

OCTOBER GATHERING 2016 ~ FRIDAY AFTERNOON

READING: *The Death of my Ordinary "I"* – Jeanne de Salzmann

I remember myself in the moment when I do not see myself as an object, when consciousness leaves no room for division. It is the moment when, feeling consciousness, I feel I am consciousness. I feel "I." Remembering oneself is the emotional shock that occurs when all the energies in us come into contact. This emits a creative vibration that is immediately subject to the Law of Seven. So, remembering oneself cannot remain static.

In my habitual state my experience is vague and nebulous. Thoughts, waves of emotions and tensions arise. The thoughts do not come all at once; they arrive one after the other. It is the same with the emotions. When one thought has passed, another arises. But between the two there is an interval, a stop, a space that is extremely important. Behind the movement that has begun and finished, there is a reality that is hidden from me. In this interval I can become aware of what is behind the movement. No thought lasts; what appears must disappear. The disappearing is as important as the appearing. It is part of the same fact. And if I can live the two, accept them both, I am beyond the appearance and the disappearance. I contain them. In this moment, my centers enter into relation with each other, a relation that comes by itself.

Opening to our essential being, the higher centers, requires a state of unity. But, in our usual state, our center of gravity is always refused in favor of the ego and displaced toward the upper me but that, at the same time, I do not trust. I do not have faith in it. I want it to yield to me. I am afraid, afraid of disappearing.

In order for me to pass beyond this fragmentation, this separation from my essential being, all the energy in me needs to blend. It needs to be entirely liberated. Do I see the necessity for this? Do I accept it, do I wish it? For this, an absolute tranquility needs to appear in all the parts of myself. This is not in order to succeed, or to receive and appropriate to myself something marvelous. Rather, it is to see my nothingness, my attachment, my fear of losing the meaning I attribute to myself. Instead of always wanting to be right, I see my contradictions. I see myself hypnotized by my imagination. I see everything together, both my ego and the real "I."

In so seeing, I liberate myself. For a moment I am no longer the same. My freed attention, my consciousness, then knows what I am essentially. This is the death of my ordinary "I." To remember oneself means to die to oneself, to the lie of one's imagination. I have the taste of understanding through awareness of the lack of understanding. In remembering oneself, it is the letting go of the ego that allows a new consciousness to penetrate. Then I see that the ordinary "I" is a phantom, a projection of myself. In fact, everything I take as manifestation is not something separate, but a projection of the essential. Returning to the source, I become conscious of that which arises not to fall back, that which is not born and does not die—the eternal Self.¹

¹ de Salzmann, Jeanne, *The Reality of Being*, pp 262-64

KEITH: This is obviously a very high state that Madam is referring to, to have a moment in which she ends the portion of her essay on the death of my ordinary “I,” how one could wish that but seeing, as she points out, steps on the path, in other words, what is required to reach this point where my ordinary “I” dies.

And you see what has to be suffered again and again and again—all of those views we have of ourselves that we have to put aside, that we have to see and in a sense, with attention, which sounds contradictory, and shunned. So how do we shun something? How do we turn our attention away from something that is right there in front of us? If I see this mechanicalness to my manifestation, and I judge it for what it is, how do I turn away from it?

What are your thoughts, what are your associations about that? When I see something that is bound up in my ordinary “I” in myself in a moment, when I bring attention to it—talk about that. What do I do? What happens? What can happen?

PARTICIPANT: Gurdjieff said man must separate himself from himself. Until he can do that, no one can help him. I have found that a useful saying if I see an impulse in myself or see negative thoughts. There is an exercise: these are my thoughts, they are not I—these are my feelings, they are not I—this is my body, it is not I. It makes me work to connect with something Higher which is like withdrawing from one’s attention from one part of oneself, hopefully striving to have one’s attention in a higher part of oneself

PARTICIPANT: When I see things in myself that I don’t like or surprises me—when I say, oh, look at that – I have a habit of coming to my breath. It is a way to escape from that and just to be with me. I don’t know if that is the best way but it is what I have done for years, when I see, which is rare.

KEITH: When you move to the breath in that circumstance, what happens then?

PARTICIPANT: I seem to find myself in the watcher—watches the breath and that is different than the thing I saw in my personality that I didn’t like. That is the technique that works for me.

PARTICIPANT: My experience is that the act of seeing is, in fact, a big deal. To see is to do and that is, in itself, something. My experience is that I have to work to be passive to myself, actively passive, so that that the ‘fixer’ in me doesn’t try to change things. I try to work to let things happen and not judge myself so that I can have an opportunity to see it, to create some kind of gap whereby seeing may occur.

KEITH: Do you find that you react inside of that state?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, often.

KEITH: One key here seems certainly to have to do with the effort we make with our attention because if we don’t see something clearly then it’s like all bets are off. Nothing is going to happen except what was going to happen and it is just going to continue to be the same.

When attention enters into that, we now have a divided state. There is the attention and there is that which is seen.

PARTICIPANT: It reminds me of something you said this morning about self and other. Because when I see myself, it is almost like seeing another. I am in myself. I see my self and my ordinary self which is other than that.

KEITH: Good point. Do any of you experience those inner states as if you were meeting a stranger and you wonder—where did that come from? Do you have that sense at times when you see a particular way in which you have said something or a motion you have taken or some manifestation and, because you attend to it, you are brought abruptly to having this question: where that come from?

PARTICIPANT: I've had that when I've been dishonest. Interacting with a customer, I would see that and I would quickly move away from it. It would surprise me but it was there; it would be an aspect of a role where I could exaggerate a problem. It wasn't something I initiated; it was just a reaction to a question of what is the problem and I would just respond. That's why I say being dishonest.

KEITH: What changes when the attention enters, when you have that moment of suddenly seeing what some aspect of yourself has been up to? How close can you come to that interface? What is it like?

PARTICIPANT: For me it is in stages. I call what I do in the face of something like this “cheating”—to do what I have to do because I don't feel strong enough to do anything else.

I sense myself. When I sense myself, I also catch the constellation of tensions in myself that are accompanying who I am pretending to be or my dishonest presentation of myself. I catch those tensions and I let the tensions go and either before that or during or after, I experience shame that I am manifesting

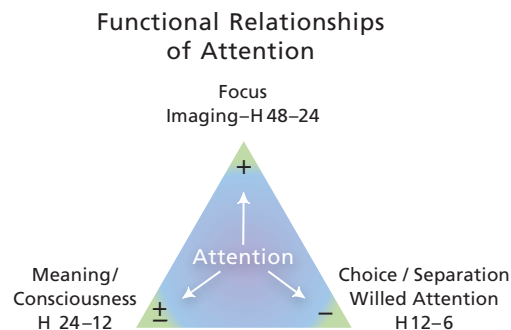
KEITH: Do we suffer when we feel shame?

PARTICIPANT: Very painful.

KEITH: It seems it is evident that when we see how crude we have been or how impolite or how injurious we have been towards another one. Something sees that and then we feel shame. What is going on right in that moment? See if we can follow the track of what the attention has led to. Because the attention has opened a door right here that has allowed something else in.

PARTICIPANT: I think we are still identified with what we are seeing. We haven't separated completely.

KEITH: But the attention is the instrument of that separation.



PARTICIPANT: When we reach the point that was being spoken of there is a *stillness* and a *silence* that accompanies that when we have relaxed our body and we are in a state of attentiveness to other and their need. There is an inner silence there.

KEITH: In re-reading what Madam has written, do you think she thought of this while she was in the midst of an ordinary life event?

PARTICIPANT: No.

KEITH: No. That's my point. What has been shared so far has been ordinary life events, when, suddenly, something wakes up and sees something, and as a result of that seeing—now follow the track here—a result of the attention.

Now we have to wonder—what is inside of this attention? What is the power of this attention?

PARTICIPANT: It is a little bit like remorse.

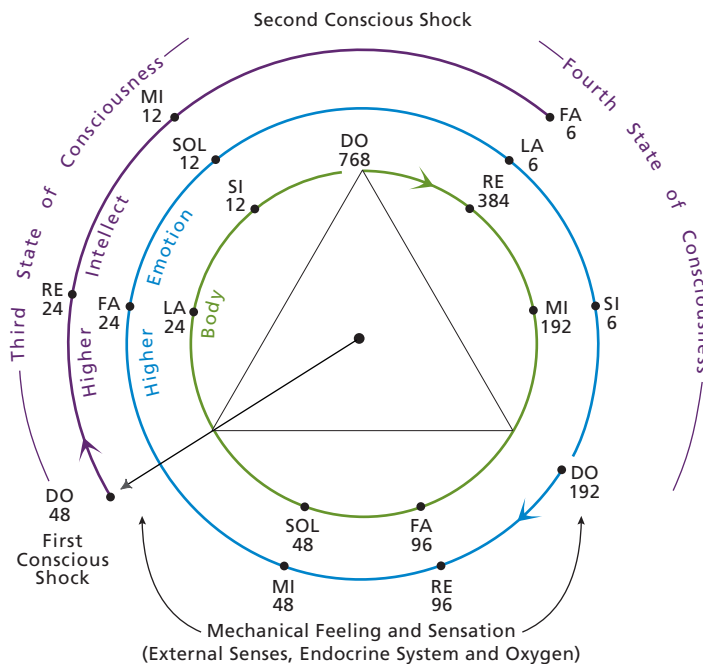
KEITH: Yes!

PARTICIPANT: Something revolts; it is a feeling because one part sees the other part and naturally notices an organic shame that has been spoken of, not the wrong kind of shame but the sense of loving what is real and admitting what is false.

KEITH: But seeing.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, from seeing in oneself.

KEITH: I am thinking that, for myself, there is a lot more power in the attention than we have been giving it credit for. We have been talking about attention as if, 'you see it'. Well, go into that deeper. Attention is a much more powerful tool, at a much more powerful level.



This is a 'hydrogen' 12—all the 12s are of this quality; whether it is SI12 as Gurdjieff's Exioëhary or whether it is SOL12 or MI12. The 12s characterizes it at a certain level or quality of energy.

For me, the qualifier across all three in the 12s is *attention*.² With Higher Emotional Center, it is a creative attention that enters into the artistic life, expression. It is that seeing-in-the-moment the miraculousness that we see reflected in people like Da Vinci, Mozart or other people in the artistic arena; it is that vision in the moment when something is seen that is a very creative element in what gets produced and the result of that artistic, creative moment.

We start talking about someone like Einstein and I think we are talking about MI12. It is the creative higher intellectual activity that, in a moment, sees into the nature of something and then won't give up. As he himself admitted, I see something and then I am damned to follow it. Something in his attention saw and then he had no choice; he had to stay with that and keep after it, in spite of what all the people around him said. He kept at this until finally, he arrived at something.

This is characteristic of MI12—the real exploration but concerning the higher intellect. Whereas, in the case of the emotional; we are talking about the spiritual or the artistic but, in any case, it is that attention that is the creative initiator, if you will, of what follows on that.

Keep in mind Gurdjieff has told us every 'hydrogen' category is very large, so when we are talking about 'hydrogen' 12 or SI12 [of the Food Octave], we are talking about everything that underpins the motivating factors in our ordinary, mechanical life. All of our sexuality, our interaction with other people, our motivation to be physically active, all of our ordinary stuff about learning to read and to write—all that is down here; all that is accomplishable with the attention that is given to the physical body. It is all Exioëhary. He puts it in this category of sex energy but, if we think deeply into the primal triad [World One] and given the highest expression of Exioëhary, of SI12, it is the energy that is behind, underneath reproduction. It has nothing to do with the egg and the sperm; it is what makes it possible for the egg and the sperm to come together in a creative moment in a whole new being! That's the Exioëhary that Gurdjieff is pointing to there.

But then you can apply that to the physical body and step it down and down. There are many, levels in which SI12 will have application in ordinary life—similarly so with SOL12 and with MI12.

So we have a long distance. We can take this attention we have been talking about because there is a quality of attention to all of these things. One attends and tries to learn how to play the piano, how to dance—any of these things that require an increasingly refined attention. We are talking about the same quality of energy that is a 12. They are all 12s but they apply to many, many levels inside of us. We should never give up on the creative capacity of attention, because attention being a 12 has this creative capacity. So the result of attention is that we see things but we also see into things, which was referred to earlier about shame.

Why would you feel shame? Because it is in the nature of the attention to see what you have been and what you are and put those right in front of you and there you are. What do you do with that? We are suddenly met with this very great obvious conflict inside of

² Buzzell, *A New Conception of God Further Reflections on Gurdjieff's Whim*, chapter 16, "Attention (H12), The Greatest Gift to Life; The Power to Pursue Meaning and Purpose," pp 280-299

ourselves. But that is the creative aspect of the attention, so don't ever think of attention as a single thing, like flashing a light bulb on something.

PARTICIPANT: I don't know if this is an example but there is some kind of simultaneity involved also. For example, we are trying to see to ourselves and we don't often speak about this thing, chief feature. There is something that is the thing and, always, that's where it goes emotionally. As was said, there is progression, one sees something, I react, but, eventually, I see it over and over again, something recognizes; it is more identified, what this thing is. Something starts to hunt. When I feel in despair that it has swallowed up my inner life and I'll never be free of it—for example, today I had the same reaction but in a completely different arena. I recognized it, this is the same thing; this is more data. This actually helps because now I know a little more than I knew yesterday. It is not necessarily a pattern but something is hunting for the roots of it. It goes back to primordial relationships (father, mother...) but also goes the other way. It seems to take persistence, a feeling like I can't waste any more time and just randomly seeing these things, unrelated. It has something to do with attention because something is hunting in my emotional world and it hits a wall but if I persist and don't give up then I think more is given.

KEITH: Mrs. P told a delightful story along this line which was paralleled by one of my own. She was one of one of Ouspensky's secretaries for several years so she was always doing things for him as secretary. One day when she brought in something she proposed to do or had gone ahead and done it, he turned on her and, in a very angry voice, said, "Irmis, you are always inventing!" She felt chagrined and embarrassed by the whole situation. She said, "it took me three years before I realized he had told me my chief feature!" She was one of the most inventive, creative people. In events, she could take nothing and make a big event out of it. She was always inventing; she was very creative that way.

The first week I was at the Pinnacle, it was a very hot. At the end of the 10-day session, she put on a party and we all had whisky sours. She loves whisky sours so we are sitting out in the garden area outside and I figured this was my last day so if I have a personal question I would really like to ask, I better do it now, right away. So when the opportunity came, I approached Mrs. Popoff and asked, "Mrs. Popoff, could you tell me something that I could work on in my inner world?" She was very quiet for maybe two minutes, almost to the point where I wondered if she heard me or not. Then she turned and said, "Well, Keith, I've only known you for ten days and you hide very well." That was it. I won't tell you how many years it took to discover that [laughter] but it's one indicator of her marvelous quality of attention.

The attention is there and it never disappeared over all those years Mrs. P wondered and suddenly *she woke up* the gift that Ouspensky had given her. It was the *attention* that did that; the attention working in her. We should remember that this quality of attention is like that. It is not a something that comes on like a light bulb.

We have a very distorted image of what attention is really about. It is the highest creative energy in us. And it always there—there is always that quality of attention that is available to us. How to approach it; we have to draw it down. This is what is standing at 5 on the enneagram and looking up to 8. We are asking for something to descend from 8 to 5, to make possible the transition into the third part of the octave.

It is very much worthwhile to make the effort to see that we stand in the face of something that it is there—it is there inside of each of us and we must call it down. We can say I will make an effort to pay attention; I will watch the best I can and then we are always (at

least I have this quality often) thunderstruck when it happens. Suddenly you see something! But you know it has been dependent upon the fact that the attention is in us. It does not come from outer space. It is in us; it is part of our higher emotional and higher intellectual functioning.

Because it shares the creative qualities of attention, as all three 12s do, it is the best that we have to call down. It is Exioëhary that is available to us in our ordinary world, in our ordinary life without a Kesdjan or Higher Being-body and without being in that octave trying to go higher in that octave and so on. In our ordinary world, our ordinary blind, dumb world that we live inside of—the quality of attention that we are talking about is available to us because it is not SOL12 or MI12, it is SI12, it is sex energy. Sex energy is the attention that is available to us.

So we can rightly say, “Pay attention. Pay Attention.” Because it is there. And what it brings is not the flashlight. The flashlight is a little tiny part of it; the rest is the creative possibility that comes from the seeing and then the result. If the result is a moment of remorse then that is a treasure. I’ve seen something about my nature that I have never seen before and in this moment, suddenly it is there. Other times it can be a real joyful thing, when suddenly you see in your child a feature that you have never really absorbed before and you see what a sweet, marvelous little human being there is in their manifestation in the moment and it is a gift. But it comes because we pay attention.

PARTICIPANT: A few days ago, I carpoled with a friend of ours and I hopped in the back seat. There was a big jug of Roundup there. It was maximum strength. She said it was great, you can spray it on something and it kills it for a year. She was so happy with it. Later on she was saying how she was going to vote for Trump. This whole thing was going on in me; she’s talking to Mr. Organic-Free-range-All-Natural-Tree-hugger. A few minutes later, she was holding a ribbon at a track meet. She was helping my wife get past this ribbon. I had to juxtapose that first image of her with this one, where she was being so helpful to my wife and being quite there with her. It evoked this question: how can I embrace both those impressions? It is a real struggle and is a tension to hold it together in the emotional part. It is just like this thing about seeing something in the child you didn’t expect but that was effort—to hold that contradiction and to see she was a wonderful person.

KEITH: ... if she would just change her mind.

PARTICIPANT: If I could just reason with her.

PARTICIPANT: How does Askokin relate to this sensation in your study?

KEITH: Good point. Because buried inside of events can be, when approached creatively with the attention, we can see something in the order of higher emotion or higher intellect; we can see something creatively that is genuinely lovable or appreciate-able in terms of beauty or in terms of understanding how the laws happen and why they work the way they do. So we can *see* in those moments.

PARTICIPANT: Is that Askokin?

KEITH: That is extracted from the Askokin. I don’t think for a minute that Gurdjieff is trying to deny... experience is experience. Life flows. It is a part of that river where he is saying you can catch what you really need if you are paying attention, if you are fishing cleverly. You

can pull out what you need. There may be a lot of Abrustdonis and Helkdonis in there but you don't need all that. If you just wish for it and you don't try to fish, then you are not going to get it either. But it is there for all of us—it is the flow of life. To free Askokin is like that; we have to see it as the flow of all that we experience, all that comes into our purview, that becomes a source of our possible Abrustdonis, Helkdonis.

PARTICIPANT: I am getting a little stuck on something you are saying about attention. I think what you are saying is “free” attention. It's funny because I am always attending to something but often it is attending to something and its involved in this but I am not really there to pay attention but it's paying attention.

KEITH: Every brained being has to have a certain level of attention. Actually, even cells, Microcosmos, can, with very adequate justification, be understood because it pays attention, it is aware of molecules, of a certain charge on their exterior coating and so forth, outside the cell wall, inside the cell wall, what has to be rejected, what can be reached out to and used as a source of food—all of that requires some level of attention. As Gurdjieff says, everything in the Universe is alive to some degree. He gives the gamut of Reason, from Absolute Calm, which is no reason at all, all the way to the incomparable Reason of HIS ENDLESSNESS. It's like that; there is that inside of it that will have some level of attention; it may be mechanical to answer your question. In us, it is often very mechanical but that's not what we are talking about.

We haven't got there yet, but this can never be evoked without the Will, without some reflection from the Will. If not the Wish, then we have to wish a lot. Like Gurdjieff says, must Wish. Wish is next to Will. Without the Wish, there is no Will. Without that, there is no Attention—to want to have the Attention. It has to be evoked.

PARTICIPANT: Are the 12s Attention or is the Attention on a higher level and the 12s are the crystallization of it in the form that we can use.

KEITH: I put the Will at 'hydrogen' 6 so 'hydrogen' 12 as the Attention is the power of the Will but it is at the disposition of the Will. So, we have to wish for it.

We have to wish to pay attention.

Now, take that seriously. When you discipline yourself, when you kick yourself in the foot, “now pay attention!” that is wishing of a sort. It is putting a push into what we really want, what we really wish for and that's Okay.

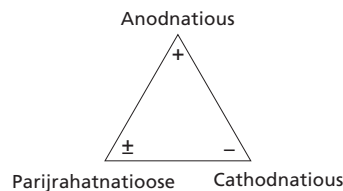
ENDNOTE: from *Reflections on Gurdjieff's Whim*, P 44

The Work brings the methods and understanding that make this rebalancing, this *reconciliation*, possible. In this Work, the power of *attention* — the photonic reconciling power of Parijrahatnatioose³ — is of premier importance. As recorded by Madame de Hartmann:

From the very beginning the conversations related to attention. Mr Gurdjieff told us very seriously that attention is absolutely indispensable for any work we wished to do with him. If we did not understand that, nothing could bring us to the aim for which we came to him. All of us there already felt that we were more than just a body. We knew that 'something else' was in us, and we wished to know: what is that? What have we to do with that? How can we call to it? How can we bring it out? How can we rely on it and not depend only on the body? All this was really a burning question for us, and Mr Gurdjieff made it clear that if we didn't study attention—not study in the ordinary way, but putting all our attention on developing that attention—we would arrive nowhere.

Triad of Okidanokh

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3 G.I. Gurdjieff, *Beelzebub's Tales*, PP 156-57

4 Buzzell, *Reflections on Gurdjieff's Whim*, PP 112-13