

COURSE SYNTHESIS NO. 42

THE TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE OVER THE AGES THE SCHOOLS OF WISDOM

The type of knowledge transmitted here does not originate in ordinary human thought, but in what is called the higher Spirit. This is the essential characteristic of this Teaching, the history of which we are going to briefly outline.

The religions teach that man has lost his connection with the spiritual world and finds himself stranded on earth, as it were, separated from God. In his mercy, God sent Guides to men in order to teach them how to rediscover the knowledge of the spiritual world as well as the means of reaching it.

These Guides chose certain men and women, teaching them this knowledge in Schools – Schools of Wisdom, Mystery Schools, Initiatic Centers, and so on. These men and women subsequently became Initiates, Great Initiates, and Boddhisattvas who, with the help of the Guides, began to introduce impulses originating in the higher Spirit into humanity.

The Schools have taken on different forms over the ages, but they are nonetheless all connected through their common source, which is called the Fourth Way in esotericism. Higher knowledge is only taught in Schools, which is the reason why it is only possible to evolve by being connected to one of these Schools. An isolated human being is only capable of accumulating earthly knowledge, as great as this knowledge may be. Alone the union of human knowledge and spiritual Knowledge makes evolution toward the Absolute possible. This union is symbolised in such mythical couples as Cain and Sophia, Hiram and Balkis, and John and Mary.

A School is thus a place where one acquires new knowledge but also – and this is most important – where one learns, through the knowledge one has acquired, to raise one's being, since this transformation of being is much more difficult than the mere acquisition of knowledge.

As each person has a different level of being and can only evolve according to his own rhythm, several types of teaching are simultaneously present in a School:

- A Teaching for men nos. 1, 2, or 3:
This Teaching is based on the transmission of knowledge and the explanation of certain rules of life, thought, and practice. Each person is free, and only those people who so desire may become men no. 4. The others will have at least received an impulsion that will permit them to progress in another life. A regular contact with the master is necessary.
- A Teaching for men no. 4:
In this Teaching, knowledge is acquired in greater depth, but it is principally based on the work of transformation of being. Even if the inner transformation remains for a long time incomplete, the pupil is asked to incarnate his ideal outwardly, by adopting noble attitudes and by no longer manifesting his negative emotions. There must be a very frequent – almost daily – contact with the master, but the work with other pupils (nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4) is also of very great importance.
- In certain cases, there is a transmission for men no. 5, in order to permit them to become Great Initiates or men no. 6.

One of the roles of humanity is to produce a certain type of energy for the process of evolution as a whole. The Schools participate in this production of energy, and all the energy that is not produced must be compensated somewhere.

One of the rules in the Schools is that everything one receives must be paid for in one form or another. The best way to pay is by participating in the production of this energy through one's efforts to acquire knowledge, but above all through one's efforts to transform one's being.

The second way to pay – which only concerns man no. 4 – is to remain silent. He only speaks of the Teaching deliberately and consciously – always seriously, but most importantly, only with people who are capable of receiving it correctly.

Concerning rules: many rules are applied in Schools. Each rule is applied individually, and it must never be practiced, in any case, if it goes against a person's profound nature. Normally, a rule should only be applied when it has been understood beforehand, but it is important to realise that each rule has its own significance, and that it is usually a means for awakening to oneself more rapidly. The results obtained in the progression of one's being will be greater when one follows the rules one has understood, and when one makes efforts toward the work of inner transformation.

Let us recall a few of the basic notions on a spiritual path:

One of the essential characteristics of man no. 4 is that he no longer manifests his negative emotions, since he has understood their inherent abnormality. Even if he may continue to have such emotions inside himself, he does not express them outwardly.

Man is an incompletely developed being, but if he makes certain efforts, he is capable of raising himself above this level of incomplete evolution. He carries perfection within himself as a seed, but this seed cannot develop on its own. Man must make efforts, and he needs help, from Schools and from the people who are on the Path together with him.

Not all people can evolve. The first reason is that most people have no desire to evolve and think they are just fine as they are. Another reason is that knowledge is available in a limited quantity that cannot be distributed to everyone.

As evolution is only possible when we make efforts, we can only raise our level of being when we are ready to sacrifice something. Expressed differently, we can only receive to the extent that we are capable of giving.

Man does not know himself. He lives submerged in a form of unconsciousness, like a programmed machine. He is divided into many "I's". Self-observation and the practice of meditation permit him to gradually become aware of this state.

He must at the same time struggle against:

- all forms of lying, to himself and to other people,
- his tendency to daydream, unless it results in artistic creation,
- all forms of negative emotions, starting by not manifesting them,
- his tendency to talk uselessly,
- identification, the process in which everything that is happening around him takes possession of him,
- and his worries about other people's opinion – what they may think of him.

And finally, three lines of work are necessary:

- work on oneself,
- work with other people,
- and work for the existence of the School.