no help. Thanks to this natural functioning, the different centers automatically receive energy, which at least ensures their mechanical functioning.

The transformation of impressions, however, is not automatic. An enormous quantity of unconscious impressions enter us, whereas we have very few conscious impressions.

Now the only way to assimilate an impression is by being conscious of it; otherwise it is not transformed and becomes instead a poison.

Impressions enter through the intellectual sphere, and this poisoning can be seen in the endless mechanical thoughts that inhabit us; these mechanical thoughts are the waste products of undigested unconscious impressions. This elimination of waste products continues during the night in the form of dreams.

The means of stopping this constant internal chatter does not consist in telling it to “stop,” since then another thought in another place arises immediately, but in becoming conscious of our impressions. Then there are less waste products, fewer superfluous thoughts, and we begin to have a certain control over our intellectual center.

The food of impressions can provide us with a much subtler energy than the food we eat, capable of nourishing not only our lower centers but our higher centers as well. If we are not conscious of our impressions, it is absolutely impossible to develop our higher centers.

This is the reason why this teaching insists so much upon all the practices that render our impressions conscious, such as meditation, self-observation, and self-remembering. Without these practices, ordinary life is possible, but there can be no spiritual evolution since the necessary food and energy are lacking.