

Gnostic Psychology – Notes 07

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Activating the Essence and Making the Personality Passive (Part 2)

The development of the essence depends on the work upon oneself; the personality must become passive and essence must become active. This can happen only if 'buffers' are removed or weakened, because 'buffers' are the chief weapon with which personality holds essence in subjection. For inner growth, for the work upon oneself, a certain development of personality as well as a certain strength of essence are necessary.

Personality consists of 'rolls', and of 'buffers' resulting from a certain work of the centers. An insufficiently developed personality means a lack of 'rolls', that is, a lack of knowledge, a lack of information, a lack of the material on which the work upon oneself must be based. Without some store of knowledge, without a certain amount of material that is 'not one's own', a person cannot begin to work on themselves, to study themselves, to struggle with their mechanical habits, simply because there will be no reason or motive for undertaking such work.

The 'Rolls' of Memory: Impressions and Associations

What is our memory? In order to understand this, we must learn to regard each center of the human organism (the intellectual, emotional, motor, instinctive and sexual) as a separate and independent machine, consisting of a sensitive matter similar to a mass of photographic rolls or a very special roll of "film" or recording material. All that happens to us, all that we see, hear, feel, learn, etc., is registered on these rolls. This means that **all external events and internal states leave certain "impressions" on the rolls.** "Impressions" is a very good word because they actually are impressions or imprints left within ourselves.

An impression can be deep, or it can be very slight, or it can be simply a glancing impression that disappears very quickly and leaves no trace after it. But whether deep or slight they are, nonetheless, still impressions. And these impressions on the rolls are all that we have, they are all our possessions. Everything that we know, everything that we have learned, everything that we have experienced is all there on the 'rolls' of our memory. Exactly in the same way all our thought processes, calculations, speculations, etc., consist only of comparing the inscriptions on rolls, reading them again and again, trying to understand them by putting them together, and so on. We can think of nothing new, nothing that is not already on our rolls. We can neither say nor do anything that does not correspond to some inscription on the rolls.

Inscriptions or impressions on these 'rolls' are connected by associations. **Associations connect impressions that are either received simultaneously or in some way similar to one another.** It is quite clear that different simultaneous impressions connected together will remain longer in memory than unconnected impressions. All impressions of a moment of an external event are connected and remain connected in the memory; the same is true for impressions connected by their inner similarity.

If one is more conscious in the moment of receiving impressions, one connects the new impressions more definitely with similar old impressions and they remain connected in memory. On the other hand if one receives impressions in a state of identification, one simply does not notice them, and their traces disappear before they can be consciously appreciated or associated. **In the state of identification one cannot separate oneself from things or feelings or memories, and one is shut off from the real world...**

The Wrong Working of the Centers and 'Buffers'

The human organism that we have is exploited by the false personality in order to accomplish its egoic goals. As a result, our organism has many problems, the most obvious of which are the physical diseases which are the result of mistaken psychological states. **Mistaken psychological states are made possible through the wrong working of the centers. Instead of the Essence being able to use a given center, we are accustomed to letting the personality (which is at the service of whatever Ego is controlling it) use the centers.** This has caused the centers to become accustomed to functioning in a way that is not only inefficient, but also terribly problematic.

Due to the wrong working of the centers, we spend hours, days, weeks, months or years feeling negative emotions, or worrying about some external event (that may never even happen), or fighting for a certain political affiliation, etc. Our centers work so improperly that in some places artificial appliances have been formed in order to cope with this wrong working. These artificial appliances will now interfere very much with all our good intentions and they are called 'buffers'.

Buffers on railway carriages are like bumpers on automobiles. They are the devices which lessen the shock when cars or trucks strike one another. If there were no buffers, then the shock of one car against another would be very unpleasant and dangerous. **Buffers soften the results of these shocks** and render them unnoticeable and imperceptible (or, at the very least, negligible).

Exactly the same appliances are to be found within the human being. They are created, not by nature, but by the human being themselves (although involuntarily). The cause of their appearance is the existence in a person of many contradictions: contradictory opinions, feelings, sympathies, words, and actions. If a person throughout the whole of their life were to feel all the contradictions that are within them, then they could not live and act as calmly as they live and act now. They would have constant friction, constant unrest. We fail to see how contradictory and hostile the different "I's" of our personality are to one another.

If a person were to feel all these contradictions then they would feel what *he really are*. They would feel that they are crazy. It is not pleasant for anyone to feel that they are crazy. Moreover, a thought such as this deprives a person of self-confidence, weakens their energy, and deprives them of 'self-respect'. Somehow or other one must master this thought or banish it. One must either destroy contradictions or cease to see and to feel them. **A person cannot destroy contradictions, but if 'buffers' are created in us, then we can cease to feel the contradictions** and then we will not feel the impact from the clash of contradictory views, emotions, words, etc.

'Buffers' are created slowly and gradually. Many 'buffers' are created artificially through 'education'. Others are created under the hypnotic influence of one's surrounding life. A person is surrounded by people who live, speak, think, and feel by means of 'buffers'. Imitating them in their opinions, actions, and words, a person involuntarily creates similar 'buffers' in him or herself.

'Buffers' make a person's life easier. It is very hard to live without 'buffers'. **But they keep a person from the possibility of inner development because 'buffers' are made to lessen shocks and it is only shocks that can lead a person out of the state (or level of being) in which he or she lives**, that is: only with shocks can one awaken. 'Buffers' lull a person to sleep, they give us the agreeable and peaceful sensation that all will be well, that no contradictions exist and that we can sleep in peace. 'Buffers' are appliances by means of which a person can always be *in the right*. If we do not consider the possibility that we might not be *in the right* (by questioning ourselves and the foundations of our ways of thinking, feeling and acting), then we will never recognize our own inner contradictions. 'Buffers' help a person not to feel the Consciousness and therefore keep us 'asleep' psychologically. Sleep is very comfortable, and awakening is very bitter...