

## COURSE SYNTHESIS NO. 17

### THE FOOD OCTAVE

In the descending octave of the ray of creation, between the planets and the earth, we saw that man occupies a very particular place, since it is thanks to him that the subtle energies from above are able to bridge the interval of the octave, thus completing it and penetrating all the way down to the very densest matter.

Man can restrict himself to serving this passive role of producer of energy for the ray of creation. He can also decide to produce energy for his own evolution, transforming his material nature into a much subtler, spiritual nature. For this he needs energy, and he must find this energy in the three foods he has at his disposal, the food he eats, air, and impressions. He must transform these foods in order to transform himself. The person who decides to transform himself ascends, as it were, the octave of creation. He is the only creature capable of such an evolution.

We are going to examine more deeply one of the processes of transformation we have already spoken about: the transformation of the food we eat, the octave of the transformation of food. The solid food enters us. It then passes through all the stages of the octave until it reaches the culmination of its possible transformation, liberating all the energies required by man in order to function physically, emotionally, and intellectually, provided the food is healthy and the transformation takes place correctly.

Food enters man in solid form, which we have called hydrogen 768. Once it has entered him, it enters the first stage, DO, of its transformation: H 768 becomes DO 768.

The second stage, RE 384, is the transition to the liquid stage.

After it has been chewed, the food is mixed with the saliva produced by the salivary glands. The food, which is still partially solid, subsequently descends to the stomach, where the gastric juices mix with it, followed by the pancreatic and biliary juices in the intestines. The food is gradually reduced to a quasi-liquid form, H 384. It can then pass through the intestinal walls, to be carried throughout the rest of the body by two liquids, the blood and the lymph, which transport it to all of the organism's cells.

The third stage then follows: MI 192, the contact with air.

The food in its liquid state enters the median part of the body, the rhythmic and emotional part, the seat of breathing. Here the air breathed in enters into contact with the transformed food in the blood.

At the fourth stage, FA 96, the transformed food liberates its own forces of life, which then join to the etheric element present in the air and in man himself, resulting in the transmission of vital force. The etheric force is situated between the material energies (solid, liquid, and gas) and the more subtle, spiritual or psychic energies. This etheric force (which is also called vitality) structures us innerly, but also protects us from both physical and psychic illness. This stage of the transformation of food thus has a great importance for our health.

Vital energy, FA 96, is formed at the median level, the level of emotions and feelings. The latter sometimes interfere very considerably with the formation of FA 96, perturbing the production of vital energy and provoking certain illnesses, or in any case preventing a sufficient amount of vital energy from being extracted from the food we have eaten.

It is well known that worries cause us to lose our appetite and disturb our digestion. A healthy diet alone is thus not sufficient; we also need to cultivate healthy emotions.

Etheric or vital energy, FA 96, can also be absorbed from someone positive, for example, with whom we have passed a few moments. We feel better afterwards since we have absorbed energy from the person, particularly through the force contained in “positively-charged” words. The opposite effect may also take place: certain people are capable of draining you of your vital energy, of vampirising you, as it were.

The fifth stage, SOL 48, is to be found at the level of the lower intellectual center.

H 48 is the first psychic energy in man, and he uses it to think, but this kind of thought arises from the physical part of his lower intellectual center, from what is termed the formatory apparatus.

If, during the course of the preceding stage, FA 96 has been used for all kinds of negative emotions, or if the food has not been correctly transformed into FA 96, there will be very little energy available for passing on to the following stages, and thus for thinking clearly and correctly and for concentrating.

Thus the lack of energy in our thought derives not from a mistake in our diet, but from a disfunctioning in the transformation of energy at the median level due to our negative emotions. The energy is simply lacking in order for us to concentrate and be attentive. Our faculty of attention, our memory, everything that is connected to our intellectual center is lacking energy.

In the sixth stage, LA 24, the specific energy of the lower emotional center is produced.

If the energy reaches the intellectual center in the form of SOL 48, the octave continues automatically, producing LA 24.

Intellectually, ordinary man functions exclusively in his lower intellectual center. LA 24 will thus be used in the positive part of the lower emotional center.

It often happens that there is little LA 24 energy available, and since the emotional center is lacking energy, it is going to seek an energy elsewhere that is inappropriate to it.

Energy is not only going to be lacking at the emotional level, but it is going to be lacking for the following stage as well.

The seventh stage, SI 12, provides the energy of the sexual center, another form of vital energy.

If the energy extracted from food reaches the sexual center in a very small quantity, and furthermore, in a deteriorated form in which it cannot be used correctly, the sexual center is also going to be obliged to seek an energy somewhere else that is inappropriate to it. This explains the phenomenon that most people function poorly in the sexual domain or have problems relating to sexuality. This also explains why the teaching places such emphasis on the problem of negative emotions: they are a waste of energy which, because of them, is going to be lacking in other places, and particularly for our evolution.

We have now reached the culmination of the octave of the assimilation of food.

The solid food has been transformed into the subtlest energy it is capable of producing in man, SI 12, and if all goes well, there is a sufficient amount of energy at all levels – physical, emotional, intellectual, and sexual.

When the assimilation has not taken place correctly, there will be disfunctioning at all levels.

There is also disfunctioning when the energies are not used correctly. When someone thinks or studies excessively, he uses up so much H 48 that none of it remains for the following stage. The result is a cold intellectual. This is the criticism non-intellectuals often make of intellectuals: they have no heart and not very much vitality in the sexual domain.

In someone who does not like to think, too much unused H 48 is going to remain in his intellectual center. This excess of H 48 will then act as a poison, affecting the emotional and sexual centers and resulting in excessive reactivity or violence, for example.

Another important factor is the quality of our food. When the food we eat is degraded (frozen products, canned foods, additives, preservatives, chemically treated foods), we have already introduced elements at the outset that are not adapted to our body and that are going to prevent the food from being correctly transformed.

In order for the transformation to take place as well as possible, it is essential to eat correctly, in other words – when possible – a diet on an organic or bio-dynamic basis, as these foods still contain considerable force of life and fewer toxic substances, and to eat as little canned or frozen and chemically treated foods as possible. Rudolf Steiner said that the people of today are no longer capable of evolving spiritually because there are not enough forces in the food they eat. Food has an effect not only on our physical organism, but on our psychological state and thoughts as well. Thus the importance of improving our diet.

In addition, the air also plays an important role in the food octave. Air joins to food in the median part of the body. In order for the octave to pursue its normal course, it is thus indispensable to breathe good air, to breathe better, and to prevent the correct functioning of the digestive system. Our efforts on negative emotions are thus not simply moral efforts, but have effects on the physical domain that allow us to benefit more from the food practice respiratory exercises and abdominal respiration.

Finally, negative emotions we eat.

Conversely, food consisting of degraded elements has an influence on our emotions and is particularly conducive to negative emotions, in addition to preventing us from thinking clearly. We cannot truly evolve on a spiritual path if we eat too much or too poorly.

At some point we have to realise that everything is connected and understand that we have to make some essential choices; our diet is one of the most important of these choices.