May 7, 2020 – Multiplicity
Rodney Edmonson

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Opening invocation

In the name of the Conscious Circle of Humanity: Mr. Gurdjieff, Mr. Ouspensky, Dr. Nicoll, Beryl Pogson, J.G. Bennett, Rodney Collins, Boris Mouravieff, Madame Jeanne de Salzman, David Hawkins , Sister Bernadette Roberts, Father Thomas Keating, and in the name of the Blessed Mother Mary and the Lord Jesus Christ, I pray: May this work grow, dwell and flourish inside of me now and forever. I wish to Work.

1. I don't belong here, I am not a good speaker.
2. I'll be publicly humiliated.
3. I'll be criticized.
4. What you ought to do …
5. It would be better if …
6. You don't know me!
7. Something bad can happen at any moment.
8. Oh no, you didn't!
9. There had to have been something I could have done and she would be alive today.
10. This cancer could come back; I don't think I could go through that again.
11. People are wondering, "What's up with his face?"
12. I'm getting fat … and old.
13. I'm a hero!
14. I'm a zero!
15. Just one more cookie …
16. I don't wanna.
17. I can Work.
18. Look! A squirrel!

These I's are not my friends, and they are legion. Tonight, we explore the concept of multiplicity. The source material that I will be drawing from is in Vol. 2 of the *Commentaries* beginning on p. 594 entitled, "The Doctrine of I's."

In another *Commentary,* Dr. Nicoll asks the question: "Did you know there are I's that wish to drag you down?" This struck me really profoundly. Why those dirty SOBs! These I's are continually doing violence to me and draining me of my force.

A large number of these I's are a result of events that happened during early childhood, in our innocence. Wounds were inflicted upon us by "sleeping" people unconscious of the lasting effect they would have on our lives. So in the words of David Byrne, "How did I get here?"

Up until about the age of 40 I kept having a recurring image that remained mostly subconscious. This was accompanied by a wrong feeling of I, something that Tim called a "cramp" that we carry around, a dis-ease which influenced a good portion of my false personality.

Many of my I’s are in reaction to this early event. At the age of four, my father who was 21 years old at the time, got his boss's daughter pregnant. He abandoned his family to marry her and start a new family. My mother, only 19 and pregnant, moved me and my brother back to San Antonio, TX to live with my alcoholic grandmother. As a result of the turmoil I began wetting the bed. One morning after such an incident, in a drunken rage, my grandma spanked me and berated me in front of a bunch of neighbors. This created an image in me that invaded my tissues and has hung around in my subconscious. As a reaction, I was determined that I would never let that happen to me again – at least not without a fight. Also, as a result, I would try to both please adults and rebel against them. My essence had been stifled, and my personality had become fragmented. I had been kicked out of "The Garden." The world became an unsafe place. An unconscious error in perception arose and manifested as a dis-ease. The message was: "Don't get comfortable because bad events are just around the corner."

In the mind of a little child, God could have made a paradise for us but chose not to do so. So began the "lie of separation." Fortunately, however, the memory of The Garden, a direct feeling of God's love, persisted and eventually led me to this Work.

(Reading from *Commentaries*)

"Let us return to the fundamental teaching of the Work and take as an example the doctrine of I's. 'How many I's have we got in us?' O. was once asked. O. replied: 'We have hundreds of thousands of I's in us, only because of the action of buffers we do not see them as distinct but retain our belief that we have only one I that always acts and feels in the same way. This is Imaginary I. It is this imagination that one has one I, this Imaginary I, that prevents us from changing.'

"On another occasion he was asked whether I's weren't imaginary and he answered in so many words that I's were real beings in us, real persons, but because we did not see them we had the imagination of having Real I. 'The I's are real,' he said, 'but the Imaginary I is imaginary. Each I is a small living person in oneself.'

"Just as people are divided into No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 Man so these I's in a person are similarly divided. Each I has a thinking part, an emotional part and a moving part, but its center of gravity may be more in the sphere of the thoughts or of the emotions or of the actions. Each I is a distinct being that takes charge of us and speaks through our telephone calling itself I. Some of the I's are very harmful to us, some are indifferent and some are useful. A question was asked recently as to whether all our thoughts came from different I's. The answer is yes but not only that; all your moods, all your feelings, your actions, your words, come from different I's in yourself. As we are, we have no individuality, no Real I, no big I that controls all the other I's and arranges them in the right order."

(Pause in reading)

Once, while I was conversing with a Work partner I complained, "I’m getting faaat." My Work partner observed, "Do you realize that when you say the word 'fat' that you put an emphatic stress and strong intonation on the word, and you are making a certain face?" I said to the Work partner, "Thank you." As Tim used to say, "You would want to know."

Do here again is Nicoll:

"At first it is more easy to observe I's acting on your thoughts giving you certain kinds of thoughts. You observe that you are thinking in a certain way about someone. This is an I that is thinking, that you are taking as yourself. Or say that you are thinking about your life: this is again an I and you are taking it as yourself. When you do not see this trick that is constantly being played on you, you take all these thoughts as you. You think: 'I am thinking this.' Or, you say: 'This is how I think.' You do not see that something is thinking for you and that you are not thinking at all. You hear the thoughts of these I's as if it were you who were thinking them. In fact, you think that you think. Now better I's can see worse I's but worse I's cannot see better I's. What is higher can see what is lower, but what is lower cannot see what is higher. When you begin real observation of your thoughts you can begin to see certain kinds of thoughts that you do not wish to accept, say, about other people, or about yourself. Now if you think that these thoughts are you or if you say: 'I think this,' then you make one of the greatest mistakes you can make in this Work. You give these thoughts power over you because you identify with them, so you simply go with them without realizing what the Work is continually teaching – i.e., that you must practice inner-separation. If you take everything that happens in the sphere of your thoughts as I, then you cannot practice inner separation. Why? Because you take everything going on in your thoughts as yourself. How then can you separate if you take everything as yourself, everything as I? How can I separate from I?

"There are I's acting on us and they are nourishing themselves at our expense. If we could always remember ourselves, these I's could not have any power over us. When we are in bad states of thinking and feeling, if we make no effort to recall better states, we are dragged down. And yet, we need not be dragged down. What drags us down is our choice. When you realize beyond any doubt that you have different I's in you, when you can hear them speaking or notice them working in your emotions, and yet remain separate from them, you begin to understand the Work on its practical side."

(End of *Commentary* reading)

So again, they are legion and they are not our friends, and yet they are a buffet. They are a path to salvation. Our place in the Ray of Creation is to digest coarser energy into finer energy. This takes place at the point of incoming impressions. For me, the practice of inner-stop has been very practical: during multiple times during the day, make an abrupt stop in place and time to scan your level of being. This involves a full constatement of the I that is present. That is, a three-centered observation, usually preceded by the wrong feeling of I that is detected by the sense of inner-taste at the point of incoming impressions. Then I can apply Work ideas such as, "I have the right to not be negative," or "my being attracts my life." "Which I is speaking?"

I like to name I's: "I don't wanna." "It's not good enough." "The professor" (which I am utilizing now). "Mansplainer" (that's the professor but with an air of superiority). "Harmless unless provoked" (but easily provoked). A favorite thing is to ask: "what is it up to?" Keep stepping back in your observation to see where the last I of the moment was. Usually, this is a self-critical I. And please, remember yourself [Self-remember]. This will allow you to utilize the coarse energy that was transformed into a finer lighter energy by self-observation and non-identification.

I have been repeatedly fed by Dr. Nicoll’s dream that he cites on both p. 1500 and p. 1594 of the: *Commentaries*:

 *THE DIFFICULT-TO-CROSS DITCH*

"The difficult-to-cross ditch at the top of the slope is full of the bones of prehistoric animals - the remains of violent things, of beasts of prey, of monsters, of snakes. They go far down into this abyss. There is a plank to cross by, but the air seems full of restraining power, like the invisible influence of some magnet; and this, with the fear of crossing this depth - although the width is not great - holds me back. I cannot say for how long for there is no ordinary time in all of this. Then I find myself across - *on the other side*. What wonderful vision do I now behold? I see someone teaching or drilling some recruits. That is all. At first sight there seems nothing marvelous. He smiles. He indicates somehow that he does not necessarily expect to get any results from what he is doing. He does not seem to mind. He does not show any signs of impatience when they are rude to him. The lesson is nearly over, but this will not make any difference to him. It is as if he said, "Well, this has to be done. One cannot expect much. One must give them help, though they don't want it." It is his invulnerability that strikes me. He is not hurt or angered by their sneers or lack of discipline. He has some curious power but hardly uses it. I pass on, marveling that he could do it. I could not take on such a thankless task. I come to a place, perhaps a shop, where boats are stored. Beyond is the sea.

"When I wake I think of this man. To do what he is doing is so utterly contrary to anything I would do. I would need a new will to do it.

"It would mean I would have to go in a direction I never went in. I thought much about this direction. How could I define it to myself? I would have been violent to those recruits. Yes, that was it. He showed no violence. He had not a will of violence. He seemed purified from all violence. That was the secret. That was the source of the curious power I detected in him. *A man without violence*. And then I reflected that to reach him I had to get across to the other side of the deep gulf full of the bones of prehistoric beasts, where the non-violent lived and taught - the country of the non-violent, where recruits were being taught.

"He had nearly finished his lesson. Beyond was the sea, and there were boats stored near it. No doubt when he had finished he was going on, somewhere. As for me, I had been given only a glance into the meaning of a new will – a will not based on violence or on having your own way. I repeat – only a glance. For I knew I had not really crossed that deep gulf filled with the bones of the violent past and left it behind finally. There were no recruits for me and certainly none of the waiting boats was mine. But from this glance I know better what going in a new direction is and what a new will purified from violence means. I know also that the possibilities of following this new will and new direction lie in every moment of one's life."

What struck me about his character in the dream was that he was a "man without violence." And we know that our false personality is full of violent I's. We must keep in mind that we do violence to others when we take them as a unity (as the I that they are in at that moment). I am a multiplicity but so is everyone else. We are surely one in this respect and can understand that we all suffer in some form or another.

I've been pondering Peter's talk on the feminine quality of wisdom and have come to the realization that knowledge applied to being equals understanding or wisdom. This leads us to Real Conscience which is the same as God's will. The aim of the Work is to embody God's will. The issues are transformed in the tissues and God's will can be done on this earth. Remember: the revolution will not be televised, but it will require effort.

I’ll leave with a prayer: May we know you more, may we love you more, may we serve you more. May we know you more, may we love you more, may we serve you more.

I am. I wish. I can Work.