

Seeing: The Endless Source of Inner Freedom

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When I was invited to come here, I at first declined, because once before when I had tried lecturing in English, I really couldn't find my way with the language. But the invitation was so warm and so appealing that I finally accepted. And I must say that, now that I'm here, not only have I no regrets, but I'm very grateful to be part of what is going on here. And so I'll try to contribute as much as I can. It reminds me of something—sometimes you find very beautiful things in Freud—I remember he was bitter about not being able to arrive at a consistent formulation of his theory, and he quoted from a Moslem poet, saying, "We would like to have wings in order to fly toward God; but it is not forbidden to go in that direction, even limping." So will it be in my case.

The activities of everyone here, in this microcosm, seem to reflect what is going on all over the world. I was sitting this morning and picturing to myself the life on this planet: people going here and there, responding to all of life's necessities, being part of an immense, uninterrupted movement of exchange, yet at the same time as though driven by what might be called the hypnosis of life—including modes of thought, beliefs, and so on—which everyone has been immersed in since childhood. And I also recalled that there are places in the world having something like large antennas directed upward, through which another action seems to take place—allowing meaning and mindfulness to enter one's life.

But to really allow for this action, one has to stop, to make room for the sense of wonder and the appearance of a real search. Scientists today sometimes describe where we are as being in front of a double mystery: the infinitely large and the infinitely small. In between these, there is man, a third mystery, with a brain of infinite complexity. This image, perhaps, lacks the element of invitation to direct experience, and I would prefer to say that we are between two mysteries—the outer world and the inner world—and in order to be open to both of these worlds, man has to know himself, to know himself totally.

To stop, that is to say, to really question, to reach a contemplative mind, seems important for both science and religion. Science acknowledges certain kinds of fundamental interactions—as of now four fundamental forces have been identified—and the ultimate aim of science is to arrive at a unified theory, which would permit us to see all phenomena in the universe within one integrated perspective. Evidently religion—in the larger and not the restricted sense—points in the same direction, that is, toward oneness or unity, toward seeing oneness in the midst of diversity. So perhaps we could follow this line, trying to understand this search for a broader or more unified worldview, and starting from the periphery move symbolically toward the center.

We are inheritors of an ancient knowledge that has been handed down to us throughout the ages. Many words that we use automatically are in fact a living testimony of this knowledge. As we have forgotten the real meaning of such common words as “Catholic” or “university,” which could turn us toward the one, toward the universal, toward the unique, we have to invent new words such as “holistic” (derived from the Greek *holos* which also expresses the whole or the totality) to remind us of the danger involved in the fragmentation and scattering of knowledge. More and more throughout the world, the need is felt for the two worlds of science and religion to come together, realizing however that each approaches life from a different point of view. One, based on an extraordinary proliferation of knowledge linked solely with the mind’s—or brain’s—activity, seems to be leading us into increasing complexity; leading us outward, especially outward from ourselves. The other world and its knowledge seems to be related to the “being,” to something that brings you in and discloses the mystery inside. This is exactly what Dr. Roger Walsh expressed in his article, “The Paradigm Clash,” showing that there are two kinds of knowledge, and that there is an absence of communication, of understanding, between these two realms. There is a “state-dependent knowledge,” which shows us things we cannot see in an ordinary state of consciousness; it requires an inner experience of a definite quality. The other knowledge doesn’t need a special state; it is always at our disposal no matter how we are; it is there in our memory, in books, in classrooms and even in computers.

It is probably impossible for someone who hasn’t actually explored the possibilities inherent in “inner knowledge” to accept this kind of knowledge and not to suspect it or reject it as being magical, irrational, primitive, emotional, or whatever.

I believe that the purpose of a conference such as this is essentially to try to bring these two kinds of knowledge together. But perhaps the most difficult thing of all is to bring them together in ourselves. Only in recent decades has science recognized the importance of the subject, the searcher, the observer, and stressed the need to understand better the way the observer himself subtly influences the objects of his experiments. It becomes important therefore to know the searcher, the subject, as well as the object of study—important to go toward the unknown both outside and inside, both the world and the field of the inner being. And what is so striking is that this inner search itself also requires extreme rigor and discipline. It, too, is a science; a science one could call the “science of being.” Psychotherapy today, while continuing to develop its specific corpus of medical knowledge and practical methodology, also seeks to foster inner inquiry and individual analysis, which requires at least as much a special education. To show how difficult it is to enter into this other kind of experience, let me tell you of a man in France who was greatly revered for his work and writings, even to the point of being elected to the Académie Française. Everyone marveled at his insight and the brilliance of his psychological portraits. Several films have been inspired by his books. One day he brought in his son for a consultation. It was clear he didn’t understand a single thing about his son’s situation. He could only describe—charmingly, to be sure—the most superficial details. He had observed everything from outside, unable to live and experience another’s life from within himself. This example showed me how difficult it is to go into oneself. Such a practice needs a guide; it needs special conditions, help of some kind.

The fundamental contribution of psychotherapy, whatever its form, has been *the scientific approach to entering into oneself*. One can spend a lifetime looking at oneself from the outside,

that is, solely from the mind—thinking about oneself, rationalizing in all its many forms— but that is not really an experience. The experience of self-awareness requires that one “come inside.” *To come inside* can be seen as the first threshold of self-initiation. It means a shift, a drastic change of orientation, of inner listening, until suddenly the event, simple and obvious, is revealed: what takes place in this body begins to be perceived from inside. So simple, but we are so far from it in our usual state!

We can find in many spiritual traditions symbolic accounts of this progression toward inner knowing. The Hindu temple, for example, is built as an image of both the universe and man, and entering the temple points us toward entering into one’s body, into oneself. There are innumerable stages along the way of “being in oneself.” But eventually you arrive at the altar, where the lingam is; it represents Atman, the real Self, which pervades every individual and all of nature. You can take the lingam superficially, as sexual symbolism, but I think its meaning is much greater and conveys a sense of going inside, into the Mother, into the dark night, so that from there a new birth can take place. As you may know, the orientation of the Hindu temple is opposite to ours—it is turned toward the West; and the sun, like the lingam, disappears into the darkness, and later is born from this mother of night. The same symbolism and mystery appears in Christianity; one of the most esoteric prayers, the Ave Maria, tells of the eternal Maria, the Black Virgin, giving birth to the child of light.

So let us go back to the beginning, the first step of entering one’s body—with that experience, the question arises, “Who sees that?” One begins to sense the body, not from outside as is usually the case— as for instance in introspection—but, instead, one is aware of being inside. This is where the psychotherapeutic condition takes us. One is led inside, no longer from the outside, yet still from the periphery of oneself. One begins to see things that one never wanted to see—all kinds of forces, and the resistance and fear that are bound to all of this. We are reminded here of Dante’s first initiation, the descent into Hell. But there are conditions, which enable and support this experience—Beatrice, or the psychoanalytic protocol, for example. One lies relaxed, everything is allowed to come in, and immediately one is confronted with all kinds of contradictory movements. At first you don’t know what to do; you are enclosed in silence, trying to escape. Our usual way out, of course, is finding solutions to our myriads of problems, acting out in one way or another, above all finding a way for the ego to be comfortable, without anxiety, without pressure, without problems it cannot solve. But the encounter we are speaking of really appears in the seeing of oneself. And *the healing potential issues from this very seeing*, and not from anything else we might attempt to do. Little by little we begin to realize that it is seeing that will change us, gradually, as we go deeper inside. Then it is not only that we are seen from another location, but also that another quality appears and gives us a taste of reality.

One can affirm that as soon as one practices entering this body, and having contact with all these mysterious forces, which are usually so completely separated and unrelated, they come closer together. And one begins also to see all the forces and influences, which were in fact unknown—such as the instinctual drives, and everything that has been incorporated through education and social conditioning. An attitude of seeing begins to prevail, instead of the ego’s usual attempts to find a compromise between all these forces acting upon it. But still, in this first stage, what one sees is felt as more important than the seeing itself. Observation at this level inevitably entails a reaction. Immediately one wishes to change, to cover over what is seen, to find a solution to the

unveiled problems. These “problem-solving” compulsions are strongly linked to very old habits in oneself.

Further on, a certain confidence appears through letting go— a suppleness, a distance, a kind of autonomy. One is no longer completely taken by the forces interacting in oneself. We are speaking of a long, patient work—staying present to oneself, and feeling the need to come back when lost in some seemingly innocuous association. In the Gurdjieff teaching this is sometimes called “self-observation”: finding a sensitive place where one can receive impressions, and letting things be as they are. And this, needless to say, is extremely difficult, because, as psychoanalysis has shown, there are innumerable mechanisms, which interfere and prevent us from openly receiving these impressions. We are in a jungle of defenses, and it is very difficult to be there, right in the middle of what *is*. But there is something new: one sees that, up until now, one was only thinking about what is. Now, one is receiving what is. And this *is*, in fact, unknown: it has never been approached openly, has never circulated openly. And so one’s confidence is greater; seeing is no longer a compromise in the law court of the superego, but is itself the instrument of liberation, and progressively the center of gravity of seeing changes. One doesn’t try any longer to see in the old way; one *lets* the seeing be there.

There is an interesting principle in psychoanalysis that was formulated by Anna Freud. The terminology here is not the main thing; what matters is that she speaks of the need to be able to stand in a place equidistant from the id (the instinctual forces), the ego, and the superego. Something comparable exists in the Gurdjieff teaching: once these functional aspects of the being—these qualitatively different energies—have been recognized, one is called to stand in the place where one can be simultaneously open to the process taking place in the mind, the body, and the emotions.

Yesterday we heard a presentation in which it was said that a certain quality of feeling can be a means of real knowledge and understanding. Indeed, feeling is also a specific energy, which can be perceived. There are other energies, or drives—mainly instinctual and sexual energies—which are also vehicles of knowledge but have not yet been generally recognized as such. As one begins to realize that the fundamental aim is to become aware of the whole of oneself, *then the sacred quality of “seeing” becomes as important as what is seen, and a balance begins to appear.*

Coming back to psychoanalytic practice, we see that, in line with Anna Freud’s ideas, in order to really understand the patient we have to stand between, or equidistant from, all of these parts which are operating. And, at the same time, we have to let things be, to show no preference for this or that aspect, but instead, simply to put the accent on becoming conscious of what is seen taking place in oneself.

Such an approach is not directed toward resolving problems or difficulties, because that would just be trying to escape. There is a kind of screen surrounding each of us, separating us from reality—a way of unconsciously refusing to see more fully, because we are absorbed by our problems. But progressively we can come to a point where the seeing embraces the whole being, where a “*consciousness-of-the-consciousness*” takes place. Our interest turns to something mysterious hidden behind that in us, which always “knows”—an observing seer behind the seer,

so to say. This is really a new stage, where one has begun to value this consciousness—this seeing that sees behind—even more than having to deal with what is seen. There is a recognition of a new dimension. And, although what is seen is not neglected, it becomes secondary, because one begins to appreciate that authentic human power resides in this act of inner seeing.

One then reaches another, extraordinary, stage in the life of a human being: a deeper work ... taking enormous involvement, over years. This stage engages all of one's life, leading toward joining and merging with this mysterious seer. We can give many names to that, or relate it to many traditions, but what actually takes place is something quite specific. One enters into a battle, a decisive confrontation. We all remember the innumerable fairy-tales where some fearsome beast is guarding a precious treasure and the hero has to confront this situation. It is in fact our "heart" which is locked up, and this hero, or prince, needs a great wish and determination to face that which closes the heart to the secret and most unreachable part of oneself. And actually, I believe that the great spiritual traditions and religions speak of the same thing—of the deep loneliness of man in front of this challenge—when, for instance, Christ meets the devil, or the Buddha meets Mara, or Indra faces the dragon, Vritra, in combat. In each case there is no one there to help; each hero finds himself entirely alone.

The extraordinary mystery surrounding all of this is how such a battle can take place in deep, perfect sleep. We are not speaking of ordinary, physiological sleep here. I remember the story of Mara entering Buddha's chambers and being chastised: "Who are you to come in here in your ordinary state; can't you see that the Awakened One is asleep?" So that, among all the stages of being awake and asleep—including some dreams which must be taken in an entirely different way than the ordinary—lies the ultimate state; and it is in this tranquility, the heart of sleep, that the great battle must be met—entirely alone.

For instance, Indra has to bring back all the "pranas"—in effect, all of the breaths or subtle forces, which have gone out into the world of "creation" and been lost. Indra needs to return them and drink them all in. This tranquility is reached when all of these energies and forces, which have been expended, are brought back and concentrated. So within this deep sleep, this special state, the dragon is vanquished, and the heart opens, and the pure waters of felicity begin pouring through the body. Of course, these moments relate to the principle of sacrifice—in that, by imbibing the soma, and sinking these forces within, one makes the sacrifice, and that allows the inner Self to appear. It is the blind forces of the ego which are sacrificed and transformed in this battle. And then a new feeling appears, like a new substance, which irrigates the body and makes it more permeable to finer energies— it creates a sensitivity well beyond that of our usual perceptions.

I have been struck by the analogy between these processes and what is said about superconductors. You know that when an electric current passes through an ordinary conductor, such as a wire or cable, the electrons meet a resistance due to frictional forces, heat appears, and a great deal of the energy is dissipated. The electrons collide with the metal atoms and randomly bounce around, much like the complete disorder of a noisy schoolroom letting out. But the materials of the superconductors permit the electricity to pass with loss of practically no energy—and, in effect, the electrons file along quietly two by two, as in a wedding ceremony. It is the same with the body. The body can be transformed into a conductor of forces which

otherwise would not pass or penetrate, or would be expended here and there— reacting because there is not an open space for them, nor the quality which would permit them to pass.

We are evoking here higher states of consciousness, thanks to which the whole being is opened, finer influences are allowed to pass, and a transformation of the body begins with the successive awakening of different centers, or chakras. You know, it is not enough to seek Nirvana, or liberation—to remain isolated from all the allures and difficulties of the world. There is a kind of “nirvana” which entails a complete cutting off from the world, where one ascends to the ultimate stage and then stays there, but it is not real nirvana. The most difficult stage of all then is to descend—that is, descend into the world and participate. And to understand that, one has to understand it in the body. The mind can be eliminated in a way, the feeling also, but the last and most difficult step is the descent and incarnation in the body, so that transformation can take place completely. And this leads then to a state of complete participation in the meaningfulness of life.

Finding a way to discuss these experiences is extremely difficult; I feel as if I have been barely limping along. I don't know if you feel how challenging it really is to enter into this process. But for me it gives meaning to both therapy and life.

DISCUSSION FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION

Q: Do you employ specific techniques with your patients to help them get in touch with that process you were discussing?

M de S: There are many techniques, but I think they are peripheral, and the main “technique” is oneself: to be oneself. Only then can something be truthfully exchanged. Of course, this requires a special training for the therapist. Otherwise you will impose, or propose something, which you, yourself, are not experiencing, and then one never knows where the experience will lead. So I think the first requirement is to be oneself, so as to listen with “the third ear” and be attuned to what is felt as the patient’s essential need. For instance, if the patient’s need is to come to himself, you, the therapist, have actually to come to yourself, otherwise you are just a sort of rough sorcerer’s apprentice—using tools without knowing how or for what purpose. And this is so extremely demanding. I believe we have all experienced going into ourselves, but if I were to ask you right now whether you are really aware of yourself, and if you answered honestly, you would be obliged to acknowledge that you are not. And the difficulty with this “state dependent knowledge” is that, when people who have actually experienced something of this nature begin to gather—and I can say that this is true as well of an assembly of psychoanalysts or therapists, people who have really lived something of an authentic and special experience in their “laboratories,” something of an illumination which has been clearly received and felt in themselves—when they proceed to speak about these experiences and are no longer in the same state, they are unable to really communicate and manifest what they comprehend at that level of experience. And this can be really frustrating and difficult to accept, even for therapists, and therefore fosters the arising of defense mechanisms.

A similar problem occurs with the disciplines concerned with what we could call “the development of consciousness”—here again, we have to use words, knowing how inadequate and subjectively charged each one may be. The tragedy is that, in either case, when we speak of such things and deal with such concepts, we believe we understand them. As Laing said, “When we don’t know that we don’t know, we think we know.” And the French psychoanalyst, Lacan, reminds us, realistically, “Knowing is always in some way thinking one knows.” So perhaps this may help us to accept that someone else also does not really understand. What is evidently frustrating is the fact that you may come into a state in which you understand what is taking place, and then the next moment you no longer understand, but merely pretend to. It’s a troubling situation. Moreover, we have to accept that someone who hasn’t consciously experienced such a situation cannot possibly understand it. He can never understand it until he, himself, has gone through it. He can imagine such an experience, and may have pictures, explanations, words relating to it, but he will not really understand.

So there are certainly many supportive techniques—from relaxation, psycho-sensory exercises, to approaches to what Taoism calls no-action—but I would say that, whatever the means, self-knowledge is the most fundamental experience. You can explain to somebody what illness he has, but you cannot explain to him what he is. This must be his own experience, don’t you agree? So you may create conditions in which your patient can really enter into that experience, and this can be a help. But we must not trust too much in our protocols, methods, or techniques in

themselves. They are useful things, but that doesn't mean that solely by employing such "means," you will reach the hoped-for result.

Q: In religion there are various rituals to move one into that sacred space, and in psychotherapeutic practice there may be more ritualistic kinds of activities that help make this transition. But it is so difficult, with the constraints of time and everything. Has anybody developed any type of moving-into-sacred-space methods?

M de S: Here again, it seems to me one has to remember there are stages. Primarily, in the progressive process of seeing, one should first learn certain difficult things: not to interfere, not to prefer one aspect or another, to be "choiceless," so to speak. The accent should always be on the seeing, which is behind the experience. You are not indifferent at all, but you need to know that the seeing is the most important element in bringing order; everything takes its place from that. If one really sees and accepts, an order appears from that. In such states, real thought, and not the conditioned mind, remains the primary force. This particular seeing is a vision that suddenly brings the reality of what is there to life. One yearns for this reality, or truth, although I am aware that we should not use the word "truth" any more, because it's not at all in fashion; nevertheless the two words connote the same thing. And when this vision is available, one can say that the "intelligence of the heart" is also present, and therefore the whole of oneself naturally obeys this movement. In that moment, you are unified, and you are free. If you practice in this way there will be moments when you are really "tuned" and united, and free from everything. For instance, you are no longer dependent on this or that desire. But very quickly, once this state of seeing is over, you are again led by your desire as strongly as everyone else. So you need to explore the circumstances which support the appearance of this order, of this intelligence, so that it will begin to appear more often, more naturally. Such an endeavor gives a real taste of the "sacred." Of course, when one enters a traditional teaching or specific tradition, there may be rituals, but one seldom understands fully where they come from, what their real meaning is. This is often lost and the forms are then practiced automatically. Certainly it can be very helpful to try to penetrate the meaning of these rituals. But it is always the "coming to yourself" which allows the subtle connections to form again, and thus permits a more subtle discrimination. Without this one remains confined to secondhand knowledge.

Q: Do you see meditation as having any role in entering this "sea of tranquility"?

M de S: Well, as I understand meditation, it is to reach, or, better, to join this inner reality. When you are in touch with it, then meaning suddenly appears—and it is the only thing to which you really and naturally submit, and therefore find relief and inner quietness. Otherwise, submission is not freedom; it is imposed for something, from somewhere: from your mind or your ideas, or your emotional preferences. But discovering real submission is like submission to the sun. Nearly everyone has experienced the feeling of being suddenly opened when the sun has acted upon him; isn't that so? So there appears to be an analogy here, where something like an inner sun suddenly unlocks everything that has been until then closed off by—or busy with—all our typical impositions; all the "I must's," "I should's," and so on. We all have these parts, which have been locked away, not even wishing to be known.

In the authentic healing process, everything offers itself to this seeing, and everything is then shown in its real nature. Yet there are steps of self-knowledge. For instance, although we may begin to experience more deeply the functions of thought and feeling, if we don't have a complete participation and knowledge of the whole of ourselves, we don't know what they really are for or what they mean. We are used to seeing the effects of these inner activities and movements, but we don't understand their real place—just as we may not know the function of a planet in the solar system. It is a conscious awareness of not knowing which suddenly opens as well a completely new way of breathing. The body begins to breathe as a whole and develops an openness to the surrounding world and all its invisible influences. Usually our unconscious reactions to these influences prevent them from going where they otherwise could go, but in this state of new awareness you begin to sense the direction toward allowing things to enter and act upon you. This, in fact, is what contemplation is, this birth of a new, more sensitive man who can receive and participate. One becomes more normal. But why do you ask this question?

Same questioner: The reason is that I'm trying to understand if the first steps in this direction are, from a psychiatrist's viewpoint, similar to those taken by a spiritual leader. Is meditation also useful in psychiatry in seeking the path to the inner self? It would be helpful to get some kind of technique or method, or whatever.

M de S: Yes, but, as far as I'm concerned, I think the first thing which is necessary is the ability to see one's situation and understand that it is our own responsibility to look within, toward the sources of our Self. Then there can be an engagement of a new kind—a lifetime engagement—which can be shared. One is no longer a "patient" or a "therapist." "Engagement" would then mean to really share all aspects of life, and even for therapist and patient to feel together on the same path. But a path also involves a form, and there is no assurance that the particular path one follows will suit someone else. So, for me, this is already another stage, where personal engagement should be free and respected. Some therapists might immediately propose making use of certain traditional methods. Personally, I would be very cautious; I would wait until I see something more free appearing in the person. This doesn't mean that an authentic breakthrough cannot appear in life. When people have a brush with death, for example, they may experience a completely different understanding of what they have tasted. So, fortunately, life can also bring this sort of fundamental experience.

Q: Could you describe what you would do if a patient came to you requesting help for depression, or anxiety, or whatever?

M de S: Like any other psychiatrist, I would listen, observe, and act within the limits of my make-up. But let us be less serious. Maybe I would send him to another psychiatrist. I'm sure you, as a psychiatrist, cannot take everybody. It is not a matter here of defining in words the nature of this relation, but you sense—perhaps subjectively, in a way—the potential strength, openness and defensive mechanisms of this person, and you sense whether you will be inclined and able to relate in a meaningful and deep way that will bring definite help. You may also feel that someone else would do better in such a case. It is part of our work to be objective, about ourselves as well, and to make the right choice. So, if I feel I have something to offer which can be applicable and helpful to him, we can start this difficult enterprise together. Here there is nothing I want to say about techniques.

Q: Sitting here and listening to some of these questions, it seems to me that the very nature of who you are is really providing the answers to those questions on another level. I sense you to be more present and tuned in at some subtler level—simply sitting with a stillness, then opening. It seems to me you have provided the answers by how you’ve presented yourself today, and I was touched by that.

M de S: Well, thank you. But you know I am interested in the Gurdjieff Work, and Gurdjieff would say in such cases, “Ohhh, you are very, very good, very good, indeed. But very good is not enough.” So I would say that perhaps a possibility is shown, but it is not really enough.

Same questioner: It is for me.

M de S: Well, all right; I won’t spoil your experience. (laughter)

Q: How do you fit all of this into the time constraints of one hour, when so much that is unexpected and beyond one’s control can occur? What can possibly be accomplished in this short period of time?

M de S: Well, the real answer is probably that there is no achievement; all that is just an illusion. The important thing is presence—presence to oneself and presence to life... and the wish to start again, anew, every time. So one develops a “here and now” attitude which enables one dynamically to return and start again. This inner search provides a large spectrum of vivid impressions whose “substance” can be tasted; of course, to enter more deeply into that process, there must be some support offered by the work of other people who are searching in the same way.

I am reminded of a patient I cared for, who, after attending seminary, was in a completely schizophrenic state. He was sent to me through a mutual friend. And it was all the more difficult because he was taking all kinds of drugs. In this case, to be effective, I felt I had to commit myself to him; I must confess that I wouldn’t do that with all my patients, because I would have neither the time nor the force, but I really took him into my life. I would send him down into the cellar and give him strenuous work to do, and he saw he was able to do it, because he wished to do it for me. This was a very specific situation of transference. One day he took advantage of this situation and began to live in the cellar. I became very concerned that the neighbors would be alarmed and would be fearful for their safety and possessions. One morning, after sleeping there, he came upstairs to me, looking particularly frenzied. I was really perplexed and emotionally tense, and didn’t know what to do. I just looked at him for a long time. After a long period of inner confrontation, I just became calm. I looked at him as though he were just like anyone else; I no longer had any of my associations about him, and I didn’t say anything. He stopped taking drugs after this event and he never went back into the cellar. It was really extraordinary. I think that he felt in that moment that he was deeply accepted. There are so many ways of genuinely participating and not indulging in all our subjective drives. Of course, in order to go deeper in such an approach to mutual transparency, a long time is necessary. As to working by the clock,

though I do spend more or less time than the ritual hour or three quarters of an hour, one has to acknowledge that there is a natural limit—when the cup is full.

Q: I was very touched by your image of the dragon, and of the necessity of the guide in order to take the next step. I understand that one needs a guide, but that there is also a moment when we have to let go of that guide to move to the next step. Can you talk about that part of the process; it seems to involve some sort of intentional suffering?

M de S: Yes, it is extremely crucial to come to such a high level of consciousness as this. But you know, in a very short moment one can be awakened and live all of it—although it would not yet have become an Integral part of oneself. Nor is it understood; nevertheless, it brings us great hope by showing us the “markings” of what is possible for us.

It is true that there are qualities of suffering. On one hand, I am not able to respond to the demanding calls of life—for example, as a therapist, I might right now be unable, innerly, through some sudden appearance of resistance, to give myself completely to the situation. And on the other hand, there is a less subjective suffering which doesn't have to do with my serving, with my not being able, but with the very fact that the situation is not served. The emphasis is then on the objective lack, and not on the narcissistic impression of my lack. I think these two sufferings are very different, but often mixed. But when they are confronted and seen, then the lower one, the narcissistic one, enters the stream where suffering begins to be the support for a new movement in you. You are no longer fixated on your problems, but begin to be attracted toward a different direction and feel freed from certain usually irresistible ego-dynamics. There is probably a deep suffering behind all the sufferings, and I think the root of that is “not being oneself.” I believe that even the most deviated psychotic suffers from being unable to be himself, and so necessarily he invents himself, lies, or even destroys himself. Of course, to be oneself needs a sacrifice. In all the traditions, all forms of psychology, there has to be a sacrifice. You have to pay in some way to let the gate of freedom be opened.

Q: I am interested in how seeing relates to the body and feeling. I have studied with Moshe Feldenkrais who used movements to actually feel the body, and he spoke of a similar, though perhaps more subtle, approach taken by Gurdjieff. Could you say something about this?

M de S: Yes, it is a basic aspect in the whole of the teaching of Gurdjieff. One can say there is usually a kind of immobility, or heaviness, in our movements, when the body moves automatically. There are all kinds of forces acting to produce a specific movement, and it becomes an investigation to discover in yourself the center of gravity of a central attention which should be free from all the movements, and at the same time helped by them. Little by little, one begins to welcome the challenge of being able to let a movement be accomplished rightly—which means in a certain emotional state. In many forms of movement you have to deal with your inabilities, and you often react to and reject this experience. An extraordinarily intense moment comes when you feel this while in movement; such an experience is far more valuable and clear—to see the instability of your attention while in movement. If you are lying on the couch, a long, long experience is needed to see that your attention has drifted here and there without your knowing. You see it at one end, finding yourself trapped or blocked in some way or

another. But in movement one sees from the beginning how the attention tends to go here and there, because the whole being has to be involved. So I think that a privileged way of going deeper into oneself is to try this in movement, and from there to search for a central, inner space. All traditions, even Christianity, have had dances and definite studies of movement.

I think this is fundamental. After all, psychotherapy prepares us for life, and life is movement. These special studies are for learning how to be present to life, but they offer conditions that are less accidental than life. One begins to acknowledge certain movements of energy in oneself, which brings feeling into the experience. In India and in traditional dances elsewhere it is taught that placing your hand in a special gesture, or mudra, brings about a completely different level of sensitivity. Several of you were asking about techniques; this is certainly one means of liberation from obsessive-compulsive feelings. When working innerly with the support of movements, the experience doesn't pass through—it escapes—the usual filter of thought. Instead, you are immediately and directly helped by being confronted with your actual situation, your bodily sensitivity. One can be stymied by thinking about all kinds of difficulties. But if someone is drowning, or if your house is on fire, you move directly and find yourself centered much better than when you are thinking, “What am I to do. . .

Do you know something about the movements in the Gurdjieff Work?

Same questioner: This was my first introduction.

M de 5: All right. Many people here are interested in finding a new balance, a new center of gravity while they are in action. One may discover that it is intimately related to a new centering of one's attention and that this can be studied through the science of movement. It is certainly a powerfully awakening experience and a vital way to approach self-consciousness.