

Gnostic Psychology – Notes 03

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The Work upon Oneself: Knowing Our Mechanics

As we have said, the purpose of Gnosis and Gnostic Psychology is **to transform ourselves**. To do this, we must first recognize what we are, and then we can begin to change. If I want to work on a car, but I do not look at it or understand what I am working with, then the changes I want to make could either be impossible (because the structure I want to change does not exist in the way I expect it to) or I will make changes that will have undesirable effects (because the change affects the vehicle in a different way than what I had wished for). Therefore we cannot assume anything about ourselves. Instead, we must begin by observing ourselves (as we have already said) without any kind of prejudices – simply observing and gathering information. In this way we can discover what we truly are and how we really work.

Observing Ourselves and Our Interior World

Self-observation requires that we look inside to see what we are thinking, feeling, or sensing, etc., in a given moment. Because of our current mentality, this can be difficult at first, for two specific reasons: 1) we are taught that we *are* our thoughts, feelings, sensations, etc. (vs. I *have* a thought, etc.) and 2) because we believe those thoughts, feelings and sensations occur only because of outside stimuli, (ie, “*they made me feel bad...*”). We have a huge problem with our present culture, we think that someone else make us “feel” in some way. On top of that, we try to avoid negative feelings and don’t want positive feelings to go away. So we spend our lives chasing positive feelings or avoiding negative feelings, and that we think come from the outside.

One of the foundational principles of Gnostic Psychology is that our thoughts feelings and actions come from inside, from ourselves. Outside stimuli (External Events) only activate or shed light upon thoughts, feelings and sensations we already have within. When someone else supposedly “makes me feel bad” what has actually happened is that they have brought attention to something that *I* am uncomfortable with. But, why does it bother me, offend me, or make me feel a certain way? And the reverse is also important: why do certain things make me happy, excited, nervous or relieved? These are the kinds of things we need to ask ourselves in order to discover **how we really work**. We have many mistaken concepts about ourselves and about the world around. We need to question everything, so that we can discover the truth for ourselves.

Fundamental Concepts about the Human Machine

According to Gnostic Psychology, we can say that there are some main ideas we should understand about the “Organic Machine”:

1. **The human being’s physical organism is a Machine** or Factory that is able to transform ‘matter’ or ‘energy’ from one type into another (digestion, breathing, etc).
2. **The human being has three “Brains”** which are the synthesis of 7 “centers”
 - 1st Brain: Intellectual, the Superior and Inferior Thinking (2 centers)
 - 2nd Brain: Emotional, the Superior and Inferior Feeling (2 centers)
 - 3rd Brain: Action or Motor-Instinctive-Sexual, Movement and Sensation (3 centers)
3. **The human being is born pre-disposed to excelling in one of these Brains** (we are all born either as a Motor, Emotional or Intellectual type of person).
4. **The Superior Emotional and Superior Intellectual centers do not function properly** (generally, they do not receive the proper nourishment in order to be developed)

Self-Observation and the Functions of the Human Machine

Starting with the concept that the human being processes things through the three Brains, we can begin to understand how to observe ourselves. Self-Observation requires that we separate ourselves from what we think, feel, sense, etc. **We become the observer and our thoughts, feelings, sensations, etc., are the observed.** This is very similar to the Buddhist concept of Mindfulness: being aware of our psychological state. As we begin to observe ourselves, we will start to see that we have: a thought in the Intellectual Brain, or a feeling in the Emotional Brain, or a movement or sensation in the Motor-Instinctive-Sexual Brain, etc. At first we simply see that we have an opinion, a belief, a feeling, sensation, etc. Later we can see how that concept, opinion, belief, feeling, or sensation leads us into certain activities and behaviors. When we understand this connection, then it becomes much easier to control ourselves. But, when we do not observe ourselves (when we forget about ourselves), then we easily become fascinated by the world around us (external events) and by our psychological states (internal states). And as long as we do this, then we are doomed to be someone who moves through life like driftwood on the waves of the ocean.

Psychology, Self-Study and the Consciousness

With the right methods and the right efforts the human being can acquire control of the consciousness, and can become conscious of themselves, with all that it implies. Only after this point has been understood does serious study of psychology become possible. This study must begin with the investigation of obstacles to awakening consciousness in ourselves, because consciousness can only begin to grow when at least some of these obstacles are removed. The greatest of these obstacles is *our ignorance of ourselves*, and our wrong conviction that we know ourselves (at least to a certain extent) and can be sure of ourselves, when in reality we do not know ourselves at all and cannot be sure of ourselves even in the *smallest things*.

We must understand now that psychology really means self-study. One cannot study psychology as one can study astronomy; that is, it cannot be studied apart from oneself. And at the same time one must study oneself as one studies any new and complicated machine. One must know: the parts of this machine, its chief functions, the conditions of right work, the causes of wrong work, and many other things which are difficult to describe without using a special language, which is also necessary to know and understand in order to be able to study the machine.

Self-Study and the Three Brains

Gnostic Psychology teaches that there are three distinct psychological aspects in each person, one corresponding to each Brain. With one part of the psychic essence we wish for one thing, with another part we desire something quite different, and thanks to the third part we do a completely opposite thing. In a moment of supreme sorrow, perhaps due to the loss of a loved one or any other intimate catastrophe, such as a car accident: (1) the emotional personality is in desperation, (2) while the intellectual personality wants to know the reason why such a tragedy is taking place, (3) and the action or movement personality just wants to escape the scene.

These three different and often contradictory personalities must be intelligently cultivated and instructed by means of special methods and systems. Gnostic Psychology affirms that one can awaken consciousness and make it continuous and controllable, through a special kind of effort. Through a **great effort** we may become conscious of ourselves for a few minutes. Normally people are not conscious of themselves. The illusion of being conscious (in a continuous form) comes from: memory and from all the processes of thought. To remember unconscious actions is not the same as being Conscious. A person who practices a retrospective exercise in order to remember their whole life, may recall: how many times they got married, how many children they engendered, who their parents were, who their teachers were, etc. But this does not mean they have awakened their Consciousness, this is simply remembering unconscious acts, and that is all.