

OCTOBER GATHERING 2016 ~ FRIDAY MORNING, SECOND SESSION

KEITH: If we accept the notion that Gurdjieff is speaking individually to the reader of *The Tales* and that in one way or another we can understand ourselves as sitting in the place of Hassein, in the end, we are left with however we understand the message. I think it would be worthwhile if we try to explore *what is the meaning of that message into my own life*. How do I understand what I am obligated toward, now?

I think all of us have a tendency, a perfectly human tendency, to simply assume that however this is going—it is just going to continue. But we live in very, very interesting times, very difficult times and unpredictable times. And the question of what our own personal obligation is—is one that increasingly, it seems obvious especially to people in Work what is my obligation toward this. Here I am and at whatever age I am (I am about to be in a month 84 years old) so what am I obligated toward with whatever time I have left?

If I am an incipient grandson, what does that obligate me toward, individually?

I think it would be worthwhile sharing some impressions about how does that strike you. How does this opportunity for Abrustdonis, Helkdonis—how does that travel inside of you?

PARTICIPANT: For practical purposes I ask myself, from the Work point of view, “What can I do.” Do I want to spread the message of the Work? Is it my interaction with people? We talk about self-remembering and self-observation it is a very big part of the Work, and self-remembering is the most practical part. I think you can try and make a difference with interactions with other people in our daily activities. I don’t know whether we could change anything practically except by maybe just being present and somehow connect as a vehicle for the Work impulses. (Quiet)

KEITH: Is this quiet because everybody is seriously considering or is everybody hiding? (Laughter)

PARTICIPANT: I want to stop war. And I am embarrassed to say that now that I am 55 but I would rather be embarrassed because I won’t give up. I am happily embarrassed by admitting to people that I don’t believe it’s possible anymore but I still believe that I have to try. And I don’t mean with myself, stopping war within myself. That is so much easier than stopping war on the whole planet.

And I admire Gurdjieff the more I read and understand his writings because he, at some point, says that I am going to make it my aim to figure out the suggestibility problem. And because people are under suggestibility they go to war more easily. If they could become free of that they would be able to choose something different. And so I sit here when you ask that and I can’t really say anything because there is nothing I can do except little things—I can do little things, like smile at a child when they come up after a performance. That’s a very small thing and I try to do this with small things. I remember the whole as best I can, including my inner world in which I have to stop war also.

So it is hard to respond and it is hard to do enough. I can’t do anything very big—not big enough for my aspirations, what I feel called to do. So, I sit here quietly wondering what little thing I could do—rather that speak up, like I just did.

PARTICIPANT: This is a very, very big and vital question that has moved me for many, many years to try to reconceive the basis of international relations and how each of us as individuals can try better to build earth community, as I call it now. It also led me to look into the Baha’i world community, which seems to offer a revelatory basis and a new covenant for the

establishment of a non-competitive method of self-government that will help in the elimination of conflict and not pitting people against each other.

It seems to me that each of us should wonder with all the energy and sense of transformation in the world whether there is not a great spiritual force behind this, a great intelligence that is cleansing the human community and leading us toward the promises that religions have always given us—that a day will come that we will live in peace.

PARTICIPANT: Perhaps this is idealistic or naive or both but when reading this I walked away with understanding, the personal understanding that Abrustdonis is service and Helkdonis is understanding. I believe and it has always been my belief that the work itself is like a world or a cosmos and that may not be the right word for it but it has a force of its own. If you are a small person, retired or without world connections or whatever, it seems to me that what we can do is serve the Work. And I suppose that there is the prayer that that's enough.

KEITH: Yes Bob.

PARTICIPANT: From *Beelzebub's Tales*, P 1107:

“And so, my dear Hasein, when it appeared that the instinctive need for conscious labor and intentional suffering in order to be able to take in and transmute in themselves the sacred substances Abrustdonis and Helkdonis and thereby to liberate the sacred Askokin for the maintenance of the Moon and Anulios had finally disappeared from the psyche of your favorites, then Great Nature Herself was constrained to adapt Herself to extract this sacred substance by other means, one of which is precisely that periodic terrifying process there of reciprocal destruction.

So in answer to Steffan, war on this planet may not be just between us. Great Nature is requiring it if we don't work. So what you can do is to liberate these substances. [Abrustdonis and Helkdonis]

PARTICIPANT: You know sometimes we can't avoid war. I haven't but maybe someone here has been in the services, I don't know. But if you are in the Work and you find yourself getting drafted and involved in war and you can't avoid it, you have to make the best of it. I am reminded of the story in *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* by Thomas de Hartmann's where he was in the same situation. He [de Hartmann] was called to duty and he had to go and couldn't avoid it. And Gurdjieff said that if you can't avoid it you have to go but this is what you do. In moments of danger, like being shot at, try to be present to your breath most of the time. At least once, I think, that did save his life, maybe a couple of times. So he couldn't avoid going to war but he brought the Work with him to the battle field by being present to the breath. It may have saved his life. And maybe in other ways we don't know it may have saved other people's lives. We all have dreams of stopping war but it is beyond our control whether there is war or not. You can send energies out into the world and make a difference in the long run. But from a practical point of view bring what you can from the Work into life. And if you have to go to war bring it to war too.

PARTICIPANT: I think we are touching on something that strikes me as true in that I have had the experience in my life of someone who may not have been in the Work, certainly they weren't, and I can't speak as to their level of consciousness but they said or did something that had an important effect on my life that I took in and gathered something positive from. And when I review some of those instances I do believe that the person, in some instances,

was unaware of the effect. So I think that we need to keep in mind that we really don't know the effect of what we say and do might have on another being. We should just try to be with that fact—we really don't know. We have to do the best that we can in the moment to be as forthright, sincere and conscious as we can because we don't know just what that is going to be.

PARTICIPANT: Sometimes we get a hint. I have gotten a hint in the last year or so from starting to work more intensively. I notice that when I'm really working on myself that just in the world, the place that I live, that I will go into a place once and I'll come back and be treated like royalty. And that's just not one place, it is everywhere I go. And I think that's an effect of who I am being and I'm not intentionally trying to be regal or special, but I come back and I'm treated well and people remember me and they respond and they change, in themselves, and that's not something that I would try in any way to fiddle with. It just happens that way.

I know at least for myself that there's a tremendous potential. I feel as if I had what I call a track to run on, I could go to Washington and within a week I could have spoken to people in the White House and as many people as I could encounter in Congress or wherever else because I have done that kind of thing before with people of high status. That is something that I kind of discovered it's just a matter of you don't hold yourself back, thinking you can't do that ... and these people are approachable ... they want information, they want wisdom.

There was somebody, I think it was George Soros who had all this money and he wanted to become a philanthropist, he turned, I think, to the Gates. Instead of him knowing in his own conscience what the world needs, what can I do with all my billions of dollars. He had to consult with somebody. And I'm sure in this room that people here are far clearer about where to apply the influence of wealth. I struggle with this question because I'm the kind of person who has the Hamlet syndrome.

I grew up in such comfort that my issue is not so much to be or not to be, it's to do or not to do. And in my life I have turned down an awful lot of things that I should have done. I should have made the extra effort but I rested back in the comfort of what was given to me in my background, the things that I know, the circumstances that I've been in so I didn't make an effort to live up to what I know that would have been my potential; to go to an Ivy League school, I turned that down, to make a career on Wall Street, to become a doctor, a psychiatrist, or something like that or to become an academic of some sort. I know I have that capacity. But I rested back. I rusticated. I lived in a comfort zone. I think a lot of people have the Hamlet syndrome. I think it is a product of growing up in America post World War II. There are people with PhD's who are working in supermarket checkouts, bartending but they have a PhD in anthropology. My difficulty with this is realizing that we've got the potential. But my difficulty is sort of having a track to run on. It's sort of like if I had an ideology and was going out to convert people to something that would be quite easy.

But the Work is very different because the Work isn't a dogma. Work is not instructing people in setting up institutions, for instance. And so I don't know sort of what to do with myself. I just started to write and I figure that I can incorporate important ideas, maybe they are higher ideas, into my writing and I am about to help somebody at set up an art gallery and there is the possibility of having an art school and possibly of coming up with something equivalent to what Impression was, it was a school of art, an esoteric school, the Impressionists, and contribute in that way. I think that stopping war would be a ... I think it is possible and I think Gurdjieff or somebody said that if there were 200 conscious people in the world they could stop war.

PARTICIPANT: You said you were turning 84 and I just turned 70. It certainly brought some new thoughts, at least from a different perspective. And as you said that you can't always

count on what has preceded that the group is always going to be here or a certain member is always going to be here or that family members are always going to be there, and I look at it as different degrees of reason.

And I see that if we do value, whatever each of us has put forth, that is a degree of reason. I look at my change. Mr. Adie speaks a number of times about becoming clear and when he speaks about that and I can put that within myself and it is fear of not embracing the moment, that reason, age and experience are more forgiving of myself, are more in pursuit of trying to understand others' perspective. I am still working. I'm still plumbing, I'm semi-retired, I have to generate an income and I have finally reached a point that I have more time to read. And I can remember trying to generate an income and really, really pushing my body and I pushed my body for many, many years and creating an image within my Work, my trade. I saw that as reason at the time and now I can put that aside. You know when I am down on the floor after doing my preparation and I am doing my stretching exercises and Cindy might be up and I can't always count that she will be coming down the steps, but someday that will stop. So for me the most meaningful thing is different degrees of reason. I can say that that's the most objective appreciation that I can say that I have really received.

The fact is that I can speak about that and go beyond my self-centeredness. That degree of reason is what enables me to be in the moment and to see other and as you were speaking this morning how tell a story and be inclusive, how to, if you are with your family, how to make it more meaningful – that it's not how it has always been, that somehow you're creating new members. And that's my gratitude to the Work. It is never-ending. It is still fresh. I'm still seeing new insights. And that is why I said something about fear. I am so grateful that I see that fear within myself. And that fear is what prevents me from embracing the moment. Embracing the moment is being in the Now.

PARTICIPANT: What you say George and the reference to the 200 conscious people and the quote that was re-read about Great Nature adapting herself – this all seems to be what we are looking for. In answering your question Keith, I think that this is the separation of Abrustdonis and maybe some Helkdonis.

KEITH: There's an individual, Jan Jarvis, most of you know Jan and she will be with us tonight hopefully. She had other obligations that delayed her ability to get here. But, in correspondence with Jan she has highlighted two issues that I think are very much related to the question that we have in front of us now. The question [topic] is this. I'll try to put it in her terms. If one is in this Work to form, to coat a Kesdjan Body and that is your aim, then you are not in this Work. You are on an egoistic self-pursuit to coat your body—with a Kesdjan Body that will survive, if that's where it ends. So if that is your aim to coat a Kesdjan Body in those terms; that that is your fundamental primary aim then you have an influence that's yours. On the other side is working in a group and that group has a corporate¹ aim and that serving the group relative to some aim that that is a more appropriate aim. That's a question that Jan has as I understand it.

But it seems to me that it is obvious, Gurdjieff speaks a great deal in *The Tales* about the coating of Kesdjan, but as we explored last year at this gathering to some extent, the coating of Kesdjan has a certain fundamental requirement. We cannot enter in any way, shape or form to a pursuit of Kesdjan unless we enter a world of self-other. This is the absolute requirement.

1 Corporate in the sense of pertaining to a united group, as of persons: the corporate good: united or combined into one.

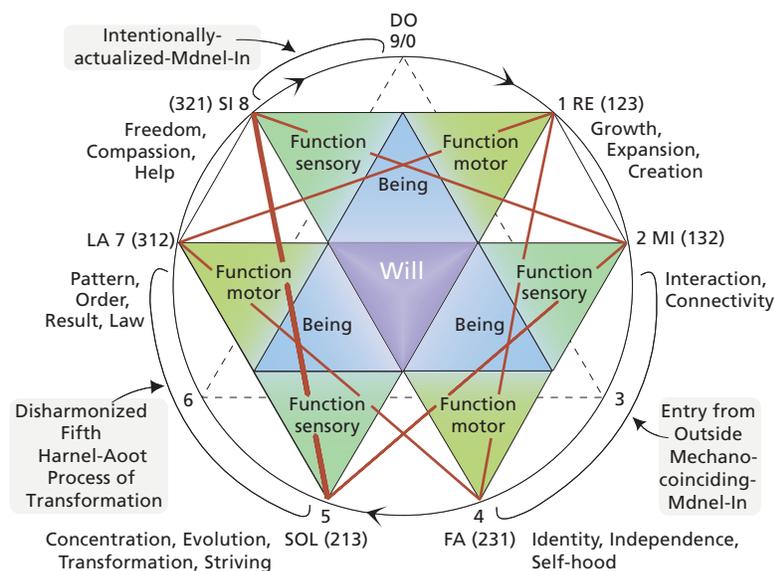
In terms of the three-food enneagram, this is the passage from MI of Air, in which we are still locked into the mechanicalness of all of our inner relationships between the brains—in which all of our emotion or feeling world is still focused and centered on the self. To enter the world of self-other is only possible with the use, as Mr. Adie pointed out and will be pointed out in other readings that we will be doing, requires the *attention*. And the attention cannot *ever* be directed solely toward *my* future, *my* salvation, *my* coating of Kesdjan. But it has always to be seen, understood and lived in the context of self-other.

So we are in this together. We are always self-other; whether we are alone brushing our teeth in the morning or whether we are involved in a large group activity or if we are going to a group meeting or we are pursuing life as George does I think so meaningfully. He pursues Work while he is plumbing. He takes self-other into that world so that he is, *in* his concerns of the people he is working for; he is living in that world. He is *in* that world of self-other. That's the requirement; the basil entry point. If we do not have that, then it is all egoism, it is all self-feeling to try to gain something for myself.

PARTICIPANT: There's a contradiction I am hearing. Jan is saying it's egoistic to create a Kesdjan Body, but this whole idea of Kesdjan involves other people like you were talking about George and I don't get the major contradiction of what you are talking about because when I am in my own little world of my physical existence and my survival, that is where my egoism is. It's dissolving as I am entering a relationship with others and responding and perceiving them finally. So that's a process away from egoism. So I don't see how egoistic and Kesdjan relate and those thoughts were in my mind.

KEITH: I totally agree. It is a contradiction in terms. But I think what Jan was trying to point out and I think this comes up occasionally in our own group work, when you can see that someone, an individual, perhaps yourself, that you are pursuing a particular aim, say with a particular exercise and so forth, from a very selfish perspective, that we are doing something for ourselves, hoping to gain something for ourselves, hoping to enlarge my consciousness or whatever, and it has so much to do with the attention that is focused that way. Then we have not brought the attention, the hydrogen 12 energies down from 8 on the enneagram.

An Evolutional Octave



It should come 8 to 5. In coming from 8 to 5, in bringing attention from the 3 twelves that exist at that level, bringing what attention that we can to the point of incoming impressions at 5, coming down in that direction, then this is the requirement you see. If it is for myself all the energy of attention ends up in the self. It doesn't open to other, include other. It seems to me that there is a danger and I certainly agree with Larry that there is this contradiction in how Jan put that. Still and all we all can fall prey to this – that we are doing something for ourselves and we do not have our participation as a human being with all other in that equation. I think that's true. It's certainly true in my own world that there are times when I see what I have been up to, what that 'I' has been up to, and that it is serving itself, it is not serving the self-other world.

PARTICIPANT: This relates to something that my wife Judith, bless her soul, grew up with in that notion of heaven and hell. To paraphrase what she says that all these people were working to save their ass from going to hell. That disturbed her because all those "good works" were fading and possibly were grasping at self-aggrandizement.

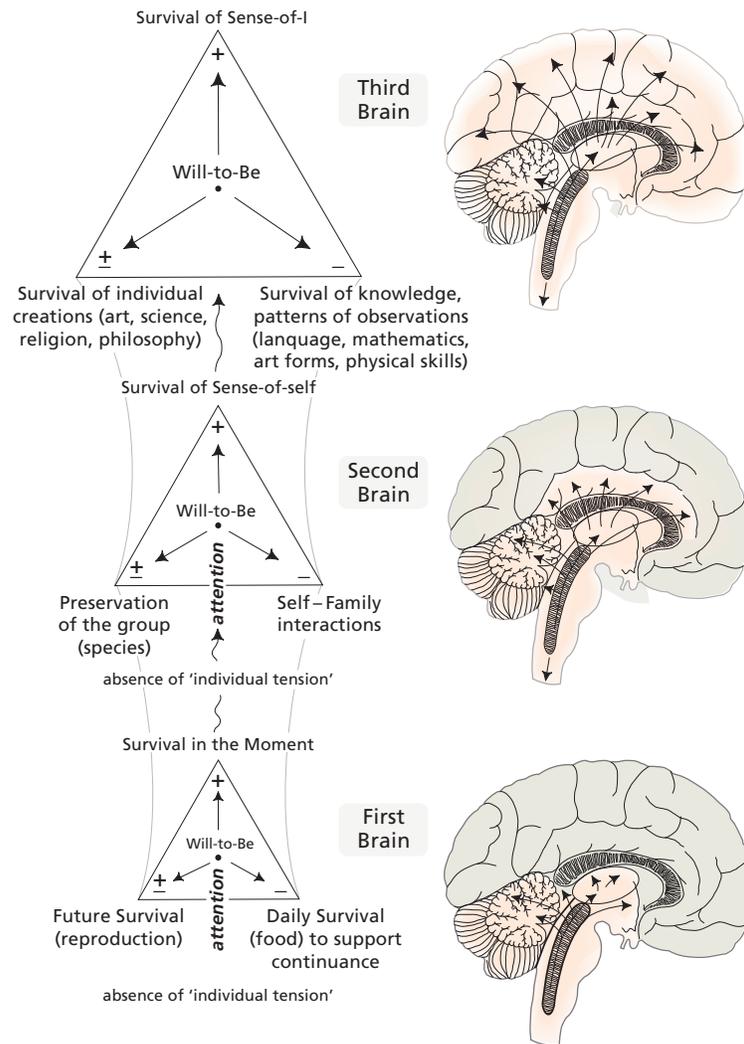
PARTICIPANT: For me the principle or the path to self-perfection, one's motivation to do that is something that everyone has to decide for themselves. But ultimately when Gurdjieff talks about help for ENDLESSNESS and that we, in gratitude, will maintain all that God has created, we have the responsibility to maintain what the CREATOR has created for us. And we can only do that, we can only serve him when we have the reciprocal process with HIM where we have to strive to work on ourselves to be able to be of service to HIM and to the creation. So, I think if we don't wish to serve HIM and our own work is based around that wish, you know other things can happen. But the motivation, whether religious motivation or conscience or whatever longing one has to serve the CREATOR and Gurdjieff is pretty clear about that in *The Tales* when he presents this to ENDLESSNESS about the relationship we have with our father and if that underpins our Work on ourselves, it is more likely that we will be safe and that for me is the only way to steer clear of that motivation.

KEITH: But I think one of the points about Jan's perspective on this, and I am sure she will be willing to share her perspective when she gets here, but she is right, majorly right in this sense, the world out there today, the world that we all come from and go back into, and that many of us still have jobs inside of and the work that we do, is not at all like we have been talking about.

At every turn out there everything is so organized that it is *our* profit, it is *our* getting ahead, it is making more, it is winning the race, it is all of this. It seems to me that there is very, very little in the world out there and I think you all have a clear notion of what is meant by out there, in the world of politics and economics, that most of that has to travel through or have some relationship to everyday. Just turn on the television, or live through the political season of hates and threats and that's all out there. It's very real, very powerful. It inevitably gets inside each of us. There is no way to stay pristine pure about what is going on out there. We can't get up in the morning before it assaults us one way or another and I think part of what Jan was referring to is that if we feel we are privileged and inside something that really has nothing to do with that world out there, just pursuing this in here, that's a mistake. Because *we are* part of that world and we interact and interface with that world every day. How do we do that? And this is my point about self-other. If our interaction with the world out there with individual people is not open to *including* other in this pursuit, whatever it is

that we share in that moment, then we can't legitimately claim that we are engaged in an activity that is *inclusive* of others.

PARTICIPANT: For me the Work would include the other and it is partly because I wish to see through the illusion of self. I actually want that practice to keep going *in* me of seeing through the images created in the three brains of this imaginary self, which is highlighted by the survival triads. The imaginary self isn't the will to be, but it is at the center point of each of the survival triads. In all three of the survival triads is the self that is surviving. And when I include other that defense mechanism that wants to be at one of the survival points—dissolves, a little bit at a time; and a new image is created in me, one that is quite reversed in the survival, quite reversed.



KEITH: Quite reversed. Yes. My whole work now and I no longer have a private practice but I am still engaged in the nursing home where there are roughly 70-75 people that I am responsible for. Of those 70-75 people, easily 60% of them are demented individuals. They

don't know what today is really and often they don't even know what time it is. Sometimes they don't know who they are but almost all of them have very strong opinions about one thing or another. This is my world. You go into this world and here are all of these people who are demented and I go down to visit them and they start telling me about what Uncle Fred is doing to the property and how he has wasted all her money and here is this 92 year old woman and she's chasing every male in the facility. At the age of 92 she has still got this thing about men. And so when she has a chance she'll go over snuggle into bed with a man. Now this is her world. How to be in that world with that person, how to take her *humanness* into consideration, how are we called upon to be with respect to this 92-year old demented individual? In a sense, I take that as how to make an effort to be with each of the nurse's aides, with each of the nurses that care for these individuals and they do a great job. They are so patient and understanding of the circumstance of life in a dementia community. And they are very forgiving and accepting and very adroit, very able to move around the overt manifestation of the dementia in such a way that peace reins most of the time. And that it doesn't break out into warfare, which it so easily could if these people had their way and their adventures. If their behavior was truly followed through on the basis of what they are talking about, because they can be very verbally and accusatory, they can be very violent, abusive and suspicious and whatever you do don't get talking about politics in the last six or seven months especially, because whatever connection they have, and most of them have almost no connection, but they still have a connection and they are influenced by the anger, the dismissiveness, by the hatred that is projected out there. I see this in the world of these people that they are really powerless because it gets in there and they have absolutely no way of making sense out of it. So they have to incorporate it in their world. They invent endless, endless circumstances to explain what is going on in their world.

PARTICIPANT: Is that a kind of Solioonensius in their world?

KEITH: Sure it's bound to be. It introduces a great tension and they have to resolve it somehow or other. They do it with the remarkably limited reason that they have. They project in terms of their own past. And elementally, one of the things that seems so clear, about I would say the majority of these demented individuals, is that I see their essence and their fundamental personality so clearly much of the time because a lot of the *stuff* that all of us accumulate in our world that we hide behind in terms of the way we meet life; that is all gone for them. They don't have that as a resource so like I said about this 92 year old lady that's always trying to climb in bed with any male who happens to be there, that is a very, very elemental feature of essence. That's the way she is. I talked with her and her two daughters and they just laughed and said that mom has always been like that. She's always been after the men. So I think this is confirmation that we always see the elemental features of essence, of fundamental personality that suddenly burst to the forefront in the dementia patient because there is so little else to take up any kind of push toward manifestation. The only push toward manifestation is what's there. It is very elemental. They will show the elementality and override it with all this dementia related stuff. Like, "Fred where have you been it's been so long" and she is trying to crawl into bed with him. It's not Fred, so there's this marvelous ability to invent around the dementia but it's forcibly projecting something very fundamental individually. I believe and I'm convinced myself that we all do this, we all do this. And we often hide behind it; we don't see that that's what we're up to, that we have this inability to sort out.

Part of what I mean when I spoke about the attention coming from the 12s [MI, SOL, SI 12] down to point 5 on the enneagram is to have something specific to do with the first conscious shock and that is the entry into the world of self-other, you see is away from a world that is governed by dementia. The world below that in our total mechanicalness, when I am sure you have had moments when you realize what an asinine s.o.b. you are, sometimes, that you have done, said and thought or associated pretty awful things, about people, about motivation and so forth. I think most of us have had experiences of that kind. You suddenly see that somewhere in you is this monster. And the dementia may allow some of that to kind of come to the fore. Then it is what it is.

My point is that when Gurdjieff says that we have many “i’s” and that *attention* is the only weapon that we have. We will hear this from Mr. Adie in one of the morning pre-parations. When he speaks about how absolutely critical it is to see that our attention is the only thing we do. He speaks this out when he talks about what Gurdjieff has said “man cannot do.”

But that’s not true. We have to do it. There is no choice in this; we must do. How do we do? We do with our attention. That’s how we do—*only with our attention*. That’s such a good way to put this because we, with the attention, suddenly look beyond our selves. We are attentive to what is happening out there. We are projected into the world of self-other, projected into it and then we have to deal with it. Well this is an aspect of Abrustdonis. This is the world of feeling, the feeling of relationship with other. What do I make of this situation that I am now in with this person who is really ticking me off because they are swearing about this or that? People shouldn’t do that—accusing this person of all these terrible things! So I have inside of me this *tending-to-react* to that, to argue about it or whatever. So, how do I embrace this person, this circumstance, whatever this happens to be?

This is where we get into this world of self-other, in every individual interaction that we have with each other and with the world out there. Every one of those is a challenge relative to the attention. What am I attending to when I am listening to what someone is saying? What am I attending to? Am I listening to them? Am I listening to *me* thinking about what I am going to say to counteract what they have just said? Do I spend a lot of my time putting together *my* argument which is supposed to put an end to *their* argument? Do I spend my time doing that or do I sometimes, with certain kinds of people, find that we are on the defensive, or the offensive? You always have to put up with this person. Think of their prejudice in the face of attention—if I had that attitude inside of me. And if I bring attention into that moment, you see how, for a moment at least, I can be free of that. There is no accusation when our attention is clearly on the circumstance; when there is just attention. Then there is no judgment, there is no defining, there is no constructing—we haven’t been inventing and we haven’t been associating. We are simply attending. Then the attending always brings us into relationship with what is out there.

PARTICIPANT: This relates to the questions of aim, conscience and reason because, in my experience, when it is perceived that I don’t see the person—I see my prejudice. What I experience is my belief or my objection, particularly if there is an objection towards an individual. I do not see that person I see my objection. After a whole lifetime of this I think that the experience is that conscience finally, in a way, revolts, “*no*, this is not normal, I don’t want to live this way.” Then I begin to see that all I am objecting to is what I will not confront in myself. Then reason has to come in because I have to understand. I am completely stuck in negative emotion. It’s like I see this person and I have this belief. Then my reason tells me, “*no* you do *not* see this person, you are seeing your thing. You wish to see them but you also have to digest that this is in you.”

To me this is where conscience and reason really come together. It isn't something that is unconscionable; I have to use my reason and wish and consciousness to escape from this prison. I have to go through my own garbage heap to get there. But at the same time I also have to remember when I am with this person that I wish to see. What I believe I am seeing is not that, because I saw it with X and I saw it with Y and I saw it with me, so it's not them. So to me this is a marriage of conscience and reason.

KEITH: I wish I could say I agree.

PARTICIPANT: But you don't. (Laughter)

KEITH: No because what I wanted to say all the way through there is that you haven't put attention in a way in which we can try and approach it right out front.

If I see this in myself that wants to argue, I can get lost in my argument with myself. I am associatively wound up inside and I am not paying attention. I am not attending. That's what I am saying. Gurdjieff says it in several places, he seems to say, to me, if you attend if you really put your attention on to what is happening; for a moment at least you will be free of all of that associative garbage in the time that you are attending you are free of it. Now if you do that and hold to it then over time you begin to see into it. The attention begins to capture a part of all this associative garbage. It sees that it can be free of it, deep in to moments it can be free of it. We don't resolve those things inside of us by arguing with that which is inside—reconciliation begins with acceptance. I see this inside of myself with my attention and that's where we start from. I accept that this is in me. Okay. Where do I go from there? That's the question. I wonder what began it. Why should I be that way? Why do I have this kind of suspicion with this kind of behavior? Why do I always think that because person is a male or a female that I have this associative nonsense inside myself? We do that all of the time. You see that I want to attend to something—I want to go on a hunt. I want to search out where did this come from inside.

Mrs. Popoff spent quite a bit of time admonishing us because there was a very, very popular program called "Roots." And she would say you must with your attention "you must explore the roots." And it is the attention that can do that. You can't figure your way into this. You can't argue your way into this. You can't make up reasons why you think this is important to do. No. You must see it and go through to the roots deeper and deeper. If you do you will come upon innocence.

This was so helpful to me when she said that. I was in a specific kind of difficulty and it really helped. She said if you get to the roots what you are going to find is a little innocent four-year old boy! What are you going to do with that? When this four year-old boy gets caught up in this life circumstance and gets exposed to this kind of thing and you see that in tracing the roots you're reaction now and all these life circumstances is where that begins. What do you do with that? You forgive the four-year-old child. That's what you do. You don't want that poor kid to be exposed to that kind of thing. This has happened more than once to me and it is extraordinary because it simply goes away. It's not there any longer. The four-year-old boy has been forgiven because he was innocent. So all the things, in my present moment, can end up being accusatory or suspicious or whatever they're gone because I was the one that gave them away. It was associative. I just added on and added on. So the roots are important you see.

PARTICIPANT: It's interesting. I take kids out and teach them tracking. If you come across a trail and you establish the direction the animal is moving, if it's fresh particularly, there is

always the admonition to not track the animal if you want to understand the animal, it's better to back track it. Because if you make the mistake of getting too close to it all that you are going to do is to be tracking or seeing the tracks of its behavior of you tracking it and it's not going to be the animal itself. It is better to back track because then you see it more for itself. There's a correlation between the two.

PARTICIPANT: When you were speaking about your work in the nursing home and you mentioned conscious labor and intentional suffering and one take that I have on it is that the intentional suffering is you have these reactions, like when Gurdjieff speaks about bearing the unpleasant manifestations of others which are displeasing to ourselves, and if one takes some of the responsibility, like you're responsible for these people and their manifestations are calling their lower nature and their violent reactions, but one has to bear that from a higher state of reason. This is a duty when you are in that position; one's lower nature has to bear what is needed and manifest what is needed more objectively.

KEITH: This is a marvelous preparation for real life. If one can bring this attitude, which is really an attitude of acceptance and forgiveness to this demented 92-year-old and if I suddenly realize that this is what happens at the bottom of absolute mechanism. The whole of my associative inner life is all mechanism. How can it be held responsible? How can I hold it responsible? It is simply what it is. There it is. What I can do is see it when it begins to manifest itself and each time I try to follow its roots. Where did it come from?

PARTICIPANT: For me the key to bear the unpleasant manifestations of others was to learn to bear the unpleasant manifestations of my mechanism. It's that simple.

KEITH: Say that again would you please.

PARTICIPANT: We must learn to bear the unpleasant manifestations of others, of our attitudes towards our image of ourselves then, other people are not a problem. I don't want to accept my own nature because it clashes with my elevated image I have of who I am which is usually better than I am which is usually better than the other person.

PARTICIPANT: I would be interested to hear what Jan says when she gets here, but what I hear when she expresses that is a sense that there is a process that is not being fulfilled and her perception is that things get stuck at a certain level and that level has a certain inherent egoism to it relative to people's understanding of why they work. That's sort of how I understand that.

The devil's advocate part of that for myself is, as I listen to you speak and listen to us speak, it's inherent in the way we express that there is an I that must be present in order for there to be an observation of what's coming up mechanically in myself. In order to be separate from that, separate from what my perception is of the outside world and my relationship with other, inherent in that is the presumption or the striving for an independent individuality, an independent individuality that can be separate from that in the moment. So I can go back and I can start to create, based on all my readings of Gurdjieff, that there is no point discussing altruism with oneself until one has decided to be an out and out egoist, that one should have one's own I or the Master, etc.. You can build this perspective that in the beginning is the realization that one is a machine and coming to an aim to be independent. I think that that theme is carried throughout *Beelzebub's Tales*. Right at the outset in the "Arousing of Thought" all the way through to the quote that you

read earlier from the Reason-of-Understanding, when he finishes that section, he closes that with an indication regarding the Reason-of-Understanding resulting in an independent individuality; he opens his wish for everyone.

So it seems, regardless of what one would come to over years of effort in that direction that there is an inherent something about that that has to be a part of this picture. There has to be that which can be simultaneously with other because we can't speak of self-other; we can't speak of it in the higher aspects that we talk about, so there seems to me to be a stage at least at which that isn't an appropriate perspective for one to have. So, perhaps it is a case that, with maturity, one comes to the point where one sees there must be that that has a limitation from that perspective. I don't think that that can be lost or gone around because otherwise it seems to me we end up in a somewhat Eastern Buddhist perspective that doesn't require the degree of self-inquiry and personal understanding because it sees all of that as illusions that have been created as a result of the mechanicality in which everyone finds themselves.

KEITH: At the very bottom, each of us, when we try to track our biological past, certainly our physical body and all of its organ systems as they unfold—they unfold from our DNA. There is something in each of us relative to our DNA that is *absolutely unique*. On the planet Earth there is not another human being who has exactly the same DNA as each of us.

What I am trying to refer to here at a very elemental level, which I think carries on through the unfolding of the DNA into the life of the individual, is that there is a *uniqueness*—it is there at the very, very bottom—there is something that says “I am this.”

And, it should speak for itself—it should speak very strongly for itself because that is where we have to begin. If we have other possibilities that come from the use of attention to explore Higher Emotional and Higher Intellectual Centers or Abrustdonis, Helkdonis and the creation of a separate body or bodies, those are not given in the DNA of the individual. They are not given.

You see there is something, and Gurdjieff said in a number of different contexts, that higher beings had been on the planet Earth, *truly higher beings are all the same*. When we go through the four quadrant exercise we identify those great sacred teachers of the past and he is saying that they are all the same. Now that is a very paradoxical state; to say that the great mythic figures of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism are the same. To say that is a big, big thing, to say that they are all the same. But they are different from the DNA.

I think this ties in with what Harry was saying. Our uniqueness, and we are really each of us unique—that uniqueness is not something that we cannot escape as long as we have a physical body. As long as we are alive in a physical sense, we are going to have a physical body that is structured around the unfolding, elaboration and compounding of that DNA. But there is still a uniqueness, so that each of us when we stand up and speak or manifest in any way there is an I, there is an I that is unique. And we each need that, so eventually the hope in coming to the being of Kesdjan and Higher-being Body, that we depart from that.

You see when we die, when Gurdjieff speaks about the first Rascoarno—he's talking about leaving the actual physical body and that would be an interesting exploration for us to take here together. What does it mean when you die? What are we talking about here? If there is such a thing as a Kesdjanian existence—what in the world does that have to do with us? And if you are to have a Higher-being Body that is to live beyond Kesdjan, as the Kesdjan finally dissolves, what does all that mean? What is inferred about that?

But here in this context, to connect up to what Harry referred to, with the coming of Kesdjan and Higher Being-body, we are no longer at that stage; we are no longer focused or elementally connected to the physical body. This raises so many interesting questions about, for instance, the nature of Kesdjan.

We haven't spoken, to any degree, about Kesdjan and what this means. Is your Kesdjan different from my Kesdjan? If someone who has had truly a developed, well-formed and matured Kesdjan, can your Kesdjan become associated with that Kesdjan? Are you both existing in the same world? If so, what world? What does that open into? What does the world of Kesdjan open into? For me, these are really interesting questions to try and have a look at.

But the most important one for our conversation here is to connect up with what Harry said and that is, yes, we have a unique DNA and that uniqueness of our DNA in our physical, bodily sense is something that we really should *mark and treasure* because it is unique and is an elemental level of I. But then comes this other question of how do we leave that behind? which is what the exploration of Kesdjan and Higher Being-body really concerns—leaving the world of the physical body behind.

PARTICIPANT: It brings up thoughts about mitochondria and that whole thing. I remember many years ago reading Lewis Thompson's *The Lives of the Cells*. He comments upon this whole notion that we have other things in each and every cell. We have this notion that we carry them around but really it's them carrying us around and this whole idea of that different other identity is really the bank; it is like the cash flow that makes all of this work possible. It is an interesting way to think also about this whole world of Kesdjan. If I was following that analogy, I would say that our Kesdjan are all the same. And the same with what you are talking about with the Great Traditions and the Great Initiates—they are identical. It appears in the cultures or the times, that's the energy flow that carries us in our journey.

KEITH: I love to get into mitochondria [Keith was reminded it was time to break] so this is a good to ponder over lunch, the mitochondria now in us.

We have cellular mitochondria; they inhabit the nuclei of our cells and we have cellular mitochondria which inhabit the cytoplasm of the cell.

The mitochondria in the cell is not the same as the mitochondria in the nucleus. In the cell, the mitochondria come about at the moment of fertilization. When the sperm enters the egg at the moment of fertilization, its tail falls off. In that tail is all of the male mitochondria. No male mitochondria get into the ovum. Interesting question.

That means that all of our cellular mitochondria, yours, mine, everybody's, is all from the female. Big questions this raises—big questions. The cellular mitochondria are female. Amongst other things, and in all the derivatives, the mitochondria are the energy manufacturers for the cell and for the whole of the body, eventually. Those mitochondria, through the manufacture of ATP, drive the cell mechanisms of the cell and eventually the entire body. And to consider that all of that, in the cellular sense, is all female derived just raises some very interesting questions.

PARTICIPANT: What about the nuclear?

KEITH: That has to do with the replication of the entire cell because it contains the DNA of the entire cell.

PARTICIPANT: So there are still no male nuclei.

KEITH: Right. If you go all the way back—and this is where it gets kind of murky because I am talking about billions of years and the record, from a microscopic perspective as biologists look into this, it gets very difficult to follow. For instance, there is a conjecture that the mitochondria actually have their origin as separate cells. They were quite sufficient to manufacture their own energy systems.

PARTICIPANT: In bacteria.

KEITH: You could call it that but they were separate organisms and they were either eaten by or they were invaded by other larger cells which already had a nucleus with its own DNA. But they've got their DNA in the mitochondria and it worked out (and this how the biologists elaborate on this) to be a very fortunate, self-supportive arrangement for both sides—for both the mitochondria that had a foreign origin and for the cell itself that became the host for these mitochondria.

Over time, they came to be mutually self-supportive, such that every cell eventually through bacteria and through the great division that produced the Tetartocosmos or multi-celled beings—all of that through this replication process continued on so that exactly where the DNA of the cell nucleus came from at its origin, from what I understand, is still a big mystery. So whether that's male-female initially, in its origin, we are now back into cellular biology that is in the microcosmic range, in Gurdjieff's terms.

When we see that life appears on the planet Earth, we see first Microcosmos and then we get Tetartocosmos and then multi-celled beings of various forms but, for three billion years, it was all one cell. Every form of life on the planet was all one-celled beings. And only then, only when the remarkable bridge to a multi-celled creature—only when that was bridged finally, did we begin to see the elaboration that led to the present concentrations we have of multi-celled beings and we have all kinds of clams and mussels—there are thousands and thousands of species of multi-celled beings that are unbrained and from that, we get these two great differentiations. One around chlorophyll around plants...it is interesting, we could go into the chemistry of the chlorophyll molecule and how it serves a certain function relative to photosynthesis and how, exchanging from that central portion of the molecule, another element and you get something remarkably close to that which can function around neural cell growth. So the exact same process in one great unfolding from Tetartocosmos into the whole of plant life from another unfolding comes all the potential of brained life. It is a very thrilling, interesting notion that here, that which is going to support the whole of this comes and they both emerge in this great unfolding from Tetartocosmos.