

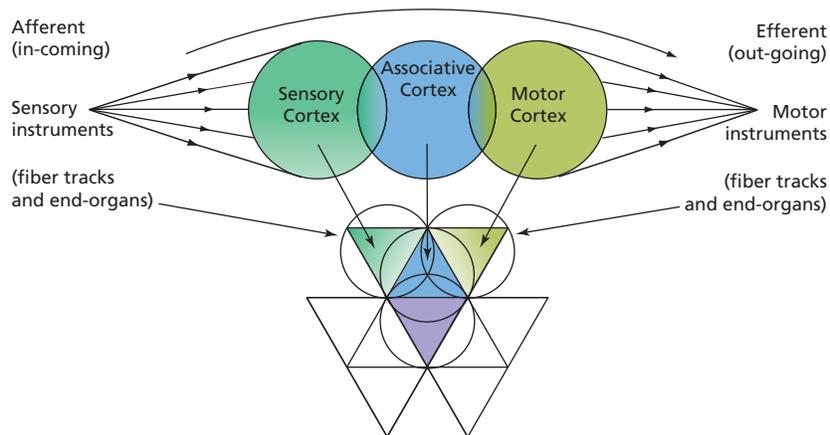
OCTOBER GATHERING 2016 ~ SATURDAY AFTERNOON

READING: J.G. Bennett, *Deeper Man*, P 225

The possibility is given to us of forming a vessel which will cross the ālam-I arvāh and reach the spiritual world. Then it can be discarded. This vessel is the body Kesdjan. Gurdjieff describes, the state of the substance of the inner world in ordinary man is like a cloud. It is amorphous, without any coherence of its own. It temporarily takes up the 'shape' of whatever physical part is attracting our interest. At one time it is a mouth, at another an eye, at another an anus and so on. If life is lived like that, then only the very barest kind of organization is produced, because without the body it is always in a state of dream. Many of the exercises that we do are aimed at producing some coherence in this substance. We learn how to use our attention to separate and blend the various energies of which it is made. This is what is meant by alchemy. Besides this active work, it is also necessary to practice meditation or something of the kind in which we do not try to do anything. If we can become quiet enough, the energies settle into their appropriate places in us and can coalesce to form the second body. We can call whatever state this substance is in the 'soul', but we have to remember that this is a relative term: some souls are much more substantial than others.

KEITH: There is a very interesting *intimation* in our practice of sensing. It is interesting to explore if we go with it far enough, far enough relative to what is its purpose. We can understand that it is trying to bring us into contact with our physical body, so that we are physically *really present* in whatever the life-flow of events is. And we do this by sensing.

I want you to bring up whatever picture of the nervous system that you have in mind. We are so built that there are afferent and efferent nerves. Afferent means coming back in from the periphery to the brain through the spinal cord. Efferent means going out the brain or the spinal cord to the periphery.



When you sense and you reach out with attention, you reach out into your leg or your arm. The question is

what is the root? How does that neural process go on?

PARTICIPANT: I am thinking arm but I am connecting with my image of my arm.

KEITH: So I can intentionally do that; if I do it with intention. If I have an aim to sense my arm, it is logical in what we know about neurophysiology to conclude that what is really going on is in the brain itself, that we are making a neural connection inside the brain. We know that inside the brain that if we continue to make certain kinds of efforts. This could be learning how to play ping-pong, it could be learning to swim, learning a language or to studying physics or playing the piano.

There are multiple pathways in the brain that are explored, specific pathways that are explored when we are learning a particular skill. If we are studying language, it is the language part of the brain that becomes very involved. There are many, many interconnections that are explored. If you try at our adult age to learn a new form of language, we know how difficult it is, trial and trial to get the pronunciation right, to use words in sentences, to communicate with it. It takes a long time with a lot of practice.

It is the repetition that I want to go after, because literally what we have been able to demonstrate in recent neurophysiologic research on the brain is that we literally build new pathways. Pathways that have never existed before in the brain are made when we make efforts of a certain kind—efforts in a direction that do not come naturally. You don't know how to play ping-pong because you are born, you have to practice it; or to play an instrument or to do many things. So there is this repetition and this exploration that has to go on and on and on. However, the end result of that exploration and repetition is that we build new pathways. And those pathways over hundreds of thousands or millions of years get passed on. In other words, our capacity for language was not there five hundred thousand years ago. Our capacity for nuclear physics was not there ten thousand years ago. You can say that the brain was there yes, yes. Were the neural pathways that make all that exploration possible? Not necessarily. They had to be built. How do you build them? By experimenting, by trying, so we try to communicate.

Go back to early man fifty to seventy thousand years ago when he was trying to talk and share information to another human being. Just think of how experimental that was. If you put yourself in that position of saying something about food to this other being, or we have to pick up something to move it out of the way and he has to help me do that because it is too heavy for me. How do I communicate that?

So there are many, many ways to understand how human beings, in the course of thousands and thousands of years, how we have built new pathways in our brain. It was not all there at the beginning. Because the brain is adaptable and because we, on a cellular basis, are adaptable, we can build new pathways.

So let's now come to something. We build new pathways and for us to sense in ordinary life is a new activity. Who goes around in ordinary life sensing? Why would I do such a crazy thing as that? Why do I try to sense my foot? That doesn't serve any purpose. There is no reason for doing that. But we do. We explore as all people who make effort in this direction and build new neural pathways. Over time in the distant future, perhaps, those neural pathways having been laid down will become more readily available. Just like languages for us now, the use of our hands as far as now compared to how it was fifty thousand years ago.

So over time with our efforts to sense neurologically we are going to build pathways in our brain that generationally goes on into the future and it is going to make it easier and more possible to build those new neural pathways—until maybe it begins to happen from

birth. Imagine what our life would be if you had been sensing your body all of your life.

If you were aware of your body all the time, asleep, awake—every moment you're sensing—not because you make a conscious effort but because it simply is the way that you were put together, what a marvelous, marvelous development that would be. That would mean in the future we would not have to do any special work because, it would already be there. Why would that be so terribly unusual if in the future I could sense my leg? What does it do for me now? In my physical body does it do anything? In the physical world every day, does it do anything? Well maybe, maybe. If I put it down in terms of movements, in terms of other kinds of conscious effort maybe it does play a significant role. But maybe in the distant future it becomes something that we are born with. When you sense, Gurdjieff tells us that we are building atmosphere around our moon.

Now if Moon, in the analogy that we began with yesterday in Earth–Moon–Anulios, if Moon is our planetary body, it is our physical body; if we are building an atmosphere around the physical body through sensing, in helping to build its atmosphere, am I not assisting evolution? Am I not assisting the evolution of the physical body?

We spoke earlier about how it is essential to see involution and evolution perhaps in a very different way by including the requirement for us to participate in the evolution of the lower worlds. Not just our own world of our thoughts and feelings and so forth but if it has also to do with the world of our physical body that we have an obligation, a responsibility to assist that physical body in its evolution to a higher state of consciousness? Certainly if the body had built into it something that led it to sense itself from the beginning of its life of manifestation, we could truthfully say it is more conscious. The body is more conscious, more conscious of itself. So in Gurdjieff's terms more consciousness has entered the world. The moon has developed an atmosphere. And who knows what that future is?

If the moon in Gurdjieff's terms, if moons become earths [planets] and earths [planets] become suns, those are difficult images for us to deal with in today's terms of astronomy as we understand where moons come from and where earths [planets] come from and then we turn that all around, all upside down and then say look the Earth is growing to become a sun.

If we take it in the terms that, as perhaps Gurdjieff was intending us to take it—in human terms, then it is a different question. Then it is a different question to ask what the future of sensing is. We meet that responsibility of assisting our physical body to become more conscious, what does that do to our consciousness right now, just now in these moments do we become more conscious? Obviously we do. If consciousness is something that belongs to the totality of our physical body it, if we really come to realize that I am in my physical body and that a third of my being is in the physical body, then anything that assists that physical body becoming more conscious is a big deal—an important thing to do and an important effort to make, to bring into greater consciousness.

When we struggle with these concepts of Abrustdonis and Helkdonis, which are all efforts to move up the Ray [of Creation] to get into the upper octave of Air and into the octave of Impressions, we have also to remember in that effort to move up we also have responsibilities moving down and those are very personal responsibilities.

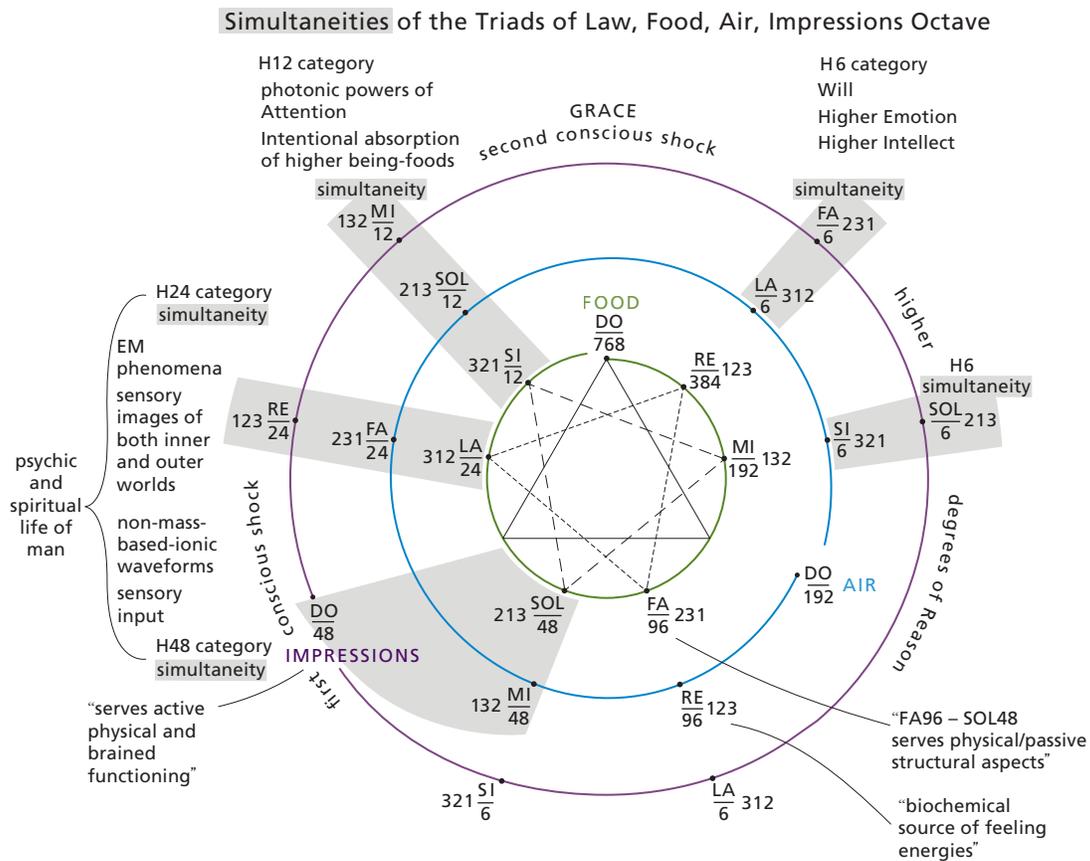
Responsibility to sense is what our aim should be, because it is possible. It is not imaginary at all. Certainly it is not imaginary in my experience. It is possible to have a continuing sense of the body for long, long periods of time, hours at a time. When you're always sensing the body is not an impossibility and for me it is that, not twenty four hours a day, every minute, not yet, but it may be in the future that it becomes conscious. So, if I become conscious of this portion of my being then I am really talking about something that is a big deal relative

to my own future.

I'm talking about Abrustdonis and Helkdonis, of making the effort to coalesce Kesdjan and Higher Being-body and I am doing something now with the physical body. I am working on my being and if I don't make that effort I am not working as I could have worked in the whole of my being.

So participating in that marvelous exercise of Mr. Adie's this morning, when we speak then of the body, we speak of sensation and then "I Am." Really we are incorporating the physical body, the physical aspect of being, of "I Am" into this whole effort. That becomes something really special and something that is more and more possible that we can do that, and to assist the physical body to become more conscious.

Are there questions or impressions that you would like to share relative to illustration and questions that have to do with the digestive octaves of Air or Impressions? One of the most intriguing and interesting efforts in the world is to bring spirit and the electro-diagnostic together. Matthieu Ricard,¹ he is a marvelous spokesman. Google him and you will bump



into a very interesting and remarkable guy.

PARTICIPANT: Just a simple question, could you please define the meaning of atmosphere? The atmosphere in the body what does that mean? Maybe my image is not that good.

KEITH: No—your image is fine. It is just that it is like the Earth's. The Earth has an atmos-

1 https://www.ted.com/talks/matthieu_ricard_on_the_habits_of_happiness

phere; where does that atmosphere come from? It comes from many places, right? But one of the major things that keep contributing to it is the activity of the world of plants. For us it contributes oxygen and oxygen is something that we are absolutely dependent upon for our life. We begin to realize that we are contributing to increasing consciousness in the atmosphere. Actually many people share impressions that there is something vibrating outside of my physical body. I can sense it. That's very, very difficult to talk about, how are we going to talk about the atmosphere around your leg or your arm, we're sounding crazy. It is very difficult—what's there? You know there is nothing observable. The atmosphere is something that we are subjectively and objectively, in terms of our attention aware of. We are aware of the activity; the livingness of the tissue is producing life on the planet produces and contributes to its atmosphere. Does that help?

PARTICIPANT: When you say atmosphere it is also inside? Is that right—there is a vibration inside?

KEITH: It's continuous. We find air wherever we go. We can dig a hole and it is still there. There is no place where there is not air or things that contribute to that. When we think of the physical body there are many things that contribute to the atmosphere of the physical body. For now, those have to do with elements that are in the world of electromagnetic impulses and forces and those we can't paint, we cannot put a color on them, we cannot say anything about an experiment that you can prove it. Down the road it wouldn't surprise me at all that we would develop this sensitivity. You see what we are able to do. Remember you saw Matthieu Ricard's picture on the magazine as the happiest man in the world? Do you know who he is? Matthieu Ricard is a Frenchman, his parents were in one of Bennett's groups early on and this is going way, way back. Matthieu became a biologist, a PhD in chemical biology and molecular biology and at the age of 25 he decided he wanted to become a priest. So he went to India and became a Buddhist. He is a very intimate friend of the Dalai Lama and he is the leader in America of an effort that has been going on now for almost twenty years at the University of Wisconsin in doing MRI and other electro-diagnostic evaluations of brain function among meditators. It is he, for now over thirty years brought Buddhist monks to the United States and had them all wired up and do serial MRIs of what is happening inside their brains and where is that happening.

We had an interesting conversation with him and he wouldn't remember us from a hole in the wall because he was trying to talk with 150 people during one of the breaks at the seminars that the Dalai Lama puts on and we were fortunate enough to get down to Washington for that. It was one of the early seminars that the Dalai Lama was a sponsor of. When the Dalai Lama left for a couple of hours to meet with the president surreptitiously, Matthieu simply came down off the podium and mixed with all the people. He was carrying on conversations with everybody and we had our opportunity to have a little conversation with him, he is very outgoing, gregarious very warm but also he has over 40,000 documented hours of meditation. He meditates on the average 4-5 hours a day, still does and that is part of his life routine.

Now I suspect that he has an atmosphere around his body. I strongly expect that he has been assisting his physical body into a real presence into the world. In any case I mention that because it is an effort that is going on in the world of neurophysiology using modern instruments that have become immensely subtle. It is very surprising the kinds of things that they have been able to dig out.

For instance with Matthieu, they have recorded that part of his brain that lights up and it lights up more than any other brain that they have ever seen examined and the title on the front page of Time magazine that he is the happiest man in the world because this area in the parietal lobe is exactly where all the other meditator's, and ordinary people like you and I, we light up the same areas, whereas ours are less intense. Still and all this is modern neurophysiology. They are climbing inside of machines documenting that these kinds of changes are taking place. So down the road, in the next 20-30-40 years we have no idea what is going to be unearthed so far as neural capacities, as far as identifying further and further events that take place inside of the brain.

PARTICIPANT: Do any of these machines work on the level of emanation? Do they read something outside the body or is it all inside?

KEITH: So far the only thing that I know that is trying to go another direction is to use pulse magnetic waves as an exploration in the treatment of depression. In other words, they bring a magnet with strong magnetic pulses up close; in this case it is over here on the lateral-frontal area. Over a period of time they have pulsed this at high levels of magnetic pulses and they knew where to go for this because previous experiments have shown that there are documented electroencephalographic changes in the brain when you hit it with magnetic impulses. The one study that I read about was surprisingly successful for a while. The depressive symptoms that the patient was complaining of, there were 30-40 patients in the study, were markedly reduced for a period of a month or two, something like that. It wasn't established as a treatment program for them because the research program simply used the pulse, saw what happened and published it. And, as has happened in so many things in medicine, everybody walked away from it. No one that I know of has gone anywhere with it. That there is an influence from outside inside, we know that. It is just that it is still simply asking the question is there an influence. Yes, there is an influence. There have been some fragmentary and frightening studies, negative studies done on high power lines close to children's schools, play areas and most of us have some familiarity about that. They have a very negative implication about the dangers, the injuries that can come from that kind of thing.

So relative to the digestive octaves of Air and Impressions, are there any questions? Is this very straightforward so far as the illustrations are concerned now?

PARTICIPANT: I would like to ask a question about what you said earlier. We use this phrase, "to grow new connections". I am wondering whether we have a physiological basis yet to understand this. New dendrites grow? Does it mean that neurons ... that there is a seeking out? What is *it* that is seeking out? For instance, I want to figure out how to sense my leg, but I don't know what you are talking about. So I sit here and try to sense my leg and try again but there are not yet new connections. What's going on? I am wondering if we understand what is moving along the neurons and seeking a magnetic field, feeling its way into all the neurons and moving stuff around."

KEITH: Paul MacLean tells the story, not about himself, about investigators in neurophysiology because he was asked questions like you're asking and they kept after him because he would give this very complex kind of answer about some experiment that he had done. More and more frustration showed up in the group and finally one of them said "no, no more of this sophisticated scientific stuff."

What does a brain do? And he thought about that for a while and he says "brains hunt." The question was "What do they hunt for?" Significance, significance.

What they've found in answer to your question, which is a good question but has a marvelously precise answer—it hunts. It sends out dendrites. It sends out little projections from the nerve cell body—it just sends them out in all directions until something significant happens. It is still hunting, hunting for what—significance.

What does it mean? Does it mean anything? Well if we are trying to gain a new skill, whether studying a language, hand-eye coordination or whatever it is and something happens in that arena in that part of the brain that has significance because it relates some aspect of those functions, then the brain pursues that. Then it builds more dendrites and a more sure connection. Then if those dendrites make sure of those connections then it begins to insulate them. Insulation, a fatty material begins to incorporate along that dendritic fiber. Why, to insulate it? To make sure that stays open and is going to be more usable from moment to moment. This happens in our brain all the time especially when we explore, when we have new ideas, when we explore with new sensations, with new activities, like when working on Movements. Movements are a marvelous way to stimulate the brain, the neuromuscular parts of the brain, to stimulate new pathways. We are all the time trying to figure out how to do it. And we never get it exactly right. We are always trying to bring together multiple coordinated motions that have a certain meaning and that meaning is in another part of the brain so we have to build new dendritic processes extending into those parts of the brain.

PARTICIPANT: You keep saying we. And the current terminology is the brain does this, as if the brain is some independent entity.

KEITH: Well it's your brain, it's my brain, and we choose to be possessive, but ...

PARTICIPANT: We did a really fun thing with the kids at school on brain growth and we talked about how we make new neural connections. They had four maps with pictures of the brain. And on the first one they had two sides using a very thin thread for a connection and when you practice a skill more they put on a thicker piece of string as the skill would grow. And the last time a piece of straw was put on as they mastered a skill. It was fun as an adult even to visualize this process. At first the connection was very thin because the journey had been made only once and then the pathways became stronger and stronger. The insulated pathways had been established.

KEITH: This should be very encouraging to us, now, right here in this room, that this kind of thing makes such sense. It is true with us. The more effort, the more pathways, the more there is a built-in urge, and this is one thing that I think we can feel very positive about because there is hope—hope is buried in this.

If I have this visualization of these little filaments reaching out, if I confirm this hunting it is going on inside of me—it's not going on because I make the effort for it to hunt. I didn't make my brain. My brain hunts because that's what brains are for. Brains are for hunting and bringing meaning and significance to whatever it encounters in thought, in feeling and in motion.

PARTICIPANT: Another thing that I have begun to notice is how we practice three notes and we struggle and get a little better, like you are saying, but then we stop for a few seconds or change the subject or have a break, and during that little break time something happens on the down time that made it easier and more concise when you come back to it. If you wait the next day, it's gone, but if you come right back to it there's a jump towards better, quicker.

KEITH: We know exactly how that happens. Because what happens in the in-between is that

the neural fibers that have been sent out and didn't bring back information that is useful, those are given up. Then there are tracks that do bring a reward of information that is useful and those are maintained. All the other tracks that were going on, perhaps at the same time, those are given up if no information is given back.

PARTICIPANT: I see that.

PARTICIPANT: There is something that I realize as an adult when I make the negative connections and pathways, where I've got negative emotion, and the more I am feeling then the negative part gets stronger and stronger. So that's the importance of not going into the negative pathways, because then if we stop all the pathways being made they will close up again. Their connections then close up. It's made me realize that if I'm feeling negative thoughts their getting bigger and wider and then I stop my thoughts and then the brain's plasticity will close them.

KEITH: Yes, all the time. You starve them.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, they can't grow again.

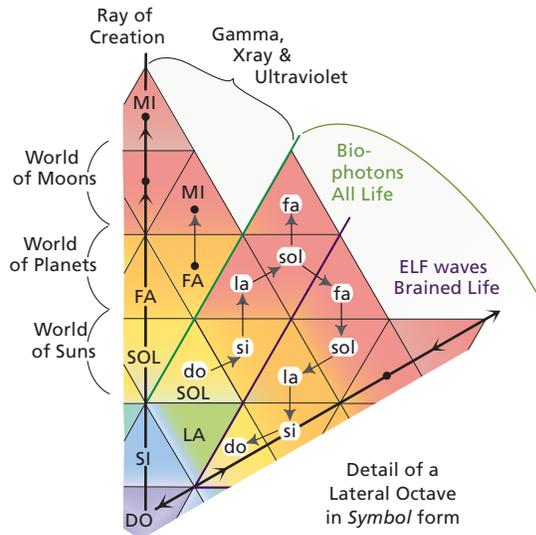
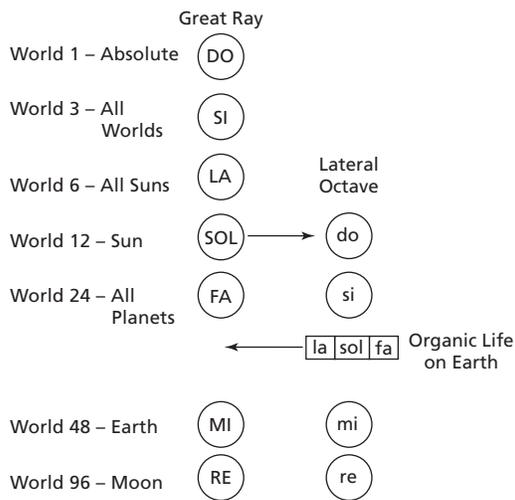
PARTICIPANT: So brains are designed to hunt. All brains are designed to hunt. All brains hunt in search for meaning, meaning for whom, meaning for what? It seems as if something is learning to use the machine and program it first.

KEITH: Well can we see that first in terms of the physical body and then in growth patterns in children we begin to see them socially interact and test out their problems, what they like, what disturbs them. So they begin not just in the physical sense but also beginning really on the emotional sense to interact and they build pathways.

PARTICIPANT: And that is supported by what? That we sense that we divide our attention, that we try and explore higher feelings? That is not about like in a sense. So it seems to me that we come back to this mystery of me, my, I and learning to break up inside its body, to break up inside its nervous system and its brain and learn to have this tension to redesign it.

KEITH: One way to approach this is to bring it into relationship with the question of function of life on Earth. If we see that from the sun, the do of the lateral octave, and the si being the planetary world, in the solar world we are dealing almost exclusively with energies, formless, there are no masses that we give great consideration to when we are talking about solar, or do of the Lateral Octave or we're talking about energies, high energies; conscious and directed energies, but they have to interact with the world of particles, atoms and molecules in order to bring into realization something in that world of molecules and atoms that is a manifestation of the pattern. The pattern derives from the solar world, the do of the Lateral Octave. When that pattern, which I believe that original imprint is the great enneagram [Ray of Creation], the enneagrammatic expression of life in all of its inner and outer relationships and all of its potential is contained in the do-si of the lateral octave.

Do-si leads into the la-sol-fa, the la-sol-fa then being the connecting link in the Lateral Octave which has to be completed to the mi. It has to be completed appropriately so the la-sol-fa is Microcosmos, which for four billion years is the only kind of manifestation of life, of the impulse that has come through the planetary world of atoms and molecules; we are an expression of that, each living thing on the planet is an expression of that. But the first that comes is the Microcosmos or one-celled life. It took four billions years and that is where the experimenting went on. Just imagine how much experimentation can go on, how much trial

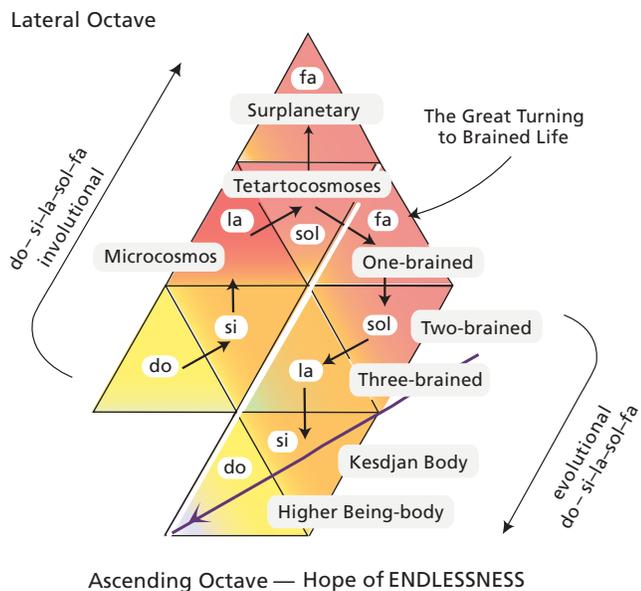


and error can go on in four billion years. That's fantastic. We have no real notion of what that involved.

It is not repetition of the same thing because built in, built in to the Law, the enneagrammatic expression of the intervals and the unexpectednesses at every single octave, there is going to be experimentation and many, many failures. There are many Microcosmos that no longer exist. We have evidence of that on the planet. But they died out. What did they die out? Well a whole bunch of things caused this. They ran out of food or ran into cosmos that were bigger than they were; there are all kinds of reasons.

However, finally comes this experiment in learning how to get along with other cells. And the first evidence that we have is *not* that the one cell repeated itself in terms of reproduction. Before that, began the experiment of *living with other*.

And this is where the mitochondria comes in. The original suppositions, now in microbiological terms, there were little life-forms there were essentially mitochondria that had energy systems inside of themselves that produced sufficient energy for that life-form to continue to operate. It could bring in sufficient molecular forms from the outside world. It could defend itself on the surface and so it was able to persist. So, at some point in time and it's only four billion years old, the supposition is, the evidence gets very, very complex and not at all easy to dig out—the supposition is that these little tiny microbial cells, these energy systems were incorporated or eaten, if you will, by bigger cells.



The difference being that when they entered into the cell it was into the cytoplasm not the nucleus because the nucleus had its own energy system. But the energy system that came inside of it were so beneficial to the whole cell that the whole cell decided it wasn't going to eat and digest it because it was a ready source of fuel. It could make ATP and the ATP could enter into the Krebs cycle and be used in the digestion of sugars and so on. Energy would come out the other end that would help cells survive.

So very early, while it is still Microcosmos, these energy systems begin to appear inside of cells. Eventually the cells begin to share and this goes back to what we talked about earlier when I talked about neural influences or electromagnetic influences where you have cells that have charge on their exterior. Cells begin to develop increasingly complex forms of charge on their external coating. In other words, the molecules begin to line the exterior coating of the cells and they themselves begin to develop sensitivities; sensitivities, for instance, in the immediate vicinity, out there in the environment. Is it food? Is it something that can be made use of? Well, it has markers, it has charges on its surface. Are they compatible with the charges on another surface? If not, it is rejected and not gone after. It may be avoided or moved away from or it may move to incorporate it and use it as food. Eventually that begins to happen between cells where they begin to explore each other as to whether or not it will become beneficial to become incorporated or beneficial to live separately. And these cells begin to blend.

PARTICIPANT: Keith may I ask a question? The earliest mitochondria that you talked about were they also female?

KEITH: We don't know.

PARTICIPANT: Along that same line, have you looked into, because earliest cells with a nucleus, those prokaryotic organisms with the blue-green, I mean with the green algae and too, there were more of the blue-green non-nucleated species? It seems to be interesting because they were capable of synthesizing energy just from chemicals as opposed to blue-green algae coming along and photosynthesizing, transforming energy via photosynthesis. So those first, and you were saying that the mitochondria of the DNA is different from the mitochondria of the cytoplasm. So, what do you think about how those nucleated prokaryotic organisms developed? Do we know where those mitochondria came in?

KEITH: Another version of the same question, no we don't. The answer may be out there but it is an intriguing question where it came from originally. But much of it is singularly around sexuality. In other words, we have non-sexual reproduction; non-sexual life-forms for a long period of time and so sexuality only entered the issue here along the line of this differentiation billions of years ago. Still and all it wasn't at the very beginning as far as we know. So part of it is all wrapped up in these historical states that are so distant that when you try to find evidence of them in living organisms it is very difficult, extraordinarily difficult.

PARTICIPANT: So you have talked about pheromones about being a way to exchange information between living things—what creates that pheromone? Is it the mitochondria in the cell?

KEITH: The mitochondria supply the energy for it. Think of the mitochondria as an energy producer. It produces ATP (adenosine triphosphate bond), ADP (adenosine diphosphate

bond) or AMP (adenosine monophosphate). Why is this distinctive? Because the second and the third bonding energy to hold to phosphate in orbit require more energy, so if you can get it to stick it contains more energy in it. It gives up a higher level of energy in terms of the bond through whatever process it becomes involved with. ATP becomes involved in the digestion of sugar and glucose, breaking down into smaller usable substances. In that sense the mitochondria provides energy whatever the manufacturing process is going to be including breaking down proteinaceous substances, carbon based substances, fatty substances and so on.

PARTICIPANT: So it is still a female-based something?

KEITH: Well that is where the confusion comes in and the question that Zeke had as well. Do we know where that begins to occur because there is an interesting inference and if it has always been like that, then it gives an interesting dominance to the female influence throughout all life? So it is an important question but I don't know that anybody has any definitive answer.

PARTICIPANT: I would like to go back to the reading and my question, and we have talked about this before, that what I have come across is this conflict in myself and the conflict I feel, maybe not in the structure but the emphasis of the Work. I don't know how to put this but we were talking about the body Kesdjan and the coalescing of certain aspects of the body Kesdjan being an aim or a result perhaps of any one of our lives efforts may produce. But on the other hand I have this profound sense of unimportance, this really strong sense of my own nothingness, my own insignificance in these cosmic processes. Yet I also have a visceral and personal understanding of the Work, this Work, any form of Work, as having an aim and an agency beyond anything that I might aspire to, so I find a certain conflict that the idea of the aim of the Work is to congeal a Kesdjan Body which is to take us to an energy world. And this idea of nothingness, that this idea that I am not important and yet the Work is important. When we talk about the body Kesdjan I almost feel a certain distaste because there is almost a spiritual ambition about this wish. I really want to know with all these processes that go on what is this Work for? What for? We spend all this time doing Work and there is a *for what* but I don't know what that is. Does that make any sense?

KEITH: Not a great deal. (laughter)

PARTICIPANT: Let me just say something real quick in response and that is Gurdjieff's book *All and Everything* tears apart what I grew up with and what is surrounding me of the blasé ideas that I would be stuck with if we didn't have Gurdjieff's wonderful mind to interact with. And I have got to think that without you guys I wouldn't be able to read that book. But anyway, for me, it gives me this sense that conscious labor and intentional suffering has a law conformable action, it builds things. I don't need to worry about those things. They are going to happen because I do the other. In other words, the soul gets built, whatever you want to call it. If you want to use a fancy word like Kesdjan, go ahead. It happens because of the Work ideas. If I consciously labor and intentionally suffer the Law of Three must produce x, y and z, which he defines and because he defines it, it makes me realize that there is another way of seeing things that are objective. That's how I use it. I don't turn it into a goal to build some body as Ravi reminds us that Kesdjan dies to. It perishes also. He says that the Gurdjieffs make such a big deal out of that and why do they do that because it dies too.

Then he chuckles. There are different ways of seeing it.

PARTICIPANT: Perhaps is it the being nothing that is the beginning point from which the Work produces? It is where we start after we have done a bunch of work with the ego, the lower centers—maybe that experience of being nothing is an important something.

PARTICIPANT: No I don't think it is from the beginning.

PARTICIPANT: No, I mean a place of beginning.

PARTICIPANT: It's a new do.

PARTICIPANT: New do. Thank you.

PARTICIPANT: I was just reflecting on the constancy of it as aiding in maintaining my humility.

PARTICIPANT: Right—you have to come back and back to it.

KEITH: What does Beelzebub say about this question that we are trying to engage ourselves with? When he is approached by Looisos immediately before the second descent and Looisos asks him to perform this service for ENDLESSNESS, of going down to the planet and doing what he can to reduce or eliminate this sacrifice of one- and two-brained beings that is being carried on to such an extraordinary degree? What is Beelzebub's answer?

PARTICIPANT: Is it something about being worthy to perform this?

PARTICIPANT: A particle of everything existing.

KEITH: Although an independent particle of everything existing, of the whole, chew on that. That's not an easy concept. You put that into one side of your brain and it blows up the other side of your brain when he says how can something be independent and yet automatic.

PARTICIPANT: That's actually out of Ashiata Shiemash.

KEITH: Yes and then Ashiata, how does Beelzebub identify Ashiata? He is now sitting on the counsel of Podkoolads. He is a sacred Podkoolad. He is on the immediate committee that ENDLESSNESS makes us of in understanding and governing and doing all the things necessary to do to run the world. He puts him there you see and after Ashiata has been sent to the Earth to perform his task and the task collapses. And yet he is sitting as an advisor to ENDLESSNESS and Beelzebub joins him. Now there is something to try and chew on.

PARTICIPANT: I guess they are not giving up.

KEITH: What do you mean by that?

PARTICIPANT: Meaning that if it didn't work according to plan that doesn't mean it didn't succeed to some degree.

KEITH: Well Ashiata is one of many other sacred beings that Beelzebub identifies as being sent to the Earth to try to relieve some of their difficulties, some of the problems, their problem with Kundabuffer. And none of them until the time of Ashiata have succeeded. The use of Faith, Hope and Love and their use has been so denigrated. But with conscience it also undergoes denigration.

PARTICIPANT: The independent particles and I am chewing on that all the time as I try to digest *Beelzebub's Tales* and what Gurdjieff carries as a theme throughout is that Beelzebub returns as an anticipated, accelerated result having earned his pardon. And one would assume having come to the point of the sacred Podkoolad realized whatever it means to be a particle, albeit, an independent one. So for me it's a big question as to why Gurdjieff chooses to carry that theme of independent individuality all the way back to the council of sacred Podkoolads. Because that, for me, has to do with the question of what it means to have what we call real I and what that means in terms of an independent individuality seems, at least in the context of *The Tales*, and that he starts with that and seems to also end with that as the theme. In a sense that is also I think why it first struck me because the Work in my youthful impression of the state of the world when someone put *In Search* in my hand, the one statement that came out of that was that the world is the way it is because you are the way you are. At that time the question of how am I and am I just mechanical, am I really? Am I not just the machine and wholly mechanical so in that is the striving for independence to not just be the machine. So there's that question.

PARTICIPANT: But isn't that starting to be not wholly mechanical?

PARTICIPANT: At that point in my life, at that age, there was some primary emotional imagery that was placed in me by my Roman Catholic upbringing. That was the judgment upon which I was making on the world and the judgment about feeling that the people should not behave this way, we should not treat others that way. It shouldn't be like this you see. It shouldn't because after all Jesus and his wonderful model for what it means to be a decent human being. So there's a conflict in the mind of a young person and these people are telling me all these things, the wonderfulness of the Christian message. If you really believe that and this is all happening in the mind of a child so at that place for me, there is a part of me that doesn't want to be that way, I want to have my own I. I want to be an independent individual. Projecting that out in the service of anything, other than for me, cannot be that way. It was not like my aim. My aim was to pursue this thread that I had gotten on to and offered me a path.

PARTICIPANT: So what is it today?

PARTICIPANT: So your question now and the best that I can come to today is a point for myself that I hold still to the question what does that mean to be an independent particle. And I find as I continue work and as I continue to have relationships and put aside a part of my life and dedicate it, to a reasonable degree of energy, to my relationships with other people, other people in Work my emotional world has changed. As that happened, relationships have become more important. The quality of those relationships as I interact with other people and the way I have decided to spend my time with my wife, every day with others instead of with wood building things. It may be subjective for me but that has been a growth thing for me. I feel like that is good, an expansion from where I was. But then to ask the question does that have ultimate significance in the hugeness of this cosmos.

PARTICIPANT: Maybe it is like sensing, having that capacity. I experience it as having agency and that it has changed me in ways that I didn't intend it to be. I wonder if it's sort of like sensing, in a certain way, as pathways are being developed. I don't know.

KEITH: It might be helpful to go all the way back in terms of the unfolding of the Universe

to the point when matter or mass as we ordinarily describe it, as it is present in our Universe. When that first appeared and one of the interesting and remarkable aspects to a proton is that all protons are the same. Think of that. Of the billions and billions of galaxies that are now known to be in our Universe, all of the protons that are out there, every proton in the Universe is the same. There is nothing distinct about this proton or that proton.

In the early, early stages of Creation the protons began to hook up and there is so much energy that two protons collided with such force that it overcame the rejection force of that proton towards another proton since both are positive charges they reject each other. But when they come together under conditions of such enormous energies that are greater than the rejecting energies of their surface structures, they blend together. So now you have materiality appearing that has two protons.

We will leave aside the questions of neutrons for now because you could say in one sense that neutron is a proton with an electron added to it. The electron has been incorporated into the neutron so the charge on it is neutral and its mass is slightly larger than a proton, which is the truth. Whether it really happened that way or not, we don't know. Physics is unable to give us an answer. They answer in terms of the kind of quarks. Ups and downs in the case of protons and neutrons; an up and a down quark produce a proton, and a down and an up quark produce a neutron. You can make of that whatever you will, but the important thing to see is that proton and neutrons become the building block, the singular building block for the world of mass-based materiality with the neutron. Especially with the neutron because now once you have reduced the pressures and temperatures of these collisions to such a degree that they can move apart, to a degree; they are still one. One thing is that there are other protons out there and other protons that have come together with other protons so there are a bunch of 'two protons' running around. And there are many, many more and out of every hundred there are ninety-eight that are still just protons.

Over time as heat and energy diminishes and more and more collisions take place that are able to stay after the collision, in a new state of coming together, now, we have the building blocks that can build more complex mass-based materialities, things that have more protons in them and begin to have more neutrons in them. In each case what has to be overcome are the rejecting forces that are already there inside of the proton and the neutron. So you have to overcome a certain energy level to incorporate another one and for that you need a lot of energy. For that what you need is a sun.

Suns become the factories, if you will, the chemical factories to manufacture the atomic table. Early suns now we can take pictures of them astronomically and they have been able to identify suns that are very, very old. What they find is that it is also possible because of the characteristics of the light bands that they produce make it possible for us to identify the substances that are in the radiant energy. For instance you can with appropriate telescopic apparatuses look at our sun and you can tell from the spectra that are broadcast, which elements are in the outer layers of the sun. On the basis of the spectrographic characteristics, which has to do with the refraction of light through the electron shell structures of that substance, those are identifiable things now. So what we find is that it is possible to see that the whole atomic table begins to be created within suns. And within a sun it can generate sufficient energy, sufficient force to bring together and fuse together the inner nuclei of these new elements up to iron—not beyond. Why? The nucleus is too big and it requires too much energy to overcome, to bring it together and build even bigger materialities, mass-based materialities.

For that you need a supernova, in other words you have to go back up the scale of

energies to where you have an immense increase in the total amount of energy, such that with a supernova, which is a sun itself, suddenly exploding on itself and exploding with such high energies that it forces iron to come together and add more onto itself. You see the environment is such that it overcomes the resistance on the shell of the iron nucleus, if you will. So we begin to build within the metallic series—eventually we build all the way to the end of the series that we have. But that only happens with this secondary creative push that arises from supernova explosions. That cannot happen on an ordinary sun like ours. In its whole life it will never be able to generate the upper end of the atomic table.

So what we have in terms of the atomic table that is on that upper end has come from other supernovas elsewhere in the Universe. All of that materiality gradually gets congealed by gravitational attraction around what became our sun, so our and all suns that became the planetary worlds includes the materialities of the entire atomic table of many, many other suns, so all these expressions, that we are stardust, are absolutely true and all other life-forms are a part of that materiality.

In all of these differentiations, in the whole of the atomic table, the proton is the same, absolutely the same—whatever galaxy you choose, the proton is the same. Calculating the length of time of the Universe, which sounds paradoxical and is, but that is the best they have been able to discover. It is incredibly long lived. It remains an individual.

PARTICIPANT: I think it is when he tells us about time and every drop of water in that glass, there is there also a full, independent world full of microcosmoses. When I look at that decanter I just see water. So there is something about that same perception that I just see water, but each little drop of water, each little bead, perceives its own independent world. To me this is an example that is like this.

PARTICIPANT: Well I thought it might be helpful to look at the paradox that we have been trying to address—the individuality, commonality and the uniqueness—and yet not being unique at all. Because in our Universe we see unlimited examples of what appear to be uniquenesses. When you go deeply, deeply into them and see how they are built you finally end up at the very bottom. You end up with a uniqueness that is always the same.

Gurdjieff says this about all of the great visitors that have been sent here with a mission. In the exercises that we do, the full quadrant exercises, we place into the four limbs—blessed Moses, Mohammed, the Buddha and Jesus in one form of that and, this is all my body. This is why we sense it this way. He is saying something very explicit here. They are not different. This is my arm, this is my leg, this is part of my body and yet these representatives, these great saints, that come to the Earth and I ask them to strengthen my being. This is recognizing the uniqueness of sameness. They are all the same—all these saints. At one point somebody may remember where this is, where Gurdjieff said exactly that all these great figures that visited the Earth, they are all the same. They are unique and yet separate.

PARTICIPANT: You are unique just like everyone else.

PARTICIPANT: We can all have unique expressions of the same thing.

PARTICIPANT: Okay—should we stop for cocktail hour?