

The Diminishing of Man's Cognitive Abilities

[‘The Fall of Man’]

Man's natural cognitive status is to be fully aware of his position in the Cosmos and the fact that he needs to complete himself – he is not completed by Nature!

Gurdjieff tells us in his magnum opus, *Beelzebub's Tales to his Grandson*, that our cognitive abilities have, in very real terms, diminished since the early Babylonian times – two and a half thousand years BC - a process which began just after the destruction of Atlantis.

Gurdjieff explains that there are several cognitive elements missing in modern man's psyche, which were formerly his –

The first cognitive ability missing in modern man is that which we now refers to as our ‘subconscious mind’, should manifest in our conscious mind, or if you like: should participate in our conscious mind. This division in the psyche of man was unknown back then – it is only in modern man that this strange anomaly has appeared. Even 4.500 years ago, man's psyche far exceeded our present status.

G mentioned that the sacred data implanted there – namely: ‘faith’, ‘hope’, ‘love’ & ‘Conscience’, no longer manifest in our ordinary consciousness, as was first ordained by the cosmic intelligences around us. This phenomenon came about chiefly because of the reduction of man's life principle, from Foolasnitamnian to Itoclanoz and also, from the surrounding abnormal conditions of external life!

The participation of the above functions in the psyche of man, alters his cognitive ability, fundamentally. A man becomes ‘a higher type of Being’ immediately.

The second cognitive ability missing in modern man, is his ability to recognize & understand that he is not complete and that there is something very significant missing in him.

The third cognitive element absent in him, is the perception to see, sense and also understand that knowledge exists on different levels and that terrestrial

science & knowledge is not the highest in our World! There is something more! [A wisdom just outside modern Man's cognitive range!]

The fourth cognitive ability lost to man is that of retention of higher Knowledge, newly perceived. Gurdjieff tells us that today, people no longer have the capacity to retain High Level Knowledge: 'what is perceived or witnessed today is very often forgotten tomorrow'. This was not the case in ancient times according to G.

The cognitive ability required to approach esoteric teachings is quite high – it is, in fact, above average. However, cognitive ability can be greatly increased by the active study of authentic esoteric materials – that is, by engaging our emotional functions as we study and not just an intellectual or academic approach. We thus generate a new force in ourselves, when we engage our emotions while studying.

Further, man has now become highly suggestible and is easily influenced by the vacuous and shallow elements in his surroundings. He has ceased to think for himself but relies on the opinions of others, fashionable theories, television, the 'herd-mentality' and a pseudo-education. Then he pretends he knows – this is where lying manifests in its most powerful form! In fact – he knows nothing!

The fifth cognitive ability missing in modern man is his failure to think for himself.

It is difficult for an individual to break free from the false mental and emotional constructs of society – after all, he has many emotional anchors and vested interests in the society; and 'powerful people' now recognize his 'achievements'.

He never questions the ethos or structure of his surroundings and trite artificial societal mind-sets. He now accepts everything without question or pondering. Deep in Man's being is the desire for revolutionary change, but his surface mind or consciousness is timid, lazy, vacuous and highly suggestible! He is now, more than ever before, easily hypnotized by the 'glitter' and 'attractions' of external life!

'If a man becomes too polished by modern education, it becomes impossible for him to approach Truth or esoteric teachings' Gurdjieff. [34]

'The new does not arise out of you it comes from the beyond. It is not part of you. Your whole past is at stake. The new is discontinuous with you, hence the fear.'

You have lived in one way, you have thought in one way, you have made a comfortable life out of your beliefs. Then something new knocks on the door.

..... Everybody in the world wants to become new; because nobody is satisfied with the old. Nobody can ever be satisfied with the old because whatever it is you have known it. Once known it has become repetitive, once known it has become boring, monotonous. You want to get rid of it. You want to explore, you want an adventure. You want to become new, and yet when the new knocks on the door, you shrink back, you withdraw, you hide in the old. This is the dilemma.'

Osho. [35]