

# ON HYPNOSIS

George Gurdjieff

In Europe hypnotism is much spoken about and much used in medical treatment. However the knowledge of it is very superficial which explains the frequently unsuccessful outcome of the treatment.

It can be said that the curing of a sick man takes place entirely by chance if the hypnotist happens accidentally to do what the given patient needs.

Generally speaking there are three methods of hypnotizing of which the third method, transference of thought, is entirely unknown in Europe.

The first method should really be called self-hypnosis, for it requires no power of any kind on the part of the hypnotist. He only has to know how to break the connection between the emotional and the thinking centres.

The complexities of the methods of hypnotism are determined by the number of possible combinations. There are connections between all centres. In man's waking state either the thinking or the emotional centre is always active, which the other as it were, observes, and criticizes it so as not to allow it to commit — the man will do anything the centre active at the moment happens to wish, which means he will commit many "stupidities" on sight.

The task of the hypnotist consists in breaking artificially for a time this connection and then in giving commands to one of the centres which will then carry out everything literally, since there will be no criticism on the part of the other centre.

For an explanation of the connection between centres, it is useful to repeat the comparison, already given, of the human machine with a team consisting of carriage, horse, and driver. The connection between centres may be compared with the reins and the shafts.

But for an ignorant hypnotist, there is another difficulty. In breaking the connection between centres he can, in ignorance, break the wrong one in which

case his hypnosis will prove unsuccessful.

If, for example, in the case of a given patient, he must isolate the thinking centre and he accidentally breaks precisely the connection which isolates the thinking centre, his hypnosis will succeed; but if he breaks equally accidentally, some other connection and isolates the emotional centre which does not understand words but understands, let us say, only images, then no matter what he may command in words, nothing will happen. This is the simple reason why patients are often not cured and say that hypnosis does not work.

When the hypnotist breaks the connection, he tells the patient to do this and that; and since criticism of the other centre is absent, the patient believes him and does as he is told. Even if the other centre sees that something is not as it should be, it can do nothing and can change nothing, for owing to the broken connection it can send no commands to that centre.

If something is commanded to a man when centres are disconnected, then every time he is in that state, the man, that is, the given centre, will repeat it. Even some definite action, say a touch, may induce this same state in a man.

In this kind of hypnosis, the moving centre is awake. The whole of man's life is self-hypnosis or one man hypnotizing another. We are puppets in the hands of people stronger than ourselves. We shall become stronger by making two centres, the thinking and the emotional, keep awake together for as long a time as possible.

The second method of hypnotism is possible only if the hypnotist possesses a definite power. In order to explain this, it is first of all necessary to say that every man has his own atmosphere, similar to the atmosphere surrounding the earth. A man is enveloped by an even layer of this atmosphere of a certain definite thickness.

When a man is very interested in something, his atmosphere, that is, the rays of a certain kind of energy emanating from him, go, as it were, in the direction of his desire and the circumference of his atmosphere becomes drawn out on that side to the detriment of the other side. If he pulls towards something is very strong, the whole atmosphere may be drawn out on one side to such an extent that it may be torn away from the man and not return to him again.

Generally, in the presence of a strong desire, the atmosphere is drawn out and

becomes elongated in the direction of his desire.

With the hypnotist this emanation or outpouring out of his energy is voluntary which means he must have a reserve of energy and must know how to collect it.

In putting to sleep by this second method, the hypnotist saturates the patient with his own energy and the healthier a man is the quicker does he become saturated or, as it were, weighed down by this energy and goes to sleep. The more sick a man is, the less of this energy he has, the more difficult it is to put him to sleep by this method. When two people meet, this energy passes from the one who has less to the one who has more (this explains vampirism). Ordinarily this energy passes from one man to another involuntarily.

The third method is completely unknown in Europe. This is transference of thought, that is, transference of a certain definite matter. What is called transference of thought here is either charlatanism or hypnosis of the first kind of which we have spoken earlier.

~ a student's recollection of a talk Mr. Gurdjieff gave in Tiflis around 1919

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## **MAGNETISM, HYPNOTISM AND TELEPATHY**

Everything living has an atmosphere around itself. The difference lies only in its size. The larger the organism, the larger its atmosphere. In this respect every organism can be compared to a factory. A factory has an atmosphere around it composed of smoke, steam, waste materials and certain admixtures which evaporate in the process of production. The value of these component parts varies. In exactly the same way, human atmosphere is composed of different elements. And as the atmosphere of different factories has a different smell, so has the atmosphere of different people. For a more sensitive nose, for instance for a dog, it is impossible to confuse the atmosphere of one man with the atmosphere of another.

I have said that man is also a station for transforming substances. Parts of the

substances produced in the organism are used for the transformation of other matters, while other parts go into his atmosphere, that is, are lost.

So here, too, the same thing happens as in a factory.

Thus the organism works not only for itself, but also for something else. Men of Knowledge know how to retain the fine matters in themselves and accumulate them. Only a large accumulation of these fine matters enables a second and lighter body to be formed within man.

Ordinarily, however, the matters composing man's atmosphere are constantly used up and replaced by man's inner work.

Man's atmosphere does not necessarily have the shape of a sphere. It constantly changes its form. In times of strain, of threat or of danger, it becomes stretched out in the direction of the strain. Then the opposite side becomes thinner.

Man's atmosphere takes up a certain space. Within the limits of this space it is attracted by the organism, but beyond a certain limit particles of the atmosphere become torn off and return no more. This can happen if the atmosphere is greatly stretched out in one direction.

The same happens when a man moves. Particles of his atmosphere become torn off, are left behind and produce a "trail" by which a man can be traced. These particles may quickly mix with the air and dissolve, but they may also stay in place for a fairly long time. Particles of atmosphere also settle on a man's clothes, underclothes and other things belonging to him, so that a kind of track remains between them and the man.

Magnetism, hypnotism and telepathy are phenomena of the same order. The action of magnetism is direct; the action of hypnotism is at a short distance through the atmosphere; telepathy is action at a greater distance. Telepathy is analogous to the telephone or telegraph. In these, the connections are metal wires, but in telepathy they are the trail of particles left by man. A man who has the gift of telepathy can fill this trail with his own matter and thus establish a connection, forming as it were a cable through which he can act on a man's mind. If he possesses some object belonging to a man, then, having thus established a connection, he fashions round this object an image out of wax or clay and, acting upon it, thus acts on the man himself."

~ from a talk given by George Gurdjieff and found in “Views From the Real World”