

HOW CAN WE BECOME SENSITIVE TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE WORK

By Pierre Elliot

Saturday 19th September 1981

Everything that exists is material, is a substance. We always are rather inclined to think of Work as being what we do, and we say "I work" or "I don't work," and we think of Work as this or that kind of effort. But if it were only that it would be the same as everything else. What Work really is, is not what we do, but it is a substance that is always present, and we can be more conscious of it or less conscious of it -- a very, very fine substance, much too fine to be able to do anything with it. There are some fine substances that we can do something about, like the fine substance of attention, or the fine substance of sensation. But Work is much finer than that, and yet it is also a substance.

It is in fact very much like blood. Let us pause a minute and reflect on the role of blood in our body and not only our physical body.

There is indeed the blood of our organic existence, of our physical body; but there is also the blood of our second body, the blood of our spiritual existence, which is what is called Hanbledzoin in Beelzebub (1), and there is also a third kind of blood, which in Beelzebub is called the Theomertmalogos (2), or the Word of God. So that when we speak about the Great Work "The Work " we speak about that. It is the presence of that in us that is Work. And our Work is to open ourselves to be conscious of and to be able to respond to and act to, the presence in us of this.

It is very important that we should come to think about Work as this fine substance which can be called "the blood of the soul", and it is particularly important to understand this, as it can become the

foundation of group work because the same blood flows through all of us.

When that awareness is present in us, then one's whole feeling about everyone else changes. But until one feels that one feels my work, my project, my business; "one person's work, I work, he doesn't work; "he works better, I work worse;" and we have all kind of stupidities and considering, and feel either righteous or indignant and take sides.

When we see there is one substance in all of us and that substance, the finest of all substances there are, then we see how we are connected in quite a different way.

There is a very important connection, of course, of a second kind -- that is, through what we call our spiritual life; and I mean that in the sense of the life in which we are striving to perfect ourselves, to form in ourselves what ought to be formed in man that is the body of our own individuality. What we are speaking about now is much higher than that, as this second kind is higher than the ordinary bodily existence. And yet, because it is so high, it penetrates everyone. This sounds open to doubt, in view of our varying capacities, but on reflection one must see, not just think it, that the fine substance of Work that is in you cannot possibly be different from the fine substance which is in me, or in anyone else in the universe.

It is because we do not, from time to time, stop to think about this highest significance of Work that we tend to become too much occupied with all the personal problems that our ordinary work makes for us. I am drawing your attention before we speak of groups and group work, to the relativity of the word 'work' . For instance, if during the course of working together here today we bring into it an effort to, as we say, remember ourselves, you will inevitably see that you find that something is shared between all of

us that is really there, irrespective of what work we are engaged in.

Our problem is basically this: All the time our attention is taken, we are drawn; we care about various things that for that reason become god for us. We must know that we have all these gods that we worship. And we only deceive ourselves if we think that we do not have this idolatry present in us. As soon as we Work, we glimpse the force of identification, of idolatry. We see the force with which we are drawn to every kind of false god. The power to see that we worship false gods is in us all. But this does not mean that their power over us ceases. Only for a short and all-important time can the power of these negative forces cease. This is the basic reason for group work. If we come together to work, we have some chance to feel more the action of what is the real divinity in us, the substance of Work and feel less the power of all these other forces.

This is why it is important to sense, to be present in what one is doing. When we do this kind of Work inevitably our values and judgments become much more corresponding to what they logically should be, that we really should be valuing what is eternal and imperishable and not continually getting lost in the temporal attractions that act on us.

Now we can see this logically, but we cannot feel it unless we are present. Groups must be designed to direct our efforts of Work to being present in whatever we are doing.

There are really two questions. The first is the title of this note: If there is a fine substance of Work which is the most precious thing in all the world, and this substance already penetrates me, then how can I become sensitive to it? By putting the question, we are enabled to make the transition between simply thinking about it to what is our practical need now. We must pay attention to this, to let our sensitivity be held in us so as to find the presence of the

Work in us and to dispose ourselves to be open to it. The second question concerns our reluctance to act on what we see. We must beware of the action of turning our backs to the Work (3), but his question goes beyond the theme of this introduction to groups and group work.

(1) A and E., p. 568/9 and p. 727

2) A and E., p. 764 and p. 867

3) A and E., p. 246

Theme 4 Week of November 23rd to November 30th

SECCRUANO

"Without constant individual tension" (A. and E. p. 762)

The work. our work, requires that we should be present. To be present we have to be free from such obstacles as identification, losing ourselves in what we are engaged in. To be present, we have to be relaxed and this brings us to the world of tensions.

Tensions are not something inert, passive, just slowing up our development. We have to observe how they come to arise. We have to observe that they arise in us from that which is hostile to the work. They represent in us a great force, our denying force. It is the center of egoism in us which defends itself by means of tensions.

It is essential that there should develop in us an active side which sees and experiences the need to relax. Once again, we need to

observe, observe our inner gestures of refusal, our clutching at whatever we are lost in. By relaxation we can become free.

The way is clear. We need to learn to make a gesture of relaxation and to learn to renew it.

Mr. Bennett had a word for this--unhooking. We need to learn the art of unhooking, to make a movement of disengagement, or inwardly lofting go. To do this we begin with work on physical tensions, letting go literally a hundred times a day. Later we see that to look for and relax only the superficial tensions does not do very much because under the influence of the underlying tensions they quickly return.

This week, wherever you are in this work, resolve to make some progress in the field of tensions. Superficial tensions can be affected by a superficial effort of attention, the deeper ones require work of a more subtle kind. This week set yourself to go deeper, for tensions are the opposition to our work.

(Monthly meeting Nov. 2005) *This is one of a series of weekly themes prepared by Pierre, twenty-four (twenty-five now) years ago (this week); this theme begs the question, "what is this underlying tension?" does it have a bodily location?"*

... **there** is a vitality, a life force an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and, because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique ... and if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium, and be lost ... the world will not have it...it is not your business to determine how good it is or how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions.. it is your business to keep it yours, clearly and directly, to keep the channel open ... you do not even have to believe in yourself or your work ... you have to keep open and

aware directly of the urges that motivate you ... keep the channel open ... be brilliant today...

Martha Graham to Agnes Demille...

May today there be peace within...may you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be ... may you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith ... may you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you ... may you be content knowing you are a child of God ... let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love ... it is there for each and every one of us...

St. Therese de Lisieux

THE AWAKENING OF THOUGHT

Jeanne de Salzmänn

Objective thought is a look from Above. A look that is free, that can see. Without this look upon me, seeing me, my life is the life of a blind man who goes his way driven by impulse, not knowing either why or how. Without this look upon me, I cannot know that I exist.

I have the power to rise above myself and to see myself freely ... to be seen. My thought has the power to be free. But for this to take place, it must rid itself of all the associations which hold it captive, passive. It must cut the threads that bind it to the world of images, to the world of forms; it must free itself from the constant pull of the emotions. It must feel its power to resist this pull, its objective power to watch over this pull while gradually rising above it. In this movement thought becomes active. It becomes active while purifying itself. Thereby its true aim is revealed, a unique aim: to think 1, to realize who I am, to enter into this mystery.

Otherwise, our thoughts are just illusions, objects which enslave us, snares in which real thought loses its power of objectivity and intentional action. Confused by words, images, forms that attract it, it loses the capacity to see. It loses the sense of I. Then nothing remains but an organism adrift. A body deprived of intelligence. Without this inner look, I can only fall back into automatism, under the law of accident.

This look makes me both responsible and free. In the clearest moments of self-awareness, I reach a state where I am known, and where I feel the blessing of this look which comes down to embrace me. I become transparent under its light.

Each time, the first step is the recognition of a lack. I feel the need for real thought. The need for a free thought turned toward myself so that I might become truly aware of my existence. An active thought, whose sole aim and sole object is I ... to rediscover I.

So my struggle is a struggle against the passivity of my ordinary thought. Without this struggle a greater consciousness will not be born. Through this struggle I can leave behind the illusion of "I" in which I live and approach a more real vision. At the heart of this struggle, order is created out of chaos. A hierarchy is revealed: two levels, two worlds. As long as there is only one level, there can be no vision. Recognition of another level is the awakening of thought.

Without this effort, thought falls back into a sleep filled with words, images, preconceived notions, approximate knowledge, dreams, and perpetual drifting. This is the thought of a man without intelligence. It is terrible to suddenly realize that one has been living without a thought that is independent—a thought of one's own—living without intelligence, without something that sees what is real, and therefore without any relation to the world Above.

It is in my essence that I may be reunited with the one who sees. There, I would be at the source of something unique and stable, at the source of that which does not change.

Text dated July 23, 1958, from a notebook of Jeanne de Salzmann. First published in *Georges Ivanovitch Gurdjieff*, Bruno de Panafieu, ed. (Paris: Les Dossiers H., 1992).

REMEMBERING THE SELF

"Your principal mistake consists in thinking that *you always have consciousness*, and in general, either that consciousness is *always present* or that it is *never present*. In reality consciousness is a property which is continually changing. Now it is present, now it is not present. And there are different degrees and levels of consciousness. Both consciousness and the different degrees of consciousness must be understood in oneself by sensation, by taste. No definitions can help you in this case and no definitions are possible so long as you do not understand *what* you have to define. And science and philosophy cannot define consciousness because they want to define it where it does not exist. It is necessary to distinguish *consciousness* from the *possibility of consciousness*. We have only the possibility of consciousness and rare flashes of it. Therefore we cannot define what consciousness is."

I cannot say that what was said about consciousness became clear to me at once. But one of the subsequent talks explained to me the principles on which these arguments were based.

On one occasion at the beginning of a meeting G. put a question to which all those present had to answer in turn. The question was:

"What is the most important thing that we notice during self-observation?"

Some of those present said that during attempts at self-observation, what they had felt particularly strongly was an incessant flow of thoughts which they had found impossible to stop. Others spoke of the difficulty of distinguishing the work of one center from the work of another. I had evidently not altogether understood the question, or I answered my own thoughts, because I said that what struck me most was the connectedness of one thing with another in the system, the wholeness of the system, as if it were an "organism," and the entirely new significance of the word *to know* which included not only the idea of knowing this thing or that, but the connection between this thing and everything else.

G. was obviously dissatisfied with our replies. I had already begun to understand him in such circumstances and I saw that he expected from us indications of something definite that we had either missed or failed to understand.

"Not one of you has noticed the most important thing that I have pointed out to you," he said. "That is to say, not one of you has noticed that *you do not remember yourselves.*" (He gave particular emphasis to these words.) "You do not feel *yourselves*; you are not conscious of *yourselves*. With you, 'it observes' just as 'it speaks,' 'it thinks,' 'it laughs.' You do not feel: I observe, I notice, I see. Everything still 'is noticed,' 'is seen.' ... In order really to observe oneself one must first of all *remember oneself*. (He again emphasized these words.) Try to *remember yourselves* when you observe yourselves and later on tell me the results. Only those results will have any value that are accompanied by self-remembering. Otherwise you yourselves do not exist in your observations. In which case what are all your observations worth?"

These words of G.'s made me think a great deal. It seemed to me at once that they were the key to what he had said before about consciousness. But I decided to draw no conclusions whatever, but to try to *remember myself* while observing myself

The very first attempts showed me how difficult it was. Attempts at *self-remembering* failed to give any results except to show me that in actual fact we never remember ourselves.

"What else do you want?" said G. "This is a very important realization. People who *know this*" (he emphasized these words) "already know a great deal. The whole trouble is that nobody knows it. If you ask a man whether he can remember himself, he will of course answer that he can. If you tell him that he cannot remember himself, he will either be angry with you, or he will think you an utter fool. The whole of life is based on this, the whole of human existence, the whole of human blindness. If a man really knows that he cannot remember himself, he is already near to the understanding of his being."

Excerpts from *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*, P.D. Ouspensky

AWAKEN TO THE QUESTION

Michel de Salzman

We have, all of us, something in common—together with the fact that we just exist now: it is that to everyone present here, whether he recognizes it or not, the most important thing, the thing that really matters to him, is *himself*. I am not referring now to some specific ego features such as selfishness, self-love, or self-importance, but to something very simple, factual, quite unavoidable. Am I not extremely important since everything that exists exists because I am? And if I think the opposite, is it not

again I who think it? Everything passes through me. I am the only one who can experience or live my life. It is not a secondhand life, although unfortunately most of the time we seem to forget that.

This fact brings us immediately to the most difficult question. What is myself?

Let us try to consider that, avoiding as far as possible our "ready-made" patterns of thought. We are of course immediately tempted to refer to a philosophical point of view, or to recall the Buddhist or Hindu conception of the self, or to approach the problem in terms of depth psychology, behaviorism, or any other of our personal "idiosyncrasies." Let us try to face the question in a more provocative way, I would say in a naive way. So I come back to myself. What is it? Do I have anything of my own?

My life? I may say, In a way it was given to me. I have done nothing for that. It is now given to me as an existential fact. I can become aware of it. It operates through my body.

This body given to me works by itself according to definite laws. It is the site of myriads of processes and of constant exchanges with the outer world. Various determining influences have given it its peculiarities: race, heredity, climate, food; and also more distant influences: astrological, cosmic, etc., of which we know very little. Anyhow, it works, and most of the time I am unconscious of it. It is like an animal. An animal in itself is a great thing, as the etymology reminds us: "anima," like "spiritus," refers to the breath, to the mysterious "animation" of the body. Thus animated, the body goes and comes, eats, sleeps, evacuates, has sex affairs and sometimes calls on me to be recognized, to be taken care of; but it usually works as well without me. In the best moments of awareness it appears to me as an integrated part of a greater whole, from which it is inseparable. Made of matter, my body obeys the causality of what we call the physical world.

Now there is another, greater whole of which I am a part, to which I belong, in which I bathe. That is culture or society. I may sometimes realize that everything I have, all my thoughts, my words, all my feelings, my body's learned ways of behavior—all the contents as well as most of the dynamics of what is called my psychological life—have been "inputted" into me.

My only originality seems to lie in the way it is put together. Everyone has a style, some characteristic habits and associations; but so it is in a computer also. The way all this has been put together has merely happened. It came about through contingency—through accidental events—and developed quite unconsciously. My computer deals with new inputs according to its own conditioned program. Nothing completely new can ever come out of it. None of us, for instance, would be able to draw an entirely new animal. Known elements or features would inevitably be made use of. I may say, roughly, and provocatively, that everything, including my character and equipment, has been given to me. My psychic life, even though it obeys the causality of intentionality, is also given to me and is basically conditioned or motivated by its cultural world.

At least something seems to remain undoubtedly my own, something that gives me the sense of my identity: I, myself, the one who pretends to be aware of all that. But here again, is it not one of those deeply rooted assumptions that we never put into question? Our "ego" actually turns out to be just as much of a gift, maybe a poisonous gift, but nevertheless, a grand gift from our culture.

We are not just simply born into human existence. As existentialists would say: human existence is initially ego-consciousness. And this only appears in a child born and reared in

a human society, usually after the age of two, when the neurological system has completely matured. Ego consciousness appears then, altogether, as affirmation of oneself as I–ego, as discrimination of oneself from what is not I–the other; and as a fact presented to oneself and recognized by the ego. Immediately dissociation arises in the ego: the ego in ego –consciousness being simultaneously ego as subject and ego as object. In spite of all its dramatic attempts to escape this conditioned subjectivity, the ego seems never able to be a subject without an object ... unless, with some help, it can go down to the very root of its fundamental contradiction.

Should I conclude that I am just a specific conjunction of outer influences, a sort of metabolic link within the cosmos? Something remains evidently irreducible to such a perspective. However deeply I realize that what I am is altogether "imported," conditioned, and divided, I still believe in a mysterious and compelling vocation: that of being myself. Like Isis desperately trying to gather the dispersed members of Osiris the ego is ever in quest of a unified, meaningful identity.

In fact with ego- consciousness and its provocative ambiguity there has been awakened in us a strange and immediate sense of responsibility. This brings me much nearer to what I can recognize as my own. Especially if I recall that to be responsible means properly to respond, to answer. All I can possibly do, as a matter of fact all I am doing, is responding, responding to my existence. What really defines and shows us a man is his response. If there is for me the slightest possible choice in the midst of operating laws, whether from hazard or necessity, is it not in the way I respond– that is, in the quality of my participation in all that is given to me through the immediate experience of my life?

Let us be clear that my genuine responsiveness is not to be found in any of the formal responses that my programmed computer

never fails to produce. It has to be sought beyond that. It is an intentional act of knowing, which has a singular capacity for freedom since it can exist beyond my "formal" conditioning. This primary, free response is my attention. My attention is my own and fundamental answer to my existence. It is both my response and what I can be responsible for. An opening as well as an engagement, it is my becoming present to what is, it is *hic et nunc* my participating in the actuality of being. Arising as a basic act of knowing through actual being, my attention is simultaneously awakening to myself and to the world. All the rest, I mean all the other responses which are formal, all my acting out, all my outward manifestations proceed, so to say, by themselves, depending in their quality on the quality of my attention.

The idea of quality of attention is not familiar to us, nor is the idea of different possible levels of attention. But this would need an elaboration we cannot make here. Let us just say that our attention is much more than we generally think. It is much more than a simple mental or cerebral mechanism. It concerns our whole being. If its potentialities are far from being fully actualized in our usual life, maybe it is precisely because it is not recognized as a multidimensional keyboard and as the unifying principle of our being.

Paradoxically this basic act of knowing, which is attention, is only actualized when we don't know—that is, when there is a question. Its level and, so to say, its degree of "totalization" are proportional to our questioning. You have surely noticed that when a question is vital—when it takes us in the guts, as you say—it suspends all unnecessary movements, emotional and physical as well as mental. It clears the way for real awareness and sensitivity, which are components of my total power of attention. It is only between my not knowing and my urge to know that I find myself present, mobilized, open, new—that is to say, attentive.

Attention in its active form is therefore inseparable from interrogation; it is essentially, in its purity, an act of questioning. This act is the privilege of our human existence. An animal contents itself with being. The responsibility of man is to question himself on the meaning of his being.

In our society, mainly concerned with production and efficiency, the drama is that our capacity for questioning, still so vivid in early childhood, is very quickly eradicated or pushed aside for the benefit of our capacity for answering. When a child has a real question, most of the time he is immediately given a stupid answer. In the best cases the educator goes to the dictionary to be sure his answer is accurate. But anyhow, unconsciously, if not proudly, he closes the question. From school to the end of our life it is always necessary to answer. We are compelled to learn how to answer. If we don't know how to answer, we are just no good. So little by little we become some kind of model machine able-to-answer-all-situations with all the necessary blindness as regards its own contradictions. That kind of answering, whose degree of sophistication may sometimes hide from us its conditioned character, is required by our life. But under its dominating necessity, is it possible to keep alive in ourselves our most authentic and precious capacity, which is questioning?

This is the whole problem confronting us, actually. But are we strong enough, free enough, concerned enough, to really question ourselves while answering? The challenge is just as difficult as facing a Zen koan. While playing our part, while being engaged without cheating in the situation that calls us, can we at the same time neither affirm nor deny, neither resist nor follow, assume that we neither know nor don't know, that we are able or unable? Can we be acutely present to what is, without judgment or indifference, without any solution or escape? It would mean being aware on all fronts, renouncing the known for the unknown, withstanding the

inevitable principle of repetition, staying still within our movement.

Total questioning in our living is the key to being, but whoever ventures unprepared into the experience will meet a wall of resistance in himself, if not simply fear that he is stupid, incapable, and so on. Only exceptionally motivated searchers will take the risk and leave room for questioning—and get beyond the phantasms of insecurity. Most of us, are so busy with successful answering and so identified with our own image that we need severe shocks such as death, suffering, illness, deep frustration, or "supergratification" to awaken to the question.

The question is here, waiting for us, following us everywhere, since we ourselves are that very question. I have started with it, asking, "What am I?" but this approach has kept me an outsider, a mere on-looker of myself. When born in the mind, the question calls forth an answer through the mind and keeps me divided under my compulsion for explanation and for power over my object world. Understanding needs more. It needs experiencing—that is, to be put to the test and to pass through. I have to engage myself, to respond totally in the act of knowing myself. Arising from being, the question finds an answer through being. Our question has thus shifted from a ratiocentric point of view to an ontocentric point of view and has become "Who am I?"

Behind the misleading screen of all our other questions it is the question of each one of us in our human existence. It is humanity's first and last question. It is today as it was centuries ago. Throughout human history, dim, bright, or enlightening lights have repeatedly reactivated that question. It is the axis around which moves in a spiral the eternal revolution of human culture.

Excerpted from "Man's Ever New and Eternal Challenge", in *On the Way to Self Knowledge*, edited by Jacob Needleman and Dennis Lewis (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp.54-60.

THE FIRST INITIATION

G. I. Gurdjieff

The following is a translation of words recorded by G. I. Gurdjieff's pupils during a meeting in Paris on December 16, 1941.

You will see that in life you receive exactly what you give. Your life is the mirror of what you are. It is in your image. You are passive, blind, demanding. You take all, you accept all, without feeling any obligation. Your attitude toward the world and toward life is the attitude of one who has the right to make demands and to take; who has no need to pay or earn. You believe that all things are your due, simply because it is you! All your blindness is there! None of this strikes your attention. And yet this is what in you keeps one world separate from another world.

You have no measure with which to measure yourselves. You live exclusively according to "I like" or "I don't like"; you have no appreciation except for yourself. You recognize nothing above you—theoretically, logically, perhaps, but actually no. That is why you are demanding and continue to believe that everything is cheap and that you have enough in your pocket to buy everything you like. You recognize nothing above you, either outside yourself or inside. That is why, I repeat, you have no measure and live passively according to your likes and dislikes.

Yes, your "appreciation of yourself" blinds you! It is the biggest obstacle to a new life. You must be able to get over this obstacle, this threshold, before going further. This test divides men into two

kinds: the "wheat" and the "chaff." No matter how intelligent, how gifted, how brilliant a man may be, if he does not change his appreciation of himself, there will be no hope for an inner development, for a work toward self-knowledge, for a true becoming. He will remain such as he is all his life. The first requirement, the first condition, the first test for one who wishes to work on himself is to change his appreciation of himself. He must not imagine, not simply believe or think, but see things in himself which he has never seen before, see them actually. His appreciation will never be able to change long as he sees nothing in himself. And in order to see, he must *learn* to see: this is the first initiation of man into self-knowledge.

First of all, he has to know what he must look at. When he knows, he must make efforts, keep his attention, look constantly with persistence. Only through maintaining his attention, and not forgetting to look, one day, perhaps, he will be able to see. If he sees one time he can see a second time, and if that continues he will no longer be able not to see. This is the state to be looked for, it is the aim of our observation; it is from there that the true wish will be born, the irresistible wish to become: from cold we shall become warm, vibrant; we shall be touched by our reality.

Today we have nothing but the illusion of what we are. We think too highly of ourselves. We do not respect ourselves. In order to respect myself, I have to recognize a part in myself which is above the other parts, and my attitude toward this part should bear witness to the respect that I have for it. In this way I shall respect myself. And my relations with others will be governed by the same respect.

You must understand that all the other measures—talent, education, culture, genius—are changing measures, measures of detail. The only exact measure, the only unchanging, objective real measure is the measure of inner vision. I see—I see myself—by this, you have

measured. With one higher real part, you have measured another lower part, also real. And this measure, defining by itself the role of each part, will lead you to respect for yourself.

But you will see that it is not easy. And it is not cheap. You must pay dearly. For bad payers, lazy people, parasites, no hope. You must pay, pay a lot, and pay immediately, pay in advance. Pay with yourself. By sincere, conscientious, disinterested efforts. The more you are prepared to pay without economizing, without cheating, without any falsification, the more you will receive. And from that time on you will become acquainted with your nature. And you will see all the tricks, all the dishonesties that your nature resorts to in order to avoid paying hard cash. Because you have to pay with your ready-made theories, with your rooted convictions, with your prejudices, your conventions, your "I like" and "I don't like." Without bargaining, honestly, without pretending. Trying "sincerely" to see as you offer your counterfeit money.

Try for a moment to accept the idea that you are not what you believe yourself to be, that you overestimate yourself, in fact that you lie to yourself. That you always lie to yourself, every moment, all day, all your life. That this lying rules you to such an extent that you cannot control it any more. You are the prey of lying. You lie, everywhere. Your relations with others—lies. The upbringing you give, the conventions—lies. Your teaching—lies. Your theories, your art—lies. Your social life, your family life—lies. And what you think of yourself—lies also.

But you never stop yourself in what you are doing or in what you are saying, because you believe in yourself. You must stop inwardly and observe. Observe without preconceptions, accepting for a time this idea of lying. And if you observe in this way, paying with yourself, without self-pity, giving up all your supposed riches for a moment of reality, perhaps you will suddenly see something you have never before seen in yourself until this day. You will see

that you are different from what you think you are. You will see that you are two. One who is not, but takes the place and plays the role of the other. And one who is, yet so weak, so insubstantial, that he no sooner appears than he immediately disappears. He cannot endure lies. The least lie makes him faint away. He does not struggle, he does not resist, he is defeated in advance. Learn to look until you have seen the difference between your two natures, until you have seen the lies, the deception in yourself. When you have seen your two natures, that day, in yourself, the truth will be born.

Hafiz says:

" One regret, dear world,
That I am determined not to have
When I am lying on my deathbed
Is that
I did not kiss you enough."

Rumi excerpts:

**"Sit quietly, and listen for a voice that will say,
"Be more silent"
Die and be quiet.
Quietness is the surest sign that you've died
Your old life was a frantic running from silence.
Move outside the tangle of fear thinking
Live in silence."**

Lo, I am with you always means
when you look for God,
God is in the look of your eyes,
in the thought of looking,

nearer to you than your self,
or the things that have happened to you.
There's no need to go outside.
Be melting snow.
Wash yourself of yourself.

To change,

a person must face the dragon of his appetites
with another dragon, the life-energy of the soul.
When that's not strong, the world seems full of people
who have your fears and wantings.
As one thinks the room is spinning
when he's whirling around.
When your love contracts in anger,
the atmosphere itself feels threatening
But when you're expansive, no matter what the weather,
you're in an open, windy field with friends.

Work. Keep digging your well.

Don't think about getting off from work.
Water is there somewhere.
Submit to a daily practice.
Your loyalty to that
is a ring on the door.
Keep knocking, and the joy inside
will eventually open a window
and look out to see who is there.

I have put duality away

and see the two worlds as one.

One I seek, One I know
One I see, One I call...
He is outward, he is inward.
Out beyond duality,
we have a home, and it is Glory...
This is the time of union,
the time of eternal beauty.
Abandon your stagnant pool
for the running waters of life...
from the world of separation to the world of union.

There is the Hasidic tale of the great Rabbi who was coming to visit a small town in Russia. It was a very great event for the Jews in the town and each thought long and hard about what questions they would ask the wise man. When he finally arrived, all were gathered in the largest available room and each was deeply concerned with the questions they had for him. The Rabbi came into the room and felt the great tension in it. For a time he said nothing and then began to hum softly a Hasidic tune. Presently all there were humming with him. He then began to sing the song and soon all were singing with him. Then he began to dance and soon all present were caught up in the dance with him. After a time all were deeply involved in the dance, all fully committed to it, all just dancing and nothing else. In this way, each one became whole with himself, each healed the splits within himself which kept him from understanding. After the dance went on for a time the Rabbi gradually slowed it to a stop, looked at the group, and said, "I trust that I have answered all your questions."

"Take the understanding of the East and the knowledge of the West—and then seek," said G. I. Gurdjieff. And bring us back a myth that contains the whole horizontal expanse of outer science, the whole vertical height and depth of the possible qualities of man's inner world. And do not cram it down our throats, but let each one eat in his own time, digest at his own organic tempo, then rise and do, on his own volition, on the basis of his own understanding, the work that only he, as "a particle of a part of the great whole," with his particular capacities, in his particular circumstances, was born to do.

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