

## OCTOBER GATHERING 2017 ~ FRIDAY EVENING

Music: #42, from Vol. 1 of Sayid Chant and Dance

Reading from *Beelzebub's Tales*, PP v-vi

FIRST SERIES: To destroy, mercilessly, without any compromises whatsoever, in the mentation and feelings of the reader, the beliefs and views, by centuries rooted in him, about everything existing in the world.

... and ...

### *Friendly Advice*

[Written impromptu by the author on delivering this book, already prepared for publication, to the printer.]

ACCORDING TO the numerous deductions and conclusions made by me during experimental elucidations concerning the productivity of the perception by contemporary people of new impressions from what is heard and read, and also according to the thought of one of the sayings of popular wisdom I have just remembered, handed down to our days from very ancient times, which declares:

“Any prayer may be heard by the Higher Powers and a corresponding answer obtained only if it is uttered thrice:

Firstly—for the welfare or the peace of the souls of one's parents.

Secondly—for the welfare of one's neighbor.

And only thirdly—for oneself personally.

“I find it necessary on the first page of this book, quite ready for publication, to give the following advice,

“Read each of my written expositions thrice:

Firstly – at least as you have already become mechanized to read all your contemporary books and newspapers.

Secondly – as if you were reading aloud to another person.

And only thirdly – try and fathom the gist of my writings.”

Only then will you be able to count upon forming your own impartial judgment, proper to yourself alone, on my writings. And only then can my hope be actualized that according to your understanding you will obtain the specific benefit for yourself which I anticipate, and which I wish for you with all my being.

AUTHOR

KEITH: Thank you. I have to apologize; my voice comes and goes. For the most part I will speak as little as screws up your hearing and try and stay with the program. One remark we should hold in common for this time together and that is what has characterized our October gatherings in particular, but also the March gatherings, has been the remarkable persistent participation of everybody here and certainly we hope that will continue. We want everybody to put in their questions, comments, disagreements—whatever it is—we want maximum participation and whatever perspectives you wish to have or questions.

The first question which I would invite your comments is this “to destroy mercilessly.” How do you understand that? How do you understand his opening comment, to destroy mercilessly in the beliefs and views held by centuries by us. What does he mean when he

says to destroy all that? What does he want to destroy? How do you see that? Sitting here now on the edge of reading *The Tales*, what does he want to destroy in me? He is not going to destroy my belief that the sun will come up in the morning or that a week has seven days. What will he destroy?

ANNIE: Primarily that it is putting into question and then shattering my sense that I know myself. That I understand who I am, that I know how I am behaving and why I am behaving the way I am. That's first. It's not looking out at the world as much as the looking in that has been affected by *The Tales*.

NICK: It seems to me so many things we accept that are ingrained in our behavior without actually questioning them; that are fed into us from childhood, in basic terms, what's good and what's bad, duty, patriotism, ideas about social justice, what to be proud of and what to condemn—all those things, we didn't really give much thought to it. It was kind of forced upon us and now we know that when this happens, we say it's bad or when something else happens, we say, "Oh, he's a great guy."

But what Gurdjieff was so great about is that he would go in depth and he was merciless to destroy it and we will be left in this deep shoe and then you have two choices. You either destroy it or that's not good and you don't want to read it anymore, depending about how you feel about going deeper. But that is what I feel it is about—destroying mercilessly, bringing up that big blast of unquestioned material that we keep in ourselves and act according to it, never actually going deeper into it.

KEITH: Beliefs and views—isn't that what he is going to destroy? Whatever your beliefs are. If he says he is going to destroy, mercilessly, what is he going to destroy? What is his aim? Shall we read it again?

IRV G: I've been thinking about this. In terms of the great ages of man, the procession of the equinoxes, the Age of Pisces and the Age of Aquarius we have heard so much about. Unfortunately, it has been trivialized by new age thinking but it really is very profound, this transition between the Age of Pisces and the Age of Aquarius because, for the last two thousand years, the Earth has been under the influence of Pisces. When the sun rises at dawn, there is Pisces on the Spring Equinox. Pisces has to do with belief. For the last two thousand years their world view is formed by what they believe and who they believe and the question is who should I believe? Should I believe my pastor, my priest, the scientists? There is always the question, which authority should I believe? My parents?

Now we are going into this new Age and I think Gurdjieff was the prophet of that and we no longer can do that anymore because in the Age of Aquarius you have to perceive by your own understanding. What we understand determines our world view, and he says that each one of us has to come to our own understanding with his writing. It has to be merciless that we made this transition from belief to what we understand as a basis for our understanding of the world. We can't do it half way; it has to be merciless and complete.

BONNIE: Something that arises for me in this, and it is that my self-importance is so much 'in the way' because it is what I believe my views are right. I can mercilessly whittle away at that self-importance.

JOE: I have a sense, more and more in my own life, of myself as fragmented and fractured in many different pieces. That's incredibly uncomfortable. In order to keep going once I have

that sense, I tell some sort of story and I don't consciously tell a story but there is some sort of story that denies that fragmentation. I am a seamless whole; I make sense, there is cause and effect; I am doing this because there are reasons; I am good at this—all of those things. That story feels a necessary fiction that I tell myself. When I hear that passage read or when I read it, my sense is that is what is getting destroyed—that story, that kind of over arching fiction that sands off the edges and makes it all seem and feel a little smoother. Because it is comforting to create that story, when that story is being challenged or erased, like there is no mercy because it is hard.

**BARRY:** It seems to me what he is saying he is going to destroy is our image of man. From my understanding of Western philosophy/religion is man/woman, humanity is the center of the Universe. We are the crown of Creation. He is always talking us as little peculiar three-brained beings out there that have a very peculiar way of living. We as a species are not what we think of ourselves to be.

**BONNIE:** You wrote a chapter, Keith, in one of your books, “The Nature and Sources of Conviction.” Just flying here today and the little difficulties that arose, I saw different convictions that I have come up about the way things ‘should’ be. I have plenty of opinions and convictions and yet I, more and more, recognize that they are so limited, this ‘radio Bonnie’, that jumps into every automatic reaction that I have, is always there and that does need to be destroyed; it needs to be at least stepped away from. I am not sure quite how to destroy it. But maybe you would like to talk about your chapter because isn't that what we see that arises?

**KEITH:** That chapter primarily has to do with Hadji Troov and it has to do more with the outer edge, the first acquaintance into some else's life. The initiation of conversation; of what is most appropriate when you are meeting a stranger, how can we be considerate of another's place by watching where he comes from, how he is dressed, how he speaks, what he speaks about, keeping your own mouth shut.

All of those that are kind of stepping stones in the opening pages of the chapter. The chapter goes much, much further than the source of conviction. But the conviction that seems to be emphasized there which has much to do with what we are talking about here also is—there are *sources*. The question often is how in any given event, like even this event, how often do we recognize the sources? Like, for instance, you have a certain feeling about being here whether you really wanted to be here or whether it was a difficult time getting here, whatever, but there is other than perfect harmony in your feeling about coming here in that place inside that has some feeling about being here. In that is a conviction, that has to do with the place, the event, the meaning, the anticipation of other people of friends, of subject, of conversations—many anticipations, but they all have that conviction—they evoke convictions about the worth of it, the appropriateness of it. Am I respectful enough to the people who are there? Do I recognize everybody? Do I see that I look away? Do I see that I don't recognize someone? But I see in the moment—if I look that I don't look. I don't see.

That reminds me, there was a “look—see” in one of the readings. We will get to it sometime over the next couple of days but it might be appropriate to make mention of it here. At one point, in the *Nicoll Commentaries* where Nicoll is talking about how he looks upon a particular event and Gurdjieff interrupted him and said, “No, no, must look, must look. And look and look. Must take picture, many, many picture.” And then he went on to something else.

What that emphasized for me, relative to what we are talking about here, is that in the greeting, in the coming to meet other people, there are these two distinctly different modes of entering into that event. One is: do we look? And the other is: do we see? The meaning being, in Gurdjieff's terms, is that when you look and you take picture there is no decision, no judgment, no evaluation, no anything—only picture. Then take another picture. And another picture. Over time, maybe years, you have many, many pictures and those pictures mean something in the world of picture because they don't involve your physical body or your emotional judgment that has gone into all of these times before—this is just picture, picture, picture.

So, you can take that and add it on to whatever else you have accumulated about that person; but that should not be confused. You can sometimes, as Gurdjieff said, you see more clearly when you look and there is nothing else there. You just look. You have a photograph.

ELAN: It seems to me this whole discussion is what he is saying at the very beginning of the book is already about egoism and this is what he is saying he is going to destroy mercilessly is our identification with our egoism. It is interesting when, at the very beginning, when he talks about the prayer, that one doesn't pray for oneself first, one prays for the welfare of one's parents and the welfare of one's neighbor and then only for oneself.

In those words, he is setting up the stage for the endgame of the book where he says there needs to be a new organ implanted that will make us aware, always, of the inevitability of our own death, is the only way that egoism can be expunged.

KEITH: Okay. How does he do that? He said he is out to destroy mercilessly. Then you turn the page; you are in "The Arousing of Thought." You are into it; you are off. How does he destroy? What is being destroyed? I have all kinds of convictions about this world. Some of them are correct. I am convinced the sun is going to come up tomorrow morning and I'm pretty sure I am right. I am pretty sure I can have a conviction about that without too many people rising up in absolute horror that I could have such a stupid conviction. It seems almost sensible, in the sense, that I have seen it over and over so it is sensible to say it's probably going to happen again.

So what is it that is being destroyed? That today is going to be just like yesterday—a bitch. Well, is that true? What is appropriate answer? What would you say? How the hell should I know? How do I know how today is going to be?

Is that a conviction about my immediate future that I am rather frequently falling into? Do I have a conviction about this morning? This afternoon? Tomorrow? Today? Do I carry around an unconscious conviction about the nature of my daily life or maybe not just my daily life but what goes on into the future tomorrow, next week.

Next week I am going to a Bruins game in Boston (they don't even start the season for another two months but) in any case I am going to see the Bruins play, whatever. How to deal with that kind of conviction? Because now I am talking about a future event. Is there someway in the line of my life, I am going to come to something; I am going to get a paper that says I am a graduate of this school or I am going to finish the lessons I am taking on the guitar or I will get something; I will accumulate something and then it will be mind. I have a conviction about that. There is a feeling a something, a want, a passiveness. What do I possess in that arena? What is it that I want? That I can almost taste about tomorrow? It doesn't seem unrealistic; it's possible but somehow I believe it to such a degree that I make a commitment to it—to having it the way I want it to be.

There have been so many stories since 1948 about what Gurdjieff did throughout his years in Paris and it became very much a daily, that he would be up very early, 5:30 in the morning, at the back door and he would be distributing all the left-over food from the day before to the neighborhood. He would give everything that was left to everybody.

The neighbors got accustomed to it. He was there every day with whatever it was that he had that met somebody's need and there he was.

When he was asked why do you do that? Anybody remember the story? I not like that woman, that old woman who feed the pigeons. She feeds the pigeons and it makes her feel good. I feed the pigeons because they are hungry.

MANDY: Didn't he say that she said fed the pigeons and that was good for them and he said she not tell the truth because when I feed people, it makes me feel good too. Wasn't it something like that?

KEITH: Yes, he was trying to turn it around and say in effect this woman felt good. The good accumulates to the woman because she fed the pigeons. I feed people because they hungry. It's like I feed the pigeon because the pigeon is hungry, pigeon must eat too. The reason for bringing it up in this context is that there is no need for conviction—there is need only for what is. What is. Pigeon hungry.

There is a connectedness in Gurdjieff's way of looking at events that seem startling at times, especially reading *The Tales*. Sometimes I wonder where did he go with that? And then I see it is my stupidity. I didn't want to go where he took us and so I invent something that I expect an ordinary person would come to, but he is ordinary, obviously.

That's the arena of conviction that is much more interesting. It is what I am tempted to accumulate for myself, whether those are feelings, bonbons, words of compliment or respect or whatever. Am I accumulating something on the order of putting a worth on something, a value on something which is an invention of mine? And I don't see that. I don't see that that is an invention. I created that. I created that so that I would feel better or would have a momentary "yeah!" or whatever.

IRV: But still, isn't there a fundamental difference between conviction and belief? I was under the impression that is something I come to either from my experience or my reason or it might even be mechanical, but it something I have come to for myself. Whereas belief is something we acquire from outside, like something we overheard our grandparents say or something someone told us. Isn't there that different between belief and conviction?

KEITH: I don't know. Is it?

SOMEONE: Neither is useful to us.

KEITH: Remember what we said about participation as a beginning here? One or two, but I don't see a great deal.

JAN: The idea of reward is in some simplistic level, especially when people start in the work, built in to it. The idea of acquiring being or enlightenment or the idea of a Kesdjan Body are all carrots. There is something that has to happen. These are the shiny things and there has to be sometime when one turns away from the shiny things, almost sacrifices them, which is what you are talking about and Bennett talked about in the sower and the seed—that you do something because it ought be done. That's a difficult place to come to because we all want something for ourselves.

KEITH: Who determines what ought to be done?

JAN: I think that is something that is presented from anything so simple as seeing garbage on the road and picking it up or being faced with a crisis where one could turn away and say, god, I just don't have the time. It can be anything from tiny to massively important. We are probably proffered those opportunities all the time and most of the time we are not aware of them; but they are myriad.

KEITH: I don't know...I don't know.

GEORGE B: He didn't say what ought to be done; he said what has to be done. There is a difference. 'Ought to be done' suggests that I know something, I have an 'ought'. But 'has to be done' has to do with the thing itself. There is a difference. "Ought" is a word fraught with difficulty.

JAN: I think he used that word in conscious labor and intentional suffering.

GEORGE: No, he used the word "has."

JAN: I stand corrected.

GEORGE: It has a different meaning "has" and "ought" because ought suggests you've got some sort of agenda and "has" is simply looking at the situation as it is.

KEITH: Good. "Oughts" simply lead down a troublesome road.

DAVID: If we are going to mercilessly destroy our whole education, our whole experience of life, then maybe that's when it is the end of ego and that's the moment when Grace can enter and something else is working through us. And then what has to be done just works through us because we have stepped aside. We are merely an instrument.

KEITH: I just had—what could you call it, a conviction?—but an observation when Larry came over to give you the microphone, did any of you notice? What did he do?

BONNIE: He had a candy. [There was a bowl of candy on the nearby table.]

KEITH: How many of you saw that? Quite a lot of people saw it. Point to the attention in that moment. It was very brief. He stood there, saw that, did that and that was the end of it. You could put that on a timer and that would be a pretty brief period of time. In that brief period of time, there was a picture; but behind that there is also a recognition of something, recognition of something that would be tasty. There is an almost immediate response. At least that was the impression I got; it happened pretty quickly. Just look—took! It's almost like nobody else saw that although I don't think Larry had any concern over whether anybody was seeing it or not. But it happens that way. That is what I am pointing to in ordinary life. We do this kind of thing all day long.

LARRY: Pigeons like chocolate too.

BONNIE: It is the automatic that you are referring to. Is that what you are pointing out?

KEITH: The part that is unconscious, truly unconscious. And this is the playground of Kundabuffer—all those silly, nonsensical things that are tied up one way or another with our wrong work of sex energy, at least according to what Gurdjieff takes up in *In Search*.

He doesn't take it up in the same way in *The Tales*, but *In Search*, he spends 3 or 4 pages in his prolonged discussion all of the evils, the side effects of the wrong work of sex center. If you follow those pages, it outlines what, in other places, he discusses as the interstices of Kundabuffer.

I read through those and see this is strangely resonant between the two—not the same—I don't mean to say one is the other, but there is a resonance here—that a great many of those things that we put in the category of Kundabuffer really are examples of the wrong work of sex center. That's pretty obvious. The wrong work of sex center covers everything from the visual clues, auditory clues, sensory clues—all manner of things that pull us in that direction. All of us have a plethora of experiences during the day when that comes up—a slight glance or non-glance or away-from. I hope I am not betraying myself; I'm not giving away something that is big secret. I think this common to all of us. We all have many more rapid unconscious ways of betraying ourselves—of betraying ourselves if we see—if we look.

If we look and we say that, would we be different? I don't know. It might be a good question to ask Larry the next time he walks across the room and there is candy available. Are you tempted?

NICK: When you brought this up about the candy, I realized how much and how fast was going on in my mind because not only did I notice Larry, I noticed Bonnie when she did it the first time and there was “mmmm, there are candies.” And she took it. Then Larry did it and hmm, it becomes the norm. It becomes a pattern. When David took the microphone he actually blocks [the view] there so maybe [if] somebody from here wants to talk after him, I can jump in and take the microphone and grab the candy too. [laughter] And it happens like that—instantly.

KEITH: Yes! That's what [we can] catch! We don't realize how quick we are. This takes thousandths of a second and we have to learn to use our attention like that. If we don't have real attention—what Gurdjieff is driving at all the time, we lose it, because we lose just those moments but those are the ones where we really get lost—something happens and it happened and we are lost. Lost in what? Lost in Kundabuffer, that moment with its possibilities has gone down the drain; because we went down the drain in our own motivational use of the time and the event. We misuse the time and the event because something appears that's unreal, a temptation, and we fell for it. It's kind of like, that is all there is to it. It's just wasted—the event—as a possibility.

We have to be very quick, very quick. Merciless.

BONNIE: In seeing how quickly Kundabuffer takes over—I saw that in myself a number of times today but I had one significant experience where I saw, “Well, I don't like that.” It consumed me for a quite a number of minutes.

KEITH: What is it that consumed you?

BONNIE: An event happened while traveling here today. I didn't like it. Kundabuffer was right there not liking this situation and I saw myself swallowed up for a good hour. I was annoyed and on and on.

I'd like to know about suggestibility and Kundabuffer because I did see this in myself; I was observing it but it had taken me immediately and it took a long time to quiet down about it. For the hour that I was annoyed, I was this 'radio Bonnie' that goes on in my head.

The situation was that I called the shop and I wanted to talk my husband, Denis, to let him know we landed and were fine. Well, Denis left for St. George today. I had no idea he was going to leave today and I saw that I was annoyed. I thought why does he do that? He knows I could have come down with him in the middle of the week.

All this chatter goes on. Sooner or later, I was wondering, am I suggesting to myself this situation that he can just up and decide to leave town before we had talked about it; we were going to do it later. It went on for an hour. Was I continually suggesting, wallowing in that situation?

The reason I brought that up is that I took a candy before Larry did. I thought, "Well I saw Larry take another candy so maybe I can take another one." Suggestibility has a big role in this like and dislike, especially dislike is so obvious that Kundabuffer is jumping in and has control of the situation. What I am asking does suggestibility continue it?

KEITH: This is a good question because it points to something else that, over time; I think we all have to get very familiar with the technique, the Kundabuffer technique. I am going to jump ahead a day and a half because we will be taking it up in more detail later. What we will be taking up, so we can have a basic understanding of what is going on, is how we inherit things; in other words how and where our genes come from. We are going to be talking about genes, the definition of genes but especially we will be talking about epigenomes, to make it more interesting and confusing perhaps.

Let's put it, for now, in this context. A gene is something that is absolutely fixed in us. Each of us has 24,000 thereabouts. They are not all identical; there are different genes doing different things or let's say a family of genes doing different things. The family of genes that has to do with, for instance, producing the digestive enzymes in the pancreas is very closely related because the chemicals are identical; they are exactly the same thing. They just came about by a slightly different route but it is the same chemical. We can talk about why that happens later.

More essential, for our purposes right now, is that an epigene is something, which accumulates, you could say, on the *exterior* of the genetic code. Think of the code as this back and forth double helix that goes on for 182 volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* for each of us. That is how long the genetic code is. It is quite enormous in that sense.

What an epigene comes down to is first of all, it is not a gene; it's only a piece of a gene; it's epigene. It can find itself associated with a gene in the sense of a provocateur. It can hint almost about the function of a gene. But if you put the hint in, now repeat the hint, repeat the hint 10 times, repeat the hint 50 times. That's a lot of hints. That's Kundabuffer.

When we see something, as you saw something, that wasn't the first time. You saw that again and again and again. Very often, perhaps not always, what we are seeing when we first capture it, as we first see it, as with Larry or with you, if that's a kind of first sight of that kind of specific kind of thing—as Gurdjieff would say, "Good, good. Take seeing exactly: that you cheat, that you grasp—take that as you God. I am going to see that, that is what I am going to see about myself." I am not going to rest until I see that in myself. Make that your God, he said, "Repeat, repeat, repeat."

I had to repeat that to myself a thousand times because I don't want to repeat; I really don't, and it's absolutely essential to do that, to see that there in me, this conviction, this weakness that will follow a recommendation from this epigenetic, if it nudges me, if it raises the picture of edge of the chocolate then that is enough; it doesn't have to taste; it doesn't have to tempt with anything else. By that stage maybe all it needs is just the container with



nothing in it; but it reminds you that yesterday it had chocolates in it or whatever, invent your own poison. We see how we fall into these traps. We have to find our own. We have to see why or how we called into that chain of events.

I am sure all of you have had days where you start off the day with a particular kind of [event], maybe a startling kind of thing that happened on the radio while you were driving to work and it kind of sets off the day. You notice certain kinds of events more than you notice other kinds of events. I have had those kinds of days. It seems like somebody gets mad every five minutes. I am aware that somebody got mad. He spoke unkindly to somebody else. I don't put anything necessarily down to it but it is noticed. I notice that there is this out there. So, maybe I am being prepped by Kundabuffer; so that it is a good time to be as alert as I can be.

Perhaps do something else. Every time I sit down, relax the right foot. Something. Do something with real clear intention. At the same time, be aware that I am aware that something happened, that I became aware of a vulnerability. I am hunting for that at the same time that I am relaxing my foot. This is part of what I understand Gurdjieff is emphasizing when he says, "must make habit." Must see this again and again and again before, finally, you see it. That's the picture. See it. See it. And then you begin to see the connections. Oh, it's there; it's there. And then you come up against it in the moment. And you walk by it.

Are you all familiar with the story of the holes in the road? You walk down this road and you keep falling into the hole. Walk down the road, fall in the hole. And then you walk down the road and you notice far ahead of you there is this hole in the road and you walk on... and you fall in the hole. How did that happen? I fell in the whole again. You keep doing this and you get closer to the hole before you realize, gee, I have been here before. Finally, some day you come and you come to the edge of the hole and you say, "I don't want to go there," and so you walk around the hole.

The day you walk around the hole is a big deal. It was always out there, and you kept falling into it, falling into it, falling into it .... Why is it such a big deal to walk around it?

LARRY: Is this the Epigenetics you are talking about?

KEITH: Exactly. That's it. You have just broken an epigenetic construction. But that is in your nervous system and you have done something to alter the way in which your nervous system literally works. And that is a big deal.

DAPHNE: When you first started talking about this an image came up that I did in my training called a "genogram." Did you start with inheritance?

KEITH: Yes.

DAPHNE: A genogram goes back into your ancestors and over and over again you see the same pattern, generation after generation.

KEITH: Yes, there are pluses and minuses to that. Sometimes it is just that you have a wart that grows out here; it could be something as simple and straightforward as that. It could be any one of a thousand totally innocent things that get passed on by true genetics.

DAPHNE: And some of them seem to be behavioral.

KEITH: Many of them are triggered by behaviors. That is the epigenetic part of it. It is a very active field now in psychology with many studies. For instance, there is an incidence

among identical twins of schizophrenia. If you study those that do have schizophrenia and you study their identical twin, you find their possibility of having schizophrenia is 4 or 5 times higher than the general population. If the one who has the confirmed schizophrenia has a rank of 72, his schizophrenic sibling might be only 45 but he didn't come to exhibit his schizophrenia until he was older perhaps. Whatever factors were there, they were not expressed as early as they were in the older sibling.

But sure enough many studies now [they have found] manic depression is pretty well enfolded in this same category, as well as several other possible neuropsychiatric disorders.

DAPHNE: Isn't this, in some degree, the system that forms our beliefs as well? And so that is why he was saying they need to be mercilessly destroyed. Yes?

KEITH: Yes! Because you don't get out of it unless it is merciless. Cannot have mercy on something if it isn't doing you any good—if you see that it puts you to sleep and every time it happens, I lose myself. I do some silly thing and it doesn't have to be a big deal. It's just something that you do unconsciously and you have an opportunity to become less unconscious.

Gurdjieff puts such emphasis on the length of time. I don't pay anyway near enough attention to it in the line of my own daily world; but he puts such emphasis on repeat, repeat, repeat—such emphasis on exercise. Do you exercise? Must repeat. Must pray to God, many, many times. He is quite merciless when it comes to emphasizing. This is real work. This is tough. Of course it is tough. You are trying to build a soul. What do you think... do you think this is something cheap? He would get very flowery when somebody walked into that trap.

NEAL: When I first read that and even when it was read tonight, I think the same thought came through my head which had to do with religion. So much of what is rooted by centuries within us is what we believe from my religion or your religion. It is clear that I have those in me, they were taught to me when I was five or six. I see them sometimes and I am not a religious man that way now but I see the habits that were ingrained in me in that way. That particular passage spoke to that.

KEITH: Yes, good. At the same time, Gurdjieff says every man should have a religion. He expressed both sides of that. If you believe blindly in some religious persuasion that has been put into you from the age of five on and you never questioned it,

NEAL: The kind of belief like if I do this, I'll go to heaven and if I do that, I'll go to hell.

KEITH: Of course, that is the kind of thing that he is saying; where you get yourself in more trouble.

IRV: Another aspect is that almost every belief turns out not to be true. Having a belief closes me off to learning because I already believe something is true I am not going to be open to a different viewpoint. But it might be the different viewpoint is exactly what I need because the beliefs close me off to seeing what's there.

NEAL: About belief, maybe there was something true way back when, but so much of it has come to us as the way it was taught and we are told this is the way we should think about this, and this is what this means. Maybe at the root or in the ancient times, there was a different thinking about that but we don't read it clear; we read it with the color of all what we have been told that this means.

IRV: The spiritual comedian, Swami Beyondananda, said what people believe is unbelievable.

GEORGE B: It just occurred to me that the story Keith told, about giving all the spare food away and the story in *Meetings with Remarkable Men* where everyday Gurdjieff got rid of all his money and started over again, might be a metaphor for treating what we believe. We accumulate it and maybe we should always be prepared to chuck it out every day and start over which is very hard discipline and certainly I don't do that but it reminded me of my friend, Tony Blake, who says we should always be trying to think new thoughts. We could take this a metaphor for the way to treat what we think we know.

JOE: It is striking me, as I listen to the last few things that have been said, that there is a certain level, at least somewhat conscious, handing down an instruction of beliefs. We have this religious code we are going to pass on to you. This is what you ought to believe. But, there is no system in place for trying to win or do it; it just happens and I am thinking that because my son, who is 12 right now, has in a number of ways exhibited some very attitudes and behaviors that I am horrified to see and come straight from me and I don't know where I got it. It's right there in him. It's painful. It's things that I thought I was working on. I thought that I was trying to not do that and then I am seeing it in my son. That's beyond giving away all your money one day and make new money the next day; it's out of the bag. I passed that on. I've probably passed on things that are neutral or good also but I am seeing these things. Those are holes that it is very hard to see how to step around. Clearly that happened because there were so many times I walked right into the hole. That wasn't through any kind of program that I had. Religion or education or political system has a program—we inculcate these certain behaviors in people—there was nothing conscious about it. It just happened.

FRANCIS: When I return to what you originally read and I remember that Gurdjieff was talking about not all beliefs but beliefs for centuries rooted. If he wanted to say I don't want you to have any beliefs, he would have said belief is bad; we should get rid of it. The specific language of beliefs for centuries rooted has a very different connotation to it that is different than I believe this today and I believe that tomorrow or you've convinced me, so now I believe what you say. It reminds me of a thing some fellow said on his view of belief which was that every person should know about their own beliefs but they should understand that there is no such thing as an absolute belief; it's all a relative scale, and that there is no zero and there is no ten. It is a scale from one to ten with no zero and no ten. There is no such thing as no belief and there should be no such thing as complete certainty and that we all sort of move between one and nine.

This idea of something rooted seems to allude to something that becomes established separate from what belief is in us as a function that plays a necessary role in our life and it's epigenetic influence of cultural patterns, the negative ones, for instance—there are also positive ones.

When I think about long ago in my life I didn't have views, I had vision. When I was really little I didn't have views on things; I just saw things. I just had a vision of things. I had a trust that every day I would discover something differently in my vision of the world. That's what I remember about how it was to be very young.

I think Gurdjieff is advocating for us not to throw the baby out with the bath water.

MARTIN: I think there is difference between belief in a higher sense and belief in another sense. If there is a belief in the lower centers, it is something locked and static in genetic

function. But we can also think of belief of the higher centers the forms of real function. There is a saying, “seeing is believing,” but I think there is an opposite, “believing is seeing.” Until you believe something you can’t actually see it. Belief is a doorway to the higher worlds when it is a real belief from the higher centers. Without that type of truth, a lot of doors are not open to us. Belief in the higher centers is like an open door as opposed to belief in our lower centers which is based on information and opinions. There is a big difference between that and without the higher center belief little can happen. Gurdjieff has the aphorism about faith of body, faith of feeling, faith of consciousness so I think there is this conscious type of belief which is a higher version.

HARRY: I certainly notice things I have never thought about when I am reading *Beelzebub’s Tales*. In the part where he is talking about monasticism (in the chapter “India” maybe), he dismisses the whole monastic in one or two sentences. This whole thing is a mistake and a misunderstanding. At the time I read that I had never even thought about or questioned and all of a sudden there is this statement.

I grew up in a standard sort of Catholic tradition where there were monasteries where you seriously pursue a spiritual path. “Oh, that whole thing is based on a simplistic error that people think that those...”—it’s getting inside because now it is “those people” making that error in thinking that they are working on themselves by going to this special place where they don’t have to put up with the rest of us people and they will be able to be more spiritual.

All of this gets created in me and it wasn’t even there before. And pretty soon, I notice I’ve got an attitude about that: “those people.” And all of a sudden I’ve got this edge about the inappropriateness and the lack of reason and the “something wrong” with the whole idea of monasticism. That just got created in me because I read the book and because, in part, I am taking, at the same level, things in the book that I take in other things on the other level. Now, there is another belief that is showing up that I haven’t thought about either; it’s just how I am taking that in. It sounds good because why would you want to go someplace when you can use conscious labor and intentional suffering in the presence of others in bearing the displeasing manifestations, etc., and so now I’ve got that there also in my mind—another belief, another view that pops up. I didn’t have that when I started.

There are all kinds of examples about that. I noticed it about the Greeks and the Romans. I spent a lot of time thinking about ancient history. I had this part of education about the Greeks and the Romans and all of a sudden I got an attitude about Greeks and Romans and about sport also. I see people watching games and I say, “what is this? Don’t they know this was all the result of a bunch of bored fishermen?”

TODDY: He’s tricking us into believing everything he says. That’s another thing we do.

CONTI: Maybe it is not that we believe what he says but that we misunderstand what he is saying. He said in many different ways that he used the words that we use but he meant them in a different way. He did prescribe for us to read this book in a certain way and he does say in the Prologue that if we follow these instructions, something will change. We want to know what it says but he is not saying it with that part of ourselves that wants to know. He is saying it in a way that has rhythm. He is addressing the real conscious. What is that? The subconscious and so if I am taking it in the way I ordinarily take it in then, of course, it is going to have the same result.

I don’t know that he was saying what you said Harry even though he did say that. I don’t think he said it to mean how it can be taken so literally.

Someone said something that reminds me of something that happens to me. I see that I do something that shows me that I am not really with what is around me. I am not really grounded in what is happening. I am coming from habits, however they originated in me, that are just repeated unconsciously. Then I get caught in the reaction to it. Then I forget the thing that I saw because I am caught and then, an hour later, oh my god, I've been reacting to this thing for an hour. What was the thing? It isn't that things don't get seen a hundred times but they are not photographs; they are not taken just for itself. There is a lot of emotion and programmed judgments and beliefs.

KEITH: Often, it seems, that when I look at some portions of the day but especially (and I see this in other people) they get stuck on something in their day and they don't seem to be able to get away from it. Their foot falls into the hole whatever the hole is, whether it is one of diatribe, criticism, being snide, being unkind to strangers—whatever, it usually falls in some negative mode like that.

What interests me is how infectious it becomes in that person. Have you ever noticed that? I see someone is really having a hard time today. I see this in the Nursing Home on occasion, either on the part of a caregiver or one of the residents—they get into a day long snit. It is the same snit over and over. It is always about something that was mispronounced or said wrong or some verbal or it is something they did, a physical thing. I see this especially in early dementia where there is this tendency to repeat the fault and misplace it. Say something about this and then the same gesture and then the same gesture. I think we do this and we didn't have a stroke.

That is the role of Kundabuffer because the echo through the epigenome. We are tempted by the chocolate. I find it interesting that sometimes there seems to be something in us that looks for it, that is kind of on a hunt. At the time, we don't notice at all—that's what I just did. I was looking; I was hunting for where are the chocolates? Do you catch yourself actually having something in mind and you didn't realize you had it in mind until after you didn't see it, when you didn't see it or when something didn't happen. Isn't that interesting that there would be that expectation in me. Where did that come from? Interesting to watch.

I am convinced for the moment that as far as epigenomes are concerned there can be a thousand, thousand repetitions of them. They can reverberate in our daily life leading up to one overt manifestation. There may be ten, fifty or a hundred reminding or tempting, tempting, tempting.

That's the sense that I get that when I watch carefully I can almost sometimes feel it's like a winding up something, getting ready to throw it.

LARRY: I am wondering if, in this epigenetic thing, I can overlay negative patterns in advance, like making my own epigenetic influence be repeating negative thoughts and making a situation worse than it would be naturally. That's the downside.

KEITH: Yes. That is one the ways it works its way out—or in. The conviction becomes more so. We know people like that. "Poor Frank ... he hasn't changed; he is the same as he was 20 years ago. He never forgave his blah, blah, blah...."

JULIE: Going back to the epigenetic part of this, from my understanding, somehow as the generations that move along, the hole that people fall into genetically, with regard to susceptibility to disease etc., happens earlier and earlier, it is expressed earlier.

KEITH: Not necessarily.

JULIE: That is what they are seeing.

KEITH: What I am saying is that it is not necessary.

JULIE: Right, it is not necessary but that's what would happen.

KEITH: Put it 'maybe'. That's okay.

JULIE: So the merciless would have to do with the prevention of that, of trying to work against that tendency, if in fact that is a tendency.

KEITH: Seeing is the first thing. If we don't see it, it 'don't' exist. And if it does exist, it's got to become a pain for us to want to do anything about it. If we just see that it is there, why should we want to change it? We must want to change it for some reason. I don't want to manifest that way. If I swear every time somebody mentions this or that, it shows that I don't have control over myself. I don't like that.

I think we would be surprised at how much of daily life (in most people's lives), how much time, how many thousands of repetitions there are of habits, of patterns, of behavior that we have. Do you pick up the coffee cup the same way every day? Do you eat with same hand in the same way? Do you hold the spoon in the same way? How about getting dressed? Do you get dressed in the same way? Do you wear the same kinds of clothes? It shouldn't take long for all of us to discover that we are full of habits. We are full of think-habits. We are full of talk-habits. It's more than just the physical thing. When we get into the feel habits, we open the door to negativity. When we get into the think-habits, we get into the back door of negativity because then we are smarter than everybody else.

MANDY: A couple of weeks ago after our Sunday meeting which followed a Work weekend, one of the members of the group brought a reading that had been read during the weekend from the *Paris Meetings*.

Gurdjieff was saying it was really important to work in the moment for the future, to repair the past. I have heard that before but this time it struck me in a much deeper way because Keith and I had been talking about Epigenetics and I recognized many things in myself that were characteristics of my Dad in particular or my Mom. As Joe was saying I see characteristics in my children that come from myself; I have passed those on. I felt this sense of remorse in hearing that reading from Mr. Gurdjieff. It struck me more deeply this time. So this "repeat, repeat, repeat" that he advises us—that's the hope.

STEVE: Since apparently our conditioning is a result of our repetitious experiences, the recommendation to repeat different exercises or different ways to look at things should be reconfiguring some of those epigenetic patterns. It must work the other way as well.

We talked about this last Sunday. A moment of recognition that I just shared was very powerful for me because I had been assuming for years that repetition re-wired neural pathways; I could understand that but the possibility that we are reprogramming our genes as well gave much more depth to the idea of transformation and becoming something different, developing something in us that wasn't there before.

MANDY: Another thing he seemed to be suggesting in that reading was not just that it is repairing something within myself or something in my children or my grandchildren but that it is also for our parents and our grandparents. That is a pretty powerful idea, that we could actually work to free our parents and our grandparents.

LARRY: Does anyone have an idea what that means, freeing your grandparents?

DAPHNE: We don't have to understand it. It's the same thing as feeding the pigeons because they are hungry. My parents need healing and I work.

STEVE: I carry my parents and grandparents inside my psychological world. My rational mind says their life is over and they are gone but when I watch inside my psychological world I get a very different sense of these possibilities because my psychological world does not exist out here in the material world. My awareness is in some other realm and it penetrates and interacts with this world of bodies and since I can go back into my past and by looking at things differently cause a shift in understanding an attitude that reverberates all the way back into the present and then cascades into a very different future that wouldn't have been without that effort. I cannot say that in this invisible, psychological realm the awareness of my parents and my grandparents doesn't have its own life in some way. If they are conditioned, sleeping manifestations, they inadvertently cause problems in my life and I resolve those problems in some way that seems to free them from the obligation they carry. And I don't need to know more than that, just as Daphne said.

FRANCIS: So I ask myself where are my parents if I am repairing them and it sounds like you saying they are in your imagination or in your memory, part of your psychology. But for me, that's me, that's not them. They are in a box rotting, so if I am going to repair them, where are they now that I can repair them? I reached a certain age where I started to think wow, I am my Dad or sometimes, wow, I am my Mom. Then I hear some people saying, wow, my kids are me. So where are my parents? What am I repairing that is here to repair? I think it has something to do with this discussion of genetics.

GEORGE B: There is an assumption that we are repairing our parents; where there may be the possibility that we are actually damaging them. [laughter] That bothers me much more.

STEVE: I'll just say this Francis, when I have a moment when I have an experience of not being my material body but something inside of it and can see that all of my awarenesses are in this psychological realm, then the fact that my parents no longer occupy their body doesn't mean to me that their essence or soul or whatever this mysterious quality is not where we all come from, go back to and are probably actually living now except we are so entranced with the world of the body, we miss it—but that's pure speculation. I don't think it is their physical bodies we are repairing.

IRV: Didn't Gurdjieff say we should pray for our parents?

“Any prayer may be heard by the Higher Powers and a corresponding answer obtained only if it is uttered thrice:

Firstly – for the welfare or the peace of the souls of one's parents.

Secondly – for the welfare of one's neighbor.

And only thirdly – for oneself personally.” (BT, P vi )

JAN: I may be wrong about the science of it but didn't the study of Epigenetics start with examining trauma. Some of the early stuff was done with the grandchildren of Holocaust survivors. It would seem that all of us cause our children trauma and we in turn are caused a certain amount of trauma just in the growing up of our relationship with our parents, no matter how well intentioned they were. I was wondering if some of that could be how the

epigenome is laid down and how we can in the moment we see the patterns actually work against them—falling into the same holes as our parents. That is, indeed, repairing the past. It's a question.

KEITH: As far as causation is concerned, from what I am reading, the epigenetic emerges from what previously was understood in the psycho-social arena as nurture. Everything that was put into the arena of early influence of parents on child and then other than parents within family then finally schooling—all of that was put into this arena of the nurturing influences, which fits nicely into Gurdjieff's category too when he talks about the early influences of the family as well as the influences of the mother. This seems to be clear that the modeling of the behavior through the parents relative to a child or a particular child and that process of nurture that begins to be placed in front and repeated and repeated and repeated: how to dress, what to say and on and on. If any of us has any memory back to the age of 3, 4, 5, you remember how awful it was because it was all repetition: do this, do this, say this, don't say that....

That nurture is going to be a provocateur of some kind of behavior. What Mama and Papa want is a certain kind of same behavior for a certain kind of input. "When I say stand, you stand! Put on your socks"—whatever the admonition happens to be, whatever the instruction is whether it is spelling a word or adding up numbers, going to school—it doesn't matter. The important thing to see; it's the repetition to the point of memorization that becomes a hallmark of nurture. Nurture in Western world is do-it-this-way, the whole of schooling is nurture in the Western world, around that model of behavior that has to be imprinted and repeated to the point of nausea. It is finally imprinted on the child.

So that is how I understand the beginning of what in the Western world we see most commonly as the epigenetic influence. It comes through behaviors and those behaviors are put on the young and then through repetition they become kind of attached on to the behavior pattern of the young—'epi-behavior'. It will be like but not exactly the same. If you put on your socks a certain way or you say words a certain way, it is not an exact imitation but, close enough—for the parent.

Every genetic doesn't have to be looked on as an ultra sophisticated thing. It is very evident in every day life. We see it in our children every day and in that we can learn a great deal about the difficulties, how difficult it is to undo what we, all of us, participated in with respect to our children. Most of us have played roles with young children growing up and those roles are not shining examples of the best possible child rearing that ever took place.

ELAN: One of the convictions I have looked at in myself over the last few years is related to what you are talking about here because my parents implanted their convictions and beliefs in me and one of the elements of what their values of what is good, what is bad and particularly for myself, they told me what was important for my life.

I remember a couple of things that happened as a result. First of all, I questioned, why are they telling me this is a value? That was one thing.

Another thing I remember as very small child. I was four and a half and my mother had a worship of musicians. She wanted to be a musician and she had this worship of how great it was to be a musician. She taught me how to play the scale and she took me over to Reyna Barrow's house. Reyna Barrow was a concert pianist. She brought me over to her place and said to play a scale for her. I saw these three letters appear on my mother's forehead: "E G O." I said, "No." She said it twice more and I ran out of the room crying.



I look at that event at the age of four plus, that set in motion everything that has happened with my problems with ‘why am I doing this?’ ever since. It’s still here now. I still have uncertainty because of it because I see there was something that she must have seen about some kind of potential and there was all mixed up with it was ego and all of that was mixed with that which was transmitting to me and my egoism.

Then I looked at this conviction that was implanted in me to such a degree that I obediently practiced piano four hours a day and I just wonder—it’s come up quite a bit this last year—why am I doing this? Is this what a human being should be doing at this time. It’s not a question that I can really get an answer to. It’s not easy to get an answer to that because it means that my whole world view (not the whole of it, I guess) but a large part of my world view was implanted into me really; not completely with my permission even.

There are a number of those things that happened when I was a child. There was one that was connected with God. They said, “Some people believe there is life after death but we don’t believe it. There is nothing. You die and that’s it.” I was four at the time and I remember I rejected it. I walked out of the house and said, “I am not going to die like that. That’s not for me.” These things come in very early.

KEITH: They sure do—and strong, very forcefully.

ELAN: How to wend one’s way through the confusion because there are certain things that may be of real value and there are other things that are not of value and there are other things that are of detriment. How do discriminate? It’s not easy.

KEITH: Right, it isn’t easy to put value on it although the circumstance maybe so singular that you have no choice. What I mean is that certain events, like the one where your mom took you to across the street to the pianist. On the surface of it, just doing that it’s just a little body doing that and he says ‘no’ and he turns around and he leaves. It marked you. It left something, that singularity of that experience.

I have this memory when I was six years old or younger. I had on my Sunday suit. I was crossing the street going to the church where I went to Sunday school. I had this ‘something’ kind of experience, stepping up on the sidewalk. The church was right in front of me across the street, and something in me said, “I am going to church to speak to God.”

Here is this little guy walking down the street who says, “I am going in there to talk to God.” That is all I remember. I don’t remember crossing the street and going into the church. I don’t remember anything except stepping up on the sidewalk, taking those one or two steps and then looking up and having those words inside of me. That’s 80 years ago. What in the hell am I supposed to do with those words?

So ... they stay with you; sometimes these are damnable things. Damnable in that they won’t go away and yet they may be of real significance, sure.

DAPHNE: Are they impressions? That was an impression.

KEITH: It was an event; that is for sure. Would it leave an impression, you mean? How many of you have had (we don’t have to talk about them in any detail unless you want) notable events, I mean super-notable events in the line of your life. They are whatever they are. If you’ve had them, you’ve had them and you know that they stick out and you know they had significance. Do you know what that significance was? Do they have some special meaning? Do you believe in them? I believe this happened. That is my memory. Am I convinced of anything on that basis? It is exactly because I don’t have any conviction. It is my question.

I don't know what that means. What does it mean for a little boy to step up on a sidewalk and point to the church and say that? It doesn't mean a thing.

STEVE: What have you been devoting your spiritual life towards?

KEITH: What? Uh..you want an ....

STEVE: It's rhetorical. [laughter]

KEITH: Tomorrow morning we will jump back in. I am so glad you are here.

OCTOBER GATHERING ~ OCTOBER 6, SATURDAY MORNING

MUSIC: Schubert, Opus 90, #3

KEITH: Our piano has not sounded so beautiful in a long time.

Reading from the chapter, "The Legomonism Concerning the Deliberations of the Very Sainly Ashiata Shiemash Under the Title of 'The Terror-of-the-Situation'," pp 353-60 and from "Arousing of Thought," p 25:

I decided to do this without fail so that this initial chapter of mine, pre-determined as I have already said to awaken your consciousness, should fully justify its purpose, and reaching not only your, in my opinion, as yet only fictitious "consciousness," but also your real consciousness, that is to say, what you call your subconscious, might, for the first time, compel you to reflect actively.

KEITH: Each of us obviously has our own many life-long experiences that we would put into the categories of Faith, Hope and Love. If we are to make what we can on what Gurdjieff has spoken about, how do you that, individually? How do we take what he has said about the nature of Faith and where it goes wrong, or Hope or Love? How do we put that into our own life because this is, after all, Gurdjieff trying to help us? If he is going to point, finally, to a state which does have the possibility of coming to real being, only through Objective Conscience, that's a very big deal, beyond anything we would discuss generally that has with Faith, Hope or Love.

So, it would be worthwhile if we could share some impressions about how we think we have come to understand the errors and mistakes we have made so far as Faith is concerned confirming the kinds of things that Gurdjieff is talking about here or the same with respect to Hope. What is silly hope in the line of my life? Where has that silly hope manifested? What am I vulnerable to in my daily life? What am I vulnerable to in terms of silly hope or love with any taint of egoism? Where do I fall into that trap?

If I could put these warning signs, perhaps I could put them down next to the holes in the road so that I could place, next to the hole down the road, a sign that says, "beware, faith lodges here," or however we come to identify that.

How do you individually approach that?

GEORGE B: For many years I've worked on an exercise that I was shown as a young man. It concerned these sacred impulses, among others, and I found that twice I saw something about these exercises that have stayed with me as a conviction, beyond thinking. One is that Hope is real. Recently I've been going through a particularly bad state in myself, full of self-pity and there is a floor beneath which I cannot sink because I know Hope is real. All the other stuff is a ripple on the surface of this reality and not real in itself.

The second thing is that I was working on this exercise one day and I suddenly felt oh, I see what Faith is. Faith is knowing with the feeling center. That's why it can't be translated into any transmittable words where my Faith is no use to anybody's else's Faith because it is in the feeling center and not translatable.

If we really believe these centers are distinct, then the perceptions of the feeling center are not expressed in words. Everybody tries, but none of us succeeds. This is why poets are still writing about Love for five thousand years.

I felt these two impulses are really, in a way, not normal, not “I love so-and-so” or “I hope it is going to be fine tomorrow.” This is just a conviction, a seeing that I can’t justify in any way at all because they don’t belong to the world of verbal justification.

CONTI: Are you saying that Hope is invisible, present under certain conditions? Hope is not about tomorrow, Hope isn’t conviction but conviction derails me from this, this sense that there is something that supports me. It is understood by a part of me that wants to understand it in a concrete way. Is that what you are saying? That is only appears or, it is there but it only manifests to me when I am brought to some sort of emptiness.

GEORGE: I don’t think I am saying that. The way I saw it and could refer to it is that this Hope is just there; it’s nothing personal. It simply exists, like a medium. We live in a medium of air; we live in the medium of Hope. But I don’t see it, which is why I let myself indulge in depression. But when I recall that medium of Hope is there, then I can put all that surface stuff into context because I know there is Hope. But it is nothing to do with me personally; it’s not my Hope anymore than this is my air. But I am still breathing it and I don’t notice it most of the time. Then I notice the air and then I realize that I am breathing the same as you, for example. Donald Trump is breathing the same air. Everyone breathes it, good and bad. And we all live in this medium of Hope without which I cannot see how the world can continue.

Anyway I don’t want to verbalize it ... I used to worry about why I can’t justify these things verbally but I consider that some things belong to this other realm of perception which if we really believe we are three-brained beings, we ought to give credit to.

DAPHNE: I have seen it so much for myself, but I see it in other people when they are dying, there is point where sometimes the little kind of hope that they will get better or have a longer life and a few people can see it and it is pretty real.

KEITH: Some time ago I put together an essay that had to do with the cosmic sources of Faith, Hope and Love. My intention then was to raise a question in seeing on the surface of it—are Faith, Hope and Love expressions that restricted to three-brained beings? Can a planet have Faith? Can a sun express a being manifestation of Hope? It seemed to be a worthwhile exploring because Faith, in that context, could be this-is-what-I-am—these are my limitations; these are my functions; these are my capacities. As Bennett said, “I am a table. I am useful for putting things on, for holding certain things. I am not a chair. I am not a ladder. I am a table. Take me as a table.”

This is a statement of Faith. A table is a table, that’s its capacity; this is what it is. This is what it is in the sense of being, in other words, what are its define-abilities, capacities, however we wish to describe that dimension of being.

Then when we take that in the case of a planet, a planet like Jupiter—we are beginning to discover especially in recent years that there seems to be a tremendous variety of possible functions. They seem to be involved in creating forms and matter and substances that don’t exist on the Earth that are quite unique within the formations that we have been familiar with in studying the solar system of other planets. We are becoming acquainted with many unusual facets that show other possibilities.

This has a relationship to Hope. If I know what I am, I am a three-brained being, I have a physical body, I can put down and describe limitations pretty well. To say how is that Faith, that this is my Faith? How does that Hope? I think that’s the easiest of all because

that is the commitment wholeheartedly, without qualification, of the Faith to an enterprise that is not all predetermined—maybe, maybe not. It may work out. It may be such that doing this will result in this. The internal-ness of Hope—we can't have absolute surety that this is going to turn out the way we want it to. We hope it will. What are we hoping? Hoping that my capacities are sufficient and that my commitment of those capacities wholeheartedly to some enterprise, whatever it is, that I am hoping that that will work out. In that case, that is my Hope. I commit my Hope in that sense. It is not now an airy-fairy thing; it is very solid. Whatever strength or experience that I do have, knowing the limitations, knowing that I am committing in a direction to an enterprise, that, while it may be worthy, it may not work out. I readily accept the distinct possibility that it may not work out. Under those circumstances, that seems to me to be pretty good definition of Hope if I can qualify that.

I have found this to be quite a help when I have to make decisions about whether I should do something with respect to patients or with policies. It has been help to say, what is my role in this? What is Faith with respect to the specific and to define that Faith in terms of the physical, emotional or intellectual capacities that are there? How do we evaluate those? And do the same thing with respect to the commitment. Are we willing to commit to that with as much 100% commitment for 24 hours a day, for how long? A day? A week? What does that mean in terms of commitment?

Love is a much further unqualified commitment, one that goes beyond Faith in the sense that Faith is a kind of description of limitation—this is what I am. At the same time we are saying, “this is what I am,” we are also saying, “this is what I am not.” When Bennett says, “I am a chair,” he is also saying “I am not a piano. I am not a house, I am a chair.”

There is the description of limitation that comes with anything that raises the question of Faith. The same is true of Hope because you are committing the Faith. There is something in a sense diminished about possibilities when we are speaking of Faith and Hope. We are speaking about a specific, a singularity of some kind but that is not true when it comes to Love because Love kind of takes the brakes off. And now there are no arbitrary limitations to the Faith or to the Hope.

JAN: Thank you Keith, that was very useful to me because of what I found when I did the exercise George referred to. When I peel back all the prepositions, like faith ‘in’ or hope ‘for’ that literally I find nothing in myself that has the experience. I do know the feeling of committing oneself to a course of action when there was no possibility, or no probability, or no likelihood that there would be an outcome that one could wish for. When I do that exercise there is one part of it that I do connect to which is the acceptance/obedience but it is hard for me to relate that to either Hope or Faith. Only that I know that when faced with something, as George said, that has to be done, I sometimes take that up and put one foot in front of another and follow in the moment what is the best that I can do, which is only the best I can do in that moment.

STEFAN M: It is not hard to verify the statement that was made in the reading about the dispersion of these impulses so it has been a theme for quite a while to look at my motivations—why I do the things that I do. In everything I do there is self-interest, always. There is always some element of looking at the aspect of what is outcome, what can I personally gain from something.

I was looking at this question of Faith, Love and Hope and investigating how genuinely can I be in with these impulses? It is very easy to see very quickly how a lot of times most of

my actions are guided, even in the action of hoping for something which is an internal action, or guided by this interest in gaining something from it.

But I looked at it in terms of what about your children, because I love my children; I give to my children. But let's say, my daughter, who lives in Anchorage, was sick in the early spring/summer and I hope that she is getting better. But even if I take the microscope and look at that, there comes from that state of her not feeling well also an uneasiness for me, so my motivation for hoping she will be better is partly to for me also to feel better about it because then I don't have to worry about it—there is one less thing to worry about.

So there are all these details so all of this reading makes a lot of sense from that point of view. He talks about crystallizations. These are not things you see and then they go away; they are always there. They come back in new situations; the reaction is the same again.

But I can also kind of extrapolate into the direction that George mentioned there is a medium of Hope and Faith and Love that in some ways we can participate in selflessly. That is a true possibility and in fact is the direction I am looking into, not that I manage to do it but it interests me.

All of this was in the reading and it kind of makes sense to me because I see it in my own life as I described but you bring up the question of do planets experience Faith or Hope? I don't know that we can have a direct perception of that; I don't think I can but it is a good question because the question to me is, let's suppose there is this medium and emotions exist outside of any kind of a being and there are beings that can participate in them; they can experience them like three-brained beings, like we ourselves can. Can planets experience these emotions also?

This brings me to the question of brains. Is it necessary to be a living being and to have some, what he calls a brain, in order to experience these kinds of states? When we talk about Hope, the way I understand it, is simply a state of Hope-fulness rather than hoping for a particular object, a state being Hopeful, without really knowing why, without having a specific object in mind for that.

Take a rock or a table that is inanimate, can there be an experience of Hope? I am inclined to doubt that. When it comes to a planet or a sun, which in terms of materiality as I understand it, is very disorganized.

KEITH: If three-brained beings did not exist or if three-brained beings that exist are those on the planet Earth, would Faith, Hope or Love exist? That puts that question in another context. Is there an objective reality to Faith, Hope or Love or is Faith, Hope and Love another way of speaking about the Law of Three, the primal impulses that come from the forces of primary force, Creation, conception, result? Is it another way of speaking of that triad? Or not?

LARRY: I am looking out the window and thinking of plants and seeds. Is that what seed has, Hope? Does a pinecone have a measure of Hope? Just who it is and does it have a Faith that has a sense of where it ends and where it begins? I can imagine that sooner than I can imagine a planet.

KEITH: If it is plant, then it can be food. But if it is a seed for a tree then it has a different possible future, in answer to the circumstance you put out there. As far as Hope is concerned, if there is realistic Hope, it would be for the fullest manifestation of what is intrinsic to it. So, if it is a seed for an oak tree, then it would appear that the fullest manifestation of its being-ness would be to be a fully developed oak tree.

ELAN: Something that he says about impulse is important here because I see these impulses, these higher impulses as coming from ... if I were to put this on the map of energies, for example, I would say that this comes from creative energies, these impulses or, in any event, they are energies that are beyond our capacity to 'own' them.

We can't have this Hope; we cannot have Love; we cannot have. We can open ourselves to these impulses. We can allow ourselves to be connected to these impulses. That's my experience. Working with the exercise George mentioned, these impulses are described as subtle emotions. That is another way of looking at them. When I began working with this exercise my approach was to try to have an experience of Hope, to make efforts to have these experiences. What I found was that only by stopping all effort, in other words, only by allowing without any preconditions, expectations, any kind of expectation would get in the way of this flow of these higher impulses.

I was going to say one can never know when the connection is being made but the more one actually becomes able to stop trying to do, but to put oneself in a completely receptive mode, one can then get connected with these impulses and they have nothing to do with these ordinary perceptions of 'hoping-for' or 'believing-in'. It is nothing like that. For example, when I experience this 'belief emotion,' it is more like a thrill that goes through me; it's not what I think of as belief but it's there. When he says ten different people have ten different ways of talking about Love but not one of them will experience real Love because we are always looking at these from our ordinary point of view about how things should be. It is not that at all.

George's analogy to air is very important because these impulses are everywhere. I would say these impulses are throughout the Universe. I don't see why they wouldn't be. They are universal impulses that we can tap into.

IRV: When Stefan M. was talking I got this kind of vision/picture that came to me about the question do planets experience these sacred impulses. I got a picture of the planet Mars. We have seen quite a few high resolution pictures of Mars and I got this sense that Mars once had water and once maybe had the beginning of life and then it lost its atmosphere. It has just been waiting for billions of years maybe there is Hope and Faith that it will come some day and restore their atmosphere and their life there so that it can transform the way planets like the Earth have this responsibility. There is all this interest in going to Mars but I wonder if actually Mars is calling us to it because it needs something that we can provide.

KEITH: When we use the word "Faith," we are referring to a state that is now—*now*. Bennett's table: "I am a table, don't take me for a chair." That's *present circumstance*. The same with me, "I am a man, an old man but I am a man." Beyond that, in terms of Faith of a man, is there very much more that I could say? No, not really. It's not what kind of a man. Are you a man? If I am a man, then, that's my Faith. I am a human being. I can have Faith also.

I realize this may be quirky way to look at it, but it seems to me that when we take Faith as a reflection of being-ness. Faith is not something that can be an individual determinant of our intellectual, emotional or physical brain. It doesn't make any sense because then we can get caught: "You believe what you want and I'll believe what I want," and on and on. It becomes an emotional/intellectual whatever, but it doesn't have any point of reconciliation.

LARRY: When you say Faith, isn't it also Faith in your capacities and what your range is, what you can/can't do? You can't jump twenty feet. You do certain things and that is part of who you are.

KEITH: Absolutely, with the limitations built into it. It would be possible to argue the outer edges of what defines that man-ness or human-ness. Are you going to be able jump so many feet? How about three and a half? You get into a lot of sticky stuff. Get down to a common view of human-ness. We can look at thousand pictures and how many times would you be wrong if they were pictures taken in five thousand years all over the world of people doing ten thousand different things and you just had this picture, picture, picture. They are all people doing things. That's Faith. They are that—as different and varying as that.

It is useful to have a broader concept of Faith, Hope and Love than one that is totally limited by our human, everyday perspective where it is almost totally dependent on what church you were brought up in, what are the beliefs of your parents or neighbors.

IRV: So, what you are saying is that Faith, Love and Hope are properties of being.

MANDY: It occurred to me during this conversation another way I started looking at is was relative to how Gurdjieff speaks about the cosmology and that everything in the Universe has some level of intelligence. There are different degrees of capacity for being in this state, as George was speaking, of Faith, Hope and Love. When Larry was talking about nature I began to reflect upon something that has been of interest in having to come to understand or learn about lately, which is this network or this nervous system under and forest floor where all the trees are connected and that, within a given species, there is even a stronger connection, even the mother tree, that puts out the saplings that begin to grow, there is a stronger connection. But when a tree is in trouble, they help each other; they nourish each other through this network beneath the forest floor.

It seemed to me that certainly the mother tree has Hope first and foremost and they know this for a fact because they know the mother tree will continue to nurture. It seems that all of life as it receives energy from the sun has the capacity for being present to or receiving something of these impulses of Faith, Hope and Love.

It also seems, maybe, there is a Faith, Hope and Love for our physical body but there is also a different level of Faith, Hope and Love for our soul and higher being-body. Can you say something about that?

KEITH: If you had a soul...we are jumping ahead a few billion miles. If we conjecture such a state as a soul and such a state as a Kesdjanian world, then would there be such things? What would be an expression of Faith, Hope or Love in those worlds? Is that what you are saying? What do you think?

MANDY: I think what George was saying is what you are speaking about.

KEITH: [looking expectantly at George for a response] He's not taking the bait.

MANDY: Yes, he did; he nodded. [laughter]

GEORGE: One thing that I've always appreciated about Bennett's picture of Love is when he associated it with unity of energy. For one thing, it tells you about the picture of what Love is but it also shears away all the zillions of associations we have with Love, which are all aligned with Ashiata Shiemash's [description]. When you think of it as unity of energy then it unites on any level you like. It unites the tree roots; it unites us to the trees; it unites us to Jupiter. It is unitive. It's beyond personal but we can experience it as person but, as Elan says, it is not ours to possess; it is simply an energy that has that result—that things are connected ... *unified*—not just connected. It seems that one of our primary difficulties, as



human beings blighted by the consequences of the properties of the organ Kundabuffer, is that it so hard to see this connectedness even with our species. Even in a group like this where people are like-minded, you still find it difficult to feel the connectedness. I do.

So, I always appreciated that this idea of Love being unitive energy; it has a power that doesn't have to do with anything we normally associate with the word.

JOE: At some point in this conversation, I made the distinction between verb and noun and in ordinary consciousness one would say, "I love you," "I hope it won't rain tomorrow"—verbs. But when I hear about a unitive energy or even something outside, something I don't have any control over enacting, it's more like a noun. It is a something.

I was thinking, on a practical level, how would I know whether I am acting from some more objective Faith or Hope or it is just some subjective, personal gain sort of Hope?

I could see myself in a situation, like right now, I am asking myself is it a verb or a noun? When it is a verb, it is just something that I am trying to control and do. When it's a noun it is a part of something very big—maybe a little cosmic pebble of it can lodge itself in me but then it would still be noun that would be a source of energy for me rather than some action that I do in order to gain something.

MARTIN: I wanted to add to what other people are saying. Later in this chapter he talks about consciousness. From my experience, Faith, Hope and Love without any effort on my part to become conscious, they do create the opposite. A prerequisite to try to connect with these impulses is to make an effort to be conscious, or to allow something to enter me, as he talks about Faith of body, Faith of feeling and Faith of consciousness. This is where people seem to be pointing. There is this ordinary awareness, but you talk about the third state of consciousness, but without being in that state I don't think we can access what Gurdjieff is talking about in these true impulses.

HARRY: I have found this perspective on Faith very useful over the years because, at the time we began exploring that it was the table as table, the persistence—it is what it is and it persists and this quality of persistence of am-ness and the contrast to that to my lack of persistence internally and remain present or remaining with a particular aim. Over time, that quality of perceiving Faith, as reflected in a persistence, and looking at that lack of persistence as a reflection of the qualities of Kundabuffer versus whatever internal dynamic that appears when one *re*-initiates. I have found that useful as a connection to the notion of a more real Faith. It has a resonance for me in terms of experience.

That quality that Martin mentions seems to be a place I always find myself. Okay, this myth of Kundabuffer has resulted in a less than balanced three-brained being so the quality of the being is such that it can be or is dependent upon an inner dynamic that requires this persistence and requires wish, which seems to bring Hope as a necessary part of that. Even if there is something in me that does not truly understand it intellectually why it persists and why it continues and makes effort, why it tries to activate wish, it seems somehow that that doesn't matter inside of me. What seems to matter is the recognition of the contrast of what is judged as the lower level of being in me vs. something that feels otherwise.

I always have this conflict in conversations—it is an on-going one for me—of the our nature being such that we simply have to get out of the way, and then the higher by law appears and so we speak of 'no effort.' And then there is always that part of me that gets lost in the verbiage of well I am making an effort because I am making an effort not to make an effort ... there is always a tension in those perceptions.

KEITH: That's interesting. What do you do with that, Harry, right in those moments?

HARRY: What me brought me to this Work to begin with was this notion that I am not what could be, or what exists in potential to be and that the world is the way is because of the fact that I am they way I am. So if I wish something to be otherwise, it has to be otherwise in me and always that tension is there is a place I want to be or a thing I want to be in comparison with what I am perceiving I am. That was a Hope in a sense. It was: this is something I can do, not like I go grocery shopping with my list but a genuine something that could persist in me to be otherwise. I go back to that conviction and push myself again and keep pushing because, for some reason, that feeds something in me—to push—so say, okay, I am going to pay attention to this; I am going to sense this; try this exercise; put myself in this circumstance. I am going to push, push, push. Then I tell myself stories about that, about how when I do that, I learn things, I see more about myself when I put myself in these circumstances. I grow and have this whole conviction/narrative around that. It's difficult to find a home in this idea of what appears to me to be non-effort.

CONTI: This is very subjective but it brings me to the two aspects of what it means to be wholly denying. The wholly aspect, on one side of it, is denying the sense of resistance and the other one, yielding and being yielding being as much wholly denying as the resistance and how that appears in me, those two aspects of this nature, how they appear.

JAN: What Harry is describing is a really big question. What is it that makes us set a foot upon a path like that? Where are the genetics in that? How is that selected? I don't think it's epigenetics, I think it's genetics. But why are we selected? Why are some people selected to see that there is something in me that I wish to do otherwise because I see that would be a benefit that passes beyond me. How does that get selected for? Can you say [something]?

KEITH: Keep looking! I mean it seriously, because I think it may only be the 52<sup>nd</sup> or the 65<sup>th</sup> reminder that is epigenetic, that is what I mean by the reminding factor. I don't think we have any idea—at least, I didn't until I really tried to pay attention how frequently these reminding factors can be there, in a moment. In this kind of flow where I'm just looking around that there can be frequent little discourses that go on—little reminding factors that say, “look at this; how about that, look here,” and they are all chained together because they are epigenetically related to each other. Many of them seem, at this point, like holes in the road that we don't fall into, but some of them, we may.

JAN: That's a reminding factor too because you go smash on your face.

KEITH: Maybe you do but, if you didn't see the hole, then you are just blindly on your way to the next hole, that's all.

What we have been talking about is so important to what we have been talking about Faith, Hope and Love because there, in our life for each of us every day, there is real life experience. It is not all nonsense going on out there; that really is not true. I think many people fall into that trap where they get into the mind set that life is just crap, one thing after another and another and there is nothing in there of any real substance. I don't believe that's true for a minute—not for a minute. Our life is filled with all kinds of real experiences. They are simple as looking out the window and having a sense of wonder of what's happening out there in the trees or with birds or with whatever is going on. There is nothing necessarily in any of that that has to do with Kundabuffer. It can be simply digesting real

experiences, digesting the sensory part of my physical existence. There is nothing wrong. That is a great plus. That feeds that part of myself.

The same thing is true of a host of other associations that may come up. The phone rings and I wonder if it one of my daughters or my son and, in that moment, when I realize it is not any of them but it was just the corner drugstore calling, that starts another chain of associations in me but my daughters and my son were there; they came associatively in a context of my concern, my wishing well for them, my wanting to know that they are okay. There is nothing wrong with that. That's not Kundabuffer; that's just part of our associative life connected to other people.

GEORGE P: Ashiata Shiemash gave the direction about the importance of the subconscious and that it was the one thing that had a possibility [relating to] Harry's direction for the Sitting this morning [which] began with paying attention, watching and not trying to do, being aware of the group as well as oneself and then bringing the breath in. When you were talking about noticing, looking out the window, in order to see those associations, it seems to have Faith, that that is an important element—to be in the moment. Is that a connection to the subconscious? We hear this about the subconscious but is it the quiet place that we experience as a group when we try to be here in the moment?

We have Faith that this is important to us; we have Faith that out of all the possibilities what we could be doing, each of us has given up their time; they have found that this is very important. Is this a way of touching subconscious because it is through the subconscious that any real...

KEITH: Gurdjieff says, "two hours, one hour." If you work for one hour a day, you should be in ordinary life two hours a day—twice as much time as in ordinary life. You cannot work all the time, that's stupid, nobody can do that. So, work one hour. He is trying to give us some indication of proportion. You make effort, then you don't make effort. However, how much effort does it take to remain attentive? That is another side of the issue. Do we just fall back asleep totally or do we try to remain alert?

Bennett has some great commentaries in a little booklet from Sherbourne titled *Noticing*. It is very useful for noticing, it doesn't mean you sit down and say to yourself, "I am going to notice everything." Not that. It's just—*noticing*. Do you notice? Do you notice that the door is always 7/8ths closed every time you walk through the door? It's never 100%. I wonder why. Or I have noticed the past week that the candles were sitting on the desktop just that way and now this morning, when I came in, they were moved. Huh. There is nothing cosmic about that but it is more a matter of it takes a certain quality of attention to notice that there is a difference—there is a difference in how things are aligned.

STEFAN M: I am still hung up with the question of Faith with respect to a tree or something like that. To talk about the impulses as universal impulses seems to make sense and it seems we should think of them as touching all life, not just human life. About the example that was given about the trees caring for each other in the forest—what is Faith for a tree? It seems there is something like what you might call an instinctive sensing of the universal order; an instinctive sensing that there is a tomorrow—that there is some continuity. That experience, not expressed in words but just feeling it, should be possible for all forms of life, that there is continuity; there is Hope in a way.

Harry was talking about it too. I can't really rationalize it but the rationalizing is comes afterwards. The instinctive sensing of I am in this Universe. That I exist somehow is possible

because there is Faith. There is an ocean of these qualities that are just there. If that was not there, then this experience would probably not take place. I am just, in some way, speculating but I am also trying to piece together the conversation that is going on.

LARRY: I had a scary thought about Faith of a table, “I am a table, take me as I am.” There is a continuity there, a table is always a table, and yet my own sense of myself when I fall asleep, then I am less than a table. I am not there. I’ve been trying to sense my right hand and left foot and when I forget or when I wake up and wonder what was I thinking about, “oh yeah, it was my sensation. I had a thing going.” But there are these blackout periods where I blackout into thought and so, in a sense, I have lost the continuity of my being.

I was thinking about the consistency of a table, that a table is always a table and I don’t even have that at times.

GEORGE B: It was very [helpful] when you reminded us that we can’t work all the time. We ought to know this but I have a tendency to beat myself up because I am not working all the time and I hear that in other people’s comments as if it were possible. It is good to be reminded that it isn’t because, otherwise, there is no Hope.

KEITH: It is so important to remember.

GEORGE B: That we come and go, literally.

KEITH: Important because each of us can be so judgmental. We see friends who are almost asleep and then we decide he’s asleep, right? We don’t know. We don’t know. We judge. We do that rather frequently, just cast your eyes around once and bet you somebody has come to some kind of judgment—not in a logical, rational sequence—I am must saying coming to a conclusion on the basis of a snapshot. We do that all the time in ordinary life if we are not careful. We don’t have sufficient attention in the moment to know whether we are there or whether we see whether there is anything enlivening going on, if somebody else is also awake. I am sure all of you have a feeling sometime that you know—something in you knows—when somebody else is making a specific kind of interior effort for themselves.

MANDY: This is interesting about babies and small children. If you make eye contact with them, they are always there. A young child or an infant will always engage and you can tell they are there.

KEITH: Can you take that further? Give us an example?

MANDY: An example is walking down the street into the grocery store and a child is in a carriage and you make eye contact with them and they always meet you, right?

BONNIE: That’s my experience also with young children and the fact that they respond so well to our attention—being paid attention to, is very big. When I say hello to someone at the shop and try to greet them with my eyes, most of the time they ignore me but children don’t. And that openness is so good, and that fact is reflected in the baby lab report that was on *60 Minutes* many years ago where these three month old children were shown good puppets and mean puppets. 80% of the time, those three-month old children looked at the good puppet, they still looked at the mean puppet too. By the time those children were five months old, they reached for good puppet most of the time. This is instinct you speak about, Steffan, it’s there in us toward goodness, kindness, the future, real Hope. It is there enough;

it's fortunate that we do run into a path or ideas that bring that out in people. So many people on this planet are of that persuasion. I'd say 90% of us are good and kind and caring and want the future to be a hopeful one, full of compassion.

NEAL: We were talking about these three things [sacred impulses] and think of them as being very separate but what I have hoped for is what I have Faith in an essential way that what I have Faith in is a subconscious act and it's not from my thinking; it's from my gut.

BONNIE: This baby lab I spoke about was a Harvard-based study still is of children and it's been going on for at least 20 years now and is well worth looking up. There are continuing studies of the qualities of what it is to be a human being.

DAVE K: It hadn't occurred to me before this discussion the context of the sacred impulses, that there have been times where my aim is centered on working the affirmation and, listening to this exchange, it occurs to me that a part of the experience of returning to that effort and the connections that take place as a result are actually examples of coming into contact with Faith, Hope and Love. I never had made that connection before. What Harry was talking about illustrates that as well.

I wonder to two-brained animals' experience of these impulses because this time of year my dog has a very intense relationship with the squirrels around our house and he vacillates between Faith and Hope. He is absolutely sure that one of them is going to fall out of the tree right into his mouth and he hopes very intensively. Every once in a while, it actually happens. But, in a strange sort of way, I can sense there is a Love between them. The squirrels are answering back to him all the time but there is a dynamic there.

TODDY: I have a question about the subconsciousness. He says particularly with the impulse of conscience that it is in the subconscious. What is the nature of what he means about the subconsciousness? As it was read in the first chapter: in order for the reader to get what he is trying to get across, our subconsciousness will compel us to reflect actively. What is he saying about the subconsciousness? How do we understand what he means by this other consciousness?

ELAN: I'll offer an opinion. We have this ordinary awareness. It goes into different places. Sometimes we are we direct our attention; sometimes we dream but we are aware that there is this kind of perception that goes on all the time. My understanding is that there is another part of us of myself that watches all the time. I am not aware that it is watching but when certain moments arise in my activity this watching part of myself emerges and I become aware of it. It enters into my ordinary, daily awareness.

For example, we were just talking about noticing. I noticed the chocolates again. That hooked me up with everything that had gone yesterday. When I have a moment where I can make a right action or a wrong action, this thing comes up from the subconscious which is always aware but I am not aware of it but it is always aware. It is always watching. Then it comes up. Then it enters into my ordinary awareness and I have a choice. To me that is connected with conscience: that's where the conscience lives because it emerges at moments. Gurdjieff says further that we try to squash it as soon as possible because it is uncomfortable—what we see. I don't want to give somebody what I want. I don't want to—whatever it is—the right action, the right life is making a demand on me that I don't want to make and so I squash this. It goes back under.

CONTI: Do you think he gives us clues to the subconscious in the whole of *Meetings with Remarkable Men*? The way he goes through his journey, he has an essential aim in his search but there seems to be what we would call derailment at times but it all feeds into [him] because he has this aim. *Meetings* addresses what the subconscious is in action and also in the Prologue of *Life is real only then, when "I am."*

GEORGE P: Observing myself over the years, the times when I am most honest is related to sleep. When I first get up in the morning is the time when I can have the most sincere observations. I am really aware of the mind, of the thought process. As the day goes on the associations just take off and it is just the eternal struggle of whatever method I am using to be in the moment or whenever I wake up to it.

The other observation is when I lay down in the afternoon for a 15 minute nap, if it is successful, my body will relax with the breath and I fall asleep and I am in an almost beginning of sleeping and I see the thoughts. It is just another way observing but it is the most sincere time to really pull back. It seems it is a referral point to the subconscious because it is getting deeper. It is not judging but I can notice very similar thoughts and a lot of them are sort crazy, unrelated, like dreams.

I had the same question about the subconscious, which is why I brought up the exercise this morning. I thought Harry leading the exercise is an opportunity to be directed. It is his voice; it is his direction but giving up the will and wanting to be there and really participating in the group, the circulation of the blood. Is that what he is referring to as the subconscious? It seems to be pulling deeper and deeper back, getting in back of the associations, just being a witness of what's going on.

So, many people report they don't remember their dreams. I know I was dreaming, but I can't bring them up but I can certainly be a witness in the nap period where I had the attention.

KEITH: Go with it.

IRV: I have a little date on that. It has to do with when I am sitting by myself. Sometimes during the day I'll get an impulse to sit for a while and I'll make the usual efforts but I get distracted and thoughts come. My automatic impulse is, "get out of here – I am trying to work." But those thoughts come from someplace real. When I watch and let them be there, it turns out these associative thoughts that come up are unresolved issues that I need to resolve and that I haven't looked at.

For example, a patient of mine had a difficulty and I was going to get back to her about it because I didn't know the answer to her question. I was sitting and I realized I had forgotten all about it and that I needed to call her. It just came up from somewhere. I thought this was really interesting and so, since then, I've been letting these associations just come when I am quiet and often they come from a place where there is a need I've neglected or a need that I need to be aware of. It's from a different part of me that I don't usually pay attention to.

TODDY: It seems related in that something compels you to reflect actively; it communicates with you.

IRV: Right, communication.

## OCTOBER GATHERING 2017 ~ OCTOBER 7, SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Music: de Hartmann, *Serenade of the Invisible Belfry*

KEITH: The article [we are about to read] takes up, in considerable detail, the interstices of where the term genome comes from, what it fundamentally involves, because there is a lot of stuff out there in the literature that is quite frankly just literature. Many use these terms without a strict adherence to what they really are, like a lot of things in today's news literature, there is misuse or misapplication of terms. And that is certainly true in regard to genes and genomes. So, listen for that, as Harry reads, and then we can go back and clarify things if that seems to be necessary. Listen carefully. I may have Harry stop and re-read a couple of small portions just to make sure that it gets thoroughly stuck.

### BEHAVIORAL EPIGENETICS: HOW NURTURE SHAPES NATURE

by Tabitha M. Powledge

Identical twins have the same genes. Yet as individuals, they can be quite unlike in behavior, in personality, in health, and even in appearance, and they tend to grow more different as they age. How can genes that seem to be identical produce such different effects?

A big part of the answer, scientists now think, is epigenetics—how nurture shapes nature. Epigenetic mechanisms are molecular events that govern the way the environment regulates the genomes of organisms. Epigenetic processes lead to individual differences in appearance, physiology, cognition, and behavior—the group of traits known as the phenotype. Scientists are at the very earliest stages of investigating them. The goal is to pry open one of nature's most challenging black boxes: explaining how life experiences are transmuted into persistent changes in body function and behavior.

In its brief history, epigenetics research has concentrated mostly on the early development of organisms. One strain of these investigations is development of behavior, and this line of research now has its own name: Behavioral epigenetics refers to the study of how signals from the environment trigger molecular biological changes that modify what goes on in brain cells.

KEITH: Okay hold that in mind. This is big stuff. There is something that is establishing a condition between something in the environment and changes via the electrical aspects of our nervous system, changes in the way in which our brain functions.

Now if that is not an adequate substitute for Kundabuffer, in Gurdjieff's terms, I can't imagine what would be more powerful, what would be more perceptive, that here is an organ that is implanted. Certainly this is implanted that will do certain things with the perception of reality. Whatever that is.

Notice that it is reality. It is the everyday world that is going to be altered in the way in which it is understood, the way in which we respond to it.

So, for now let's just say this is obviously a big deal. A big deal.

STEFFAN S: Isn't it also true that if I intend something I can make my own pathway?

KEITH: We will get there. That's got to come down the road further on when we are looking at this. [the reading continues]

Behavioral epigenetics refers to the study of how signals from the environment trigger molecular biological changes that modify what goes on in brain cells.

In its brief history, epigenetics research has concentrated mostly on the early development of organisms. One strain of these investigations is development of behavior, and this line of research now has its own name: Behavioral epigenetics refers to the study of how signals from the environment trigger molecular biological changes that modify what goes on in brain cells. Here, the term environment encompasses pretty much everything that happens in every stage of life: social experience; nutrition; hormones; and toxicological exposures that occur prenatally, postnatally, and in adulthood. If research on epigenetics is in its infancy, research on behavioral epigenetics is in embryo.

Despite its embryonic state, behavioral epigenetics is already a vast topic, rife with complexities that grow more intricate every day. Discoveries seem to lead not to illumination but to more questions, and we have space here to touch on barely a few. Yet behavioral epigenetics has been held out as promising to elucidate, and perhaps even solve, immense medical troubles, such as mental retardation, autism, schizophrenia, and neurodegenerative disorders, and even social challenges, such as aging, addiction, suicide, child abuse, and child neglect.

### **Learning and Remembering**

The basis of all behavior is learning and memory. Epigenetic modifications to a number of genes have now been shown to figure in learning and remembering. J. David Sweatt, director of the McKnight Brain Institute at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, notes a striking parallel between developmental processes and the mechanisms of memory—changes driven by experience—in the adult nervous system. “It’s not just that development and behavioral memory are rough analogs of each other, but rather that they are molecular homologues of each other,” he says. The two most studied epigenetic processes—regulation of the structure of three dimensional DNA and its associated proteins, plus chemical adjustments to DNA through mechanisms like histone modification—are essential both in development and in long-term memory formation. “It’s as if evolution has been efficient in the set of molecular mechanisms that cells use to trigger persisting changes. It uses those mechanisms in development when it’s patterning the organism, when it’s turning an embryonic stem cell into a neuron or a liver cell,” he says. “Then in the adult nervous system it has coopted some of those same mechanisms to trigger experience-dependent, persisting change in the function of neurons in the nervous system.”

Several studies have established that both DNA methylation and histone modifications are essential for learning and remembering. Some examples are based on fear conditioning, in which mice learn to show fear of a particular location where they have been subjected to electric shocks.

After this conditioning, DNA methyltransferase, the enzyme that attaches a methyl group to DNA, increases in the hippocampus, the brain region where memories are forged. Inhibiting the enzyme prevents memories from



forming. Forming memories of and remembering this contextual fear also boosts acetylation of histones in the hippocampus. Blocking histone acetylation therefore interferes with the behavior usually associated with the fear, but blocking deacetylation reverses these effects and also strengthens the formation of the fear memories.

It used to be—and still is, to some extent—that researchers believed that once epigenetic marks—particularly DNA methylation—were made, they were immutable except in special cases like cancer. The central dogma dictated that the marks were laid down when cell fate was determined, and that those marks were unchangeable for the remainder of an animal's lifetime.

Now the take-home message from Sweatt's lab and those of other behavioral epigenetics pioneers of the mammal nervous system, such as Michael Meaney of Douglas Hospital and Moshe Szyf of McGill, both in Montreal, and Eric Nestler at Mount Sinai in New York City, is just the opposite.

Recent work from labs investigating this new subfield of behavioral epigenetics has shown, Sweatt says, that there is dynamic regulation of epigenetic marks in nondividing cells in the mature nervous system. At least a subset of genes undergo active demethylation and remethylation, which is driven by the environment or by experience. This dynamism, he says, can lead to either transient or persistent functional changes in the nervous system.

KEITH: Keep in mind, as we are passing through here, I don't think that any of us can retain everything that has been read. But one thing that should stand out for us here is a change in what we presumed was a fixed circumstance with regard to the functioning of certain parts of the nervous system. For the most recent years, 30 – 40 years anyhow, that that was fixed. We thought it couldn't change anything and now we see it is changeable.

This should be very helpful for us in Work.

What they are beginning to demonstrate is that these changes in the nervous system that seem so immutably fixed are not really that way at all. But under certain circumstances with a change in the epigenetics you can change the memory; improve it or change it or do away with it. So, I just wanted to emphasize that. [the reading continues:]

Sweatt's recent work has concerned the potential role of DNA methylation in regulating long-term memory storage in the cortex. He and his colleagues have reported that putting DNA methyltransferase inhibitors into an animal's anterior cingulate cortex a month after it has learned something partly erases that memory, diminishing it by half. The role of DNA methylation in long-term memory storage is at the moment a wide-open question and a focus in his lab, Sweatt says.

HARRY: When he is referring to methylation, he's tying that to memory because it is the nerve fibers that are methylated that become able to continually re-activate and transfer the signal that we would say as a memory?

KEITH: The area, as I understand it, the circumstance and the process which is set in motion is more fixed. The memory then would unfold from that and that would be more fixed. That's how I understand it.

IRV: Yes, but biochemically the methylation refers to the DNA right?

KEITH: Yes, but that fixes it. It gives it fewer alternatives.

IRV: And it when you inhibit that process, learning diminishes by 50%.

HARRY: I think I was mixing that with the term “mylenation.” [the reading continues]

### **The Influence of Mom and Dad**

The epigenetics of parental care got its start some two decades ago when Michael Meaney and his colleagues showed that rats’ mothering styles influenced their pups’ response to stress as adults as a result of effects on the glucocorticoid receptor in the hippocampus. Offspring of nurturing mothers tended to be less anxious than those of more lackadaisical mothers. The Montreal researchers showed how early experience could shape an adult animal’s behavior and even disease susceptibility, and they attributed these findings to gene changes wrought by epigenetic events.

Environmental chemicals can also affect parenting and offspring behavior. Many studies have been done on the ubiquitous endocrine disrupter bisphenol A, which alters DNA methylation. It has a great many effects in rats and mice treated during gestation, both on recipients and on their offspring. Learning, memory, and behavior, including maternal behavior, seem particularly affected. For example: Treated moms do less licking and grooming of their pups, and the pups tend to explore less and behave more anxiously, avoiding new places.

Researchers in Frances Champagne’s lab at Columbia University in New York City are comparing social enrichment with social isolation or social impoverishment in rodents soon after their births, examining how those different environments change genes that govern social and reproductive behavior. Champagne’s is among several labs to show that social experiences—in particular, social experiences that are relevant to mammalian development—can induce epigenetic changes. These researchers are studying not just extremes of maternal care, but also how natural variation in mothering styles can induce significant differences in epigenetic profiles.

Their latest work defines the outcomes of communal rearing in mice. Communal rearing, which comes naturally to mice but is not found often in the lab, induces multiple changes in both the brain and behavior that persist across generations, even in those offspring who were not reared in a communal nest.

There has been a big increase in research on fathers’ experiences and how those are transmitted to offspring, Champagne says. Paternal effects may be particularly helpful in sorting out confounding factors in epigenetic studies, because what fathers transmit to offspring biology is only through sperm and whatever epigenetic marks they retain. There is no cytoplasm, no mitochondria, no uterus, and no messy maternal behavior to complicate interpretation. “It’s a way of actually seeing whether there’s some sort of germ cell epigenetic change,” she says.

Subjecting male lab animals to endocrine-disrupting chemicals and other toxins has produced behavioral effects in their offspring, even when the exposure takes place well before mating. When male mice and rats are exposed to alcohol before mating, their offspring do less well at discrimination on spatial

tasks, and they are more aggressive, take more risks, and display more anxiety-like behavior than offspring of unexposed animals. Males exposed to cocaine have offspring with smaller brains and deficits in attention and working memory. Even males exposed to toxins during their own embryonic development transmit detrimental effects to their offspring. In all of the examples mentioned here, epigenetic changes, especially those in DNA methylation, have been observed.

[Daphne asked for the part about fear to be re-read]

JAN: Let's talk about fear. For example, I had almost a paralytic fear of flying because of a runway accident. For years you had to fill me with diazepam and two strong whiskies. I could not get on the airplane without that kind of pacification. These terrifying incidents in a place, like the mice example, are terrifying life or death experiences.

And then one day something happened, I got on a plane and it was in the back of the plane, which is always bumpier, and I could just feel this incredible fear arising in me. And from across the aisle this woman leaned across to me and she said "here." She opened a box of lemon drops and said, "these help." And there was something in that moment that changed me, and I sucked the lemon drops for the next two hours.

The experience in the airplane, although I can still experience fear, began to diminish to a point where I can get on an airline and not think about it. So, there is some sort of modification that can come in with a deliberate act from outside. I think this would really be something worth exploring.

IRV: Well that sounds like the methylation is reversible, with an experience like that.

KEITH: How do you suppose, in putting together the elaboration, this having to do with the implantation of Kundabuffer? Put yourself in his position. How do you think or what would be the most effective way of getting across the points that he wanted to get across? And why? What was he trying to tell us when he put together the story of Kundabuffer for us?

TODDY: I think it appears in "The Arousing of Thought:"

In my opinion the trouble with you, in the present instance, is perhaps chiefly due to the fact that while still in childhood, there was implanted in you and has now become ideally well harmonized with your general psyche, an excellently working automatism for perceiving all kinds of new impressions, thanks to which "blessing" you have now, during your responsible life, no need of making any individual effort whatsoever. (*BT*, pp 6-7)

GEORGE B: That seems to be a perfect description of the sort of parents I come across who help their children over every obstacle before they get to it, thereby creating an automatism which they are not able to deal with anything themselves and which then has to be dealt with. It is an automatism implanted by the parenting style. We often see parents who put that difficulty in front of their kids by not allowing them to meet their own challenges. So I don't know whether it is Kundabuffer or the effects of it?

STEFFAN S: My sense of Gurdjieff's aim is that he is wanting us to see that we have this denying source in our heredity, but he is building up to saying that this gradually became an inherency and is the stuff we do ourselves. So, he is building up to that idea and he leads us

to know that Kundabuffer has been removed and it should be okay but those conditions that they themselves are responsible for and those are what you are talking about because that is where epigenetics come in, but it also gradually becomes an inherency.

ELAN: The other interesting aspect about this is that it seems to me that in that story of the implantation of Kundabuffer, in that whole story one of the most important parts is that it is not our fault. It is not our fault that we have this. If I think about this from a different perspective it is almost like he is saying this is like original sin. But he is saying that it is not our fault and it opens the door for a change back, right there at the beginning. At the same time, he says that we have created these conditions by ourselves, we are to blame for how things are. Basically, the beginning of this problem is not because of us. I think that is very important.

KEITH: Would you say those two sentences again? I just want to make sure that everybody has that in mind.

ELAN: He said, in various parts of Beelzebub, that we have made things worse by creating being existence ourselves is that the bottom line is that at the very beginning of the problem, the problem originated not from our own fault, which is very important. It gives hope that it is not just us.

MARTIN: I seem to remember when Kundabuffer was first implanted it was because beings had to be put to sleep, as it were, the higher powers did not want us to see reality.

KEITH: I don't remember it being specifically mentioned. Does anybody?

MARTIN: I am using that in terms of seeing things topsy-turvy, so beings on the planet would not commit suicide because they were serving the Trogoautoegocratic process without will. So that is why it was implanted in the first place, to keep the beings on the planet still would create energies necessary for the cosmic process, otherwise they would revolt against this.

KEITH: So, why is the term implantation appropriate? The first few times I read that I got irritated. I didn't think that was a fair way of describing it. When you implant something, you take something that is fully formed, and you stick it in there, then it does a certain thing. That's an implant. And that offended me. So, how do you see that now? It is there on the pages that this is what Gurdjieff said.

GARY: We were just reading about the toxic exposure can result in the transmission of various kinds of deficiencies, across generations regardless of nurture. So, it is like it's implanting a tendency or an openness to be a certain way or not.

IRV: The way I remember it from the book is that the way we see reality upside down is by me thinking I am the center of the Universe. In the Legomonism when Ashiata said I am just a particle of this huge whole. That's reality. The way we see it, the way I see it is that I'm the center and that feeds my vanity, my pride, my self-love, my conceit, all those things. And it is so interesting that as children grow up from babies, to toddlers, to small children, they go through a stage where they think that they are the center because they need the attention of their parents and they can't do for themselves and we get stuck there. And this transition to seeing that I am just a particle, an insignificant particle of the whole, that transition from thinking I am the center of the Universe is a big part of de-crystallizing Kundabuffer, isn't it?

KEITH: Well, what is your experience? How do you experience that? Who is offended at first regard or later? Who is not offended at all? How do you understand it? This is a worthy enterprise to try and dig into. This is, after all, the nature of Kundabuffer. It's a big deal of how we understand implantation. What did Gurdjieff have in mind? What was he thinking when he chose this? We know now, this many years later, that Gurdjieff was a masterful linguist. He had great abilities in looking into languages and the underpinnings of languages. He would argue for hours with many of his pupils about what words to put into *Beelzebub's Tales*. So, we know that he chose with care and argued about precision, so that when he used the term *implant* he has something very specific in mind. How do you understand that? What did he want to emphasize about this that it was implanted?

The first thing one could say about implantation for whatever it is it didn't come with the package – *it came into from outside*. However, we see it, it needs to be understood that way. Something coming in from outside. I mention this because we are going to run into the same frustrating difficulty when at the very end of *The Tales* we see what the recommendation is from Beelzebub. Again he speaks of implantations.

NEAL: It's a fully formed thing. That's how I'm hearing it, which is that it is fully formed and it didn't take our work, it was implanted and ready to go.

KEITH: Okay. Ready to go. So, if it was a system, it may have been a whole bunch of steps on a road and they all got put in at once.

NEAL: It wasn't like a tendency that needed to be developed. It was fully formed and started working.

JAN: I have something that is a little different because when I first started looking into epigenetics it was in relation to holocaust survivors and the behavioral issues that we are seeing were with the grandchildren—certain behaviors. What I wrote down was this: if this bit of DNA material that sets the prior tendency and then there is some sort of exciting event or trauma and then there is the behavioral expression. So, if we were talking about an implant and if there is a prior tendency available and there is an exciting event or trauma that makes the genetic material express, Kundabuffer is implanted. Linguistically it reminds me of planting something that is a seed and that prior tendency, the behaviors would be the exciting trauma of life. Something that stimulated it to grow and the behavioral expression would be the abnormal, three-brained being, unbecoming behavior. So, planting something or implanting something doesn't have to come in fully formed, it could just be the tendency, almost like a tweak. It could be genetically modified behavior that we see as unbecoming.

JOE: Especially when I think about the connection you just drew, it strikes me that there has to be a connection at some point. If you planted something, a foreign body that has no way of connecting with the host that you put it in it won't have an effect. It's like if you plant something in bad soil then it won't work. So, I have been thinking about anything that could be implanted at some point there is a mutual cooperation to what was put in and to what host it was put into.

KEITH: From where is it implanted in Gurdjieff's terms?

STEFFAN: From higher intelligences.

JOHN: Mom and Dad.

MANY OTHERS: Looisos.

KEITH: Looisos is the image of the doer. He is a member of the High Commission. He is, after all, an Archangel, if I remember right, and he is in charge of the High Commission. Looisos is the arch-chemist-physicist. It is important that we see from the very beginning that whenever Kundabuffer is going to be discussed and however we approach it we have to have in mind arch chemist-physicist. This is not an imaginary thing this is chemistry and physics. That puts us in a category of events that becomes more important as we try to dig into this business of Kundabuffer

IRV: I am just trying to think of examples of implants that medical people put in, that this is an analogy. One of these is a pacemaker. So, it is a device implanted under the skin of your chest and it modifies the heartbeat. It keeps it from getting too slow. But it is fully formed when it gets in there. It has a function and we are having no control of it—it takes over. That's one example. Another one is a computer chip, say it is a GPS or something, so that means that somebody somewhere can know where you are going and that doesn't have any relation to our biology. There are a lot of different functions to our implants. Right? I am trying to get a feeling for planting something inside that affects us and beyond our control.

KEITH: Yes. So, it comes in from outside. It is put into us from outside. Who is the us? Is it only three-brained beings?

HARRY: It is three-brained beings. If the question was Kundabuffer, in terms of the story line, then everything is developing quite normally, even after the original collision that breaks apart the Earth and when it was originally implanted they had tails and he talks about that we are still at a point of development where they had like tails between their legs, whatever he needs to indicate with that—so it seems like reading it that way it is a certain development of life to a point and then it seems that they may come to see that they could develop reason and come to see the reality and they might just destroy themselves because of this that is implanted. So it seems that in a sense it has to do with an anecdote of the developing reason so that beginning to see principles and relationships outside of what is real in the moment. I don't think in terms of two-brained beings or a cat or a dog etc., as being able to come to realize that I am not going to throw the ball this time. I have just thrown it 20 times in a row and then I fake and the dog goes. The animal is connected to what the perception is and that is real. The abstract of the third brain—so somehow, it's what is already there. Because every creature will have patterns of behavior.

TODDY: I don't know if that is the same as what you are saying. He said secondly so, it's not like it is, automatically, a result of the first one:

“... every repeated impression from outside should crystallize in them data which would engender factors for evoking in them sensations of ‘pleasure’ and ‘enjoyment.’” (*BT*, p 88)

That's a three-fold process and is a pretty sophisticated process. And, there is something about this that there are repeated impressions coming in from outside and then the organ is implanted from outside.

MARTIN: One thing for me is that last time I was thinking about the difference of when it was implanted and when it is removed. When it was implanted, that is when the system Ors

was not stabilized basically. And once it had been stabilized it could be removed. So, they came and removed the organ, then there was no worry that the beings would want to leave anymore. It was only when the system was unstable.

KEITH: Tell us more about when the system was unstable.

MARTIN: Well this is my memory of *The Tales* – the reason that the Ilnosoparnian process was established on Earth to create the law of three and the law of seven to feed the moon, feed the fragments to keep the system stabilized after the collision and that that process required beings and that process was part of feeding the moon. It was that process which was necessary, and it was thought that the beings would revolt for this reason to stabilize the system.

KEITH: I don't remember that it was to stabilize the system. Can we read that again?

GEORGE P: Before we go back the story is that if the three-brained beings came to the realization too soon, it seems to me that invokes a certain awareness, a state of awareness and that if I fall in my own awareness, I remember at the Pinnacle there was a time that I came to the awareness, a stark awareness of my lack of knowledge, a lack of intent and it was extraordinary. But it was the impartiality of the group and the trust and, so it just seems that for the removal one has to be psychologically stable and have a degree of development. The story seems to me that if you come to the awareness that it is talking about a certain period in your growth and in your awareness. And that's the implication of the removal that one has to be ready. One cannot be told the answer; one has to find it for themselves. It seems to me that the removal [of Kundabuffer] is one's own work and to learn to trust themselves.

KEITH: Didn't the High Commission remove it?

GEORGE P: Is the High Commission the guide?

KEITH: It is the same High Commission that put it in. The High Commission put it in and the High Commission is going to take it out.

GEORGE P: So Looisos did both?

KEITH: Certainly. I still want to get back and I don't want to leave this question earlier about Ilnosoparno. Because I don't believe that we are on the same page there by a long shot. I would not understand Ilnosoparno the way it has been alluded to so far. It is quite different.

GEORGE B: Can I ask why we read that piece from Harry? It seems that the piece he read is talking about the future not what may or may not have happened in the past. The implication of what this epigenetics is is that changes in human genetic pattern is affected much faster than we think.

So, this could have happened in the past, but the really interesting thing is that it might happen in the future and the way we behave and the way we transmit that behavior for the future generations can actually change the way human beings are, much faster than we think of normally of evolution. But it is actually possible from some intention and understanding. It is hopeful and scary at the same time. Actually, it can change the behavior and the genetic makeup of people quite fast.

For example, he talks about the state of the parent, the parent rats; prior to conception changes the way rats behave which, in turns changes. And it seems to me that we get and

I don't mean to be disrespectful to the conversation, but the whole point of that piece that Harry read was that he was talking about changes that could be affected in the future rather than what may or may not have happened from this Archangel or that.

KEITH: Are these changes in our future? Hopefully?

GEORGE B: Yes, that is what I am saying. According to that article, changes may come about without bringing in a High Commission. Changes can be made by the way *we ourselves conduct ourselves*.

KEITH: Yes sure, one can raise that theoretically. You can also raise it as a monstrosity, absolutely. Just think of all the horrible things that could result that if a semi-conscious group of human beings set in motion things that would change the genetics, that would be nothing but a horrendous prospect. So, understanding the process and the risk is very worthwhile. And understanding what Gurdjieff was implying when he spoke first about Ilnosoparno, because that does come earlier, and then what is implied seems to be required by the High Commission and the arch chemist-physicist and the implantation of a specific organ. Those are facts, in Gurdjieff's terms and we have to deal with them the best we can. So, what do we think about those?

JOHN: If we think about words, there aren't very many words that Gurdjieff transposes from *In Search* to *The Tales*. I can't think of too many, but buffer is one of them. You know what he says about buffers in *In Search*, and here we have Kunda which is reminiscent of Kundalini, we have the tail and it seems to me that this is not the whole perspective on this because he leaves in heredity and we have this long piece this morning in which heredity figured in over and over. But there is one thing that is implanted in everyone worldwide that relates to most of the things that have been discussed and that is a perception of sexuality in the culture and in the family. If you think about the differences of perception of sexuality worldwide, all the cultural differences and attitudes towards sex. He says it's an organ, and we know about buffers that buffers are something that prevent a person taking a hold of a subject at once.

So, it seems to me that one thing that fits the description of being implanted and then is removed, in one way or another, for some people at least. If we think about our attitudes about that change of life there is some of that removal but its not entirely removed because of the consequences of the implantation remain. It seems to me that that is both consistent with the metaphor of the tail, Kunda-buffer-the implantation and the removal, and I am pretty sure that it is not the only aspect of this. From particularly the first book *Perspectives* you talk about cauda equina as the place where the nerve center in the pelvis and so on and that is one perspective on this idea-Kundabuffer.

IRV: Could you summarize the perspective?

John: So, buffers are implanted by the culture, by the parents. He's using the word buffer from *In Search* all the way into *The Tales*; he doesn't do that with very many words. He's got Kunda involved and mentions the tale somewhere in respect to this. And it is an organ implanted at the base of the tail.

JOHN: And the place of the tail is very close to the sex organs which are linked to the highest function which is S112 or Attention. And the dog has attention so that ties it into what Harry was reading.



STEFAN M: I would like to ask just one question to the medical people here, “what is actually the definition of an organ in the body?”

KEITH: A tissue that has a specific defined arena of functions that concern the whole body, muscular-skeletal, liver, renal, the pancreas and different glands, the stomach, the GI tract and that the way in which that would be approached.

STEFAN M: And with this reading at the beginning are you suggesting that there was this implantation that is to be taken literally? That it was an organ that was literally implanted? It was implanted and produced certain substances that, and all this goes way over my head, but he talks about how chemical processes can change behaviors and perceptions. And I suppose the net effect of the organ was to have different perceptions that were altered to protect us. So, are you suggesting that this was an actual physical organ that secreted certain chemicals that affected the brain? And, how do you perceive them?

KEITH: Well that has been true throughout evolution. The evolutionary appearance of all manner of things in the body but especially in the brain. We see going back two to three million years quite distinguishing things about our humanity and eventually going to mark homo habilis as a distinct species differentiation, much earlier humanoid [unclear] and that becomes a very tough issue when you get into what modern studies have done over the last hundred years and what they have been able to isolate, in terms of DNA, bone fragments and so forth.

That we are, all of us, at least four species say a hundred years ago, and this was not understood at all. It was dismissively argued against. We were human and that was it. And the fact that we may have in our past sexually mixed it up with other species that were almost human or much like us that was taken as an insult. Humans would never do that! There is some really silly stuff out there.

But you now see that there is clear DNA evidence. It is interesting where the proof is coming from. There are DNA stretches that go 50,000 letters and that is a tiny, tiny thing. It is real and it is 50,000. And it did come from this other species of humanoid. So somewhere back there there was a secular mixing that produced progeny. Now at what point does Homo Sapien Sapiens emerge? Where can we say that three-brained beings emerged?

In view of what we know now and what we read in the opening chapters of *The Tales*, that's a pretty murky area. Everything is going along fine and then Ilnosoparno comes up. Well what are you going to do with that? What are you going to do with Ilnosoparno? If you have got at least four and maybe more species who are cohabiting over a twelve million year period, something which was not understood in 1900. What do we do with these apparent contradictions? We have to come to some way of understanding that.

Could we find that segment in the opening chapters where Ilnosoparno is instituted?

“But nevertheless, my boy, this Most High Commission, having then calculated all the facts at hand, and also all that might happen in the future, came to the conclusion that although the fragments of the planet Earth might maintain themselves for the time being in their existing positions, yet in view of certain so-called ‘Tastartoonarian-displacements’ conjectured by the Commission, they might in the future leave their position and bring about a large number of irreparable calamities both for this system ‘Ors’ and for other neighboring solar systems.

check this with  
Keith

“Therefore the Most High Commission decided to take certain measures to avoid this eventuality.

“And they resolved that the best measure in the given case would be that the fundamental piece, namely, the planet Earth, should constantly send to its detached fragments, for their maintenance, the sacred vibrations ‘askokin’.

“This sacred substance can be formed on planets only when both fundamental cosmic laws operating in them, the sacred ‘Heptaparaparshinokh’, and the sacred ‘Triamazikamno’, function, as this is called, ‘Innosoparno’, that is to say, when the said sacred cosmic laws in the given cosmic concentration are deflected independently and also manifest on its surface independently—of course independently only within certain limits.

“And so, my boy, inasmuch as such a cosmic actualization was possible only with the sanction of HIS ENDLESSNESS, the Great Archangel Sakaki, accompanied by several other sacred members of that Most High Commission, set off immediately to HIS ENDLESSNESS to beseech Him to give the said sanction.

“And afterwards, when the said Sacred Individuals had obtained the sanction of HIS ENDLESSNESS for the actualization of the Innosoparnian process on that planet also, and when this process had been actualized under the direction of the same Great Archangel Sakaki, then from that time on, on that planet also, just as on many others, there began to arise the ‘Corresponding’, owing to which the said detached fragments exist until now without constituting a menace for a catastrophe on a great scale.

“Of these two fragments, the larger was named ‘Loonderperzo’ and the smaller ‘Anulios’; and the ordinary three-brained beings who afterwards arose and were formed on this planet also, at first called them by these names; but the beings of later times called them differently at different periods, and in most recent times the larger fragment has come to be called Moon, but the name of the smaller has been gradually forgotten.

“As for the beings there now, not only have they no name at all for this smaller fragment, but they do not even suspect its existence.

“It is interesting to notice here that the beings of a continent on that planet called ‘Atlantis’, which afterwards perished, still knew of this second fragment of their planet and also called it ‘Anulios’, but the beings of the last period of the same continent, in whom the results of the consequences of the properties of that organ called ‘Kundabuffer’—about which, it now seems, I shall have to explain to you even in great detail—had begun to be crystallized and to become part of their common presences, called it also ‘Kimespai’, the meaning of which for them was ‘Never-Allowing-One-to-Sleep-in-Peace’.  
(BT PP 84-85)

LARRY: That word deflection has always—I just don’t get that—the two laws deflecting. I don’t get what that means.

KEITH: Almost any description of an enneagram or when we image an enneagram we are imaging it as being deflected from each other.

LARRY: The way the two laws play off each other?

KEITH: Yes that's right. They are not simultaneously at every point in the same way. They are deflected; they are spread from each other. Do you understand that?

LARRY: Not really. I see the overlay of the two laws, but where is the deflection?

IRV: I think the question is how the Ilnosoparnian process relates to the maintenance of the moon? That's what I need clarified for me. How does the Ilnosoparnian process augment the maintenance of the moon? I don't get that.

STEPHEN: I have always assumed that the Ilnosoparnian process was life. Is that a correct?

KEITH: Why not?

STEPHEN: If Ilnosoparno is a natural process that arises, then why was permission needed here?

KEITH: Because of the unusual circumstances. The collision.

STEPHEN: So it maybe would have happened, maybe it wouldn't—there's not life on every planet but it was needed here because of the special circumstance.

CONTI: Wasn't it just the speculation of the circumstance? It was a speculation about the possibility. In both cases the trajectory of the comet that eventually hit us because of a lack of coordination. Whatever, these Higher Commission guys were speculating about what if.

JOE: There is nothing in here that says speculating. They were calculating.

CONTI: Yes, it was a miss-calculation because they were thinking about something that wasn't actual.

STEPHEN: They were taken by surprise, by the miss-calculation of the comet so they wanted to hedge their bets.

CONTI: That's right.

STEFFAN S: But they didn't know about epigenetics. They made a mistake, that's the point.

CONTI: Once the implantation was implanted that's what it is. Once you put something in, like a pacemaker, you can take it out, but it has consequences when you take it out. And if there were at one time not foreseen, so it is the same with this. It was not foreseen that they could just remove it without leaving any affects. And there's where the epigenetics, from my narrow point of view comes in.

NEAL: I heard that the epigenetics story was exactly the effects of the organ Kundabuffer and how it manifested within us.

ELAN: So, is this an example of Gurdjieff writing in such a way that something is ruffled in our subconscious and we have to take serious consideration of it? If so, what is he trying to say here? Why is he doing this? I mean, maybe this just doesn't fit together. And, he is making it so that it doesn't fit together on purpose. Because if it did fit together our ordinary reason would be satisfied. But it doesn't fit together no matter what we do. So, maybe it has to do with something about the process of writing this way is posing us to act. Something is getting ruffled from reading this material. But it might not be, and I am talking theoretically now, but it might not be what we think it is. It might be completely different.

KEITH: What might be completely different?

ELAN: What we think we are going to get from reading this book. We are trying to figure out what Gurdjieff meant by this and this and this ... and it is important to engage it like that but maybe that is completely not the point.

HARRY: So, it may be a lawful inexactitude?

ELAN: It could be, whatever that is.

TODDY: We could ask about the 'Tastartoonarian-displacements'. What do they do? They are afraid that in the future they might leave their position. And from the perspective of the High Commission it is an irreparable calamity for both Ors and the neighboring solar systems. In a way, that is an exact description of what we just said.

NICK: I am trying to understand what you are saying. It seems there's a lot of contradiction there. Because if we listen to you, it implies giving up and hitting our heads against this problem because we are not going to find anything. But at the same time is that what he wanted us to do so we shouldn't give up on it while accepting the position that we should give up even though he didn't want us to?

ELAN: There is another spiritual tradition of Zen in which the disciple is given a koan that doesn't fit. So, it is not a question of giving up. It is a question of engaging in that impossibility to such an extent that eventually some perception comes in which is unexpected, another dimension altogether. Then the koan itself is not the point. The koan is a tool to illicit something in the practitioner that was not available to the practitioner in any other way.

MANDY: It is the process itself not the result.

ELAN: We are going to break our heads on this because we are human and we are interested and it's curious and I think it is important to also keep in mind that there might be a whole other reason for this.

TODDY: Isn't the question we are talking about is what is going to be destroyed? To me, what you are saying is our inculcated associative process is going to be destroyed if we engage in that process and something else might appear.

ELAN: We can't reason our way through this.

IRV: Well, let me try. [laughter] Often there is an inner psychological meaning with many of these things that don't seem to make sense, outwardly. It just occurred to me that maybe this High Commission is in us. It is something psychological and in us. Like when we are very small, and we have a traumatic thing happen like a bad criticism, or something that really affects us emotionally, we have this kind of battle with ourselves—well okay, I am not going to have these feelings any more. I am not going to feel different. It is kind of like a contract a child makes to himself to deal with dysfunctional parents or something. And you grow up and don't need that anymore, even though it's like Kundabuffer, it is not necessary, it stays there, especially for men.

Until I was 40 years old I didn't even know what my feelings were and then we have to re-discover. That's a possibility—an inner psychological meaning for this whole thing.

KEITH: To throw one more wrench into the pile—what if Earth, Moon, Anulios is symbolic of our three brains? If the Earth is our physical brain, the Moon is what it appears to be relative to emotion, it is there dominant inside: we see it, we calculate it. And then there is Anulios which he puts in this category of the little planet that even grandmothers didn't tell mythic stories about anymore, because it was so distant and so tiny. For me that is the truly innocent part of our real emotional center inside. So, I have something there in my elemental state because after all this happened to the Earth when it was very young.

Now we have an Earth, we have a physical body and emotion, and we have Anulios; something which is a powerful influence but unseen and undiscoverable so that when we carry this analogy of Earth, Moon and Anulios through *The Tales* each chapter, each event, how consistent is it? I invite you to look at it that way. What would it be in this event? What are the emotional possibilities that may appear under certain circumstances in *Beelzebub's Tales*? So, I think it is an interesting perspective.

It also opens the door to another way of looking at this planetary system. It may raise even more interesting thoughts. In my perspective largely because of what Gurdjieff doesn't do. He never talks about Jupiter; he never talks about the other planets in the solar system. I find that an interesting omission. If we were to take the Earth, the Moon and Mars then I would see a way of understanding our typical, ordinary, mechanical intellect that it is and when we are in that mode, we are asleep—when we are acting or reacting mechanically.

Mars is the home of our real emotional center. The Toof-Nef-Tef is the leader of Mars. He is a much revered and accomplished leader who only fails when he can't find the correct answer as to why his people are unable to perfect themselves. He does not know how to account for that. He has no way of knowing that it has to do with the exchange or misuse of electricity, that more of it is being shunted to the Earth than should be because of certain things that the Earth is doing—mechanical man—the mechanical intelligence of man asleep.

Saturn then becomes higher intellectual center with its inhabitants, father and son and is also a place where Beelzebub visits and has a close personal, Kesdjianian relationship with this chief scientist. It is also the place where the space ship has to stop, and it can't come any further into this system, this solar system. So, it has to stop at an outermost planet in order to pick up Beelzebub when he is on his way home.

So, the planets of this solar system become another way, or a test if you will, that you can put down and wonder whether or not in these planetary designations as representations of things inside of us – that this is a way of approaching higher emotional and intellectual centers and ordinary emotion and intellect. It may be an interesting and useful way of looking and asking questions.

Mr. George Bennett will give the group the exercise that has been referred to.

GEORGE: We can make a clear distinction between what we normally call feelings, emotions which are largely almost entirely reactions and what we can also call objective feelings, higher feelings, higher emotions that include the three we talked about today: Faith, Hope and Love, whose source of arising is not in our ordinary self. And in this exercise, we are going to make use of places in the physical body which correspond to places, for want of a better word, in the higher bodies; not that they are physically linked but they are associated with these higher sources in us, which we have become accustomed to using, which we call *Latifa*. We are going to begin the exercise by spending five minutes in relaxing our bodies and filling with sensation, which we all know how to do. We will do that in our own time for five minutes.

So now we have an awareness of my self, my self, here and now in this physical body. And to this we add an awareness of our breathing; we follow the passage of air in through the nostrils, down into the body and out again.

Now we breathe in with this awareness my self and we pause the breath holding the breath for a space of 5-10 heartbeats, 5-10 seconds and as we hold the breath we bring our attention to a place just below the right breast with a feeling-wish. We maintain our attention in this place below the right breast with the feeling-wish as we breathe out again.

We are going to do this four times, ideally it would be seven, breathing in with the awareness of my self, pausing the breath with our attention in the place below the right breast with the feeling wish and maintaining our attention here as we exhale, four times.

If you have time for three or five breaths it doesn't matter right now.

We take two or three regular breaths to relax our breathing.

And now we bring our attention to the left breast with the feeling-hope, holding this for a few seconds, we breathe in with the awareness of my self and we pause the breath with our attention in the left breast and the feeling-hope, holding this for a few seconds and then maintaining our attention here as we breathe out again, four times.

We take two or three breaths to regulate our breathing, ordinary breaths.

We bring our attention into the right breast with the feeling-belief and as before we breathe in with the awareness of my self and we pause the attention in the right breast for 5-10 seconds and keeping it there as we exhale, four times.

We take two or three breaths to regulate our breathing, ordinary breaths.

And we bring our attention to a place just below the base of the throat, two or three finger widths below the base of the throat with the feeling-accept. As before we breathe in with the awareness of my self, my whole body, and we pause the breath with our attention in this place below the base of the throat and the feeling-accept, keeping our attention here as we breathe out again, four times.

We take two or three regular breaths.

Now we bring our attention to the center of the breast with the feeling-love. Once we breathe in with the awareness of self we are breathing in with the whole of my self. So we breathe in with the awareness of my self, we pause the breath with our attention in the center of the breast and the feeling-love. Keeping our attention here as we pause the breath and as we breathe out again.

We take two or three regular breaths.

And now we breathe in as before and we hold the breath one time for longer, for a half minute or longer, for only as it is comfortable and we experience all five of these sacred impulses together.

We can use the corresponding places in the physical body, the Latifas, to help us with this. So, we do this with one longer holding.

We breathe out when we are ready and then we can sit quietly for a minute or so to let the exercise settle in us.

OCTOBER GATHERING ~ OCTOBER 7, SUNDAY MORNING

Music: Chant from a Holy Book, Vol. 3

Reading from the Prologue from *Life is real only then when "I am,"* PP 1-2

*I am. . .? But what has become of that full-sensing of the whole of myself, formerly always in me in just such cases of self-questioning during the process of self-remembering. . . .*

*Is it possible that this inner ability was achieved by me thanks to all kinds of self-denial and frequent self-goading only in order that now, when its influence for my Being is more necessary even than air, it should vanish without trace? No! This cannot be! . . . Something here is not right!*

*If this is true, then everything in the sphere of reason is illogical.*

*But in me is not yet atrophied the possibility of actualizing conscious labor and intentional suffering! . . .*

*According to all past events I must still be. I wish! . . . and will be!!*

*Moreover, my Being is necessary not only for my personal egoism but also for the common welfare of all humanity.*

*My Being is indeed necessary to all people; even more necessary to them than their felicity and their happiness of today.*

*I wish still to be ... I still am!*

KEITH: It seems perfectly natural that each of us should be more than a little perplexed by what we just read—that Gurdjieff himself would be reflecting on this state in himself. How do you see that? How do you see this state that he is referring to? First he seems to focus on the inability to self-remember. Are there any comments on that? How do you understand that and perhaps reflecting a lawfulness that has to obtain inside of us? How does that touch you? Does it just leave you perplexed and wondering what really is going on here? What is Gurdjieff referring to?

MARTIN: When I have read that passage before, and I've read it a number of times, I find it quite reassuring in a way that even Gurdjieff is describing the same denying force that we have in ourselves. Like Elan said yesterday, it is natural that we have Kundabuffer or some denying force within ourselves that we have to work against. There are times when we struggle with that and Gurdjieff is describing his experience.

KEITH: Does anyone see the significance to what seems to be a description of two specific states? One in which he is not in a state of self-remembering and the other, that he is. Would you tend to agree with that as an assessment, how he is spoken out this little interlude that was read, that we have these two different states? In one of them, he is in a state of self-remembering and in the other, he clearly seems to indicate that he isn't. How do you understand that? [the suggestion was made to read the text again]

While listening, keep in mind that my question has to do with two different states or two different viewpoints, or he seems to be saying one thing and then another thing.

*I am. . .? But what has become of that full-sensing of the whole of myself, formerly always in me in just such cases of self-questioning during the process of self-remembering. . . .*

*Is it possible that this inner ability was achieved by me thanks to all kinds of self-denial and frequent self-goading only in order that now, when its influence for my Being is more necessary even than air, it should vanish without trace ...*

KEITH: Right there! He is speaking about an absence.

TODDY: I don't know if this relates but listening to the music that we just heard, all of sudden, I heard the drone correspond in me to, "no, no, no..." The melody was "yes, yes, yes." The beauty of them being together seems resonant with what you are saying that we are searching for this right relationship of these two. In the music, it was there.

KEITH: Ok. Right relationship between what?

TODDY: Yes and the no.

KEITH: Go further. Yes what? And no what?

TODDY: There is always an impulse in me when something comes in, something automatically goes, "no, no." But there is also something from another place that is, "wish, yes."

KEITH: Could it be, for instance, relative to what you just said, that from one part of us, the self-remembering part, we can affirm something and from the other part, we deny it? Any affirmations or qualifications?

ELAN: This reading reminds me of something that has been happening to me for the past four and half years and it is that, for quite a long time, I have been unable to really get anywhere with the Morning Exercise. I am in a state where something is unable to concentrate or accept concentration; I don't know how to describe it. I have been working at these Morning Exercises for forty years and this is the fruit of it for me. And yet there is still something that is going forward in my inner life that seems to be okay. But it is very disconcerting to have it look like this.

Every morning I sit and wait for the moment where I will be able to concentrate the way I have been able to concentrate in the past. I feel a strong connection to what he is saying there because it does bring a state of despair sometimes but there is also other work to be done in my life and so I move forward.

KEITH: In going forward, are you affirming what Gurdjieff said at the very end of the quotation?

ELAN: I wouldn't have thought of it in those terms from where I am—all I can see is two things. There is a result in sitting every morning that comes because every morning even though it's like scrambled eggs inside, I get up and I am more collected. I am collected enough to go through the day which I would not have if I had not elected to do that sitting. But the other side of this is there is this compulsion in me right now to accomplish a task and, because I have a task, there is some kind of force that is coming from that task which is giving meaning to my life because it has difference components. It has a component of service and it also has a component of inner growth at the same time.



I remember these stories about Mother Teresa who had these high spiritual experiences with Jesus when she was young and then that just left her and she had to go on the strength of her own determination from what she had seen but was no longer able to see in her life to move forward and still be of service. Maybe it has something to do with that.

LARRY: I have this impression of Gurdjieff being at this low place initially and then he is in another place, it reminds me of the impossible, that quagmire, that denying part is not to be gotten rid of, it has to be there the whole time in order to have the other. That is how it is for me. When I am in a low state I have to be there and experience that to go through it and see the other side and have value for both sides. It is completely purposeful in that sense. I need to have both sides of that coin.

KEITH: Can you qualify what you mean by both sides?

LARRY: That huge mess of denying, impossible confusion and negativity of being lost and unclear, if that's not there, there is nothing to transform. If I just woke up every day and I was in a collected state and did my sitting and was even more collected, first of all, that doesn't happen and it's unrealistic, but also I would not have the insight like when I am with kids and learning how to play trumpet. Because I am a beginner trumpet player, I know just what they are going through in what difficulty is and how to get them out of that to something better. In the same way I need to intimately have that experience with my own place. If I don't, I am living in an imaginary world. That resistance is really essential.

Regarding the music this morning, I have a different thing, I am asleep, the piano is talking; it's telling me a story and the drone is saying, "keep going, wake up, wake up."

KEITH: This is very interesting. Any other differentiations?

JULIE: I was thinking that these two states need each other to exist. You can't remember until you forget. You can't forget until you remember. Remembering is two sides of the same coin, like they need each other.

IRV: I've had the experience of my own little scale of what he is talking about many times. There is the presence of something that I really value and then it's gone. When it's gone, it's an absence; it is a presence versus an absence. I don't see it as a negativity or denying; it is not there.

What is so interesting to me today is that when it is not there, there is a corresponding effort and that is to wish. The wish to recover what has been lost and that is the effort he was making. "I need this more than I need air," and so maybe when it is absent he is telling us that is what we need to do is to reaffirm how important it is and the wish. When I wake up realize I've been asleep for hours or days, that's what come to me—I reaffirm my wish and need and my aim.

KEITH: "Beyond air." What do you think Gurdjieff is pointing to here? Why would he say that? I need this beyond air, more than air. What is air bringing and what is beyond air?

Think of the digestive octave. We have three digestive octaves. We digest food; we digest air; we digest impressions. Is he saying something pretty specific about [he needs] beyond air? I need to digest impressions. I need to get into the third octave of the digestion of the three brains. I need to be in that third octave. When I am in that third octave and I am digesting impressions, what does that bring me in contact with?

STEVE: Many times I wake up first in my head; I am aware of my thoughts and recognize that there is just a dim outline of the body so I am only really in one part. I move the attention into the body and literally another dimension opens up. When I am only in my head it is flat; the body brings an intensity and intentionality and energy. But then I see there is nothing in the center. This has been a puzzle to me for years and one of the things I've been working on for a long time. Where is the feeling? There is a colossal octave of feeling and when that really happens, that is whole other dimension. Then I know it in all three places and when it happens I realize that I am experiencing these collectively from what I call my fourth place.

So, for me, the intention moves into the body; it makes me [aware of] the lack in the middle which brings its own beginning emotional taste. But my experience shows me that the world of the body is an entire dimension, totally different from just thought and the world of emotion—it's like those two on steroids. These are really different worlds.

I can be little awake in my head but it is dim and flat and not energizing and typically have to make an effort into the body but I really have to wait for something in the feelings. When I read the opening to the Prologue, it sounds to me he is conscious in his mind but the awareness of the body has been a constant companion for years and now he has to go find it. Why is that? Why have you forsaken me? This reflects the search to find my missing pieces and intentionally bring them into the sphere of my attention so I can feel increasingly 'dimensionalized,' energized and more and more whole for a moment.

This feeling of despair is a wonderful sign because if I were at least awake in my head and my wish, I wouldn't feel the despair, I would be totally oblivious, as I think Julie and others were trying to say. Feeling the resistance, the second force shows me there is some awareness in two places. If I don't give up in despair but persist and work with it, maybe I will get interested in the sense of hope that it will come again because it does again and again, so just go back to work. But I wouldn't be feeling the lack if I weren't already partially awake in my wish. Obviously something is there because of the persistence. Persistence is in the feeling. But it is much more subtle compared to what happens when it really opens up; it's a totally different world and understanding pours in through the heart. It's completely indescribable. I would love to live there all the time. That would be a real transformation.

GEORGE: I think it may be Elan quoting J.G. Bennett saying that he wasn't able to remember himself all the time but when he needed to, he could. The idea that I am going to be always in this state may not be realistic.

ELAN: He said that the purpose of working with self-remembering is to realize that you cannot remember yourself.

MANDY: Later on in the Prologue, he talks about a "Eureka" moment that he had. He realizes that if God is God of the whole Universe, then he can be got of his own little Universe. Then he speaks about sending away his beloved, something that is beloved. I have thought about that a lot. I come up with things and a big part of me goes, "Oh, no—not that." This 'that' comes back with a lot of frequency and it goes, "no, no—not yet." Therein remains my struggle.

JAN: He says at the start, "I AM," which implies that there's something that has permanence. My morning preparation is usually to start in the morning to find my body and to get up slowly, feed the dog, have a cup of tea and wait until I think all centers come into one place. I don't do morning exercise anywhere and I don't try to get anywhere with it because I don't

have anywhere to go in myself. I don't have any ambition. But I find that I AM in times of necessity. I haven't done the Latifas exercise in two or three years but, the minute I bring it into my awareness, it happens because there is some remembrance that has been implanted. This is something that works. It came back without a struggle of any sort the minute it was introduced.

I have certainty (I don't want to use the words "faith" or "belief") that when there is an absolute necessity for me to be present some sort of I AM that may be nascent or it may be quiescent and it may be not available at all times but when it is necessary, it appears.

STEFAN: To me this book has made a big difference in my understanding of Gurdjieff's work himself. He says later on that he realizes that if people didn't know him personally, it would be hard for them to understand *Beelzebub's Tales*. In this book, he starts out with letting us know about himself, about what's going on in the moment. I've always considered it a real strength that he takes himself off this pedestal that people tend to put their teachers on. He is describing an experience that I can easily connect to because I've gone through states of despair myself, the state of being disconnected from where I intended to go. I don't have the feeling connection anymore to my initial impulse.

Also it is very interesting that he calls this the "instructive series." You would think the instructive series would be a manual of exercises. Well, instead, he starts out with this state of despair, which I can relate to because I have gone through it myself. And what it does is it tells me this is the boat that we are in and take responsibility for it and go with it and live through all these different states, the euphoria and despair. Keep going.

GARY: Many years ago I had a moment of aesthetic arrest. I was struck, for a few minutes, with the total beauty of everything and the seeing and being-ness. I can't make that state come any more than I can make three-centered awareness come to me in my Sitting. Sometimes it is for a moment. When I read the Prologue, ok, I have set myself this task I need to go toward life. There is something I need to accomplish but how do I go toward life on the basic of these experiences that I've had that I can't justify, that I can't prove. They are beyond my control. That would seem to be the essence of Faith, to live faithfully to those experiences.

DAPHNE: I didn't hear what Toddy heard but when she described it, I was grateful to hear it, the yes-yes-yes, the no-no-no. Without the no it is like trying to swim fast in deep water from a standstill. We need a side of the pool to push off on—the friction of no to get going.

Last summer the Maine group did a retreat with the Toronto group and there was an event in the kitchen that was very difficult. I got a blast. I walked away from it, I fled, and walking into the bathroom to compose myself. I had been looking at that part of the ray of Creation and I realized that if I become identified with this blast, that there would not be any possibility of a reconciling force. Something about the yes-yes-yes, the no-no-no in balance gives us another possibility.

STEFAN: Keith, what do you see in this chapter?

KEITH: I find it much more interesting what you folks make of it. It seems on the surface perhaps that Gurdjieff is trying to point out that there is God of the outer world, all the things out there and there is my inner world. Perhaps I can remember myself in my inner world, in what I have to come to conclusion is a possibility of my God of my inner world. I AM. I can Be. I cannot Be in that outer world. I am nothing.

That's what I try carrying around with me reading through it. He opens this in one frame of reference, looking at this as if he were looking at his inner world and he is: I AM. But then he recognizes as he is looking that there is that outer world and I am nothing in that outer world. Finally at the end, he comes back to that, I AM. I am not that outer world. I am this inner world. Later, when he establishes his responsibility with respect to his inner world that he can become God of his inner world. It is one thing to read through that, but every time I read through it, that's a tough state of affairs.

If you put that on God, what we put on God, here He is responsible for that great outer world with everything that's going on and then I have this inner world—but I am responsible for all that's going on there. What does that mean? That means that there is a whole bunch of nonsense inside this inner world and I am responsible for it. How am I going to address that? How am I going to look at that stupidity, that ignorance, that falling under all kinds of suspicions, of temptations?

I am kind of going into the back door of Kundabuffer by saying this is what gets me in trouble; this is the test of the I in the inner world. If I am going to be God of my inner world I have to be responsible for all of it which means first and foremost, I have to be aware of it. I have to be conscious of it.

How do I get there? Gurdjieff gives us a mountain of tasks, of opportunities, of muddles, of trying, trying, trying. He gives us many exercises and with each of them, he says, "repeat, repeat, repeat." I don't repeat often enough. What I see once is nowhere near enough. If I see the edge of a temptation that may lead me to fall into the hole, the same trap I fell into before, that's not enough. It's not enough because I have built many routes to that hole; I have all kinds of ways I approach it. All of those ways we could think of in terms of the event: "What color was the dress she was wearing? What kind of dress was she wearing? How did the sun shine on her face or the rest of her body?" Any one of those and dozen more can be, for a male, a start down the road. It doesn't mean the next step has to take place but it may, and then another and another.

So you are taking these steps. These are great illustrations of epigenetics because it isn't the gene but it opens the door to what may be, such as the fullness of a sexual relationship with that specific woman. If that's what in the back of your mind, best to see it out front—to see this crazy mind of mine is up to. It is all bending in this direction. How many other times it is bending towards making money, being successful, whatever.

LARRY: So the DNA is the real possibility of that sexual relationship?

KEITH: YES, the true DNA; this is real because it is! In life on the planet Earth, this is what runs the show, the male/female relationship. But when we take that and distort it around my importance and what I want and all of the "me-me-me," then I begin to construct fantasy where I fulfill exactly that kind of nonsense. Once it gets going inside of each of us, there is a very fertile plane for the whole epigenetic takeoff. Why? Because it is built that way, that's all. It is not that it has any magical ability; it is just that we are biologically constructed that way.

We are really in the process of studying our own biology. This is both the terror of the situation because it is real but it also is the power. We can change our biology. That is really what Gurdjieff is saying. How can we escape five, ten thousand years of warfare? We see this recurring again and again. What is the way out? A lot of Work—a lot of very, very painful day after day after day, looking, seeing and then struggling to separate myself.

As he says, “You must make this your God.” How do we sense the right foot? We have to start somewhere so he starts with something that looks on the surface to being very simple. Maybe it ends up bringing up right straight up against your chief feature, somewhere down the road, maybe years down the road.

MARGARET: What you are saying addresses the question yesterday about implanting this organ. You were emphasizing implantation. In biology, if you implant an organ, our body is in conflict with it and tries to reject it. In our inner world, what does that mean? This is what we are working on in our inner world, this conflict, our work between the yes and the no.

KEITH: Right and this is in our head. We affect our biology, no question. Through the action of our central nervous system, in the present moment, 2017, it is readily recognized that the activities that take place in our central nervous system have biological consequences. They change our chemistry and through our chemistry, change our organ systems function and through our organ systems function, change us altogether. So it really is that, no fooling around here; this is real dramatic physical change.

MARTIN: When Keith mentioned the inner and outer world, it reminded me of an exercise that was given by Mrs. Popoff called an “octave of denial.” You set yourself to make seven small denials during the day. One example was I was doing practical work in the garden; it was a hot day and I needed some water. Part of me said this should be one my denials for the day and part really wanted to go and get the water. I got it and was going to drink it and something just refused the water. It helped wake me up; it was like a force Gurdjieff talks about in the chapter about the inner and outer world.

If you deny something in the outer world, it helps the inner. It is possible to work with this octave of denial; the small choices between our inner world and our outer world. We can work intelligently but there is a balance—sometimes we need to relate more to the outer world—sometimes the inner world. Gurdjieff makes it clear there is a choice to be made.

KEITH: It is so easy to read the words where he says, “I cannot work all the time.” Work one hour and then ordinary life for two hours and do that through the day. Have I have ever work an hour in a day? I don’t think so. When I try to comprehend what my days have been and when I could really say I make an effort for a period of time, can I say that was one hour out of every three, every day? You come to your conclusion; I have come to mine.

LARRY: What Margaret was talking about stirred my curiosity. When you implant an organ, the immune system wants to keep me as I am, safe from invaders. The immune system has to accept this new organ so, if I am going to accept the inevitability of my own death and those my eyes fall upon, I have to accept that whole concept. That comes up against this previous immune system that wants to keep my egoism as I am.

MANDY: Conscience is probably the natural rejection of the implantation.

STEFAN: The word “crystallization” has made me question why “crystal?” A crystal is something that is permanent forever. This term is used with the organ Kundabuffer. Yesterday, we looked into epigenetics and saw the connection between our nervous system, our emotional states and actual biological changes in the body which you could call crystallizations because they stay there for a long time. It is interesting he used that word because now we have some evidence there is a biological process that supports that context. In turn, the biological changes in the long term also affect our feelings and our habits.

This is interesting in the context of our work in our exercise actually have a permanent effect. In *Beelzebub's Tales*, we hear about "coating" which is a similar process. Essentially, it is a process of adding and, in doing so, there is a result that keeps growing and there is a permanent change. You could call that a crystallization.

Coming back to exercises and methods such as the Movements, I have similar to what Elan pointed out in the Morning exercise and how it has changed for me, it is also I feel the same about the effect of my work. I am becoming interested in the effectiveness of the things that I do and how I do them.

I still believe there can be an effect and a permanent effect but I've been trying to get a sense of the gravity of a particular exercise or the particular method we use to see when it actually has some impact. The state of friction is an indicator of something occurring in the emotional alchemy and actually leaving results. So I've been trying to become more and more sensitive to actually face an extreme state like the state of despair but to be in it and to experience that friction, experience the force field between the yes and the no without looking for a resolution, trying to get rid of it.

All those things have gradually changed my attitude towards the Work and toward the exercises and methods which we use which are very valuable but which can become habitual and flat.

NEAL: There is a very good essay in Jeanne de Salzman's book on exactly this subject; it is about seeing what you can't do and standing in front of that. Seeing that resistance of what you can't do. What was said about the yes and the no in the music is that harmony that one cannot exist without the other.

About our work yesterday about wish, there is a critical thing about having the wish when one sees that conflict between the two.

HARRY: One of the things I took from Madam's reading yesterday was her insistence on remorse of Conscience relative to the sustaining of wish and the notion of engendering that and having the sense that is it possible to have that in one's emotional world with more intention. The crystallization I felt you were speaking of, Stefan, was not this idea of having a sense of the whole of myself all the time all day and my thoughts are like pinball machine. So the permanence begins to feel more that it has to do with a growing state of valuation and it seems it wants to expand to include having value-for. From being in a place where the only thing of value was all of the "me-me-me," over time I begin to value all of the individuals in my life and Work and, as that grows, I value the opportunities to be with people and to be with kids and have this whole rich dynamic, relational world I value these exercises and the opportunity to be creative. It is a growing value.

So whether or not that crystallizes... Do I carry a mood around with me; like a certain event happens and now I am in a certain mood I carry around? Well, that's there it is in the background like my body is there but, if that was a growing higher feeling of value-for then, that would in a sense, be there; it would be a part of the I AM.

NEAL: I just lost you.

HARRY: It's a part of my being, a growth of the I AM. It is a more full AM and it has a sense of more permanence but not necessarily in my awareness all the time that I have to focused on it in the same way I am focused on sensing specific parts in a specific exercise. Maybe I am in and out of higher or lower states of awareness during the day but there is affect that

colors all of this and so I fall down the hole then that's the affect. I have the 'falling-down-the-hole' affect but hearing Stefan's question, that is what came, just growing value, even value for the dry desert places I find myself in. Keep including, keep having value for. It still gets mixed, I still get very emotional whereas I never used to get emotional but that is taking a long time for me to able to have that and not move away from that from judging as being too sentimental.

KEITH: Is that what was behind this event that's been going on between you two? [indicating Elan and the microphone—laughter] That was not your intention but you were surprised or not surprised or wondered what in Harry gave some subtle indication of and then it went on from there.

ELAN: I became intensely aware of it at the very end when I saw our past, our history and I saw what we each can potentially offer each other.

KEITH: For each of us observing, it was simply an opportunity to see a state in motion and to stand off and watch and see, yes, that's what's going on. This is a conversation not in words. This is a real human interaction at a subtle level but it is there. It is worthwhile for us to be aware of it. It is in the moment because I believe it goes on all day every day at various levels between people.

LARRY: Like a moment of music.

KEITH: Yes, it's like what key are you playing in?

STEFFAN S: I wanted to go back to what Steve Aronson brought up about Higher Emotional Center. I would add Higher Intellectual or we could say love and compassion for Emotional and wisdom. The Work hasn't made me permanently conscious but I digest impressions and I repeat what Mr. Aronson spoke out, that detachment from the three centers. At the end of your talk, you spoke of love and being there all the time and I can't do that but Gurdjieff, in this opening chapter, gives me a little confidence—neither can he. He oscillates.

What I have learned from him is we are transforming apparatuses that oscillate. My job is to be there with the three centers ready to go, well tuned, trained, relaxed with the energies ready for the higher centers and when they speak to me, obey and be ready to take action. That happens about once a year. It does not happen very often. I oscillate in this huge range and the range has increased. Due to Gurdjieff's ideas I would never have known about the range otherwise. Those ideas have affected me.

JOHN: In the beginning of the Prologue what is the part of Gurdjieff that is noticed that he is not remembering himself? Without that, there is never going to be the impulse to put everything back together again. Harry reminded me of this because Mr. Nyland seemed to say that work comes from remorse, realization of something I find not right. Does anybody know from what part of Gurdjieff was speaking or where it came from?

KEITH: I don't know that I understand your point. You mean the opening to the Prologue?

JOHN: Yes.

KEITH: This is Gurdjieff and I don't understand which part.

JOHN: How does he possibly know that he doesn't have what he thought he should have?

KEITH: It seems we conclude that Gurdjieff has a clear intent in this opening and it is that people, 65-70 years from then, now, namely, will have a certain impression from what he has written because he knows that we will have a wide arena of associative meanings that we place on what he has put on paper. He had that much awareness of future response, reactions, understandings—I think he understood human beings more than well enough to be able to say, “This is how many people will understand this 50 years from now. This is how many other people will understand this 100 years from now.” He had that level of wisdom.

MARTIN: At the beginning he says, “I AM...but.” It is still coming from his I.

STEVE: In response to your question John, my association was that the range of experiences is organized in a continuum. I know the taste of being asleep in an ordinary way; I know the taste of being negative and depressed and I have the taste of being more awake and I have the taste of the extraordinary state I was talking about. Madam de Salzmann was asked how she understood the Work. Her response was, “What is my state now?” Work is to try and monitor where I am on that hierarchical continuum. I know I am not at the top right now; I know I am not at the bottom. I have a sense of where I am in this moment so right now I am making an effort to intensify the sensation of the body and the emotion that comes with this is a little higher right now. I know this because I have been up and down the scale countless times; I just pay attention.

My sense is Gurdjieff found himself on a scale that he wasn't used to and was surprised he wasn't waking up in his usual place. Mr. Bennett spoke about state and station. There is a range in the state. I don't go as low as I used to and occasionally I find myself higher than I've been before. The question of station seems to be where is my average place I hang out these days and it's a lot higher than it used to be but it's not as high as the top of the scale.

GEORGE B: The few lines that were read are Gurdjieff's battle cry: I have done all this work and it is gone. This doesn't make sense. This isn't logical. That I recognize. Labor has gone on and suddenly it's all gone. I thought I was secure and that's exactly what he is describing. I don't all this stuff and it's disappeared. He doesn't say it has temporarily moved away—it's disappeared. There is sense of a zigzag but sometimes it drops to the bottom of the shaft. If it happens to him I shouldn't be surprised if it happens to me. I think I may have reached something and then I get reminded it ain't true, I have to work at it.

STEVE: That condition is related to surrender and acceptance. Whatever this energy is, it doesn't stop; it is always moving so it can fluctuate a little and a lot. I have to accept that is the way it is and I am not in control. I have a growing relationship with it and I can make myself open to it but it's not mine. The shock of the experience is a stage in the deepening understanding of how the laws work. Part of our work is accepting that is how it is. Here I am down here and how can I find myself? Sometime it can take days.

GEORGE: You know when you are on the enneagram and you are deeply in galoshes and there is nothing you can do about it and it is further away from the end—understanding the process doesn't make it not real when it happens. You can't talk yourself out of it because you really are in that place. You can talk about the enneagram till the cows come home but when I am in that place, it is completely real.

I used to publish a monthly magazine. Every month I would come home and say to Anna, “We are not going to make it to the deadline this month.” It is actually real at that moment. When we are in galoshes and it doesn't matter if we are on Cloud Nine afterwards.



IRV: In the late 70s, when I was first given the Collected State exercise that Gurdjieff gave to Mrs. Staveley, I related to it so well, I make a vow that this was going to be my work for my whole life and work with it all the time. After a couple years, I felt I had something that was permanent. It was my reality, my anchor in the Work. One day I was skiing and I broke my leg. In the ambulance, on the way to the hospital, I needed to collect myself and it was gone. I could not find my center. It was more distressing than my broken leg. I was told then that I had to start over from the beginning. You can not drop down and come up on an elevator; you have to come up the stairs. So eventually it did come back but it was a real process.

HARRY: After that part that we are focused on, there comes a section where he says, “No. This can’t be.” Then he says, “... *necessary not only for my personal egoism but also for the common welfare of all humanity.*”

The question of ego is there. Why does he use that word unless he wants to call our attention to something specific to the ego? From that place where he affirms again, “No. I AM.” I am curious as to how that plays against a perspective in which I am simply an entity through which energies are moving and there are highs and lows and bottoms and tops. My responsibility is to be present to that but not to think or to imagine that there is a doing in that. What is that relative to Gurdjieff saying, “No? I AM.” I am affirming and then he brings in the term “egoism”—“... *necessary not only for my personal egoism.*” I am wondering how others understand that transition.

MANDY: That comes back to my most recent question of the sending away the beloved Son. In my puny efforts and coming up against that in myself that says, “no, not that,” there is a struggle every time when I see this in myself. I remember that some part of me has said, “this is the one, this is the Son.” There is this, “no, not that one.” It still produces a great friction. Many of us have said yes, when that moment comes and we must be there; we are called upon from something from the outside that comes in and I have the yes/no. I can pretty much depend that I will be there in this moment for this circumstance but can I do it inside myself? Can I initiate this moment of remembering? What I think Gurdjieff is aiming for us here is that this is the experience he came to—all of this he has been able to produce in himself but then comes the question: how to initiate that from within?

TODDY: We are speaking about scale, from shit to God. He speaks about the word Alleluia—is big word from shit to God. I have had the same question you brought up, Harry, relative to what you said Mandy. There is a reflection in the beginning of *Beelzebub’s Tales*. Beelzebub is on Holy Sun Absolute and he says, “no, something is not right.” What could not be right? Then he goes to the ass end of the Universe. This is in me. This revolt has something to do with the three prayers in Purgatory: “Sources of Divine Rejoicings, Revolts and Sufferings.” There is something divine about a revolt. What is this revolt?

MANDY: What a triad that is. The suffering becomes the Holy Reconciling.

STEFFAN: It seems hypnosis is being sacrificed. Zoroaster taught that the Priests and the Kings are manipulating the minds of the people for their own benefit. Gurdjieff the man in his third book gave up that power to manipulate others. I know he studied all the great teachers and was against the power possessors manipulating others and I am sure, when he wrote that, he was aware of the cosmic drama. I do not think that is the only drama he was writing about.

KEITH: Which cosmic drama?

STEFFAN: The cosmic drama of manipulating images to benefit oneself or one's class to be power possessors, to dominate over others. Giving that power up is something all power possessors need to do, especially if they want to become masters in the real sense.

KEITH: We have to keep in mind how many times Gurdjieff re-wrote this opening chapter? Many times. How many times do you think he read what we read in the opening two or three paragraphs? Does this do what I wish it to do? He saw what influences it could have; he made decisions. We know he was famous for paying particular attention to words and their meanings were. He clearly put a great deal of attention to this opening segment. My question still is: he re-wrote and re-wrote this and edited it a great many times before he passed on it. The key thing is what he wrote was so powerful that I keep coming back to how much time and effort he put on writing this—for us. We are now 70 years later.

GEORGE: I want to know how long it took to live that paragraph. How long was he in that state? In 20 lines he's gone from despair to saying no.

JOHN: Isn't there are parallel with HIS ENDLESSNESS noticing the place of his existence was diminishing?

JAN: Louise March referred to Gurdjieff as the master of exactitude. There is a certain rhythm to these paragraphs. I AM? And then I AM.

DAVID Z: This discussion we have been having this morning has been really unique. My sense of it is that we have been acting as a single organism. We have moved away from a place of ego. When we close, it may be worthwhile to re-read the reading and go into a brief silence and ponder and see where it takes us.

[We decided to keep going and re-read the text to conclude.]

MANDY: Keith, you brought up the third octave. We saw a lovely video of last night's dinner [a seven-course meal based on the color spectrum and related to the Color Spectrum exercise from Mr. Adie]. I have worked with the exercise for a few months. In the exercise, we begin with sensation, in the second part, the circulation is the breath and in the third part, you add the color—color being a vibration and coming from light in the Impressions Octave so all three digestions are there. Could you speak to the Impressions Octave?

KEITH: However you picture the three octave digestive enneagram where food comes in at DO768, Air comes in DO192 and Impressions come in at DO48. Fill in all the upper numbers, the DO-RE-MI-FA-SOL-LA-SI of Food, the DO-RE-MI-FA-SOL of Air and the DO-RE-MI of Impressions.

By the time we come to Impressions, the implication is that anything that comes into the arena of observation or awareness on the part of the Impressions Octave. This implies an attention that is not there at all in ordinary life. We are struck my moments in our awareness of world around us but we are not as “WE ARE or I AM.” We are not present in the present moment.

Whenever we are sitting quietly, think about or review what has come into us through the Food Octave, this involves almost exclusively the physical body. Still and all, that is a big thing. All the activities of the physical body, its strengths and weaknesses, capacities, its experiences and so on—those are all existent as you make the passage from SOL48 to LA24.

There is a quality to LA24 that means it has come to some degree under the influence of DO48, in other words of our attention in the moment. We are aware of that influence of the physical body and all of its ramifications and activities of the physical body in its metabolism on us.

I mention it this way so the next step may be easier to see and that is we begin to become aware of how we are from moment to moment—aware of a good bit of the emotional automatic consequences of the Air Octave, meaning the influences of the endocrine. The endocrine system has become more and more varied over the last 40 years. We now know there are many more endocrine-like glands throughout the body that many tissues that were not thought to be endocrine in nature are now understood to be endocrine.

In any event, those glands that have been popularized as the endocrine glands are specifically associated with rather clear-cut emotional states. If you think of the thyroid, the digestive system, the adrenals and defensive systems that get called into play, all of those fear-related, worry, anxiety, anger, hyper activity comes from our endocrine system. If the endocrine system did not release those hormones, we would not have those emotions.

I put it that way because I want to emphasize that those are mechanical, biochemical states—the feelings or emotions. And here it gets testy over which is a feeling and which is an emotion. But if we can leave it in this category for now there being an arena of feeling, of what we ordinarily call “emotions” that are associated with the endocrine system and they are entirely mechanical, unconscious in their manifestations. Why we are angry in a given moment is because hormonally, something has gone awry. You may give it a reason but that’s not the reason. You can easily identify why under other circumstances you would not have that feeling of anger and yet, in this circumstance, you do.

My point being that the DO-RE-MI of Air is where you go from the biochemical which is the DO-RE to MI which is the transition into the role of the nervous system, the entry of the nervous system into the Air Octave. That entry is what we experience as feeling. This is the degree of sensitivity we have to the automatic emotional states. They are all either totally mechanical or negative. Notice, all of them are negative because they have to do with fear, anger, aggression, all of those things which are diminishing of the significance of the body.

LARRY: You mean self-preservation?

KEITH: Yes, the emphasis is always going to be on the self—always. I put that kind of emphasis because it seems to me pretty clear that if we start talking about what happens when the Air Octave moves from MI48 to FA24, it has crossed over the entry of DO48, of Attention. We can infer that there is a presence, a consciousness at FA24, a consciousness of the image that was not there at MI24. We will experience it.

MANDY: Where does oxytocin come into this? I ask because oxytocin is a hormone that is produced between a mother and a child but also between a husband and a wife and I bet it can be produced in other relationships such as Harry and Elan’s. [laughter] When you were speaking about hormones being all about the self then oxytocin doesn’t fall into that category; it’s a self-other. We can’t produce oxytocin in ourselves; it is a result of a relationship that is formed. Is it a result of the Air Octave?

KEITH: Right. We have to get from one octave to the other. We get through that not through human life. That happened long before three-brained life came out of the planet, way back in mammalian evolution, where all of these things we have been talking about took place,

all of the evolution of the hormones, from the earliest appearance of hormones right up to so-called three-brained beings, which is confusing enough. We have talked a little about how confusing three-brained beings become when we know as of today there are at least five species of three-brained beings who inhabit this world. Most of them here are at least four, some of us are all five but, if anything, we are not one species. We are one called “three-brained beings,” that’s fine as long as we keep them separate in our mind, that Gurdjieff is up to something different from what anthropological studies are up to. We are dealing with both in one sense when we are dealing with FA24 which are images of the world of self-other.

To me that is one of the clearest things that differentiates us. We can put DO-RE-MI24 the mechanical emotive and FA24 which is the true emotive. True because we are aware of it in the moment. If we are not aware of it then becomes just what you had a question about; we are still not aware. We may respond or react to it, yes, but we do that with other kinds of hormonal influences also—self-other things.

But in FA24, we are in the emotional octave; we are in images because all 24s are one form or another of images. If they happen to be images of words, numbers or notes, that is clearly in the cortical regions because that is the language of the cortex. Feelings are language of the limbic brain but they are no less parts of the language.

I hope we can get accustomed to seeing an image of the physical body is one thing; an image of the physical/emotional is another thing; an image of the real emotional is another thing. Here, when I am using that term, we are talking about the Air Octave itself in its development beyond the mechanical—now we are talking about the Kesdjanian Octave, always and forever—everything that occurs beyond the MI-FA into FA24. From there on, especially with SOL, SOL12 becomes incredibly important because it is nearing a completion point in Air or emotion. It is not yet complete but like all SOLs (SOL of the Food Octave, Air and Impressions) we get you have set the form of the octave. You have set it or established it. However you do that tonally. In classical forms, that was very easy to see, a kind of 1-4-5-1 and there you are. You have outlined the tonality, the form. That’s the kind of simplistic meaning I am trying imply there.

When you get to SOL, in this case, SOL12, being a 12 it is the creative level in the octave. Like SI12, it can be the creative energy that may lead to a whole new physical being, that’s SI12 in the physical body and SOL12 can be in the emotional body. It can give us an image of Kesdjan Body. It is not the body yet; we are at SOL in its octave. It won’t have its absolutely complete determination until it reaches DO.

But at SOL, we have struck the tonality—we have outlined the basic octave of Higher Emotional Center. We now are at the point of SOL12 and this is where we are in contact with Higher Emotional Center. We can function with confidence, benign function, not arrogantly but benignly. We can believe what we feel. This is true.

ELAN: How does it work at SOL if SOL12 corresponds to Higher Emotional Center? What would be the final DO of that octave?

KEITH: Of SOL of Air? Sure.

ELAN: LA6, SI3?

KEITH: No, forget 3.

ELAN: Where is the completion of that octave then?

KEITH: Good question. As I said, at SOL12, we are at that level of creativity where an image of the completed Kesdjan or the completed Higher Being-body can be seen. It can be outlined. Presumptively, that means the personage who is going to be the physical carrier of that Kesdjanian soul inside themselves; they become aware of that.

STEFFAN: He is asking how do the numbers work from there forward.

KEITH: I'll get there. That's 24. 12 on the enneagram, something in each octave had to come in from outside at the MI-FA. Something higher, 192, then Air enters. Impressions come in at 48. By implication, what should come in at the MI-FA of impressions, that's the SOL-LA of Air. What should come in there by number? 6. But 6 is coming from outside. Here is something coming from outside, coming down to point SOL, the transition between SOL24 and LA12 and right there is this that is coming outside, from the level of 6. This is the Will. 6 is always the Will, the one Will. That one Will must participate in the final coalesce of Higher Being-body into the true Kesdjan. True Kesdjan coalesces into a unit at that point.

Even Gurdjieff has difficulty describing this state because it is simultaneously a unique something and at the same time, it is bound into the whole as One. How do you talk about that state? "Cosmic individual" and that gets you into all kinds of difficulty in words because you are approaching the state. By implication, this person now with a completely Higher Emotional Center has been interpenetrated by the Will.

HARRY: Can you explain why the SI of the Air Octave cannot be a 3?

KEITH: I take it simply. Firstly, from my remembrance, Gurdjieff never refers anything beyond 6. In *In Search* he takes the two step-down so far as the numbering system is concerned and chooses the third or the second step-down and runs that down on the right-hand side with what he then places on the enneagram later. It is that third which would be the step-down that becomes then 6. So there is no 3. The highest is 6.

STEVE: The highest degree of Reason is one or two levels below HIS ENDLESSNESS?

KEITH: I almost had to wonder the first few times I read that whether he didn't take it from another tradition because how do you make sense of the Podkoolad and the Ternoonald? He does not mention them anywhere else; he gives them no characteristics, no qualifications as to their power or their role. We are just left adrift so it is make of it what you can. They are degrees of Reason? Do you want to assign them? Sure, make them up.

If you are going to be the architect of all organizations of galaxies, so you are in charge of outlining where all these galaxies can fit. Okay. [laughter]

IRV: Our highest possibility is World Six yet Beelzebub went to Sun Absolute which is World Three so he obviously started from a different place than we did. Can you say something about that?

KEITH: I don't know in that context whether or not. Let's go way back to the early parts of *The Tales*. Beelzebub is first described as a brilliant and very fiery youth. His birthplace is on Karatas. How do you understand Karatas?

JAN: It is Latin for "charity." But charity in the form of well-wishing for others.

KEITH: That is one clear interpretation. Some would call it "love." However, there is another clear translation of the word, the "stony way." I think that's beautiful. To put love in this context, the planet from which Beelzebub comes as having a name also, the stony way,

the hard, hard way at the same the way of love. There is something so coalescently right. It fits. It helps me understand some of where I believe Gurdjieff is coming from.

So, he goes from Karatas. He gets taken on to Holy Sun Absolute. He is a youth and he clearly does not then, or ever after, have a physical body. Isn't that a terrible thing to say? Why? mostly because he doesn't need it but mostly requirements of law. His physical body is already perfected. He is spoken of in that way. His body would be a coalesced Kesdjanian Body. It would be a body of Higher Emotional Center. Where else would his home have to be in this solar system then on Higher Emotional Center, Mars. Mars is Higher Emotional Center in this solar system. The Earth is us, our intellectual, physical part, our world of automaticity that takes up almost all of our time. The moon is what pulls us around. It is the thing that says, "get up, go to sleep, get up." Anulios is the little voice that is all the time prattling fairy tales. We don't hear them and Grandmothers don't talk about them anymore.

We have these three parts of us: physical, emotional and intellectual which are adrift from each other. They cannot talk to each other. Our emotional center, our center deals with all the fairy tales which is a lovely analogy. I had a very rich young childhood in fairy tales as most us did, I hope.

In any case, when Beelzebub comes to this solar system, he doesn't come down to stay on the Earth; he stays at his home, Mars, Higher Emotional Center. He observes from Mars. Doesn't that tell us anything about where proper self-observation must come from?

Appropriate, correct self-observation takes place from Mars, Higher Emotional Center. Every place else is mechanical or so intellectual that it gets lost.

That is assisted by a Teskooano and who makes the Teskooano? This highly intellectual being who lives on Saturn and Saturn turns out, for me, to be Higher Intellectual Center. This is after all where the offspring of that higher being becomes the Kesdjanian offspring of Beelzebub. Wow. What an interesting web he has bound together here. Now this offspring is tightly tied through the whole of life to Beelzebub. Inadvertently gives to Beelzebub an answer to the question that who of all people has asked him to find the answer for him and that is the king of Mars, the Toof-Nef-Tef whose passion in his life is to help his people and he doesn't know how. This is such a powerful image of Higher Emotional Center. The Higher Emotional Center has true seeing; it sees and feels the depth of difficulties but it does not guarantee that it knows the right thing to do.

And part of our tragedy, in 2017, maybe there isn't anything he can do. If is the misuse of electricity that is being disproportionately used on the planet Earth, what the hell is Mars going to do about that? What can it do? Can it do anything or is there an implication that Hassenin may have something to do with that?

MANDY: The image of Beelzebub is the one who is the source of all the connections between Mars, Earth and Saturn. There are connections that weren't there before Beelzebub.

IRV: What was the fiery youth doing on Holy Sun Absolute?

KEITH: My way of getting Beelzebub onto Holy Sun Absolute is to simply point out that he was a fiery youth and highly intelligent and that he was already perfected. This is not some bright adolescent, agile young man, not that. One should not mistake the picture that Gurdjieff has created here. This is a very astoundingly smart and very direct individual who looks and wonders about what the hell is going on. This is his question: what the hell is going on? I look around the world and I find that doesn't add up; we've got to study this further so I've got to talk to my friends about that. So he goes off and starts talking to his friends who are

on Holy Sun Absolute also. It makes us re-think how we understand Holy Sun Absolute. It may not be the images we have put on it before.

STEVEN: It suggests an interesting paradox; he has been perfected sufficiently to be taken on the Sun Absolute but he lacks sufficient degrees of Reason. So Reason continues to develop after whatever this level of perfection is so there seems to be more stages here.

KEITH: This is clearly indicated at the very end when we see all the other degrees of Reason being represented. These individuals were presumptively also on Holy Sun Absolute but didn't happen to participate in the near revolt.

STEVEN: World Six seems to be the location where higher Reason can be developed but there is an octave of that so it is not question of 'hydrogen' three which seems to be above the level of understanding that even Sacred Anklad can get to but that there are many degrees of understanding once one has entered the realm of World Six.

TODDY: Why does he return to Karatas? He doesn't go back to Holy Sun Absolute. Why?

KEITH: To live out his long life in peace.

HARRY: He goes back and somebody asks him, "oh, would you mind...?" Despite his age and all the years of exile, now he's got to get back on a ship and go all the way to "Pandetznokh" and then come back, and during that entire journey he is educating his grandson; going through that process of reliving his life and sharing it. It's not like he just went back there.

TODDY: But wouldn't you think the ultimate pinnacle of the life of Beelzebub would be the unification with Holy Sun Absolute like all the other Higher Being-bodies?

HARRY: Eventually. He's got to go through that process first.

TODDY: Are you saying he's going to Karatas have a 'bite to eat' and then go to Holy Sun Absolute?

HARRY: No I am saying he is going to fulfill his obligation to the future, to his children and then he is going to go.

MANDY: And then to his Teacher on Deskaldino.

ELAN: It's quite strange because the story begins with Beelzebub being banished from the Sun Absolute because he saw these contradictions and it led to a near revolt. When one studies Beelzebub one finds out how absolutely complicated it really is. When he talks about the Choot God Litanical period, he is finally gotten answers to those questions which must have been a part of what he saw as illogical because it does seem illogical. There are these inexactitudes in the whole story that would lead anybody to think it is illogical.

KEITH: Yes, right.

MANDY: Do you think it is possible that HIS ENDLESSNESS saw something in Beelzebub that could help him understand why it was illogical?

STEFAN: I think one needs to see that looking for a happy ending is actually a human value that we bring into this.

TODDY: What makes you think I am looking for a happy ending?

STEFAN: Because you made it sound like Sun Absolute is the finality.

TODDY: No, that's my question. What is Holy Sun Absolute? What is Karatas? Why did it go that way? I ask because it is illogical according what he says so this is an inexactitude that I must pay attention to; I am not looking for a happy ending.

STEFAN: But what I am hearing in the discussion are these human values we bring into it by which we measure and compare and so you could also look at the whole process of being an infinite process of involution and evolution that goes up and down all the time. There is no beginning and end to it.

JOHN: But it's got two more books. This is preparation for the next book.

JAN: It is good to remember that Beelzebub is a narrative, a very complex mythology out of which we can parse some meaning for ourselves. Maybe it is even a meta-narrative because we use it as a referential writing, but the really interesting thing about it is that it has practical application, not just for us but, if we look at the implications of things like epigenetics, we have some chance not just to get something for ourselves, which is not really important, but to bring something into the suffering world and fulfill our being-Partdolg-Duty. That's what this narrative is about.

If we get into "Why did he go to Karatas? Why did he go to McDonalds?" it loses it. I know it's fun, but I get lost in finding out why this happened, as much as how can we use what happened in application. That's simply me.

KEITH: One more thing we have to keep in mind is why send Beelzebub away? Is this a punishment for him having stirred up this near catastrophe on Sun Absolute? Or what?

ELAN: A way for him to get the answer.

KEITH: A way for HIS ENDLESSNESS to get the answer, which immediately bounces back to ENDLESSNESS not knowing the answer. What does that mean? How does it come about that things occur in the endless Creation that HE is unaware of?

GEORGE B: He gets sent away because unless he is sent away he has no initiative. In any children's book, the first thing they do with the child hero is separate it from its parent and then it has some action. Look what Gurdjieff said with his own star pupils. He sent them away because otherwise, they could do nothing. They would be under his shadow and his wing and they couldn't do anything.

KEITH: Only at a certain point, though.

GEORGE: Yes, but you have already said that Beelzebub was at that certain point; he was already a perfect being but he gets sent away. Only then can he act independently and bring back any information that is useful.

KEITH: Yes, good point.

STEVEN: To pick up with what Keith was saying, one level of this is all a description of our world and we have a number of examples where ENDLESSNESS is taken by surprise. HE is learning the way we are learning, as if there were a difference. So HE was taken by surprise by the rebellion. This is analogous to our recognizing that there is something wrong with us.



For me, it was recognizing all this activity in my formatory apparatus was getting me nowhere as bright as it thought it was and I had to send my attention to the outer reaches of my body and material world and work my way back up through the emotional world to bring back to the center the missing data because initially there is a lot of theory but there is no experience. So what then? The story ends where it ends and maybe, like in the expulsion from the Garden, Beelzebub and his greater understanding, now greater than the angels, isn't going back to that state of innocence. Now he can be of help because this extension of ENDLESSNESS that is trying to develop its Reason and that's what we are doing in our Work.

David re-read the passage from the Prologue

*I am. . .? But what has become of that full-sensing of the whole of myself, formerly always in me in just such cases of self-questioning during the process of self-remembering. . . .*

*Is it possible that this inner ability was achieved by me thanks to all kinds of self-denial and frequent self-goading only in order that now, when its influence for my Being is more necessary even than air, it should vanish without trace?*

*No! This cannot be! . . .*

*Something here is not right!*

*If this is true, then everything in the sphere of reason is illogical.*

*But in me is not yet atrophied the possibility of actualizing conscious labor and intentional suffering! . . .*

*According to all past events I must still be. I wish! . . . and will be!!*

*Moreover, my Being is necessary not only for my personal egoism but also for the common welfare of all humanity.*

*My Being is indeed necessary to all people; even more necessary to them than their felicity and their happiness of today.*

*I wish still to be ... I still am!*

OCTOBER GATHERING ~ OCTOBER 8, SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Music: Hymn to the Sun

KEITH: A useful suggestion was made, relative to the direction we are moving in now, to read short segments from papers that have been written by other authors about some aspect of chief feature and then, paragraph by paragraph, just open that for discussion as we move through it, if folks have anything to discuss. The first is from a blog written by Joseph Azize:

As we continue this work with chief feature, some things become clearer. First, to struggle with chief feature seems to always involve losing belief in a story. That story is the fictional idea of myself which comes with chief feature. I might be wrong, but it appears to me that just this effort to not believe, is fundamental when I am up against chief feature, because all my life something in me (personality) has implicitly believed it.

Chief feature is something with which we have been living since we were children. It formed, I tend to think now that it must have formed, before we were old enough to reason about it. That is, it must have crystallised when I was too young to be able to reason about my impressions, to compare memories, to critique, analyse and conclude. This, I suggest, is why chief feature is both pervasive in my psyche, and why it seems so right. We are accustomed to it.

True. But not only accustomed, that is too weak a word.

GEORGE B: I would question whether you could ever reason your way out of it, however young you were, or old. Based on my own experience, I would have found that difficult.

KEITH: I don't have any memory at all of ever thinking about that when I was a little kid. Do any of you remember that—remember thinking about what your chief feature was? It never occurred so I don't know. Anybody have any impressions on that in the line of your own life?

DIANA: I am just wondering about when he says losing belief in a story. The story can be negative as well as positive. It doesn't necessarily have to be that one has an inflated idea about oneself; it could be quite the opposite, that one sees oneself as sort of inept or a victim or incompetent or whatever.

KEITH: That is the only part of this that struck me as having something of substance to it; it is my story.

DIANA: Yes, what is my story about myself.

KEITH: There it doesn't need to be around a specific talent or capacity. There is just something about "this is my story" because we recognize, even at sometimes quite a young age, that there is some constancy; there is something about me that is the same. We can't put it into words. Do any of you have that kind of experience? I had that, for instance, with regard to athletic activities. I was a very athletic youngster when I was up to the age of 9 or 10 years old. I played all kinds of sports and was very busy and able physically. If I were to talk about it then, it would have been in those terms. That was my story, sports and being active.

NEAL: You talked about its being old but I am trying to figure out the age of old, how far back that goes.

KEITH: For me, it was about 8 or 9.

NEAL: I have a story I tell myself that probably comes from when I was 6 or 7. My whole growing up I thought “I am an actor,” because I did some acting when I was young and it became a part of my story about myself. My parents would say, “Oh Neal; he’s the actor.”

KEITH: Ok, yes, that makes sense. Sure.

[Continuing from the reading:]

Our very sense of right and wrong is bound up with chief feature. We can no more separate out from it than we can separate out from our sense of right and wrong. It is, perhaps, only when we can start to accept a standard of right and wrong which is beyond what our personality has been conditioned to accept, that we can see our chief feature. And that, I think, can only happen when real “I” starts to crystallise. If I am correct, this is why it takes so long to see chief feature.

GEORGE P: I thought only someone else could tell you what your chief feature was. From this reading it sounds when one develops an I, one can have an insight. That is a little bit different from what I have always thought about chief feature.

KEITH: Good. Any other impressions on that? There should be some different impressions from our different group leaders who have brought this up in one context or another.

MARTIN: I was in a group in London with Caroline Shaffer who worked with Mr. Bennett at Sherborne. At one meeting about chief feature, she said, “I came up against my chief feature today; the ‘I Am’ exercise and breathing helped me to separate from it.”

GEORGE B: The chances are very good that she had been told her chief feature by J. G. Bennett because on the third Sherborne course, which we were both on, he told all the students what their chief feature was.

Whether he was supposed to do that I don’t know. When he told me what mine was, it was a great surprise, but ever since then, I have noticed that it represents my approach to almost everything. I see it all the time when I think about it at all. He got that right. She (Caroline Shaffer) knew it from him.

TODDY: We had the exact opposite from Mrs. Staveley. We were dying for her to tell us our chief feature. She would not touch it.

DAVE: She told me.

Toddy: Oh. damn, she wouldn’t tell me! What she did do (because this was a major work that Jane Heap did with Orage) in our early years in groups, was to study the categories of chief feature: vanity, self-love, lying, and then the sub-categories. We would take one a week and study them in ourselves.

KEITH: What do you mean about categories?

TODDY: We had a list ‘mapped out’ by Jane Heap and Orage.

GEORGE B: And they were all negative?

TODDY: Well, yes. The way she described it is that whenever you were confronted with a crossroad, it was your chief feature that always tilted you. If you knew it then you were able to compensate. You were not going to get rid of your chief feature; you were going to learn how to live with it. For us in our group (which was obviously different than Dave's), she would not tell us. She said she could tell us but it would do no good. We had to find out for ourselves.

DAVE: The only thing I have to add to that is that if you pestered her enough about it and you were close, she would give you a little hint.

MANDY: Dave, your chief feature is persistence. [laughter]

JAN: I find this interesting; this discussion is varied into two different streams. If we talk, as Joseph said, a story of myself that arose before one were in rational age (the Catholic Church puts it at 7)–and I can go back and tell you stories of how I was at that age, probably very similar to how I am today. At that age, being a parent, you have children who are born and they have different essences. Basically the story of myself starts at essence. As you manifest the story that comes to you before you are of rational age, that story is fed back to you. It is a feedback system from your parents, your peers, your siblings, it is reinforced over and over.

It is interesting that he goes on to say is basically that not until you have a system of, perhaps we could say, objective morality vs. self-will, which needs Real I to overcome, that this seems to be something that gets crystallized in oneself because one is always receiving feedback from the world, from one's peers, teachers, parents over who one is. That story is not really my story; it is the story that is also told to me over and over. It is even more difficult to overcome.

KEITH: In a positive or negative sense or is it always one or the other?

JAN: For an example, all through my marriage, my husband said one thing. Then when I went back to University after we split up, they finally thought being smart was a really good thing. He just thought I was a smart-ass. There is also the positive and negative in a certain way but I am interested that lying, swagger, vanity—all these things that are negative have been taken off a list. They might be manifestations but they can't be chief feature because those things are basically manifestations of how one preserves one's identity, not the story. You don't tell yourself, "I am a swaggerer."

TODDY: We simply received different approaches. This is what we were told, and I don't think one cancels out the other. These were fundamental attributes that are manifestations of the consequences of the properties of the organ Kundabuffer. Every stick has two ends. So it wasn't that you are purely evil and you are born evil, it was this is the thing that is an obstacle for you. You must see and understand in order to compensate. It's like you are in a river and there is always a north wind, so you must build your boat that can compensate for the north wind that will always come up. As Mrs. Popoff points out, these chief weaknesses always have another end which is the chief potential. It was given as a study which was how Jane Heap and Orage went about it.

JAN: It might be the thing that allows you to survive as an individual.

TODDY: If you understand it.

JAN: Even as a child it may be the thing that you can survive.

IRV: I am not convinced that the properties of the organ Kundabuffer can be considered negative because vanity, conceit, self-love, all those things are really energy directed at me. It's not like I am putting out stuff like anger and resentment and hatred. Those are negative emotions but the properties of the organ Kundabuffer are just the illusion/delusion that I am the center of everything and we have so many ways we do that.

I was first told by Tommy Shiolas, who was an assistant teacher at the farm. He told me my chief feature was self-pity, which was a real shock to me. I had never seen that. As I started looking, it manifested in a way that I wouldn't have called self-pity; I would never use that terminology. To me it was like a feeling of being misunderstood. I suffered because people didn't understand me. I realized, oh! Maybe that is what they mean about self-pity. It was like a revelation. That was in the early 1980s and I think maybe just observing that and being so susceptible to that and not losing energy over it, over the decades, has maybe eroded that particular feature. It may not have been my chief feature but it was certainly prominent.

Maybe there is another one underneath it. So my question is, if we work with one, can we get to a deeper one that is even more fundamental?

STEVE: This has me thinking differently than before. We have talked about it as being the underside of your greatest strength. Two things have come up for me that are from slightly different categories. In terms of what I was told about myself and what I thought about myself, I was a 'good boy.' When I make a mistake or I am unfairly accused of being wrong, something in me gets greatly upset and offended. There seems to be something in that.

When I look at chief feature, as historically the way I tend to approach life, the way George B. was talking about, I would say a leading candidate would be caution. I have a very cautious approach but those are different things and I am not sure what those two categories are. They are both true about me and they are both very useful for me to look at because they tend to be right under the surface most of the time. But they are not quite the same. As we look at this, whatever those two categories are I think may be of some use also. There is style and then there is the label which is not always true.

GEORGE P. I just want to give you this question right back. Jan mentioned essence. Is chief feature a psychological aspect [different from] essence? When people say, "he's sweet; he's gentle," we use the word essence; it is something that conveys your feeling; it is an intuition. It is not a presence but it is something that comes off of a person and you really know their type.

KEITH: Is that related to chief feature?

GEORGE P: No, I was thinking essence is that, the way Steve was talking about that he is a "good boy." I was thinking that chief feature as being more a psychological set at birth, that somehow it is just the way you perceive the world; it's not something that you've developed. We have been talking about genetics; I think chief feature is something that is set at birth. That's why I was asking Steve as a psychologist.

STEVE: I'd be very cautious about answering. [laughter] Because I'd want it to be a good answer.

GEORGE B: To reiterate what I said before, I see it in my life, which is getting be relatively long at this point, that this chief feature has in fact influenced the way I look at any situation

I find myself in, including this one—always. The trouble is, I always see it in the rear view mirror, “Oh, I was doing that again.” It rarely comes up in front of me and I see it—“Oh I see, I am about to do that”—just because I am too asleep but it’s always been there in every situation I find myself in, that chief feature is reflected in how I approach it.

If I labored for the rest of my existence trying to come up with that formulation myself, I never would; it never would have occurred to me to say that what J.G. Bennett said to me about it. It was very interesting; it was “wow” but it wasn’t particularly negative. I don’t mind telling you what it was as example of some of things he might have said.

JOHN: It seems, without going too deep into this, that we are in a place where we have no agreement on what these words mean. We don’t agree on essence, heredity, chief feature—maybe even negativity. This reminds me of what Gurdjieff said about love. This person means it in this way, another person means it in another way. I believe he was indicating chief feature when he described that. When a person answers and describes love, for example, they tend to answer from their chief feature.

MANDY: I remember the story of Gurdjieff walking along with six men. He dropped his cane. One man picked it up. He talked about what happened. One man said he didn’t see it; another said “I saw it but I thought you did it intentionally.” Another said they thought someone else would pick it up. These totally different responses to one particular action makes me wonder, does this have something to do with chief feature?

ELAN: I think so, because if you look at families, for example, I have two brothers. We all had the same parents, the same influences, the same kinds of thing were said to us and the same kind of activities went on but we all turned into very different people because what was maybe harmful for one of us was just water off the duck’s back for the other one. That’s pretty much what you are saying there; I think there is something to that.

HARRY: My question then would be: is there a difference between essence and chief feature? From my perspective, it sounds as if we were saying this is a reflection of essence.

ELAN: So what if it is something that is bound up in both essence and personality? That was my understanding when we worked on this, that it is something that is both in the essence and personality.

SOMEONE: Essence and conditioning.

ELAN: And that as long as we are not on top of it, it is our chief weakness, and as soon as we become aware and able to deal with it, it becomes our chief strength in dealing with the world.

MANDY: That’s the way Mrs. Popoff described it.

JOHN: Five months or so ago, we were talking about this at A&E and there was someone who said that he had been taught (I forget what group he came from) that essence was good and personality was bad.

BARRY: I have two things to offer; I just put them out there, as something we could say chief feature is *not*. When I hear this as a story that I tell myself, I had a very negative experience in second grade because I couldn’t do math. From that point on, I told myself I couldn’t do math. That controlled my whole life through college until I decided I could try something different. I became a computer programmer. It took me so long to see through that.

The other thing this reminds me of is a gentleman in our group who does the personality. At a work weekend he did our psychological type and I found out my type and I said, “Nooo, that’s not my type, nope, you got it wrong.” I don’t know what the difference is between chief feature and psychological type.

[Continuing from the reading:]

Let us go back to the example of someone who suspects his chief feature is that he is haunted by the past. All the life he can remember, this has been the case. He does not realise that other people are not haunted by the past to the same degree. Perhaps it is of the nature of every chief feature that is shared with everyone else to some degree. If our individual chief features are like our fingerprints, as Nicoll suggested (see the previous articles), then just as what is unique about our fingerprints is the configuration of whorls, loops and arches and lines which everyone has, so too, the same may apply to chief feature.

The individuality of fingerprints has another result: it means that as long as chief feature is active, we live our own uniquely distorted world: our perceptions and conclusions are biased by chief feature, and we cannot see that until we have some representative of real “I” to stand outside our personality.

The haunted person of our example, does not realize that he does not have to live as he does: he does not know that he can recall the past without being, very often, shaken. He does not understand that the important thing is to try and change by being present, by seeing where he went wrong, and so providing an aide to being more present when similar circumstances recur, as they will. To remember is natural, and to him, to be tormented by regret or self-recrimination seems natural, too. He sees other people sometimes react that way, and he thinks it must always be right. He sometimes sees other people with no regrets, no pangs of conscience whatever monstrosities they may have perpetrated, and he feels glad that he is not so self-satisfied, so callous.

As soon as he can say: “this is chief feature”, he is able to say “this is a pathology”. And with that comes his first real chance for freedom. Irmis Popoff states that Gurdjieff said that: “man’s work begins when his struggle with his chief feature starts” (*Gurdjieff: His Work on myself ...*, 220).

Also significant is that chief feature provides a line to our work. In fact, because of the nature of chief feature, it provides a steady line. It is always there. The work against chief feature will always provide the shock we need to pass an interval. We only need to remember it.

**TODDY:** I love what he said about the whorls [fingerprints], the individual aspect of chief feature. When I asked Mrs. Staveley why she wouldn’t tell me my chief feature, she said, “You would either swallow it whole, believe it and it won’t be yours, it will just be this word you drag around or you won’t believe me.” You have to find it yourself. Over the years, it (chief feature) is not something I can describe but it completely rules my inner and outer world when I am not aware of it and it is pathological.

One reason I value all the aspects of chief feature we studied is that I began to see all the “chief features” in myself. When I worked with lying, I thought it was my chief feature; then we worked with self-pity and that was all I saw. I began to see you have this whole array of these features. It lays a foundation that is shared.

GEORGE B: Do we really buy that Work can only begin when we know what chief feature is? Because I don't. It doesn't make any sense to me. You are going to tell me that everyone who is not quite clear about what their chief feature is unable to work on themselves. Either that's a misquote from Gurdjieff or a misdirection. I don't buy it. Sorry.

JOHN: It seems to me handing people a list is just the same as telling them what their chief feature is, because this list biases them to think about it this way because they trust what they have been told. From what I have heard so far, some of the shared things that are on this list, prove to me that they have nothing to do with chief feature.

STEFFAN S: I heard people saying chief feature is in our essence. I have never seen chief feature that way; I have always seen it in false personality—personality and false personality I don't know why it is being talked of as being part of our essence when it is not.

MANDY: I think the reference to essence is that chief feature can be one's chief strength.

STEFFAN: Yes, it can. But that's different.

KEITH: I think we have some disagreements.

GEORGE P: When Steffan spoke that out, I didn't hear anyone say that essence was part of chief feature. I didn't hear anyone link those two together.

SEVERAL VOICES: I did.

HARRY: I asked the question. I was hearing two different perspectives, one of which led me to think, oh, chief feature comes out of essence; and the other one made me feel like, oh, this is personality; it's something that happens later in response to environmental influence and it's something you construct, your story; it's like post-essence and I was just trying to see where, or if, or whether that was blending and how people saw it.

ELAN: I wonder whether it would be useful to put some examples of chief features on the table because some of us actually know some chief features. When I was at Sherborne, we not only were told our chief feature but we were in groups of about ten people and in those groups, we had to figure out what the chief feature of the other people in the group was. They were very interesting. I wouldn't mention any names but I could give some examples which might at least put some kind of a grounding on the subject.

JOHN: May I ask something before you list those? Knowing all that, can you characterize what you think chief feature is from those descriptions?

ELAN: The chief feature is what makes us unique. No two people would actually have the same chief feature because all of us are different. Chief feature, as was just said, is our greatest weakness until we become aware of it and then it can become our greatest strength. I will give you an example; this person is probably not alive but her chief feature was that she was always looking around the corner. The strength in this is that this person was always searching for something but the weakness is that this person would never stay with anything because she was always looking around the corner for something else.

STEVE: Tell us another.



ELAN: There was always a certain kind of humor in the way we discovered what the chief feature was because the person who was being quizzed (so we could figure out what their feature) was, of course, blind [to their chief feature]. So, it would always come out as a big surprise [to the person] that we could see what their feature was with a little bit of digging.

There was another person in the group whose chief feature was that he was a warm, cuddly animal. What this meant was that this person would always have an easy time in life. It would always be made easy for him because people would like him and always give him an easy life. The downside of that was that it would prevent the impulse for him to work.

MANDY: What was the chief strength in that?

ELAN: His chief strength was that this person could get good jobs and get along with people.

MANDY: That is a result. So what would you see as being the chief strength of [one who] needed [those] circumstances to work on himself?

ELAN: Becoming aware of this, then one could imagine he would have a choice to allow himself to be treated always well or not. Then he could choose because people would always treat this person like a warm, cuddly animal.

GEORGE B: So, can you say that you found knowing your chief feature and being told what it is, is a useful source of Work for you?

ELAN: It has been very difficult, I have to say. Sometimes it comes up. I would agree that even been told one's chief feature doesn't mean it is going to be easy to work with.

MARTIN: My experience with chief feature is that it is like a prison. When I first started working on myself I realized my life had been conditioned to live in a prison and then I realized I was living in a prison but that didn't allow me to get out of prison. That was scary because I realized I was in a prison controlled by this chief feature. It took a long time even after having that realization to find any possible way to have any freedom from the prison. I had a couple big shocks externally, which kind of opened the prison door for a very small amount of time, and I then had a taste of what it was like to live outside of the prison. Then I would go back into it and then slowly when I tried to Work or *remember*, I would have more views of outside, of living in this prison of chief feature.

It was a very powerful realization that I had once, and to live with it is painful, because I realized I was in this prison, it was controlling my life and it was my own construction and to get glimpses out of it was a huge relief but it is still there; the construct is still there. So now it is useful and, related to what others are saying, it is not only negative. When you look at a chief weakness as a strength you are more able to live with it in a peaceful way. But still, I find it comes back and controls me if I don't try and work. If I lose a lot of awareness or if my energy is down, my chief feature will predominate again. To have tastes of not being controlled by it is like stepping out of the prison.

KEITH: Is this an 'always' kind of thing? Is that going to be there in every event all day or is it there for only certain events that have a certain significance or meaning or whatever? Are there times when chief feature shows itself and then are there other times when it doesn't? When we are just meandering around led by other kinds of interests or temptations or what-

ever, what is your experience? Is it there all the time?

GEORGE, MANDY AND OTHERS: Yes.

GEORGE B: All the time, and I can give you an example. J.G. Bennett got me in the study and he said, “You know the parable of the Wedding Feast.” I said, “Yes.” He said, “Ok, your chief feature is that you are so busy worrying about whether you are wearing the proper clothes that you don’t realize that you are already at the Feast.”

When I am a truck driver, I don’t think I am really a proper truck driver; I don’t deserve to be there. When I am a school teacher, I don’t think I am a very good school teacher; I shouldn’t be there. When I am having lunch, I don’t think I am really worthy to be talking to the person next to me. I do it, but it’s everywhere. It’s in the big things, the little things. I don’t really deserve to call myself having anything to do with a spiritual life—there is no limit. It is everywhere, at every level. Up, down, important, trivial. It is always there.

KEITH: I would say this is a very important differentiation for us to make sure we have in our minds. This is a very deep something because it seems it is always there; it is never not there.

GEORGE B: Even now.

KEITH: That’s terrifyingly frustrating.

MANDY: It’s the one thing we can totally depend upon. [laughter]

NEAL: When I said something before about the actor and when George was talking I was thinking about all the times and all the ways this comes out. In a conversation with Steve, I got the feeling, “oh, it was for appearances, I said something for appearances.” I am feeling like that’s the same thing. I do things for show, so people will think this or that or because that is how I play. It’s funny how I am seeing it all over my life. I do not know that that’s it, but I am seeing it.

JOE: I am speaking as someone who does not know their chief feature, although he has some suspicions. There is something just listening to everything that is incredibly inspiring and how really powerful this could be. Yesterday, George said some sort of self-awareness, consciousness is possible. As I listen to people talking about their chief feature, it’s like a trail of bread crumbs to come to consciousness of oneself. That takes it outside the realm of whether it is positive or negative. I have this image of something so powerful it is shaking. When Martin was talking about the prison, that feeling of how hard this is or when Elan was saying when he received it, how hard it was to accept it for yourself. Sometimes maybe you are not up to the task of meeting that power because it is so intimidating, but it strikes me that it is a very bright flashlight, potentially, or trail of bread crumbs or whatever metaphor you want—something that can really lead you into self-understanding.

STEFAN M: As I have been following the discussion I was wondering what other word we could use. It appears to me you could talk about signature elements of the psychology of a particular individual. What would that be for you, Stefan? One thing I came up with is that I try to avoid (this is not the main characteristic of myself but it is definitely a characteristic) conflict. I try to smooth situations of tension. You could ask is this a good feature or a bad feature? It sounds like it is something good; in general maybe it is useful but it is also an element of avoidance. Sometimes conflict and stress builds energy and it actually moves through a situation of stagnation. So, you could not necessarily judge that as a bad or good feature. It is there and in every situation that I enter, it will be dominant in terms of how I

am going to approach that situation.

The other thought is about the analogy of the baby fish asking the mother where is the ocean? Chief feature is also what we call “normal.” It is the *normalcy* of our life and there it is hard to see because it is always around us. Others see it very easily, in how others react typically—typical George, or typical Toddy, or whatever. I can see that but for them it is harder to see. For myself it is hard to see what signifies my psychological makeup.

MARTIN: After you mentioned the word “prison,” it is like house arrest that once you can go out it is not a prison anymore. We have this image of a prison as a scary place but if you are stuck at one place it becomes prison. But once you realize you can leave that room, it is not a prison anymore. There is a doorway in and out. It is possible to get out; you don’t call it prison anymore. [continuing from the reading]

After I had written the above (except for the quote from her book, which was added later), I revisited Irmis Popoff’s writing on this, I found that there was a great deal of depth in her comments, and felt grateful to her for sharing it. One evening, Ouspensky said to her “You are always inventing things. ... That is your chief feature. ... Now you are luckier than most people. You know what most people spend years trying to find out. Use it.” (*Gurdjieff*, 218-219). Something in her was able to accurately write that down in her notes. But she immediately forgot it. Gurdjieff came, and she joined the groups established. They even discussed chief feature, but not once in many years did she recall what Ouspensky had said.

She does not say how much later, but some years after Ouspensky had said that, she found the notes. It came back very clearly, but she was shocked. “It makes no sense. This is not true of me” (p. 220). She relived the moment. She stayed with it, and struggled. She now saw that even as he had been speaking, she had been inventing. As she turned to her present life she saw that “inventing is what I was engaged in now.” (p. 221).

She then makes this very important comment: “How, indeed, could I struggle against this, which was my very self?” (p. 221). This tallied exactly with what I have found: that the new self must start to form before the old can be seen. She states, quite memorably:

And then it happened. I cannot put into words the feeling that came over me. I saw so much, so rapidly. ... it was a real milestone in my personal work on myself. I saw my chief feature as a medal, its sides advantageous or harmful, useful or useless, desirable or undesirable, depending upon which one of them I flipped.” (p. 221)

There is a very deep principle there: it is related to the way of thinking which we call typology. A type can be thought of as a medal, and the antetypes are what are formed from the medal, as if it were dipped into wax. She is saying that chief feature is something like this. When she says that it has two sides, I think it probably more accurate to say that we have the two sides: essence and chief feature. To “flip” chief feature is to approach essence.

Joseph Azize, 14 March 2017

MANDY: It’s important to add one more thing to this; that when Mrs. Popoff spoke of her chief feature and this invention, she also spoke about her chief strength, which was her

creativity. Indeed, Mrs. Popoff was a very creative woman. In all the seminars and work we did together for some fourteen years that she was teaching. She was a Master at inventing circumstances, right in the moment, for people to be able to work.

[Keith reads from Joseph Azize's blog]

#### Nicoll on the Search for Chief Feature

Posted on March 18, 2017 by Joseph Azize

How does one look for chief feature? I mean, what is the nature of the “searching-effort” one makes? There are several ways to answer. Something of the effort is described very concisely by Maurice Nicoll, who says that Gurdjieff said to him once: “I not think—I look. Necessary to look” (*Selections from Meetings in 1953*, 123).

When Gurdjieff said “I not think”, he refers, I believe, to not indulging in formatory thinking. Thought with the higher faculties is something different. I return to this below.

But the first point is that this ties in with Gurdjieff's advice to Nicoll to take photographs of oneself: “G. once said that it was necessary to collect a large number of photographs of oneself and keep them in an album, so that one could see them together” (*Psychological Commentaries, II*, 509). This is in one of Nicoll's papers on chief feature, because the taking and then the comparison of these photographs of myself—inner and outer—is the way to find chief feature.

KEITH: Does anyone have a comment on that? To take pictures and why Gurdjieff would have put that emphasis on it—take picture. A photograph is frozen. It is that moment. It isn't a story; it's a picture so there is a difference here. We have been talking a lot about stories but here mention is made of pictures. How do you digest that as having something to do with our exploration of chief feature?

JAN: It is not a story. I think the word would be “montage” because one has the frozen moment of one in multiple circumstances. James Joyce wrote *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* which has little snippets of actions, actions, actions—many of them completely disconnected and the overall impression is like a painting where there are just dabs but when you stand back, you see an overall impression of oneself in a multiplicity of circumstances and I think that's what the snapshots are about.

STEFFAN S: The pictures that we take are useful so I can see simultaneously one with the other with another. [continued reading]

The only problem with this wisdom is that we can take it as so absolute a rule of conduct that we lose its value. That is, if I imagine that I can or should spend the whole of my existence taking photographs, not thinking but just looking, I would be misguided. If I try and always follow this advice, I will fail. The great danger would be that rather than admit this to myself, something in me will imagine that I am awake.

It is necessary, I suggest, to set aside a certain period of time, or designate a certain occasion for this exercise. I know that I have a purpose: to see my chief feature. I know why: because my work for conscious development requires

this. And so, sensing that purpose, I decide that for this 5 minute period, perhaps while out on a walk, I shall try not to think but simply to look. Or when I am preparing the food for supper, I will make that effort. And then I let the effort go.

If I am taking photographs, I could do worse than follow the example of nature photographers, who have to take their position, and wait quietly for something to appear. Like those photographers, I am open to what will appear. I know the nature of what I am waiting for, but I am prepared to be surprised.

When he gave this advice to Nicoll, Gurdjieff was speaking about a specific approach to one issue: that there are moments when we need reality. Too often, the thoughts in our heads cut us off from it. To stop thought, and simply be present and see what is before us, is the work of a lifetime. For example, why did Gurdjieff say “look” rather than “see”? My guess is that the difference lies in intentionality. I can *see* something which happens to pass within my purview, but to *look* I must intend my perception.

KEITH: What does that mean? I don't understand.

DAVE K: He is going to develop it further:

... and then, *how* do I intend? With two centres only it will be semi-hallucination. I need the united operation of my head, feeling and organic instinct, simultaneously cognised, to be awake and look. As I have said on another occasion, I think that the chief reason our work stops and plateaus out is because we become satisfied with semi-hallucination (although that is far higher than hallucination).

There are occasions when I need to think. Then, the process of intentional thought is added to that of *not thinking just looking*. One part of me, the higher part of intellectual centre thinks, while the formatory apparatus does not.

KEITH: This is essential—an *essential difference* he is pointing to here.

[the previous passage was re-read]

There are occasions when I need to think. Then, the process of intentional thought is added to that of *not thinking just looking*. One part of me, the higher part of intellectual centre thinks,

KEITH: That!

... while the formatory apparatus does not.

When I have looked, there may be a need to think. I have to marshal myself for that. But that is another question.

It is not, perhaps, surprising that the most exact answer to the query about searching for chief feature (that is, the most exact answer which I am capable of now), is the hardest: that the requisite effort uses the triad 3, 2, 1. Such an effort actually commences with the reconciling force, then the passive, and then the active. It is the direct opposite of what we think of as activity. This is, Ouspensky said, the triad of *learning*.

To say that the reconciling or “holy neutralising” force is prior is to say that the effort can only be made when one has already been working, and

has come to a point where one knows, without words, one's aim; can sense, again without words the nature of what one seeks; and is *consciously prepared to accept* whatever one sees. In such a state, neither active expectation nor passive resignation is present.

The passive force is next, because one simply receives the impression. Then the active or affirming force with the recognition of truth.

This is to take the discussion to a higher level. It is harder. But it is also more precise.

KEITH: Seems to be two things going on here: *looking* and *seeing*. How do we blend that into our search for work on chief feature? These sound like two distinctly different events—the looking and *thinking* with the highest part of the third brain.

STEVE: Looking at, there is more of a reception like a soft focus on feel and when something emerges from feel that interests attention then I am seeing; seeing has a more active focused quality. I am seeing a quantum field and the field collapses and something emerges. That is my sense about that, that I want to be looking without prejudice, without hunting for anything in particular, but something captures my attention and I see it and now I can look at it.

STEFAN M: I think he was using the terminology in a different way. The way I understood it was that seeing goes on all the time. I stand here and I see things but looking has an element of intention. I am actually going to look for something. If I want to look at a bird in the tree, I direct my eyes to that. He was talking about intention connected with looking but not with seeing.

What you are talking about is thinking after looking. So he is looking at something but then there is a further process of interpreting what you are seeing or looking for meaning in what you are seeing.

KEITH: Not words...No...Laws. This is the reaching at this point when we look, and then look. We are not looking for words to explain what we are looking at. We are looking for understanding and that doesn't come in words. That's a direct perception. We see from the looking—all three Forces are there in front of us—frozen. But we have to think; we have to have a dedication to understanding in terms of law. As he points out—we have to see the Three, the Two, the One—then we see something, perhaps.

Escape from the words. That is one of the key things in this. Don't go to words to try to find the answers to that.

JAN: There was something about reconciling that there was an impartiality implied. There was a freedom from expected results or wished outcome. The second word I think he used was "resonance." There was resonance that something that you saw, harmonically hit some sort of inner knowledge that was there, that you already knew on some level. We know and we see something because it resonates with us. There is this "ah ha" moment. It's touched something that was almost slumbering. And then, the active force comes in and so we are able to take it in with a certain deliberation—a real "yes" to that.

KEITH: Yes, because we have seen, clearly or not, (because it sometimes it is pretty dim what we see), we are seeing the law. Forget the words. It is just we see the law. I know that might seem a daffy way to explain it but looking a picture, when it is a picture, we have the whole—all three Forces. In an event you could say this is the event; it is now complete. Wherever you stopped it, it is complete.

To see that in law means there had to be a lawfulness behind each aspect of that leading to your perception and if you are just looking—not thinking about—if you are just looking and you just look, perhaps you see...perhaps you see.

GEORGE P: I had a small moment this morning. I was the last one to arrive for the Morning Exercise. I walked up the steps, remembering myself. There was a little adrenalin—I knew what time it was—but I was trying to be relaxed. I heard my footsteps walk across the floor. It was really quiet. I got to the doorway and it was ready. I could see immediately (and again this was the Three) that there was no path and just took it in, saw the back corner an empty chair. Immediately without thinking I backed up and went to the kitchen. It just flowed. I sat down. The calming down was needed; it was already there. When I sat, I didn't have take those steps you usually do to get silent. That was an example of the Three.

KEITH: Yes, I see it as a Three but from a different direction. That was an event, a real event. I think that's great how you experienced it. You experienced it as an event and that's fine.

GEORGE P: What are you saying about the picturing?

KEITH: It wasn't.

GEORGE P. You mean I am not conveying the picture.

KEITH: No, you were not seeing through picturing, as Gurdjieff was describing.

STEVE: Our language tells us “I am seeing but I am not looking. I'm looking but I can't see—now I see it!” There is coming together in an understanding. There is a higher function that falls into place as a result of a looking.

BARRY: It sounds like aesthetic appreciation; if I stand before a painting and I can withhold my judgment, something in there might click that would never click if I tried to play connect the dots with it.

HARRY: In “Hypnosis,” Gurdjieff makes the point that most of our abnormalities exist within the subconsciousness. We habituate ourselves to our waking consciousness. Those deeper tendencies, which haven't in the past been put into the context of chief feature, get elicited in the midst of shocks. He used to speak about pressing on people's corns. But for me that is like when there's a shock, when I am in a moment and I am not expecting it and something comes in that presses something in me that evokes an immediate inner reaction, that is the impression coming in from outside, and then there are the reactions that take place in me. That has a certain energy and there is a moment of seeing that as a picture or it is possible because one has begun to have an aim to be awake even if one doesn't have the specific intention to be awake to that in me which is chief feature, you are beginning to have the aim to be watchful. It seems like that the repository of chief feature would be the subconscious because this is what we don't see but is always there.

The notion of taking photographs, there is an energy associated with that and those kinds of shocks, particularly when they have to do with the picture one has of oneself—and again, it doesn't have to be chief feature, something in my imagination about myself wants to perceive myself as competent. I don't know that that's my chief feature, but I know that when circumstances come up and a shock comes in that calls that competency into question, then, in the moment of that shock, there is definitely an experience of being shocked and seeing that.

There are other characteristics that you could pick. That corresponds more with the idea of photographs because it becomes like an instant. I don't forget those instances. They are still there in my memory. I can still go back to the time I was in the kitchen and I was cooking and Pat came in and criticized the way I was doing it and the instant that that criticism came in, there was that shock and it was already coming out my mouth—that instant reaction. That's a picture.

Then the notion of chief feature becomes more of a thought, an intentional wanting to put in a larger context. Now I am searching in a different way. I am trying to put the pattern of all of that together.

MARTIN: Related to what Keith was talking about epigenetics the other day, a line that stood out, "We do not learn from experience; we are conditioned by it." I read this a few times. It kind of scared the hell out of me because I realized this is what had been happening in my life. I would follow an activity and come to a result that I didn't like and then I would think, "I didn't like that," and I would go back and the same thing would happen again—and *the same thing would happen again*; so my experience was conditioning me and I wasn't learning from it. The exact opposite was happening.

For example, when I was at college there was a girl I had a crush on and I really wanted to ask her out. I would be her with a lot of the time. Every time I could have asked her out and I didn't. It got to this point where I was conditioned by it so it became harder and harder to ever ask her out.

One night we were watching a movie late at night and it got the point I couldn't do anything. I walked out of the house around midnight and after that I was so sick of myself being so conditioned, this inability, I decided not to have a crush on her anymore. I didn't learn from the experience; I was just conditioned.

There is a funny ending to the story. About six years later I was out of college and had formed something in myself and I had tried to overcome this inability. I broke the ice with her; I overcame this part of myself that was unable to approach her. It was interesting. I didn't learn from my experience; I was trapped by it. The more I was caught in the cycle, the more I was trapped in it. Years later I was able to really summon up something which could break this pattern which you could call epigenetics at some level.

KEITH: Can you track that back further in your youth? I am thinking of more parental, familial kinds of circumstance that often seem to underpin that kind of relational circumstance.

MARTIN: In the end, you can get so sick of it or something will break down. Like Keith was saying you walk along and keep falling into the same hole and get conditioned to fall into the same hole but you don't know how not to fall into the hole. That pattern might stay with you but you might get a strong shock that comes in that breaks that pattern. Keith could probably talk about the different ways that the pattern could be broken.

KEITH: Sure, part of the epigene of that last occasion is that you ended up with one hell of a black eye and it was still there a week later and that was a big deal compared to all of the other times I've fallen into the hole, I didn't have such a big deal; I didn't get a black eye. Maybe something as simple as that in this epigenetic thing—accidents, little things that happen that are the same as but not quite the same as, and we keep adding on to those and we give them meaning, which is foolishness. They don't have any meaning beyond the fact that they are just an extension.



MANDY: Isn't that another instance of "repeat, repeat, repeat," it just happens.

NICK: In this instance, the break in the conditioning will be the ...?

MARTIN: It is like Ouspensky's *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin* where he gets a chance to re-live his life but everything is the same again. He gets another chance but everything that happens to him the first time happens to him again because he couldn't do likewise.

NICK: About the statement that we don't learn from mistakes, we get conditioned by them, I usually think of experiences as a source of learning but is turning it upside down, then how do we actually learn if we separate from experience?

MARTIN: There must be something higher which can go beyond that process that is set up. There is a functional thing that is set up in this world but there must be some higher energy that could come in to release the patterns that are established.

KEITH: What do you mean...talk about "higher."

NICK: It is not all conditioning, we do learn something, right? How do we learn if it's not the function of experience or reflections?

KEITH: Because our memory roles are pretty extensive. When we are born, they are pretty empty. We have a lifetime of experiences that will flow into all those different memories—verbal memories, visual memories, physical memories, which is experience.

NICK: I still don't understand how we don't learn from experience. What do we learn from?

KEITH: But we do, I don't understand.

JOHN: We have a problem with the word "learning."

KEITH: If you go to school to study Greek: because you are interested in Greek and you've never studied it, you study it, that is one order of learning. There are certain rules you have to obey to gradually accumulate learning of memory—sounds, letters, forms, etc., and through repetition, gradually that memory gets imprinted in the verbal and the vocabulary part so we gradually learn it. Other experiences are not like that. They don't have a learned vocabulary, for instance. They may have a verbal vocabulary but it is not something that we write down. It may not require a great deal of practice. Certain kinds of things are just everyday sorts of things. When you were kids, how long did it take you to learn all the typical discourse on the ball field, like baseball or soccer? How long did it take? Do you remember?

When I was 5, 6 or 7, I was a whiz. All of us were. We learned mechanical, coordinated skills of the body very quickly. I learned very quickly all kinds of sports related things that require bodily coordination. You could say I learned but [I was able] to copy what somebody else was doing with their physical body. I could watch them for a while and then go ahead and do it. Not everybody could do that but there is a difference in learning patterns. But somebody else may not be able to do that all so you could you call that learning for them?

BARRY: It's a different kind of learning. Montessori talked about the absorbent mind and the child learns those things which you described very quickly, also language. That ties in with what we were talking about looking. If I can just look, just take it in rather than how I try with, for instance, Movements. I am trying to take it apart, use my formatory apparatus, 1-2-3-4 right hand, left hand, it just falls apart. But if there is a higher element then that would have to be part of it.

JAN: I want to put my oar in the philological soup because there is something to language that can be precise and there use of the word “conditioning” has a very specific meaning. For instance you have to have asked, from second grade on, a plethora of young ladies out and 72% of the times you were rejected so you were conditioned by circumstances of a repetitive nature to avoidance behavior. Being shy is not the same.

When we use the word “conditioning” as well as “learning,” which John brought up, because operant conditioning is a form of learning, we have to be precise about how we use that word. When I had said earlier that when a child is born into the world, they are not blank slates, they come in with essence or a certain amount of different traits that are expressed or not expressed depending on how they are conditioned or responded to when they smile, you smile at them or you leave them alone. They are conditioned in a certain way and that’s how whether you consider it personality and then the deeper structures of chief feature develop but it’s in reaction to or in a dance that goes on between behavior and feedback that conditioning happens.

There is a thing about seeing that and I had a really interesting experience. David was going to read the opening lines of Gurdjieff [from *Life is real, only then, when ‘I am’*] again and he suggests we go back and read them again. I saw something in the first sentence and it says, “I am” and then there is dot, dot, dot and then there is a question mark. So, when you read it “I am?” it changes the meaning of the entirety that follows. That was something I hadn’t seen and I had read it visually before and I listened to you. I hadn’t heard it or seen it but I did when I went back and looked at it.

KEITH: [wrapping up our meeting] One thing we can say for sure: the issue of chief feature is not finished. We have managed to scramble it up pretty well. [laughter] Of all of sessions so far and the questions that have been raised, this is the most interesting because there is such a plethora of perspectives.

TODDY: It is interesting that it is the first generation pupils we received this from, so I think it would be interesting, as Harry was suggesting, to go back to *Beelzebub’s Tales*. How did he approach the concept that the first generation pupils picked up on in Gurdjieff’s writings?

JOHN: If we were to vote, the chief feature would not be heredity or essence. I don’t agree with that but that seems to be what people think.

## OCTOBER GATHERING 2017 ~ OCTOBER 9, MONDAY MORNING

MANDY: Last night we found several references to chief feature in *In Search* and thought they could be read now.

“Every man has a certain feature in his character which is central. It is like an axle round which all his ‘false personality’ revolves. Every man’s personal work must consist in struggling against this chief fault. This explains why there can be no general rules of work and why all systems that attempt to evolve such rules either lead to nothing or cause harm. How can there be general rules? What is useful for one is harmful for another. One man talks too much; he must learn to keep silent. Another man is silent when he ought to talk and he must learn to talk; and so it is always and in everything. General rules for the work of groups refer to everyone. Personal directions can only be individual. In this connection again a man cannot find his own chief feature, his chief fault, by himself. This is practically a law. The teacher has to point out this feature to him and show him how to fight against it. No one else but the teacher can do this.

“The study of the chief fault and the struggle against it constitute, as it were, each man’s individual path, but the aim must be the same for all. This aim is the realization of one’s nothingness. Only when a man has truly and sincerely arrived at the conviction of his own helplessness and nothingness and only when he feels it constantly, will he be ready for the next and much more difficult stages of the work. (P 226)

On one occasion, continuing this talk about the work of groups, G, said:

“Later on you will see that everyone in the work is given his own individual tasks corresponding to his type and his chief feature or his chief fault, that is, something that will give him an opportunity of struggling more intensively against his chief fault. But besides individual tasks there are general tasks which are given to the group as a whole, in which case the whole group is responsible for their execution or their nonexecution, although in some cases the group is also responsible for individual tasks. But first we will take general tasks. For instance, you ought by now to have some understanding as to the nature of the system and its principal methods, and you ought to be able to pass these ideas on to others. You will remember that at the beginning I was against your talking about the ideas of the system outside the groups. On the contrary there was a definite rule that none of you, excepting those whom I specially instructed to do so, should talk to anyone either about the groups or the lectures or the ideas. And I explained then why this was necessary. You would not have been able to give a correct picture, a correct impression. Instead of giving people the possibility of coming to these ideas you would have repelled them for ever; you would have even deprived them of the possibility of coming to them at any later time. But now the situation is different. You have already heard enough. And if you really have made efforts to understand what you have heard, then you should be able to pass it on to others. Therefore I give you all a definite task. (P 241)

The next time G. came to St. Petersburg was in the beginning of September. I tried to question him about what had actually occurred in Finland—was it true that he had said something that had frightened me, and why had I been frightened?

“If that was the case it means you were not ready,” said G.

He explained nothing further.

On this visit the center of gravity of the talks was in the “chief feature” or “chief fault” of each one of us.

G. was very ingenious in the definition of features. I realized on this occasion that not everyone’s chief feature could be defined. With some people this feature can be so hidden beneath different formal manifestations as to be almost impossible to find. And then a man can consider himself as his chief feature just as I could call my chief feature “Ouspensky” or, as G. always called it, “Piotr Demianovich.” Mistakes there cannot be because the “Piotr Demianovich” of each person forms so to speak “round his chief feature.”

Whenever anyone disagreed with the definition of his chief feature given by G. he always said that the fact that the person disagreed with him showed that he was right.

“I disagree only with what you say is actually my chief feature,” said one of our people. “The chief feature which I know in myself is very much worse. But I do not dispute that people may see me as you describe.”

“You know nothing in yourself,” G. told him; “if you knew you would not have that feature. And people certainly see you in the way I told you. But you do not see how they see you. If you accept what I told you as your chief feature you will understand how people see you. And if you find a way to struggle with this feature and to destroy it, that is, to destroy its involuntary manifestation” (G. emphasized these words), “you will produce on people not the impression that you do now but any impression you like.”

With this began long talks about the impressions that a man produces on other people and how he can produce a desirable or an undesirable impression.

Those around him see a man’s chief feature however hidden it may be. Of course they cannot always define it. But their definitions are often very good and very near. Take nicknames. Nicknames sometimes define chief features very well.

The talk about impressions brought us once more to “inner” and “outward considering.”

“There cannot be proper outward considering while a man is seated in his chief feature,” said G. “For instance So-and-So” (he named one of our party). “His feature is that he is never at home. How can he consider anything or anybody?”

I was astonished at the artistic finish of the feature that was represented by G. It was not psychology even, it was art.

“And psychology ought to be art,” G. replied, “psychology can never be simply a science.”

To another of our party he said on the question of feature that his feature was that he did not exist at all.

“You understand, I do not see you,” said G. “It does not mean that you are always like that. But when you are like you are now, you do not exist at all.”

He said to another that his chief feature was a tendency always to argue with everybody about everything.

“But then I never argue,” the man very heatedly at once replied.

Nobody could help laughing.

G. told another of our party—it was the middle-aged man on whom he had carried out the experiment of dividing personality from essence and who asked for raspberry jam—that his feature was that he had no conscience.

The following day the man came and said that he had been in the public library and had looked through the encyclopedic dictionaries of four languages for the meaning of the word “conscience.”

G. merely waved his hand.

To the other man, his companion in the experiment, G. said that he had no shame, and he at once cracked a rather amusing joke against himself. (PP 266-67)

KEITH: The question is in the last statement. Here is the final answer that Beelzebub gives:

“Sacred Podkoolad, and cause of the cause of my arising.

“In order that the convictions formed in me during this time, owing to Your explanation of the abnormalities proceeding on the Earth, may become definitely crystallized in me, I still wish very much to have this time Your personal and frank opinion as to the following: How You would reply if, let us suppose, our ALL-EMBRACING CREATOR ENDLESSNESS HIMSELF, were to summon You before HIM and ask You this:

“Beelzebub!!!

“You, as one of the anticipated, accelerated results of all My actualizations, manifest briefly the sum of your long-centuried impartial observations and studies of the psyche of the three-centered beings arising on the planet Earth and state in words whether it is still possible by some means or other to save them and to direct them into the becoming path?”

Having said this Hassein arose and standing in a posture of reverence began to look expectantly at Beelzebub.

And Ahoon also rose.

Beelzebub, smiling lovingly at this question of Hassein’s, first said that He was now quite convinced that His tales had brought Hassein the desired results; and then in a serious tone He continued that if our ALL-EMBRACING UNI-BEING CREATOR should indeed summon Him before HIM and ask Him thus, He would answer.

Thereupon Beelzebub suddenly also arose unexpectedly and having stretched His right hand forward and His left hand back, He directed His vision somewhere afar off, and it seemed that with His sight He was, as it were, piercing the very depths of space.

Simultaneously ‘something’ pale yellow began little by little to arise around Beelzebub and to envelop Him, and it was in no way possible to understand or to discern whence this something issued—whether it issued from Beelzebub Himself or proceeded to Him from space from sources outside of Him.

Finding Himself in these cosmic actualizations incomprehensible for all three-brained beings, Beelzebub in a loud voice unusual for Him very penetratingly intoned the following words:

“THOU ALL and the ALLNESS of my WHOLENESS!

“The sole means now for the saving of the beings of the planet Earth would be to implant again into their presences a new organ, an organ like Kundabuffer, but this time of such properties that every one of these unfortunates during the process of existence should constantly sense and be cognizant of the inevitability of his own death as well as of the death of everyone upon whom his eyes or attention rests.

“Only such a sensation and such a cognizance can now destroy the egoism completely crystallized in them that has swallowed up the whole of their Essence and also that tendency to hate others which flows from it—the tendency, namely, which engenders all those mutual relationships existing there, which serve as the chief cause of all their abnormalities unbecoming to three-brained beings and maleficent for them themselves and for the whole of the Universe.” (*BT*, pp 1182-83)

STEFAN M: There was one word I couldn't hear—was it hate?

DAVE: Yes the tendency to hate others.

KEITH: We touched earlier on this question of the organ implantation, the implantation of Kundabuffer and what that might involve. Certainly astonishing from the perspective of genomic and epigenomic considerations of modern science that we are involved in having to consider our total neurobiology whenever we think about the implantation, we have to take those factors into consideration that Gurdjieff was referring to – an implantation because it is similar to the first implantation. And that implantation came from above the world of life and before [with the sanction of ENDLESSNESS] and we should emphasize that. The High Commission was told to implant Kundabuffer—that was an order given from Above. We should have some way of grasping what is included in that. And by that what I mean is, the laws of World 24, if we look at this from the perspective of the Ray of Creation, if World 12 (the sun) is the origin, it is the divine origin, if you will, of the whole of the Lateral Octave, of each Lateral Octave when it comes into being and any solar system, then the sun is considered the origin, World 12 of that Lateral Octave.

World 24 of that same octave, the SI, is the planetary world, World 24. At the level of World 12, we are concerned almost entirely with energies and the creation of certain elementals, what I mean is that in our sun is the creation of the atomic table takes place, the whole of the atomic table takes place inside of a sun. So, all of the element, metals, metalloids, salts, that we identify as the atomic table. So that's World 12, the creation of the elementalness of those substances. World 24 is the world in which those elementalnesses and the energies interact, and you have the creation of those substances and in World 24 you come to the level of energies where they interpenetrate each other. Here we have this grand, creative mixing and it is a very creative arena. Because all of the planets take on their individual characteristics. Some of them have high concentration of certain elements, others have others. Some are very big and some are very small. Some are gaseous.

There are many variations, many differences in how World 24 creatively shows itself. It is not at all enough to put it into the simplistic astronomical considerations that we see in books

that give us simple perspectives about all this. It is much more interesting. When you consider in our own solar system that we have this creative mix of all the elements and all the differences and we are just barely beginning to explore this.

You may be interested in the observations on Jupiter over the last year or two. Here is a planet that is not solid. How can you have a gaseous planet eighty-nine times bigger than the Earth? There is no solid substance to it. I can't imagine a non-solid planet and, yet all kinds of things happen on Jupiter. There is a storm, there is a red spot that has been there for four hundred years.

LARRY: Doesn't it have a magnetic pull?

KEITH: Yes. I was referring to what they have taken pictures of. Not too many years ago, there was a storm in the atmosphere and they were able to track winds of hundreds of miles an hour, these cyclonic winds, at the equatorial point of Jupiter, for at least four hundred years. What does that mean? Here is phenomena that is very striking, many astronomers they just delight in learning anything new about what's going on here. I mention that in this context because that is one of the aspects of World 24 that we should be aware of. It is part of the elaboration, the creativity, the expression of chemical and biochemical and the world of planets. That's all in World 24.

From that arena of possibilities, we can conclude the variety of energy interchanges and all the biochemistry and all the changes that you could possibly imagine that could take place under these circumstances that we just described—all the atomic table and all the energies and mix it all up—you have these endless experimental situations and all manner of possibilities of exploring. Explore what? Explore life. That's the way Gurdjieff put it and from World 24, comes World 48.

World 48 is the World of Microcosmos. Microcosmos is one-celled life. For four billion years there is evidence that there has been life of a one-celled variety. Now that's 48. That's how life comes to be on the planet. I mention this because Gurdjieff brings up that there is a necessary implantation. If an implantation has to take place from Above, it has to know what the hell is going on inside a living organism. We have to understand what are the laws and what is permissible and what is not permissible. What might destroy the organism? We know now, in many of the investigations that are taking place in biology and in the neurosciences and in many arenas, that they are just barely opening up that have much to do with genetic research. There are some enormously potent and very tricky areas where one tiny little change, in a whole chain of alterations, can destroy whole processes.

My point, relative to implantation, is that you have got to know the laws. We have to understand them as best we possibly can. What is the cause of this? Where does it come from? What makes it harder, more difficult? When Gurdjieff puts all these cautions—and certainly, in the earlier reading from *In Search*, this is a cautionary tale he is telling these people—he doesn't give them this information early on and what they begin to notice are only some very general characteristics: some of these are chief feature characteristics and some are very funny and straightforward but subtle descriptions that fit into each of us.

We are all living organisms and along with living organism are these peculiar characteristics that create negative possibility and that is the hatred that emerges. It is interesting that this hatred and egoism emerged in the very final story. And this is why it is underneath chief feature.

It is something that is staring us in the face and we should pay some attention to it.

LARRY: You say that this new organ can come up right against this hatred, the hatred would be obstructing and in conflict with a new organ. And this reminds me of the organ system that Margaret brought about the immune system about not being invaded by something that shouldn't be there so they find that has to be very carefully done with medicines. So, when we implant a new organ, you are up against some kind of immune system-like thing that preserves the egoism and part of that is the hatred that seems to be the re-enforcer of my sense of me—they're challenging me, they're threatening me, so I hate them and I hate me. So, with that whole thing there has to be a way of dealing with that immune system.

GEORGE B: What interests me about this is; what can I actually do about this now? I could wait for an Archangel to come and implant something in me, if I want to take that literally, so what can I do now. Beelzebub makes it very clear, he is transfigured before he even says this and there is as much importance attached to this as there could be—that we have to do something about this egoism. We need that within us that can always recognize those around us. So what can we do about that?

The reading Harry gave us last night had something about that, we could practice this. Now that is not an implantation but one of Gurdjieff's words is transubstantiate, for example transubstantiate the strivings and take them out of the realm of theory and put them into practice. So we have this theory that we have got to do something about, and we have this idea that we have to be aware of the negativity—so let's practice that and see if something is transubstantiated in us.

Now, that may not be exactly the same as implantation but at least we are doing something until the real thing shows up. "Transubstantiation" is a really important word he uses because it means making something practical. In was in the reading last night about practice and I can work at it repeatedly—I might actually bring about this implantation in me.

MANDY: Actually the Miriam Webster Dictionary defines "implant" as: to fix or set securely or deeply; to set personally in the consciousness or habit pattern, inculcate.

GEORGE B: What it always gives me is what can I do about it now. It is the only question.

MANDY: Right.

MARTIN: I am working with this in a new way because the reading was sent out, so I began working with it a couple of weeks before. And in particular I should just say to George what you referred to is a constant sense and to be cognizant of the inevitability of our own death or the death of those upon whom our eyes or attention rests is useful. I tried to work with this, and then this was a few days prior, I thought why am I doing this? What is that thing that I have? What am I doing? I am trying to focus on my death and focus on those that my attention rests. Why am I doing it?

The why was addressed in the next sentence and was able to point out—to destroy the evil that is completely crystallized in me. So, practice, practice, why am I doing it—for the short time I tried to work with this. And then I was walking to the post office, which is just opposite where my school is, and I saw this lady getting out of her car, and I really tried to practice a sense, you know, to destroy the egoism completely crystallized in me. And this just happened. I was looking at her and aware of myself and it was just for a small portion of time something changed. I was no different than her and she was no different than me. My identity changed and I saw her as a fellow being.



That's one of the characteristics of egoism is that it *separates us from other people*. It stops us from having a relationship with other people. That's how ego manifests in me with my fellow human beings. Making this effort to destroy the egoism—just for a few seconds—has helped me. And then, I carried on as before. But I was grateful for those moments.

STEFAN M: In remembering of the limitedness of my time and the end of my life, it has occurred to me more frequently in recent time. It is not something that I'm doing, it is something that comes up. What I have seen about it is that it has to have a strong emotional component. It has to be more than an idea. It has to be a feeling or a sensation even of this limitedness of my time in this form of existence in order to have some kind of impact on my daily life, in the sense that it has to have an effect on what is important in terms of priority and what am I—a sort of reorientation of where I am going. What is really important with the remaining twenty years or so I may have. In that sense, I feel our Work is important.

The Movements are important because they help me to stimulate my emotional center and I have these *true* feelings that I have been somewhat handicapped. There is an element of my makeup that was always somewhat underdeveloped and so the Movements help me to have more of these feelings such as awe and humility, which is in the same way as effective as remembering one's own death.

What I heard new today is the inevitability of other peoples' deaths also. The two of them, to remember their limitations and my own, helps to resolve this envy or hatred that I would feel towards another individual.

JOHN: That was pretty interesting in the context of what I am about to say.

A hundred years ago, about the time that Gurdjieff comes in, and Maxwell's equations and all of that made possible the modern world, what came along with it, modern medicine. With the life span then and now, most of us would probably not be here if medicine had not arisen. My grandfather told me many times before he died that he never thought he would live that long. He came from a generation that never thought of living that long.

KEITH: Did you talk about that?

JOHN: He talked about it.

KEITH: In what way?

JOHN: Well all of his friends had died and it came up for him a lot.

KEITH: I am just trying to remember my grandparents and whether they thought they were living longer than they should, longer than their confreres, I am just curious.

JOHN: The subject I am trying to bring up is that if my grandfather was any indication, they had war but they also had a different sense of how long they might have. And they were nicer people.

KEITH: It's true the question of longevity and what you are saying is true. Generally, people did not live as long; you were old if you were seventy and most people died before that.

JOHN: I am suggesting that there is a correlation, a connection between extending the life span and hatred. There is some mechanism in between which some might express as capitalism, accumulation or whatever. I don't have a whole picture in my mind but it seems to me they could be connected.

NICK: What makes you think they are connected?

JOHN: It is true you cannot draw a correlation between two processes without something in between but I am suggesting maybe there is something.

MANDY: John, I think I see your point. What came to mind when you said that and its not something that we have thought about before and that is with a longer life-span, the interest in the accumulation of wealth and hence greed, might be something that is more prevalent in having a longer life-span. If you were going to die at 46 or 60, there wouldn't be as much point in it in saving money for your retirement. What retirement?

JAN: To predicate what you said Marlena, the instinct towards stuff is instinctual because the more mastodon meat you have in back of the cave, which can be translated into IRAs and Maseratis and mink coats these days, means that you are going to survive and not only are you going to survive but your offspring will survive. Perhaps you are that far into your lifespan, your offspring's offspring. That was how far we could see into the future.

There is an acquisition of stuff that corresponds to survival. My work is going into people's houses, most of whom have died. I organize, clean and sell their stuff—estate sales. Recently I was in a home of woman who spent the last years of her life in front of the television on the shopping channels. What she bought was face cream which promised to restore the youthfulness and elasticity of her skin, thousands of dollars of it, unopened. The impulse against death or aging is really strong, not just your death.

Three years back, sitting with a friend drinking tea and having her say to me just as an aside, "Isn't it nice to be at an age when we really know we don't matter?," I had the experience literally of the ground opening up beneath my feet. It was like I could see a thousand years into the future and see the true insignificance of my existence at the moment and every thing I did and saw that nothing will matter in a thousand years for all of us.

But I also see what we do in the moment matters entirely whether we are kind to one another, whether we are present to one another's suffering and of ourselves—that matters. And it entirely changes my perception of how my fellow human beings are and what can truly be done.

GEORGE P: Keith, you were speaking about chief feature and it was that everything starts there. Thinking about a different implantation, we have to think along those lines, that it is not something that is in our ordinary experience. It's like Dave when he led the exercise this morning, he gave us a tether when we were having difficulties with this crazy world, to remember the group and that we are not alone. Madam de Salzmann said if we were able to contact this inner quietness that we could face disease and poverty—the idea that there would something within us that could accept that. I look at gestures and prayers in the Movements this morning—they all had this sensitivity.

We talk about blood, the circulation of the group; that seems to be a feeling of another body, a group body—being able to look into someone's eyes and remember that they are going to die and I am going to die. That sensitivity seems to be something that is not in our ordinary self-preservation. Were you finished talking about the Worlds?

KEITH: There is a whole lot that is useful to explore. If you follow through Gurdjieff's pattern, we come from Microcosmos to Tetartocosmos. "Tetarto" simply means "many," so it is many-celled life that follows on uni-celled life.

For about two and a half-three billion years—just imagine—I just said two and a half-three billion. What the hell does that mean? Do any of us have any comprehension what that means in terms of time? two and a half-three billion? That’s how long one-celled life existed on Earth and, all that time, incessant explorations, experimentations are going on. Incessant. Just think of how many species came into life and disappeared the same day. Why? Because some elementalness in that primal, lawfulness that comes out of World 24 said, you can’t go that way. If you go that way, you destroy yourself and they destroyed themselves. Many creatures have walked on planet who did themselves in very rapidly because either they had a very foreshortened notion of sources of food because the sources of food took one more step in order to get it digestible and maybe that source was warmth, water or some other element they lacked in their environment very soon after they started down that road. So, they die out very quickly because they didn’t have the supportive matrix.

The point is that, if we take all together all of the lawfulnesses that are required for a living being to sustain itself, for it to be in perpetuity into the future, to be able to reproduce itself, raise its offspring, find food, defend itself, explore the world—for it to be able to do that cycle of a living organism, it leaves behind all the laws that have been properly fulfilled. That happens with Tetartocosmos when we go from one-celled life to multi-celled life.

Give a little thought to how momentous, how difficult a step that was—to go from a one-celled organism with one nucleus, one set of cellular mechanisms for doing all the things that it had to do to stay alive, and now, how does it do that as a multi-celled organism? What does a multi-celled have to do that is different from a single-celled?

Think about it for a minute. If you have five or a hundred or two thousand different kinds of cells, how do you keep that all going, properly identified, fed, defend all those sources in order to fulfill certain requirements for the whole of life? It is a big, complicated job.

When Gurdjieff first introduces the term, “Tetartocosmos,” he is not talking about a brained being or mammals, sea creatures or birds. He’s talking about multi-celled life. We have lots of multi-celled life, especially in the ocean such as clams and mussels. They are not creatures that have a separate brain that thinks or has memory—that creative possibility has not been explored by that particular branch of life. Some Tetartocosmoses never developed toward a brain, they simply remained what they were, which is fine, they are still with us.

However, certain of the Tetartocosmoses are introduced the chapter “Purgatory,” where Gurdjieff talks about when it was noticed that certain beings [Tetartocosmoses] began to move independently on the surface of the planet. This is a colossal paragraph in “Purgatory.”

It means a life form has evolved of its natural evolutionary exploration of the world of World 24 laws. It has come to the point where now it begins to move independently—but automatically. If that strange expression doesn’t stop you when you are reading, then there is nothing much that is going to wake us up. It means to walk independently but with awareness that you are walking.

“The point is that when the ‘common-cosmic-harmonious-equilibrium’ had become regularized and established in all those cosmoses of different scales, then in each of these Tetartocosmoses, i.e., in each separate relatively-independent-formation-of-the-aggregation-of-microcosmoses’ which had its arising on the surface of the planets—the surrounding conditions on the surface of which accidentally began to correspond to certain data present in

these cosmoses, owing to which they could exist for a certain period of time without what is called 'Seccruano,' i.e., without constant 'individual tension' – the possibility appeared of independent automatic moving from one place to another on the surface of the given planets.

“And thereupon, when OUR COMMON FATHER ENDLESSNESS ascertained this automatic moving of theirs, there then arose for the first time in him the Divine Idea of making use of it as a help for himself in the administration of the enlarging World. (BT, P 762)

The next three pages are a stepwise elaboration of how Kesdjan Body and Higher Being-body come about. It can be seen as a growth potential from this point, automatic, independent movement to finally the formation of Kesdjan and Higher Being-body. It is the very interesting powerful statement of the chapter. “Automatic, independent” – that has got to strike you sideways whenever you read that. How can something be independent and automatic at the same time? Does that describe ourselves at times but still and all there is something notable about the expression.

STEFFAN S: And the Divine attention.

KEITH: Right, and this happened for the first time. This raises a number of interesting questions. Is it built into the Creation with the primal thrust being given by the Creator Itself? Is he saying that, at some point in that natural course of events, independence will occur? Independent movement on the surfaces of the planet – what does that mean? Not in the ocean, not in the air – those are special circumstances, which is why I put them in a totally different lawfulness in World 24. All birds, all flying forms of life and all the mammals that decided to go back to the ocean, are different, special creations in the world of Kesdjan. We see this appear in everything from poetry to real life stories about the sea and birds.

BONNIE: When I first was reading *Beelzebub's Tales*, I read over that a number of times, but it began to be such a huge question for me: what is this independent, automatic motion? It became a huge question because ENDLESSNESS had the hope that, with this independent motion, we could help and that's what I wanted to be – of help right now.

This is a very primary thing for us to take note of. When the motion appears that is independent, that means that the life form, whatever it is, has independence. It has some 'will-ness'; something that leads it to move in a certain direction; it is independent of what? Independent of the laws? What laws? The laws of World 24.

JOHN: Is there a way to tie this together with Kundabuffer and an organ life Kundabuffer? In other words was Kundabuffer implanted through the mechanism that you are describing with evolution, implanted that way and if there is another organ that could be implanted that way, how would that be different to remind us of the inevitability of death?

KEITH: A lot is left up to us on the human side but a lot of it is unanswered. We can make up our own; we can decide how we think reasonably we should move to try accomplish that.

STEFFAN S: We don't have a way to put that organ into automatic people. What George said about that organ amongst a group is true enough; it works. There are other ways to develop it through inner exercises, like the one we read at the end of *The Tales*. That is an inner exercise that can be repeated for years and years and it implants the organ in me. We have a way to put that organ into humans who are attracted to Work but we don't have a way put it

in the masses to save the planet. Then I started looking at the survival triads and I see there is not a survival triad that shows the survival of the higher parts of people, the parts that would need that organ. You can get to the point where you have that organ when you have Higher Emotional and Higher Intellectual active but not when you are automatic. How are we going to implant that into the “Muggles?”

ELAN: What kind of perception or organ would it have to be? The reports we have of the Second World War when humanity was under a period of very heavy stress and how people came together, for example, what it was like for people living in the blitz in London. Most were most certainly aware of the potential inevitability of death because they were under attack. Because of that, it changed the relationship between people. And these were not people who had Higher Being-bodies; they were so-called ordinary, automatic people.

The organ Kundabuffer was implanted from Above by Looisos, this Arch-Chemist-Physicist, but that does not mean that the new organ we are talking about needs necessarily be implanted from Above; it may be that it is our responsibility to implant this organ. It is not going to come from Above. If it were implanted from Above, what would it be like? As I get older, certain things are happening quite naturally to me and to all of us I would say that brings the awareness of the inevitability of death much more on a daily basis. When we get into pain, for example, we connect with other people; we can share that.

If there were a situation where we were all going to die by the age of fifty, for example, that would be an implantation that would make everybody aware the death was coming. I don't know how it would happen but I can see the way we are treating each other as a race right now, we could come under that influence. In other words, the implantation that would take place, if it was implemented from Above or from the outside would, not make us comfortable. We would be in a state of discomfort by definition.

GEORGE P: You were speaking about the Blitzkrieg and people having the shared experience of fear, but I also remember Gurdjieff speaking about people, at the tail end of their life, where they have been dismissive to any spirituality and, then all of a sudden, having a conversion, but he also says it is too late. When we are talking about a new organ, the prerequisite seems to have to be a time that was put into it, other than a shared experience –building up a certain sensitivity.

GEORGE B: Can I say one thing about “never too late?” There is the famous story of [Gurdjieff] sitting at the table and someone who had been gone a long time came back and he asked if it was too late for him and Gurdjieff said it was never too late. It is important because we get this ‘we’ve blown it’ kind of thing. I am not say we can just sit around and wait till the last minute but, in fact, *it is never too late*.

ELAN: One addendum, because there was a question about how would this go towards the “automatic” people. Gurdjieff has an answer in *Beelzebub* and that is Ashiata Shiemash because Ashiata Shiemash was able to transmit this information to a large group of people so that wars stopped, the birth rate went down and life expectancy increased by, you could almost say, the organ of Conscience. Once we become connected with Conscience then egoism can begin to diminish because we are working on ourselves.

The Psychokinetic path draws on the Psychostatic path. It is the work of the Psychokinetic and Psychoteleios group to bring the awareness of Conscience to the Psychostatic group because Psychostatic does not mean dead; it means that it is not moving but that doesn't mean that independent movement doesn't exist.

JOHN: Isn't he also saying the antidote to the lack of Conscience is becoming aware of the inevitability of one's death?

ELAN: Maybe but he says more specifically in Beelzebub that the five Obligolnian Strivings are the effective means to awaken Conscience.

JAN: I think this is from Marcus Aurelius and it is my daily practice: "Whatever thy hand finds to do, do it with all your might for there is no work nor device nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

[We ended with a presentation, "Meaning in Music," given by Elan]