

## Meeting #004

### EU Session Transcript

Attendees: Robin, Ronald, Gwynne, John, Ekant, Vanya, Michelle, J O'Donnell, James

(Where the speaker was not recognized they are referred to as A, B, C, D, etc.)

Michelle: I think that the story of the curd is so obviously, but when I look around just uh my side and on others, then I see we often do things that are not good for us or hurting us or are disgusting, but we do it anyway. Because we have paid for it or we we I I do not understand sometimes why we are doing it anyway, but we doing. But the curd the curd story is obviously and we have to to smile about them, even smirk about.

James: I admire them for for eating these red peppers. I've always had admiration for the trans-Caucasian curd. It's the fruit that he is using it's showing something to do with the work and that's the work. This fruit is is what he speaks of it's it's one of the it's it's one of the teachings and this is Gurdjieff's teaching and it's not pleasant. Sometimes it's very difficult. There's resistance. But we we have to persevere we we try to persevere and I think there's something about that in this wonderful allegory. He introduces us into allegories very early in the book with this story. The one thing I noticed in the first the first paragraph he said he became one of my so to speak hobbies hobbies is originally also a pony in English hobby horse.

Robin: Which indicates emotions, the emotional.

Robin: Indicates that's what he's going to ride.

Robin: So there are a number of biblical, or let's say gospel references in the tale of the curd. But it depends on really to a certain extent it depends on how familiar you are with the gospels. There are also two I mean first of all he's trans-Caucasian. Now there is an area called Transcaucasia so you could say he came from that area, but you could also say that this story is about the Caucasians who are going to actually encounter and read this book. The the word curd actually means mountain dweller, so being a mountain dweller indicates in one way or another that this is an aspirational individual.

James: Gurdjieff.

Robin: Oh, that actually is I believe a possible derivation of the name Gurdjieff is Curdjiev. Some of a curd, but he wasn't. So who knows? He was Greek.

James: There's a piece, I think it's in Matthew where Jesus went up into a mountain and when he was set, he opened his mouth saying to them, and then he spoke. And it always seemed to me that going up into a mountain meant going into a higher level of consciousness and I don't know, is there a connection with the curd who's from the mountains? Is there a connection there or am I just making that up, imagining it?

Robin: Yes, there's also a connection with country and town, because he comes from the country and because he comes from the country, he is essence, or he is more in essence than someone in the town. So yes, it's the sermon on the mount wasn't a sermon given from a high elevation. It was a sermon given from a high level and it was given only to the disciples. He left the crowd behind in order to deliver the sermon on the mount. So, you know, it's lucky that they remembered it, otherwise we'd never hear of it.

James: And there's also this about the in paying just two cents for the pile of fruit. It's it's from the Testament. I've got it from Luke actually, but alcohol quotes it and he looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury and he saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So he said, "Truly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all, for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had."

Robin: Yeah, it's a direct reference. It's you know, he makes it two cents, right, which doesn't make any sense because if he was in Transcaucasia that wouldn't even be a currency. So you know it's it's the two cents that is in one way or another a kind of idiom in the United States more than anywhere else. I'll give you my two cents so to speak and that's a reference to the two mites from the New Testament. That's where it came from.

James: Some Americans also say it's not worth two cents.

Robin: I don't know whether they say that.

James: We used to say in Liverpool, it's not worth two pence.

Robin: Oh, well, that's true, but in Liverpool there wasn't much that was worth anything, was there?

Robin: There's a reference up near the beginning of the reading to mentation by form and mentation by words. And I I kept trying to uh relate that to the entire story uh and it appears all I could get was that it's a story strictly of mentation by form and the downfall of being sucked into the beautiful redness and so on and so forth. And I and I couldn't see any exploration of the mentation by thought, I think I said words before, by thought. unless he presents unless when he presents the idiosyncratic style in which he writes, he is presenting mentation by thought.

Robin: Well, it's my opinion that that's exactly what he's doing with the whole book. This the whole book has been written according to the what he refers to elsewhere and what Ouspensky referred to as the grammar of associations. And associations are directly in one way or another the the very fabric from which thought is woven. And what here appears to me to be doing with the tales is he is creating for you the universal language that he refers to in In Search of the Miraculous. He's creating the English version of a language which is objective. And and he's doing this. He's not deliberately telling you to make this association or that association. He's giving you associations. And and the style in which he's doing it, if you just take, you know, any of these paragraphs, I think, most of these paragraphs, anyway, you discover that, you know, he is creating multiple associations around a single idea. So, you know, the first paragraph, in view of the fact that I have happened here accidentally to touch upon a question, right, which has lately become one of one of, so to speak, hobbies, namely, the process of human mentation. I consider it possible, without waiting for a corresponding place determined by me for the elucidation of this question, it's a straight association elsewhere, to state already now in this first chapter at least something concerning that axiom, and we get another straight association, which has accidentally become known to me that on Earth in the past, and he's creating another kind of link, it has been usual in every century that every man in whom there arises the boldness to attain the right to be considered by others, and to consider himself a conscious thinker, which is another kind of dynamic that's added, should be informed while still in the early years of his responsible existence, is another detail that's been added, that man has in general two kinds of mentation, which he lists then, one kind, mentation by thought, which he describes briefly, and which words always possessing a relative sense are employed, right, which if you think through and read the parts of In Search of the Miraculous where he talks about universal language, that's what he's talking

about. are employed. And the other kind, which is proper to all animals as well as to man. So you now actually, he's actually saying that the mechanism that works in animals and the mechanism that works in man, normally, for communication, is exactly the same, which I would call mentation by form. And then he goes into a long paragraph to explain to you what he means by form, because, of course, he has wrapped that in quotes. So, you know, the, what what's happening here is he's describing why he's written the book in the way that he's done it, and he's also giving you some clue as to how you should try and receive it if you understand what he's telling you. And what he tells you when he calls about mentation by form is that you are in no condition to read this book, because you don't understand words in the correct way, in a way that will allow you to understand it. And he's saying this directly to you without necessarily insulting you. He's just saying, you don't know how to understand, you don't know how to read, which is exactly what he told Ouspensky. He told Ouspensky at some point earlier on, "If you knew how to read, you would already know a lot more than you do." So, Ouspensky didn't know how to read. So, it it's it's, if you like, almost absurd for us to assume that we know how to read when you get someone who's as gifted intellectually as Ouspensky was and Gurdjieff tells him, "You don't know how to read." Just saying.

James: But we just have to keep on eating those red pepper pods, you know, even even after that conversation. I always thought he said to him that if you understood everything you'd written, I would bow down to you, something like this.

Robin: No, that was that was his comment on *Tertium Organum*, the book that made Ouspensky famous. it was Gurdjieff's comment, "If you understood what you'd read, I'd come to you to I'd come to you to learn." So, what you'd written, which is another interesting thing, really, that Ouspensky, even though he'd articulated something, didn't actually really understand it.

James: I've always had difficulty with this with with the trying to take it on board inside and verifying it for myself, this about the mentation by form and mentation by thought. I've done for for years, actually. Some people in the New Line group told me that it was what he meant was that we should read it using mentation by form.

Robin: Well, they don't know what they're talking about.

James: It's one today.

Robin: It's like, you know, he says, "Completely not like that at all."

James: Yeah, yeah. I think I just got an inkling of it this evening, Robin. Something something something changed.

Michelle: What he also says is, even though we don't understand anything what he's saying, it has an effect on us which we which even could be so so big that we don't even like our favorite dish anymore. So, even though we don't get what he's saying, we don't understand anything, somehow, it could happen that something changes in us.

James: And tonight reading about the curd, it was the first time I realized he was also speaking about the three foods. You know, food, air, and impressions. When he's taking in the beautiful countryside. He's he's laying down in the bosom of nature. And it it just seemed to me that he's speaking about the three foods.

Speaker E: What I came across is, when he says the second kind of mentation, that is mentation by form, by which strictly speaking the exact sense of all writing must be also perceived. So, when I read this just literally, that's could mean you can perceive or you must perceive the meaning, the

sense of all writings either way. When I read it just this, this struck me this time when we read it.

Robin: He is saying that pretty much all the readers of this book will not be able to read it in any other way than through form, because they aren't capable of mentation by thought at all. So, they're going to read it by mentation of form and they and they will of course not agree with each other about anything they read, because the consequence of mentation by form is that people don't understand each other. So, yes, you're going to have to read it that way, because you haven't got any other way to read.

James: What what other aspects of mentation by thought are there besides the associative?

Robin: The I mean, I could go into this in a little bit of depth, but it it it starts to become the way that you you start to exist. So, for instance, you take a word like, if you like, no, I mean, let's begin at the beginning. The mentation by thought in respect of the mentation by thought that Gurdjieff is talking about here has a complete and proper ontology. Everybody know what ontology means? Anybody know what ontology means? They created in in the computer business, they created ontologies for chemistry and various aspects of physics and medicine. And the nature of the ontology is that it relates together all the terms you use within that subject area. And it is accurate language. So language, in other words, the French and the English and the German and the Russian the ontology is exactly the same because the words are specific to chemistry, let's say. So, there may be in one language or another various aliases that have the same meaning as other words, but they will all fall in line and everyone will understand everything in the same way, and that's the purpose of an ontology. That everybody understands everything in the same way. Now, an ontology for, let's say, mathematics, an ontology for chemistry, an ontology for physics are not the same at all, because they refer only to terms within that subject area. What Gurdjieff's suggesting is that there should be an ontology within your language, that being, in this instance, English or German. and the central word in that ontology is evolution, and that word evolution is spiritual evolution, and it is characterized by the ray of creation. So, the ontology for the English language, if it's going to become universal and universally understood, is the ray of creation around which everything in one way or another is related to it. So, if you take a word like truth, then there is a truth of World 96, a truth of World 48, a truth of World 24, a truth of World 12, a truth of World 6, and a truth of World 3, and an absolute truth. So, the word truth has in that instance seven different definitions. And it only has meaning in respect of the level on which you're using it. And pretty much all the philosophical, psychological, and religious words are exactly the same. That is, you can talk if you want about prayer, but there's a prayer 96 and a prayer 48 and a prayer 24 and a prayer 12, and these are not the same thing. So, that's mentation by thought. And in mentation by thought, it is entirely possible for two people to understand each other, because they're the way that they derive the meaning of any word used is exactly the same. They go to the ontology, or if you like, language structure. The word ontology might be just a bit too hard to remember. If you like, just call it the language structure. So, I mean, this is a really difficult thing. It's like, you know, when I eventually discovered the meaning of this page or so, I thought about it for years. And and when in one way or another I'm discussing things with other people, especially people who belong to work groups, I would have to start classifying what they were saying according to this kind of thing. So, you know, I have a rough mental level which goes 96, 48, 24, 12, because we don't really manifest above 12, so there's no point in going above 12, even if there's meaning above 12. And if someone starts talking about, let's just say, keeping accounts, then I have to ask myself, are they talking about accounts 96, accounts 48, accounts 24, or accounts 12? And when I understand exactly which level they're talking about, I can converse with them about that level.

Robin: Is is that what the word relative means?



Robin: Yep.

Robin: Yes. I got you. Okay, thank you.

Michelle: That seems to add a lot of difficulty to the communication between all of us.

Robin: He didn't say it was going to be easy. He said it would make you burn inside.

Robin: Well, I can go along thinking, okay, well, this is what he really means, and and just follow that thought thread through 30 minutes of conversation, and then find out that's not what he really meant. You know, so, I mean, you know, this is the work, right? We have to deny everything. I mean, you know, it it and we get things wrong. I get things wrong. I think, I presume everybody else gets things wrong, and, you know, 2 years later, you go, "Oh, I was wrong about that. I will actually have to revise the way I think about it."

Robin: Well, um, you know, in my life, if I'm wrong about stuff, within 30 minutes of understanding it, you know, it's like, um, I don't wait 2 years, you know, um, I mean, so it would just keep me, God forbid, my mouth shut the whole time, so I don't cross communicate, you know, it's, uh, it's very, uh, disconcerting. You know, if I was talking to Gurdjieff, I think I could probably understand him if I was face to face. But when he writes, it's a different story. So I have to dig him up and talk to him personally many times. And that's my own understanding. He's tired of being dug up, too.

Robin: You ain't the only one doing it.

Speaker E: I made an observation the last weeks regarding this uh notion of consonance of words which we read already and here mentation by form versus mentation by thoughts. I observe in the morning, especially, when I wake up, the chattering of my mind when it starts to be awakened and it starts to chatter and somehow I have in the morning more often a bigger distance than sometimes during the day. And I ask myself, what is going on there? Is this really words? Is it speaking in words? And when I observe what happens there, it is that I hear in a way sounds. So, I ask myself, what is a word? Is a word the representation of letters or whatever or the meaning we assign to it or is it just a certain sound form? Yeah, like Gurdjieff explains when he brings in the notion of of consonance. So, in this sense, is it's not so obvious when these words are passing through my mind that it is actually not mentation by words which he says mentation by thoughts. So, it's actually just a succession of of some sounds which one makes. This this in relation to what I explained last week when I observed my little boy when he starts to speak words which I'm quite sure that he does not understand the meaning, somehow, or he could not explain the meaning, but he can formulate certain sound forms which I then recognize as something familiar to me. So, in this sense, it's not so obvious for me what is really thoughts are thoughts with words in my mind. Yeah, because I'm not sure if the words I hear in my mind is is just a sound form, so a form, or is it words?

Robin: And are you including the tone? Are you including the tone when you listen? Like when kids talk to you, when your little boy talks to you, you hear the tone of his voice. Does that go into your understanding?

Speaker E: Probably, but when I speak about what's what's going on in my mind, I cannot really distinguish any kind of living content behind. It's really just sound forms passing through my awareness in a way.

Robin: There's a question you can also struggle with if you if you're in a in the mood to wrestle with things, which is when you observe yourself speaking as I am now speaking, but also to a

certain degree observing myself. The question is, what happens before the words?

Robin: I'm going to read from page 16, simply because this seems to be a fairly fairly straightforward explanation, but it it's not, if you like, it doesn't make life easy. "In other words, if in the entirety of any man who has arisen and been formed in any locality from the results of the specific local influences and impressions, a certain form has been composed, and this form evokes in him by association the sensation of a definite inner content, and consequently of a definite picturing or notion for the expression of which he employs one or another word, which has eventually become habitual and, as I have said, subjective to him, then the hearer of that word in whose being, owing to different conditions of his arising and growth, there has been formed concerning the given word a form of a different inner content will always perceive and of course infallibly understand the same word in quite another sense." This isn't this isn't like this isn't a set of confusing words. This is a straight literal description.

Speaker E: I I see I see two directions. There is the possibility that people have about the same idea or same thing, how he says, different forms, inner forms, or derived from from certain words which are expressions of ideas because the words have different meanings, they provoke in two different persons different ideas.

Robin: Are they are they two different things, are they something that has to be added to the equation? You see, like, well, I'm going to shut up. You know, I don't see them as two different things. I see them as uh you know,

Robin: The thing is, I have some periods, not always, but I have quite some periods when I don't would not say, "I'm talking to myself." Something is talking, maybe with my voice or so, but it's really I can observe the mechanicality. So, I I I feel or I have the the feeling that it is something else. I sometimes even wonder what it tells, what it talks about. So, it's not unfamiliar what it talks about, but I wonder from where it comes because I have in in those moments I have no intention to think those things.

Robin: Right, right. And so, I'm very curious about that, and maybe Robin can be of some help or someone else, because that goes on with me as well. It's like, I have no intention of getting into that stream of thoughts that's coming at me. I can hear the importance of it. I don't want to discount it. You see. So, so I have to basically have some sort of dialogue with myself while that's going on and say, "What does that mean? What, you know, what is that? Why, why, why are you intruding in my life?" You know, Jung's red book is about that. You see, I mean, he so he developed all these characters talking to him, but that's him. You know, I'm not saying that, you know, we need to do that. But I don't think thoughts come to you just because. I think there's a reason for them to be there. You see.

Robin: I'm still stuck on the ray of creation as a basis of the relative meaning of words and going back to what you had said earlier, Gwen, about you you you think something is what Gurdjieff meant and then later you find out that that was wrong, that was something else that he meant. And it appeals to me that one thinks at different levels along the ray of creation, not that you're leaping up an entire cosmos, but that something could be where your current functioning is. Something could be this is what Gurdjieff meant, which would be the result of your thinking at a certain level and you could have either the intrusion, sort of you guys' recent conversation, or just a fluctuation in which something else because you're in a higher state fractionally makes sense and that is at that moment what he meant. Um, and that to someone else, someone or you when you're operating somewhere else, it would be a different. I mean, that would be the relativity of it. And as I say it, the that Robin's definition or tying that that word relative which I could not piece it into this line of thinking. The ray of creation pieces it in. And and of course Gurdjieff says over and over again,

there's a number three man's something and I mean that there's these various places that people are that changes what is the word whatever, chair or truth, you know, uh, it varies. And that ideally one would never eat the uh, the the the red pepper because your understanding of what it was would rule out the the glossy red look of it. You'd go, "Oh, well, it's a spice, I could use a little bit of it." etc.

Robin: So it really does, according to what you're saying, and I agree with what you're saying. I think it's from what where you are in the Am I reading, am I reading Gwen at third, you know, from the third from World 48? You know, am I reading it from uh World 24? You know, it's like there's all kinds of uh insinuations about the state of my mind when I'm going through something.

Robin: That's good. So, so you're on to something. So, each world has within its own vibrational level, 48.02, 10, all the way up to, you know, so that brings up a whole different thing because is it World 48, World 49? You see what I'm saying? And so, so it brings a whole different understanding. And when you're talking about form, Robin, that gets me so confused. I I cannot follow when people talk about even formatory when they use that word. It just I want to go bonkers. So, you know, and I'm already bonkers, so it's just bonker more, you know. So, um, what because you're very, you've been studying this for a very long time, and in a very precise and accountable way. And I have seen in the several years I've known you, even your own understanding of something make an expansion of something. You see. And I'm I'm going, okay, what is that? What, what causes that? What, is it understanding in a more expansive setting, like when Eken and I hear our little voices come all over the place, we know when there's some real severe voices. I do Eken. I I know when something I have to pay attention to, and when I don't have to pay attention.

Robin: I think there's a dimension of this that's very important and is not easy to embrace because you have to do it in the inner world. And one of the things is is to start asking yourself the question in respect of any thought that you have, perhaps, anything that comes in in the internal or just ask it what the feeling is. And ask what the feeling of somebody else is. There was a an event I remembered this morning oddly when I woke up, which was that a friend of mine had died and his wife had survived him, obviously. And I remember communicating with her, but it was only by email or something, but it was utterly inconsiderate the way that I communicated, because I communicated from me. I didn't communicate to someone whose husband had just died. And I remember now a feeling of remorse. Now when I remembered the event, and it was not a big event in my life, it has to be said. It was just a bit of a shock that someone that I'd gone to university with had popped his clogs. But it wasn't a big event, but the the feeling of remorse for not being, if you like, considerate, genuinely considerate, externally considerate of someone who's suffered a dramatic bereavement. It's just like I just felt bad, you know. And this kind of, let's start uncovering the emotions that go with things. We've got this story here. This story is an emotional story. It isn't a logical story. If you eat red peppers, then you don't suffer from the various symptoms that are described in this story. But if you start to eat some of your experiences, you will suffer remorse and tears will come to your eyes and you will burn inside. Red peppers don't make you burn inside, they make you burn in the mouth. You know, you don't burn inside from red peppers. And it's possible if you get some in your, you know, if you get some in your eye, then you might actually cry tears. But if you don't get your fingers or the red pepper anywhere near your eyes, you're not going to burst out crying unless it's really one of those incredibly hot Indian curries, just saying. A faal, I think he called it. P H A L. That will make you cry. But, you know, apart from that, normal red peppers, when you

Robin: Does he say, "It also titillates your inside. It particularly titillates your inside."

James: Not titillates. He is, does he actually use that word titillate there?

Robin: Well, in in my, uh, in this book, He does. Titillates. That's another word for masturbation.

James: Yeah, it's not a outward masturbation, it's inner masturbation. Now, this is a word he does use all throughout the tales for masturbation.

Robin: So, he's playing with words. He's playing with us with that. He's titillating us. Yeah.

James: There's another donkey there as well.

Robin: Yeah.

James: Thora Bread donkey.

Robin: So, Thora Bread donkey as opposed to the Jericho donkey.

James: Yeah.

Robin: And he's convinced of the right and justice of his obstinacy. That's what I sometimes, am convinced of the right and justice of my opinions at times.

James: Until I'm not.

Robin: Yeah, thanks Gwen. Thank you.

James: Why does he why does he use this about conscience and the ex-Kaiser Wilhelm? Is he trying to show that the ex-Kaiser Wilhelm didn't have one? Which is, I shouldn't imagine that's Well, consider consider what the the Kaiser Wilhelm held in history at that point when he was writing it. He was kind of a non-entity. I mean, he was a Kaiser who was kind of just thrown the throne like he was apathetic.

Michelle: As as he lived just at the time that the Kaiser Wilhelm has to retire, is correct. He had to flee to to uh Holland. So, um, I think it it was something in the history that because he especially was the cause for of of this uh first World War and he was not able to to to think in strategic uh manner. So, at that time it was a very uh it it has a big impact that he was like he was. And then he was just and maybe you remember that he he had a lame arm.

James: Bad arm, yes.

Michelle: A bad arm, yes. And he always tried to hide this. So, and arms for me are always connected with with uh with acting, because without hands, without arms, you cannot act. So, but I just wanted to to to because as I recall, it was a female donkey that uh Jesus was riding in to to Jerusalem, especially in the Lutheran uh Bible. But when you look that what I found as an English version of the Bible, then it is said that you will find a donkey tied and a colt with him with her. So, it says it is a female donkey, not a male. But on other places like Marcus and so on, it is just said a donkey or a young donkey.

James: Okay, thank you Michelle. Thank you.

Michelle: So, where does the Jericho jackass come from, Robin? Oh, Robin, where are you?

Robin: Sorry, you just took a break.

Michelle: Okay. So, I recalled or it was just in my mind still that the donkey was a female one. So, I was looking up and I found in the Lutheran Bible it's really said about a female, but the in the



English Bible, it is said that uh and you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her. So, it's a female one. And I wanted to ask you where come this comes this Jericho jackass from?

Robin: I don't know, I just tell it from memory that that was it probably came from Ouspensky actually is the truth because it's an alliteration and Gurdjieff would not have done that, but um

Michelle: And and on other in in Marcus and in uh Luke, it was just written a young donkey, a donkey. So, or a young donkey. So, not said about the the sex of the donkey, but in in Matthew it was uh explicitly said.

James: Isn't it isn't it used in a defamatory sense in America, jackass?

Robin: Yeah, but that's usually a male. So, I'm I'm a donkey person, because we had goats and we had to have we had to have Jennies, which are the female donkeys take care of our goats. So, the jackass, basically, we didn't want, he was used only for breeding, because that's all he was good for. So, um, when when you're brought up about the female, the female donkey has a much more uh in depth uh connection to nurturing and to supporting, um, than the the jackass, basically. So, um, that's why it's called a jackass, you know.

James: Thanks Gwen. Thank you.

Robin: There's another one here.

James: Does anybody make of this marter like that comes along and tells him to stop eating, the one who calls him the Jericho jackass?

Robin: Well, he's also from the village, so this guy in one way or another is a representative of essence rather than personality, because the town is personality. And all of the smells of the industrial town are not there in the countryside.

James: It's mentioned three times and arousing of thought, this business of scent and smells, three times.

Robin: It it's kind of known that smell is a strong association amongst the senses than any other, and that people will often have memories from smells that they will not be able to access otherwise.

James: I get sense. Unforgettable smell.

James: Is there nothing more to be said about this the this man who comes and calls him that, calls him the jackass? They didn't seem to know each other, even though they came from the same area. Could this have been Could could he also be a symbol of sometimes our resistance to the work? When we just want to chill out, self-calm, you know? Yeah, thank you Rod.

Robin: In the gospels, what if you take just the gospels, what part would the Trans the the curd represent in the gospels, with the horny finger and all that? Or does he have a part in the gospels?

Robin: I don't think so, I can't think of anything.

Robin: See, I don't see Gurdjieff diverging from the gospels that much. So I I see it as a metaphor almost all the time for gospels.

Robin: I don't think he diverges from the symbolism of the gospels.

Robin: Right, I don't either. So I still think I still think the person, like he does focus on the curd.

Michelle: I I thought that he he feels like like that his it hurts. but it's somehow the they are seeing see not and the hearing they don't hear. So it's Matthew 13:13 I have to look up up what is in English. The word

Robin: like the eyes that don't see and the ears that don't hear.

Michelle: The the ear does not hear something like that. Or you can also say his pain is mechanical without without uh inside and and in the gospel is uh Father forgive them for for they they do not know what they do.

Robin: Does he need to? I mean, just in in terms of I can't think of another book that makes a warning like this. You really don't want to read this book because it'll just make a mess of you. I would recommend that all of you stop right now.

Robin: Yeah. Well, I mean, to to me, I have quit trying to make it sound like it's a great book unless you want to just change your life and unearth everything that you ever thought was sacred. You see. It's like you have to tell people the truth about because a lot of people get into the Gurdjieff work as a curiosity, because they've heard their friends or they've seen something going on about it, you know, they've heard Christian Murti, a lot of them study Gurdjieff's work. So you hear it coming from some of these gurus and they think, well, that's that would be what I would want to do. And I think, no, no, no, no, no. You know. So, you know, it's like it has certainly not won me friends. I am not more popular because I'm more into Gurdjieff. I have lost friends because of that.

James: Me too, Gwen. Me too.

Michelle: Yeah, yeah. That's true. Me too. After reading that book, the divorce was on the table. And and even Osho said that Gurdjieff's uh teaching is a great teaching, but you you have to know then that it is transformation and you will not be the same person anymore after that.

Robin: So, is anybody had a relationship that this didn't wreck? Well, that's not bad. That's three out of 11.

Michelle: I would say it deepened through it.

Robin: Really? It deepened your relationship? Well, perhaps we should all come to you to learn.

James: 29 years today since I first set eyes on my wife and we're still together and she is not in the work, but she allows, she she lets me. She puts up with me.

Robin: Yeah, I I would want to know, like I have to laugh, James, because you know, my husband's loved me, but they would always, when Gurdjieff, the word Gurdjieff would come up or anything about the work, they would just shake their head and and let me go on with it. You see. So, it's like, and my family is kind of like that too. They have become more respectful about mentioning Gurdjieff. They'll say, "Well, my mom's in the Gurdjieff work." or "My mom," and they're all very much out in public. So, I said, "Well, when you tell them that, they have no idea who you're talking about." And, you know, it's like, what does that mean? And I said, "If you're not ready to say what does that mean?" in the word of transformation and consciousness and being aware and being observant, then don't even mention Gurdjieff. It it has nothing to do with the pot of beans, you know.

James: I I just gone back I'm still stuck on the Kaiser Wilhelm and it's an example of uh my

conscience will be as clear as, for instance, and then there's these three dots. And then he says something that really uh reverses or raises the question in the reader of the reversal of the meaning of everything that he's been talking about. Uh you go, "Oh, wait. Oh, no." So I I it's something he could easily have done for that reason.

Robin: I think the donkey that Christ rode into Jerusalem, I think that was a fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy, and I think the mention of Jericho possibly might have been there, I haven't been able to track it down yet.

James: Jericho was where he started from, but he didn't ride the donkey all the way from Jericho. I got that wrong. I just kind of looked it up.

Robin: I'm just wondering, and I don't I haven't really thought it through, is whether there's a connection with this story of the Transcaucasian curd with mentation by form. I don't know why, because I think he he talks about the form of the fruit, and I wonder if there's if he's showing trying to show something about mentation by form through the telling the story.

James: Well, I think that's a worthwhile theory upon the because that that is the external form of the red pepper looked, and they do, it has to be said, I was in a supermarket yesterday. Lots of hot red peppers and they do look lovely. So, it's true. The external uh and the experience of digesting them is really kind of different.

Robin: I think you can't actually get anybody interested in this. I think people are just born like it, or not, and that's it.

# **AI Meeting Summary**

## **EU Session**

### **Quick recap**

The meeting focused on exploring Gurdjieff's writing style and concepts of mentation, including both thought-based and form-based approaches to understanding. Participants discussed various literary techniques and symbolic meanings in Gurdjieff's work, while examining how different geographical and cultural contexts influence interpretations of ideas. The group also explored challenges in communication and emotional awareness, concluding with a meditation exercise that emphasized sensation, breath, and energy in the body.

### **Summary**

#### **Human Mentation and Cultural Diversity**

Robin discussed the concept of human mentation, distinguishing between thought-based and form-based mentation. He explained that different geographical localities and environments shape people's perceptions and understanding of the same ideas, leading to diverse interpretations. Robin emphasized his unconventional writing style, which may challenge readers accustomed to conventional literary language. He expressed his intention to create a new literary form and shared a story about a Transcaucasian Kurd who persistently ate red pepper pods despite severe discomfort, illustrating the human tendency to use purchased items to the end.

#### **Kurd Story's Biblical Symbolism**

The group discussed the allegorical story of the Kurd, focusing on its biblical references and symbolic meanings. James admired the Kurd's perseverance in eating red peppers, while Robin explained the story's connection to the Sermon on the Mount and the concept of mountain dwellers as aspirational individuals. The discussion also touched on the reference to "two cents" from the New Testament, which James noted was an idiom in the United States. Ronald mentioned the story's focus on mentation by form, contrasting it with mentation by thought, and suggested that the author's writing style might represent the latter.

#### **Gurdjieff's Writing and Mentation**

Robin explained that Gurdjieff's writing style follows the "grammar of associations," creating a universal language that forms the fabric of thought. He described how Gurdjieff uses multiple associations around a single idea and distinguishes between two types of mentation: thought and form. Robin emphasized that readers are not in a condition to understand the book properly and suggested that Gurdjieff's comments on Uspensky highlight the difficulty of reading and understanding his work. James expressed difficulty in grasping the concepts of mentation by form and thought, and Vanya noted that even if readers do not understand Gurdjieff's teachings, they can still



be affected by them.

### **Understanding Levels of Communication**

Robin explained the concept of mentation by thought, discussing how different levels of understanding exist for words like "truth" and "prayer," ranging from World 96 to World 3, with an absolute truth existing at the highest level. He emphasized that an ontology, or a universal language structure, is necessary for accurate communication, with evolution and the ray of creation serving as central concepts. Robin also highlighted the importance of understanding the context or level when conversing with others, particularly in work groups, to ensure effective communication.

### **Challenges in Communication Interpretation**

The group discussed challenges in communication, particularly regarding the interpretation of words and the difficulty of understanding others' intended meanings. Gwynne expressed frustration with the process of misinterpreting and then correcting misunderstandings over time, while Robin acknowledged that everyone makes mistakes in communication. Ekant shared his observations about the nature of language and thought, noting the difference between reading words and understanding their true meaning, and Robin read from a text to further explore these concepts.

### **Internal Dialogue and Vibrational Perspectives**

The group discussed the nature of internal dialogue and thought processes, with Gwynne and Ekant sharing their experiences of hearing voices or thoughts that seem separate from their conscious intentions. Ronald contributed insights about the "ray of creation" and vibrational levels, suggesting that understanding can vary based on one's current state of being, rather than purely mental factors. The discussion explored how different perspectives and vibrational levels might influence interpretations of words and concepts, with Ronald explaining that these changes could be gradual rather than dramatic shifts between completely different worlds.

### **Exploring Symbolism and Empathy**

Robin discussed the importance of emotional awareness and empathy, sharing a personal story about a friend's death and his own lack of considerate communication. The group explored symbolic meanings in a text, discussing references to red peppers, fruit, and the story of Jesus riding a donkey to his crucifixion. James and Gwynne examined the use of specific words and phrases in the text, including "cacophonia" and "masturbation," while Michelle provided historical context about Kaiser Wilhelm II and his role in World War I.

### **Exploring Donkey Symbolism and Gurdjieff**

The group discussed the symbolism of donkeys in religious texts, particularly focusing on the story of Jesus riding a donkey into Jerusalem. They explored the literary techniques used by Gurdjieff, including irony and the use of simple language to convey

complex ideas. The conversation touched on the transformative nature of Gurdjieff's teachings, with some participants sharing personal experiences of how the work has affected their relationships and lives. The conversation ended with a guided meditation exercise led by James, focusing on sensation, breath, and energy in the body.

## Meeting #004

### US Session Transcript

Attendees: Robin, Bobbie, Stephon, Sandra, Stephen, JD, Janet,

Some speakers are simply referred to by a letter.

Bobbie: What came to me and it does every time, is his introduction about picturing. And in giving us the story of the Kurd, I picture many things like which direction he's walking. You know, that's kind of important that I might know that he's going to the east because when I go to town, I go to the east.

James: No, that's interesting.

Bobbie: I think so.

Robin: I envisage him going to the southeast, and I have no idea why. But as you mentioned it, I did picture something. He was going southeast back to his village.

Bobbie: Well, the town, our town often is southeast of where you are. That's where you go, point of service.

Robin: I guess.

Bobbie: But it's all throughout there, you know, you hear a red pepper, and you can visualize it. I can. But I can't mimic eating it.

Robin: No, nor in the way that he was eating it, no.

Sandra: I can actually picture that because I saw my daughter-in-law eat a package of ghost peppers one time. And she didn't die, and there must have been eight or 10 of them, so. She comes from uh, not New England, we'll say, a place that likes their spicy, sweet stuff. So I can picture that, and I like to picture the uh, the the beautiful red color of the peppers.

Bobbie: Did you visualize some of the northern lights last night? Didn't Didn't see them. Did you?

Speaker E: No, no, I only saw them on Facebook. But tonight, apparently, they'll be out again. Anybody see them?

Bobbie: No.

James: My relatives in uh in Montana saw them.

Stephon: It It's funny that as we have discovered in previous meetings and readings, that first, the default is to get caught in the cracks. And then then we go a little deeper. And by the way, uh Robert, that beret, wow. I guess it's appropriate for the peppers that we speak of. That is cool, man. Is Is Is to look at it a little like to look at it with the natural eyes, these stories and things. I get caught in the cracks, but when I look at it from a different space within, to try to see, as I point one finger outwardly, the three pointing back at at me is that how in the same way I fall for my egoistic and my need to feel like I know all of these things, and then I consume them, and they burn me. I get burned by them, but I don't realize it, cuz like the guy at the poker table, he's got too much in the pot, so he might as well stay in, you know, or the readings or anything else, but how the ego has so much a grip on me that I have so much wrapped up in it that I see the world synthesized

through that. So, for me, what it tells me is is how I fall for the outside trip and don't see what is actually causing me, and to adjust myself so that I could benefit from this story in a way that I refer it directly to me and my experience, and how can I get out of the clutches of this egoistic me me and I know this and I know that, but when I think I know, I'm definitely know one thing. I'm not learning. I'm not saying what's going on here. I'm saying what it is. And it's evolving, as Gurdjieff said, you know, we have so many personal, we're different people. Is to be moving onward and not stuck on appearance or painting the house that I can never live in, cuz the plumbing and the stairs and everything is broke. What's actually happening by by what I'm consuming?

Stephen: I uh I assume that the difference between mentation by form and mentation by thought is a pretty important thing to understand, because it seems like that those notions, plus all that he said in our last reading about what language to write in, he seems to be spending a lot of time warning us ahead of time that we have to become uh more conscious and understand more deeply the weaknesses of language as a medium for communicating certain kinds of thoughts, uh and to be very careful not to think that our habits of using language are going to work necessarily with the text that he's about to present us with. If that's true, I have never, I must say, I have never fully understood the difference between mentation by form and mentation by thought. Uh, even though I've heard very reasonable explanations of it, but when I listen, I read his exact words, I fall right back into the same pit. Like, for example, he says mentation by thought in which words always possessing a relative sense. Well, okay. That's not an unfamiliar idea. We know we mean different things when we use the same word. Any somewhat self-aware human being learns that in the foibles of trying to communicate with other human beings. Okay, so words are always possessing a relative sense. That's mentation by thought, but the the relative sense of words is also uh a characteristic of mentation by form. Um, but it seems as though mentation by form I'm not quite sure whether he's saying you need to understand this book, uh, by being more aware of how to use mentation by form. But I I must say I'm not sure that mentation by form is something I can really relate to my experience. And I have no idea why it would be different just between people of geographical different geographical localities or races. To me, it's true also of people that live next door to each other, that that they fall about one and the same thing or even idea, a number of quite independent forms. Um, I could go on. I mean, I've tried to think of an example of mentation by form, um, that would help me understand it, uh, sort of more empirically and experientially. Um, but I won't do that until I see whether anybody's even interested in discussing the question.

Speaker H: I I'm interested in discussing it for Steven, and the simple example that I learned was um, you know, in these guided meditations that people use to make you relax, sometimes they say, "Oh, picture yourself on a nice beach and the water is going by." Uh, what happens if one of those people are Eskimos? Uh, they won't know what a beach is, and they'll be wanting to um, picture something cold. That's one example that I can think of.

Stephen: Okay, so that's good. So, pictures of the outside world, and and whether they should be thought of as favorable or unfavorable has a lot to do with what part of the world you happen to have grown up in. I can see that. The the example I was thinking about was imagine, because because he says mentation by form almost precedes language. So I'm thinking that even though a child, even though they may have acquired some language, they are still perceiving the world mainly by mentation by form. They're not instantly translating their experience of the world into linguistic constructs, but they're having a sensation and feeling about it, about what's real. Um, you know, like, tell me if you think this is an example. Imagine two different cultures in which uh rural people in which the the the the village depended upon for its food, among other things, on apples. And everybody had to go to the orchard and pick apples. And in one culture, it is expected that everybody would go to the orchard and work, and that the entire harvest would belong to everybody and be distributed according to how much they needed. So, so it would be understood



that some old coot like me could not pick as many apples as some strapping 20-year-old, who might pick many more apples, but I would be expected to make my best effort, pick as many as I could, and even though I may be a fraction of what somebody else could pick, all the apples would go in a big bin and then be distributed to people according to whether they were feeding a family of five or whether they were living alone and need only enough apples for themselves. So, this would be sort of a like, as Karl Marx put it, from each according to his ability to each according to his need. The premise would be that you're expected to make your best effort in terms of how long you try to make yourself work and the diligence with which you work. Okay, then picture another culture in which everybody's picking the apples, but the number that you were able to pick, based on your physical prowess and whatever system you'd come up with for getting apples as fast as you could, you got to keep. So, the apples would then go in the bin, but they'd be distributed to everybody according to how many they had individually picked. I'm sorry, this seems far afield, but I'm getting into a point. In those two cultures, the word fairness would mean something entirely different, but they would both think they were talking about the same thing and that they were understanding fairness in exactly the same way. In the first culture, the idea that you'd be able to keep as many apples as you could pick, even though you might somebody else might not be able to pick as many as you would seem unfair, because it would be rewarding uh uh differences in abilities which uh which really weren't even yours, they were accidental, and which should have nothing to do with how the apples are distributed according to need. In the other culture, the first system for distribution would seem unfair on the basis that if I'm more productive, I should get to keep more apples. Why should you have as many as I get if I can pick four times more than you? That's the basis of meritocracy and the basis of capitalism. Taking those those things out of it, the point I'm getting to is that would say a child in both of those cultures is experiencing these systems before they had words or principles or any ways to to explain what fairness meant to them, they would see the adults all seem to think that this was right, they would see it was integrated in their way of life, and this would be a picturing. This would be a form uh that they wouldn't even have to give words to. This would be a form that they understood as the way to distribute apples. And those two forms could be very different, but not until you got into naming those two systems would you start to get real problems. People disagreeing. Okay, I'm really sorry to go on so long, but I need to understand mentation by form. And so I need to know what you all think about this because it has something to do with pre-linguistic, but it does affect the way we use language.

Speaker I: Well, it's it's interesting that in the uh the Transcaucasian Kurd's experience, he has a picturing that this red fruit must be delicious.

Speaker J: Yes.

Speaker I: He doesn't know what it is, but he has a picturing of it.

Speaker J: Yeah.

Speaker I: Well, because it looks beautiful in his in his vision of what a beauty is. It has the shape of something beautiful, it has the appearance of being beautiful.

Speaker J: Okay.

Speaker I: But then when he eats it, it's not at all like that. So, um, one thing that I often do when I, because I've had the exactly the same question because it didn't seem to resolve itself. Like, it seems like both, um, mentation by form, um, different cultures have different, um, experiences of of of things which they label, and, um, mentation by thought, well, again, the same thing, um, words are relative.

Speaker J: Yes.

Speaker I: Um, but one thing was when I looked up the word form, um, it comes from physical form.

Speaker J: Yeah.

Speaker I: Appearance, pleasing looks. And that's what made me think of the Transcaucasian Kurd and that pleasing look. Um, and then that led me down kind of a rabbit hole of thinking that maybe he is saying in a very covert way that, um, although we don't understand what he's writing sometimes, we might recall how he's used the word elsewhere.

Speaker J: Yeah.

Speaker I: Um, how where it appeared elsewhere. And so, um, when we look at at the text and recall how he uses that a word in another place, its appearance elsewhere, we can gain a common understanding of his usage of that word.

Speaker J: Okay, that's that's good. So, in a way, he's making a quite an important point about this, preparing us to receive this book the way he wants us to receive it. The implication is, you need to read this book knowing that words are relative in their meaning, but that there's a way of comprehending things by means of form that will help you uh uh uh uh avoid the pitfalls of the relativity of language.

Speaker I: Exactly.

Speaker J: Yes, yes.

Robin: No, not at all. In fact, completely incorrect.

Stephon: Help us, Robert. We're getting lost in some cracks here.

Robin: First of all, you seem to have ignored, I mean in the discussion seem to have ignored the idea that mentation by form is what animals do. So, how do you have a good conversation with an animal about something?

Speaker J: That's right. I forgot to mention that point. That's key, isn't it?

Robin: I I also, I mean, this is just it made me smile is that your idea of capitalism was different to mine. My idea of capitalism is about who owns the tree.

Speaker J: It's about it's about what? Who are you supposed to trick?

Robin: Who owns the tree? Who owns the tree works out how many apples everybody gets. So, I mean, first of all, pages 70 through to 90 of In Search of the Miraculous, you should just read them. Right? The the assertion that Gurdjieff is making in In Search of the Miraculous is the only way that human beings can actually understand and transmit knowledge is through mentation by thought. That's it.

Stephon: So, tell me those pages again, Robert.

Robin: I start at page 70 and go through to about page 90. I'll give you a precise thing. it's like, does Let me just talk about ontologies, because an ontology is something people should understand the meaning of ontology. But you probably have not heard the word, or if you have heard the word,

not understood the word. So, I'm going to call it the structure of language. Right? That is the structure of a language where people can understand one another. Not the structure of a language as per the English language in the way that normal people use it. No, the structure of a language where two things where uh when a person says something, everybody is bound to understand the same thing. So, there exists in the computer industry, there exists ontologies, or if you like, structures of language that make it impossible for two people that are discussing chemistry, for example, to not understand each other. Uh and that's because the same terms mean the same thing in chemistry. Copper sulfate is always copper sulfate. It isn't anything else. If you actually and this is an interesting thing about the ontologies that they create in areas like chemistry and physics and mathematics and medicine, it's it's even if you do the French version or the German version of the words copper sulfate, they still mean the same thing. So, an ontology is created in those areas by people that document computer systems or run documentation systems in computers to ensure that people who in one way or another wish to know about chemistry will not miss understand anything because all the words are relative. They're relatively related to each other. And there's a specific structure to an ontology, which is a linguistic structure, but there's no point in going into it because the problem that we actually have is far worse than the problems in chemistry and physics and mathematics, which are eminently soluble. The problem we have is that Gurdjieff in defining uh a language where people can understand each other, which he does in *In Search of the Miraculous*, relates it to the Ray of Creation. The central idea in mentation by thought is the idea of evolution in respect of man and in respect of the Ray of Creation. And that puts you in a situation that's a little difficult in terms of your normal use of the language. That is because certain concepts relate differently to different people. That is man number one, when you talk about truth, he's interested in physical truth. When you talk to man number two about truth, he's interested in beauty. When you talk to man number three about truth, he's actually interested in something that's logically consistent in terms of a statement of reality. Man number four, different opinion. Man number five, different still. Man number five actually is capable of speaking this language because he has unity and for him, all concepts are relative to each other and properly defined. Man number six and seven are beyond our pay grade, if you like. There's no point in talking about them. So, when you take a word like truth, in our normal mentation by form, it means anything you want it to mean, to be honest, depends on what you were brought up to believe truth actually was. But if you're using it in mentation by thought, then there is a truth of World 96, a truth of World 48, a truth of World 24, a truth of World 12. No point in talking about World 6, 3 and 1 because that's beyond our pay grade. Therefore, we have different meanings to the same word because they have different contexts by level. And that means that they the word truth has a relative meaning according to level.

Speaker J: Okay, that's very good. That I mean, that's exactly what he says. Mentation by thought in which words always possessing a relative sense, relative to the level you're speaking from, or the cosmos you're speaking about.

Robin: And then he eventually goes on about universal language, and universal language already exists, and the universal language is a language that expresses mentation by thought.

Speaker J: Mhm.

Robin: And I thought I would kind of do that because this is I have seen various people uh attempt to write about this, and they don't know what they're talking about because they haven't read the words. Yeah. The words are there to read. It's not like these words have somehow been mangled. The words are there on the page, and you actually have to bring together *In Search of the Miraculous* and the *Tales* in order to understand this. You can't do it just with the *Tales*. That that did my head in for quite a while just trying to do it via the *Tales*.

Speaker J: Interesting. Okay, I'm not going to talk anymore, but just to cap this topic, well, maybe not, but mentation by form then is kind of the the kind of unavoidable subjectivity that comes from different people and animals having different experiences. And that is all they know, is the experience that they have had. And those are the forms they know, because that is what has happened to them as specific entities. It's it's it's it's it's subjective in a sense.

Robin: It's subjective completely.

Speaker J: Yeah, totally subjective. Okay. Yeah.

Robin: You've got the situation, and it needs to be it needs to be thought about, because I've thought about this a lot because of wanting to establish a an understanding of things that are in this language of the work, which is what Gurdjieff's talking about. Um, children uh actually educated adults, people that have grown up and been educated for 20, 21 years do not have relative definitions in their heads. Right. They exist almost completely. This is why you get the phenomenon, which is a difficult phenomenon to deal with, where you realize that certain people don't know how to think. And the reason you don't know how to think is you do not have relative connections between the words. You may actually know how to think in mathematics because you may have learned the relative connections between variables in mathematics, and that's a particular, let's say, a niche area where it's actually quite possible to understand. And you'll know if you've had any trouble in mathematics that mathematics is never wrong. Right. It's absolutely never wrong. It's you that's wrong if you do some mathematics and it works out badly. You're the mistake, mathematics isn't. You know, the math is based on axioms that are rock solid. You know, and of course there are different branches of mathematics, so you you'd actually talk about various algebras, but you know that that's that is the way it is. And the same is the truth of of the relative understanding of language, that's how it is. Um, and that means in in various ways, it it means that the way that one actually has to read this book is to start to understand why he's using the words he's using.

Speaker J: Yeah.

Robin: And that's an effort that doesn't stop, because I've been doing it for far too long, really. I didn't mean to be bald. I used to have hair when I started this, but my hair is gone. Relatively speaking.

Stephon: This is very inspiring, uh Robert, in that it brings Wittgenstein to uh to mind, the linguist, and he wrote the Tractatus, and then years later he totally threw it under the bus and stopped doing anything for 10 years, and then came back. He was able to see that, and a lot of people said it was gibberish, and for the most part it was. But he was able to see that and then acknowledge it. When we're speaking now, what comes to heart, as the mind perceives our conversation within this being here, is that the truth, if I'm conversing with someone, first I have to do more listening than try to sift through or synthesize what they're saying through what I think. So, to listen to somebody else or to read Gurdjieff, to actually read him without a knowing, without a trying to fit into my education or my meaning of words is is very important to set that aside because if I'm talking with somebody and I really listen to them and they're telling me about their truth, I can understand more than just the cracks and the crevices of what their words mean. You know, where they're at. Are they open-minded? Are they is there room there for the truth to flourish and to blossom as opposed to being petrified like a tree that turns into a rock? So, to to to even read this or to discuss it, I have to kind of break down a lot within me, as I mentioned about talking with somebody, is there's a truth that can be derived through people both sharing. And if the person somebody was talking about, who doesn't never saw a beach or a mango, how are they going to know? Is that by first sharing this information and then the words we use will be able to



elucidate something with a consensus with who we're talking to. So, see, a lot of times I think people are just in a conversation with themselves, and they want you to partake in it, as opposed to communicating with each other. And Gurdjieff's writings, I think, require for us to do some major modifications to that default that we have as humans in being cerebral. Everything is from our head up and we're trying to decipher this there, but he said the mind, the emotions, and the body. Is to incorporate everything, to feel what somebody's saying as opposed to just the words and get caught up in the cracks of those that that difference. It it it's right here for us. But I believe the self blocks it because it wants everything to fit into what we already got inside of us, and when it doesn't, the self says, "I don't get it," or, "It's not true." But then if we got an eye that sees ourselves, we could say, "Knock it off. Be a receptive for something, and not a projector of all the knowing."

Bobbie: I actually want to go back to uh the words are uh in Gurdjieff, because it takes me several readings, in spite of the fact that I've read it before, it's always new. And so it helps in regard to what you're saying to start right back where Bobby started on page 15, in view of the fact he's beginning to talk about that he accidentally decided to speak on one of his hobbies, and his hobby is the process of human mentation. So, that's what he's talking about right here, anyway, those processes that he thinks he's calling his hobbies. That part was left out in the 1931 version, and he starts uh a little bit further down in the paragraph. In 1931, he says, "From the very beginning," and you can you can you can read the you can read the the way he says it in uh uh down here, "became known to me from the very beginning on the earth it has become usual that every man who, so to say, devotes himself to the field of a conscious thinker should be well informed, while still in the early years of his responsible existence, that man has in general two kinds of mentation, one kind by thoughts for the expression of which subjective words possessing always a relative sense are employed, and another, another kind, proper to man as well as to all animals, called by those same ancient Kurkolans mentation by form." And I wish I knew who the Kurkolans were, but there they are. And then he goes on to say again, "The second kind of mentation, by which, strictly speaking, the exact sense of all writing must also be perceived." I think that's really key right there, uh is is that idea of how uh mentation by form is key to to perceiving writing. So, I don't know if that helps or not, but it simplifies things for me to go back.

Robin: You don't know, it's he's not saying anything other than because for most of your life, if not all of your life, you have been using mentation by form, it isn't possible for you to read the book without reading it through mentation by form. You don't have the ability. It's like most people, it's true that certain amongst us when we were at school, used to use dictionaries to look things up and therefore try to understand the meaning of the words, but we were not very large numbers. Everybody else didn't. You know, and in the lesser schools, people didn't even have dictionaries, because why do you want to teach these people that are only ever going to be fit as welders and things like that, why teach them anything? You know, what's the point in telling them about Shakespeare, after all? And so on and so forth, and that was the way it was. You know, so the very, very small number of people are actually in one way or another educated in a way to understand words by their relative meaning. All the rest of people are, that's all they're capable of, is mentation by form, which means basically that their ability to think is almost zero.

Speaker H: Robert, thank you for that, because it puts into perspective what he says, "The second kind of mentation, by which, strictly speaking, the exact sense of all writing must be perceived." That's not understood, but perceived is what you're saying, right? I have to perceive it by form, but the understanding comes by mentation by thought. Is that right?

Robin: That's right.

Bobbie: That sounds great, Bob.

Speaker H: Thank you.

Stephon: You know, a funny thing, I went to school, and that's when they were pushing people through, and I could not read. My math was okay, could not read. I left school with a fourth-grade reading level. And somehow learned how to read, and how I learned was the context that the words were used, just what you were saying, Robert. That's how I put things together, and to this day, and I say it kind of with a bitterness, cuz I did not get educated, but a large part of it is indoctrination, not education, not taught how to think, is what we're exploring here. But that's how I learned. I learned by paying attention and listening. And that's my vocabulary, everything, comes from that kind of application and absorption, literally engaging and paying attention to where what words fell where within the context of the conversation. So, it's just amazing what the mind can do when it's not educated, but develops in a way to acclimate and to get through life. So, the same thing applies here, it is it wasn't a normal way. I was taught to read by the shape of the words, not what because English is so difficult. Uh, you know, vowels that are uh, you know, silent, this I I could not get it. But here I am today and my vocabulary is okay. I have half a brain and command over half of that. And that seems to I'm doing okay in life. And you guys are helping me more. But I try not to get caught up into what I think so much. Maybe it's is is seeing life through met- meditation by thought and applying that to the uh uh physical, right? Now, the the message here today is we see the beauty in the red pepper and and Robert's hat. You know, we see the beauty there. He's his beret. We see the beauty there. We're drawn to that what we see is beauty, and we don't know what it really is. Now, how are we doing that metaphorically with these readings, with this meeting, with the questions we're asking? Are we getting to the heart of the dynamic of what Gurdjieff is trying to show us here so that we can prime ourselves to be receptacles for the information that will be brought to us as we move along? We have to change our glasses maybe. We have to change, you know, put a rose We have to do something to our perception that will alter and increase and cultivate our capacity to be able to. And that a large part of that, I think, is getting ourselves out of the way and what we think we think we know.

Bobbie: Well, I got to say, I love the Transcaucasian Kurd. I love that as a story. And uh I really am happy that Bobby pointed out what direction is he going in, and uh Robert's I never thought about that, uh, but I I also wanted to uh just ask about page 19. I was like, is this the first time that he talks about great nature, the common mother? I don't remember him using that term before earlier, but there it is capitalized, "Great Nature, the common mother," and I can't help thinking about the Absolute, the Father. But uh Is this the first time we see that reference?

Robin: No, we see it on page five. Not as it is done by other like myself by pet destroyer of nature's good with a capital N. That's the first time that nature is mentioned. Uh and then Great Nature, that's the second time he mentioned. He didn't call it Great Nature before. Nature has been, let's say, promoted between page five and page 19.

Bobbie: And and feminized, maybe?

Robin: Also, there's I'm glad you pointed that, because it's I was pondering as well while Bobby was reading it. It's very interesting to see uh to conceive of fruit as a gift of great nature.

Bobbie: Well, I don't think we should ignore, and I loved your people's comment about uh the moral of this story of the of the Kurd, which is, I'm gonna eat it all because I paid for it. I paid my last two cents for it. So, heck no, I'm not gonna stop eating it if it uh kills me. So, uh that's sort of like uh I mean, he's applying it to his book, but uh I mean, that tendency to uh consume it all because you paid for it.

Stephen: There's something else, Sandy. On page 20, he said, um, "Thanks only to that particular

human inherency, which I mentioned, at first, the principle of which I intended when I decided to use it as the foundation of a new literary form." What's the principle of which he mentions?

Robin: I think it is trying to read through the I might be wrong, but the way that I reference what he's saying there is the principle is, if you pay for something, then you will use it.

Stephen: And that's the new literary form of of what, of cutting the cutting the pages?

Robin: No, it's the new literary form of the fact that you are going to have to read this book many, many times, in many, many ways, and you're going to pay the hell out of trying to get the meaning out of it.

Stephen: Okay. And we're paying with attention, right?

Robin: I don't know how you're going to get meaning out of it without attention. Maybe you can throw it at an AI engine and just say, "Go on, robot, I want to understand it. Summarize it in two paragraphs."

Bobbie: Explain this, Lossy. I I will I will say just real fast that what you guys are saying reminds me of something Steven Aronson used to say to me, and it it's like it really struck home to me when he said it. And it's like it's a biblical thing. Uh, the workman is worth his labor, the price of his labor. The workman is worth his salt. And uh basically, Steven convinced me, if you are using someone's services and have a teacher, you need to pay them. You need, however. And uh it's it's And And Gurdjieff is our great teacher here with this book, so you pay it now, if not uh with money, with uh reading and studying. So, I I but I love that whole concept, I guess.

Speaker E: Through the first readings of this, I did not pick it up that he also took from his provision bag bread. Now, bread is one thing that can alleviate a hot mouth of pepper, and you know, in this case often I associate bread to be something of a finer nature as with the Eucharist, but he did not he was not using all the assets he had brought with him. He could have maybe gotten through them with with less pain.

Robin: This This brings us to the Christian symbolism that runs right throughout the Kurd story. It's just rotten with it, more than you think, um, in there in terms of the Christian symbolism because bread in the Christian symbolism, that's what the devil was tempting Christ to turn stones into. And bread is also a symbol of knowledge of a kind. And you you will notice that, um, that Christ when he was asked to do the catering, fed the multitude with five loaves of bread and two fishes. Now, some people say he was a little bit stingy, but other people say they all had enough. And it's bread. So, this is a knowledge with uh a hot taste to it.

Stephen: Hm.

Robin: It begins with fruit, and you should take the um, um, the statement by Christ, "By their fruit ye shall know them." It's this particular fruit, which you can get in the town, you can get in life. You can get a hold of this particular fruit in life, but nobody wants to eat it much. But it's attractive to this guy with a magnetic center. He's obviously got a magnetic center, one that looks at hot peppers and thinks, "That's exactly what I need." Now, I know you're apple. Steven would just have been eating apples and stuff like that, because that's what he had. He didn't His example wasn't going to the pepper tree to get the peppers.

Bobbie: I actually want to go back to uh why he's our Kurd. Look on page 18, and uh he explains uh "I remember the story which I heard quite early in youth, and in subsequent years uh engendered an enduring and inextinguishable impulse of tenderness. I think it would be useful for

me and also for you if I relate the story to you in detail." So, it's a story he heard in his youth, and it becomes ours in the sense of uh he's relating it because it'll be of use to both of us. But also, I'm thinking could it also be our in the sense of third person our pronoun like uh, "We are not amused." Is this our Kurd?

Robin: Oh, you mean English royalty?

Bobbie: Exactly. Victorian hour.

Robin: Yes, English royalty wrote the tales, Gurdjieff just put his name on it.

Bobbie: Somebody had to do it. No, but I mean that's uh I mean that I never thought about why our way's on our Kurd. It's just he is.

Speaker E: The answer the question, um, you already know. Horror is from Latin, is tremble or shudder.

Robin: Yeah.

Speaker E: Tremble or shudder.

Stephen: I see it's really late, but I really want to throw this in, too. In the 1931 edition, he was buying the fruit for six groschen instead of two cents. So, that's a really big change. Six groschen would have been 12 cents, and I'm just wondering I mean, I can see why he would bring it closer to the uh biblical reference, but wonder what the basically reference to six or  $6 * 2 = 12$  uh would be at that earlier one. But I'll leave you with that.

Robin: I can I can tell you what the reference is. It's the story of a carpenter who was a not a wealthy carpenter. And um, someone came to him and paid him for some work he'd done, and they overpaid by six groschen. So, he went for when he realized what had happened, he went to pay them, and it took, I don't know, he had to walk 10 mi or something to give them back the six groschen, which doesn't amount to much. And somebody asked him why he did that, and he said, "In the days of Noah, um, all they cared about was money, and God drowned them all." So, six groschen, I was paid it, and I have to pay it back. So, that's It's a different story.



# **AI Meeting Summary**

## **US Session**

### **Quick recap**

The group engaged in discussions about Gurdjieff's concepts of mentation, perception, and understanding, exploring how different cultural and linguistic backgrounds influence interpretation of words and ideas. They analyzed various symbolic stories and allegories in the text, including the Kurd's experience and its connection to biblical themes of sacrifice and selflessness. The group also examined etymological insights and discussed methods for understanding complex texts, emphasizing the importance of context, attention, and emotional engagement in interpretation.

### **Summary**

#### **Understanding Human Mentation Variations**

Robin and Barbara discussed the process of human mentation, highlighting the existence of two types: mentation by thought and mentation by form. Robin emphasized the importance of understanding that different geographical locations and races can lead to varied interpretations of the same word or idea. He also shared a story about a Trans-Caucasian Kurd who, despite experiencing discomfort, continued to eat red pepper pods after purchasing them, illustrating the principle that once money is spent, the item must be used to completion. Robin advised readers to reflect seriously before engaging with his writings, as they may not conform to conventional literary styles, and he expressed his certainty about his career and personal strength despite past and future adversaries.

#### **Kurd Visualization and Ego Reflection**

The group discussed their visualizations of a Kurd walking to the southeast, possibly towards Austin, and shared experiences with spicy food. They explored themes of ego and personal growth, with Stefon<sup>©</sup> reflecting on how the ego can cloud judgment and prevent learning. Stephen raised questions about the distinction between mentation by form and mentation by thought, noting the challenges of understanding these concepts despite previous explanations.

#### **Understanding Mentation by Form**

The group discussed the concept of "mentation by form" and its relationship to language and perception. Robert explained that this form of mentation, which animals also use, is based on subjective experiences and physical forms, while "mentation by thought" involves understanding words in their relative context. They explored how different cultures and individuals may perceive the same concept differently due to their unique experiences and linguistic frameworks. The discussion highlighted the importance of reading Gurdjieff's work with an open mind, acknowledging the relativity of language and the need to understand words in their intended context rather than

through preconceived notions.

### **Interpreting Beelzebub's Tales**

The group discussed reading and understanding Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson, focusing on how perception and attention are crucial for interpreting complex texts. Robin explained that understanding comes through thought rather than mere perception, while Stefon shared his personal experience of learning to read through context and attention rather than formal education. Sandy and Robin analyzed the progression of terms like "Great Nature" and "Common Mother" in the text, noting how nature is presented with increasing emphasis and feminization. The group also explored the moral of a story about courageously consuming a costly fruit, which Robert interpreted as symbolizing the reader's commitment to paying attention and effort in deciphering the book's meaning.

### **Christian Symbolism and Perception**

The group discussed the Christian symbolism in the Kurd story, particularly focusing on bread as a symbol of knowledge and the devil's temptation of Christ to turn stones into bread. They explored the concept of "mentation by form" and its relationship to perception and understanding, with Richard questioning the exact meaning of this phrase. Stephen suggested that "must" in the original text might mean "should be perceived" rather than "have to perceive," and offered to share a relevant paragraph from "In Search of the Miraculous" to further clarify the concept.

### **Overcoming Communication Barriers Through Empathy**

The group discussed challenges in communication and understanding, focusing on how language and subjective interpretations can hinder meaningful dialogue. Robin emphasized the importance of empathy and putting oneself in another's position to understand their perspective, while Stefon highlighted the role of emotional engagement and listening with the heart to overcome these barriers. The discussion touched on the need for clarity in defining terms, such as "love," to ensure effective communication, and the group explored ways to transcend subjective interpretations to achieve a deeper understanding.

### **Gurdjieff's Three Types of Love**

The group discussed Gurdjieff's concept of love, focusing on his classification of three types: love of consciousness, love of feelings, and love of body. They explored how Gurdjieff's writing style involves multiple associations within paragraphs, aiming to rewire readers' mental associations. Janet shared her understanding that Gurdjieff challenges readers to think on three dimensions simultaneously - intellectual, emotional, and sensory - while balancing objective reasoning. The discussion concluded with Robin explaining that "Trans-Caucasian" likely refers to Europe and North America, as Gurdjieff's work was primarily intended for readers in those regions.

### **Kurd's Act: Symbolic Selflessness**

The group discussed the symbolic meaning of the Kurd's act of spending his last two cents, which Sandy and Robin interpreted as a reference to the biblical story of the widow's mites, representing selfless giving despite small value. Robin explained that allegory is rare in European and North American literature, using Shakespeare as an example, and noted that the Kurd's story mirrors the theme of sacrifice and selflessness. Richard questioned the connection between the Kurd's story and the biblical parable, but Robin clarified that Gertriff was using the image of the widow to highlight someone who gives everything, rather than aligning the Kurd story directly with the New Testament narrative.

### **Ancient Words and Modern Meanings**

The group discussed the meaning of various words and concepts in a book, focusing on the interpretation of phrases like "to your fancy" and "favorites." Robin explained that in ancient Greek, "phantasia" meant appearance or perception, not whim or liking, and suggested that the author uses the root meaning of words rather than modern definitions. The conversation touched on themes of sacrifice and letting go, with Stephen mentioning he sold his personality for \$6, and the group explored the idea of giving up material possessions to gain spiritual insight. They also discussed the concept of the "sunk cost fallacy" in relation to the book's influence on readers.

### **Etymological Analysis of Text Words**

The group discussed etymological insights from their ongoing study of a text, focusing on words like "fancy," "favor," and "horror." Robin shared his methodical approach to analyzing every word in the text, including etymological research, and mentioned his goal to compile comprehensive notes that others could reference. Sandy raised questions about the meaning of "our Kurd" and the significance of the price being 6 Grosian, which Robin explained was related to a Jewish-Russian story about overpayment and the principle of returning money. The group also explored the symbolism of horns and their association with wisdom in the text.