

I(nner) work

R Hodges Sept 2021

“The space within the heart is as great as the vast universe.”—Chandogya Upanishad

“You cannot find *yourself* among other people. You merely find *them*...be alone... [others] will come...Swear at them...the more vulgar your language the more enduring will be its effect. When you have found the space within the heart...nobody can take it away from you.” –*The Space Within the Heart*, the spiritual autobiography of Aubrey Menen (pp. 162-163)

“I (i.e. *Al-lah*, The One Alone) cannot be contained within the entire universe, but I fit easily within the heart of my faithful servant.”—traditional Hadith (authenticated saying of the Prophet)

What is work? Let me say it quickly before anyone can object: Work is from the heart. Work comes from desire: ardent, persistent, filling the space within the heart with a warmth that radiates into the whole body, and even beyond.

The last words of the film *Meetings with Remarkable men* are these, spoken at the Sarmoung monastery by Prince Lubovedsky to the young Gurdjieff:

Listen.

You have now found the conditions in which the desire of your heart can become the reality of your being. Stay here until you acquire a force in you that nothing can destroy.

Then you will need to go back into life and there you will measure yourself constantly with forces which will show you your place.

That is what work is—an indefatigable exercise of desire of the heart.

What our word “sensation” means is a sensation that radiates from the heart and irrigates the body, nurturing the growth within it of the astral body.

A preparation is needed. Earlier in the film, an old dervish appears in the Chaikhana and tells Prince Lubovedsky:

You have worked and suffered all these years, but you never knew how to work, how to let the wish of your mind become the desire of your heart.

Note that this says that the preparatory work is to *let*, not to *make*.

Work is a trinity:

Head—>heart—>body

Wish—>desire—>reality

Thought—>feeling—>sensation

With enough warming of sensation, from desire, fermentation takes place. A self arises within the body. When this extends beyond the body (even if only a little) it is the eclosion of the Astral body, a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis, which is the hard shell secreted to sleep in by us slug-like three-brained beings. Remember that *psyche* which now means “mind” and used to mean “soul” originally, in Greek, meant “butterfly.”

But these are just words, symbols. Only experience counts. Otherwise one is trapped in a cage, a Yezidi hypnotic circle of words and thoughts that loop around and swallow their own tale. Inside, we mostly live this way, and call it “work”—what blasphemy! A shock from outside is needed to cut a gap in the circle, to deconstruct thought at a certain point in its ballistic arc. A word can be such a shock. But people often have “objective consciousness”—they object to everything new they hear. Or worse, they fall into believing what they hear. It is necessary to ponder, to examine a new word from a certain distance, to receive the shock of it.

It should be understood that the work of *logos* (Greek: “spoken words”) as well as of *léxeis* (Greek: “written words”) is to *say* such words—not to *speak* them, which as Gurdjieff points out (*Meetings with Remarkable Men* p. 13) is a very different “experienced action” than to *say*. “I *say*” is a conscious act, meant to arouse thought. Every time you *say* a word, it must say “I am.” And the work of listening and of reading is to hear and receive words—“I *think*”. This must be our work in all exchanges of words in the name of Work.

When one has objections to words this is one’s own business alone and should not be expressed reactively, but serve as a reminder to stop, and ponder deeper. Then, if a response is called for, do as an actor practices to do: say “yes, and...”