

IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-MASTERY



Translated by Greta Bianchi

The road that leads to knowledge is a road that passes through good encounters.
(Baruch Spinoza)

“Whenever you start something, that is the right moment,” says the third Hindu spiritual law. Everything happens when we are ready to experience it. This was true for me when I discovered Psychosynthesis.

Always seeking the invisible laws underlying the events of life, intuitively perceived only for brief moments, I explored various fields of study. Eventually, I concluded that knowledge gained alone, without the guidance of a teacher and a supportive group, would ultimately turn

into sterile information, utterly useless for achieving a higher consciousness characterized by presence and awareness.

It is well known that to work on oneself, theory must be implemented with constant practice, which is possible only through interaction with others. Driven by the need to connect with people on the same path toward my goal, I began searching for a school that could provide what I was seeking. After a few failed attempts, the Institute of Psychosynthesis appeared on the horizon. Discovering it was a true surprise, especially because it perfectly aligns with my thoughts, partly shaped by the teachings of Georges Ivanovic Gurdjieff, founder of the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in 1919, in Tiflis, Georgia. Through the book “Fragments of an Unknown Teaching” by Peter Demianovich Ouspensky, Gurdjieff’s student and promoter of the system he named *The Fourth Way*, and my brief attendance at the La Teca Institute in Milan, I learned the fundamentals.

Both schools focus on studying the psychology of man and adopt practices useful for developing consciousness to achieve self-mastery and control over unconscious parts linked to emotions. Gurdjieff defines these as *many I’s*, while Psychosynthesis calls them *subpersonalities*: numerous personalities, each corresponding to a different need, with diverse habits and masks; roles that individuals play without realizing it. Identifying with the many I’s or subpersonalities leads to a loss of self-control. The goal for both schools is to become aware of all the countless parts of oneself through detachment and disidentification, to accept and integrate them harmoniously.

According to Gurdjieff, since the ordinary man is a sleeping being, imprisoned in a sort of perpetual sleep, awakening consciousness is possible only through self-remembering, which involves conscious and non-judgmental observation of one’s reactions and thoughts. By observing themselves, individuals stop identifying with their emotions, mind, and body, becoming aware of their true essence, of what they truly are beyond personality. But all this is possible only by making a conscious effort, possessing an *I* that wills, possessing a will, a theme to which Psychosynthesis attributes great importance. It is no coincidence that the only one of

Roberto Assagioli's writings conceived from the start for publication in book form is "The Act of Will."

According to Assagioli, will is the psychological function most adherent to the *I*, connected to the experience of the Self. It must be recognized and known in order to be possessed. It is placed at the center of human psychological functions and, if used wisely, can regulate, stimulate, and direct all other functions. Numerous points in common exist between the two schools, which is not surprising considering the historical period in which they arose - the early 1920s, a time rich in ideas, philosophical and mystical currents, as well as extraordinary men and women whom we might call *awakened*.

54

Today, amid the constant spread of wars and cultural and moral impoverishment, more and more people feel the need to embark on a path of inner growth, also appealing to those forces contained in spiritual dimensions to transform themselves and, ultimately, transform the world around them. Psychosynthesis can answer this need because, quoting Assagioli, "[...] *Psychosynthesis is understood in its broadest sense as the sum of two*

forces: one personal and conscious, the other spiritual and superconscious [...]".

After attending an introductory Psychosynthesis course, I had a clear sensation of being on the right path for the first time. A path made easier with the use of maps - ovoid and star of functions - to reach one's unconscious, and the practice of simple and effective exercises useful for harmonizing the personality to connect with the Superconscious, the transpersonal Self of which the *I* is only a reflection. A scientific approach to reach the spiritual dimension of man. Or, more simply, a manual for being better and happier, making the world a more welcoming and benevolent place for everyone.

Selene Minopoli

Writer, Varese Center member

