

"All the substances necessary for the maintenance of the life of the organism, for psychic work, for the higher functions of consciousness and the growth of the higher bodies, are produced by the organism from the food which enters it from outside.

"The human organism receives three kinds of food:

1. The ordinary food we eat
2. The air we breathe
3. Our impressions

"It is not difficult to agree that air is a kind of food for the organism. But in what way impressions can be food may appear at first difficult to understand. We must however remember that, with every external impression, whether it takes the form of sound, or vision, or smell, we receive from outside a certain amount of energy, a certain number of vibrations, this energy which enters the organism from outside is food. Moreover, as has been said before, energy cannot be transmitted without matter. If an external impression brings external energy with it into the organism it means that external matter also enters which feeds the organism in the full meaning of the term. "For its normal existence the organism must receive all three kinds of food, that is, physical food, air, and impressions. The organism cannot exist on one or even on two kinds of food, all three are required. But the relation of these foods to one another and their significance for the organism is not the same. The organism can exist for a comparatively long time without a supply of fresh physical food. Cases of starvation are known lasting for over sixty days, when the organism lost none of its vitality and recovered very quickly as soon as it began to take food. Of course starvation of this kind cannot be considered as complete, since in all cases of such artificial starvation people have taken water. Nevertheless, even without water a man can live without food for several days. Without air he can exist only for a few minutes, not more than two or three, as a rule a man dies after being four minutes without air. Without impressions a man cannot live a single moment. If the flow of impressions were to be stopped in some way or if the organism were deprived of its capacity for receiving impressions, it would immediately die. The flow of impressions coming to us from outside is like a driving belt communicating motion to us. The principal motor for us is nature, the surrounding world. Nature transmits to us through our impressions the energy by which we live and move and have our being. If the inflow of this energy is arrested, our machine will immediately stop working. Thus, of the three kinds of food the most important for us is impressions, although it stands to reason that a man cannot exist for long on impressions alone.

P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous* p181

Also see www.gurdjieff-legacy.org