



# THE MARK

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The Church of Conscious Harmony  
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# Being Unreasonable In Love

by Tim Cook

Back in the 1980's a man named Morris Berman wrote a book called *Coming to Our Senses*. What he pointed out is that we are not related to our senses. And that what our senses seem to be reporting to us is not what an objective observer would see, that between the sensory report and the experience of ourselves is a whole train of logic of western reason, and this reason acts as an intermediary that shapes the mirror of the mind to reflect something that actually isn't there. So the senses which seem to be just operative principles that objectively report circumstances as they are, aren't available to us after the age of seven or so, when the mystery goes away. We start thinking and having problems, having to put up a self that is over and against other selves. And so these senses that we rely on to know that this is a this, and that is a that, have at their base a flawed sense of perception called reason.

Now reason is a wonderful tool. It's a wonderful tool for dealing with the world of objects and things and facts, and things that can be quantified and compared and weighed and balanced and analyzed. But it really takes in a very small slice of what is. "Scientists have yet to prove...scientists have yet to discover...." Well if that was the entire story then that would be wonderful, but it is not the whole story. And since the time known as the Enlightenment, when reason

took over as being the most supreme human faculty, there has been a decline for human experience. Because the rest of the human that isn't reasonable – it's even unreasonable — is totally left out. It isn't accounted for. And so the qualities of life, the qualities of feeling the subtle shadings of love, joy, peace, patience....none of these is accounted for in reason.

We've got a truncated world we relate to through our medium of logic, our screen of logic that only lets certain information in and screens the rest out as being irrelevant. We're living in a truncated experience. And reports of our senses are not reaching us at all. Our senses are having to do a bank shot off our logic to penetrate our screen of logic in order to tell us anything. And so the awe and wonder of childhood in which we could really see a blue sky, or smell the lilacs or new mown grass or fresh cut hay... and you could really smell them when you were a kid...all those things are numinous experiences to children. What happens to us? We disappear. We become reasonable. And in becoming reasonable we become dead. Dead to the qualities of life because they are not reasonable...and you can't get paid for them...and nobody will think you're cool if you just have a bunch of qualities. Only you can experience qualities. You cannot display them to anyone. You can't

be known for them. It is a very personal thing. Now something in us is longing for a more real experience because the rest of us won't be left out. Even though we base our lives on being reasonable, the unconscious, the emotions, the body itself all want to have a say and eventually even though they've been repressed, they come back and they reveal themselves to us. And they do it sometimes in the strangest way.

When have you been most unreasonable in your life? Think about it. It's when you are in love. When you are in love, reason doesn't matter anymore. You are in love. A suspension of doubt. An opening of the heart. The mind often clears up in love and the skies are blue again for a little while. Did you notice that I said for a little while? Sure, because we can't stay in love until we've done some real good work on ourselves, clearing out the debris from that screen of logic that we've been carrying around and adding to all these years. And so, in love is the state of truth. In love, is the state of reality. In love is what God has made us for and of. And the thing we heard from the *Psalms of Psalms*, that little book in the Bible that has baffled so many people — What is that doing in here? It's a love poem! — has been heralded by contemplatives and mystics in all of Christianity as being the supreme description of our union with God. John of the Cross wrote tremendous commentaries on the *Psalms of*

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*Psalms.* All of the mystics have loved it because it describes the souls longing for love beyond reason. Where is my Beloved? I've got to have my Beloved! Have you seen my Beloved?

Paul wrote that all of creation groans with an inexpressible longing waiting for the sons and daughters of God to be born. There is love in us that wants to be born and we are squashing it with reason. It is not reasonable to feel this way. It is not reasonable to have these longings that transcend this world. To long for something we can't see. To long for something that no scientist can prove with a formula, or duplicate in an experiment. How foolish is that! That's just the kind of fool that God is looking for. Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. The wisdom of God is love and is utter insanity to the world. And so we have as a foolish model those years of young love that we went through when we were kids learning to have our hearts opened again. Oh my God, we did crazy things! But, oh the feeling...we've always wanted to get that feeling back. I will never forget the first time I kissed a girl. It was magic. Under a streetlight after a dance on a Saturday night in an alley next to her house. I can still see the ivy growing up the telephone pole. My heart was beating....oh my God, we are kissing! A door opened. I didn't know a person could feel that way before that moment. All of a sudden there was a whole new realm of embodied life for young Tim Cook in Readville, PA. I didn't know that feeling was there before. Because since I was a young kid, I was captured by reason and was trying to look like I knew what I was doing so I could fit in with the crowd. That

passion that wakened in me, I could not stop thinking about this girl....I think her name was Pat. Within two days, she was holding hands with someone else and not talking to me, and I found out what the opposite swing of the pendulum of being in love is. I was crushed. Oh, the ache inside. And the longing, oh please let it not be true. Please!!!! Do you know what I'm talking about? Sure you do. The saints have been touched by God like that. Just like that. That's why they are saints. Made them crazy. Made them totally dissatisfied with reason and logic and all things that you can count and add and hold on to, show off to people. It didn't mean a thing anymore because now another door had been opened in their being and they knew the love of God. And nothing, nothing, nothing would ever satisfy them again.

After I graduated from college I lived in Toronto, and I can remember the very day. It was like my first kiss. I was sitting at my desk and I had a book in my hand called the *Wisdom of Insecurity* by Alan Watts. And when I read a description of why music is beautiful, and why you kill the music if you hold onto each note, something happened in my mind and it was as though I could see my mind swivel on its axis 180 degrees. And I thought, oh my God I've been seeing everything backwards. Oh my God, and a door opened down here. A door opened. Suddenly the world looked different and I felt different and my values were all upside down and I didn't care anymore what anybody thought of me. First time since high school that I wasn't comparing how I was acting to what seemed acceptable. Now I

was a shy person at the time. And I fell in love with the touch of God in my heart and for three weeks I started talking to strangers, picking up hitch hikers, talking to cleaning ladies and postal workers and elevator operators. I was in love with every one of them. And I was in a new world. Well, it went away after about three weeks. But what God told me was, that was my freebie. That was my kiss for free, and now I had to find out how to make it permanent. Because once that feeling comes to us, there's nothing else that is important.

We suddenly know something that transcends the physical world. We know the touch of the experience of God that is no longer dogma or doctrine or theology — it is an experience. Once we've had this experience we know why the saints and martyrs acted so crazy.....they were in love and they knew something. They were having an experience that transcends the world of logic reported by the senses and enters into a domain which is usually repressed in people, the domain of the heart, where we have eyes to see another way. The eyes of the heart. The eyes of faith. We hear a different way where the mystery opens up and we begin to see life in a totally different way. And we become inexplicable to those around us. Just like we do when we fall in love in our puppy dog way. We no longer want to gossip. We are no longer interested in defending ourselves against being misunderstood. It's easier just to leave our heart open than be taken wrongly. Because the issue no longer is one of right or wrong but

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one of how do I keep my heart open? How do I allow this heart to stay open so that flood of love that's touching the inside flows out into my world and touches and kisses the people I look at, the people I see in cars, on corners with signs, in stores, in churches. There He is in His distressing disguise...my lover, my Beloved. He is the spirit, and He's in human beings and He is in the sky and He is in the clouds and He is in the rain. And He is in every one of our hearts and He touches us from time to time to remind us of true value.

So here is Mary Magdalene. She has been party to history being split in half. Lightning struck the earth. A comet came to earth. An asteroid hit the earth in the person of Jesus Christ and love came to the physical earth and it stood on human feet and it showed what love can do. And she saw it. She saw the dead raised. She saw withered hands being restored. The lame being made to walk. The deaf being made to hear and the blind given sight. She heard stories of things that happened when she wasn't present. She knew about walking on water. She knew about turning water into wine. She knew that for love itself, nothing was impossible. But now, it had all been shattered. And she was in the garden with the tomb that was empty and her whole world had fallen apart. Her heart had been opened, and she had been touched by this amazing love and now all of a sudden, it was in tatters. And on top of that, the traces of His presence were gone. Just gone. I can't even imagine it. I love Thomas Keating with a love that I can

scarcely even understand. I've loved my teachers and what they've brought me and what they've given to me. I love these people. To imagine them suddenly taken away is more than heart rending. Can you imagine Mary Magdalene wanting to just gnash her teeth and tear her garments and go crazy? So much so that she didn't recognize the man standing in front of her, because she was looking at something else. She was looking at her expectations of the tomb. She expects the body to be in the tomb, and now she is distraught. She expects the voice that speaks to her to be the gardener and she dismisses him until He says her name: *Mary*. Nobody ever said that name like He did and she turned around and said *Teacher*. And her heart overflowed with the reality of His presence. And the first thing she did is the first thing that you would want to do when you come to love and what I tried to do with Pat. I wanted to hold on to the experience. I wanted to keep it mine forever. What does He say? *Let go of me*. He had not yet ascended to His father.

We know what the subsequent events were, that she did let go, and He continued to manifest His life to all kinds of people, some of whom never laid eyes on Him, like Paul. And yet Paul saw Him and Paul experienced Him and Paul talked to Him in a non-corporeal exchange. A true dialectic between two individuals happened between Christ and Paul. And one of them was invisible to the senses, yet absolutely real to the experience. And Christ today is present in His risen form in the heart of every single one of us. Why aren't we

seeing him? Because our love is longing somewhere else. It's feeling forsaken and broken hearted. It isn't getting what it expected. And it is missing the love that is in our hearts saying our own names. And it is saying them with the very same ache that we feel.

I love logic and reason, but don't you think something is missing here? Every one of us knows it. And we've been trying with all of our addictions and all of our acquisitiveness and consumerism to fill in this gaping wound, a wound that is calling for meaning and truth. We've tried everything we could. We didn't realize that He is standing here all the time saying our own name with this ache in our hearts. Oh, He loves us. And through His love doors open into realities that the senses haven't dreamed of and logic can't contain or even begin to indicate or describe. So how do we allow His love...how do we find our lover? The first thing we do is make ourselves available to it because the soul is passive. It is receptive. The soul is not an active vehicle. It can't go out chasing Him around. It has to kind of open and yearn and it's longing and crying is the very thing that draws Him in. Where are you my love? Where are you my Beloved? In the *Psalms of Psalms* it said, I hardly quit looking for Him before I found Him. He was right there. He was right there for Mary and He's right there for us. And yet reason tells us that we are separate from each other. It tells us that we are separate from God. That we are separate from safety and peace and good. And this is false. The lie of separation is the fundamental lie that is the father of all the rest of the lies. If we can get

that there is no separation and that this is love's world and love wants us more than we want it, then we can let our lover pursue us. He's here. We are just busy. We haven't really yearned... we haven't really longed...we haven't really allowed the touches that He's given us to be information that is bigger than the promises of the world of objects and things.

During the dry months I was longing for rain. And what a beautiful thing it was for my soul to hear the rain when it finally came. One of the prophets says, "My soul is longing for you like a thirsty deer by a stream....I'm longing for you." It's the longing that does the work. It's the

yearning that does everything. When we are full and satisfied, God can't get at us because we are busy. But it is in our need, in our hunger, in our passion for His love that He meets us and He meets us experientially, so that we don't have to wonder if it was Him, so we don't have to get in our heads about it. Was that actually a spiritual experience? Because the head wants to do that, you know. This is between us and God. Very intimate, this heart stuff. Very close and personal. The desire with which we desire God is His desire for us. Think about that for a moment. We didn't even make the desire. This is a no brainer. And that's the problem. ☺

## SEEDS:

### The Man Who Sweats Under His Mask

If we want to understand alienation, we have to find where its deepest taproot goes – and we have to realize that this root will always be there. Alienation is inseparable from culture, from civilization, and from life in society. It is not just a feature of "bad" cultures, "corrupt" civilizations, or urban society. It is not just a dubious privilege reserved for some people in society.... Alienation begins when culture divides me against myself, puts a mask on me, gives me a role I may or may not want to play. Alienation is complete when I become completely identified with my mask, totally satisfied with my role, and convince myself that any other identity or role is inconceivable. The man who sweats under his mask, whose role makes him itch with discomfort, who hates the division in himself, is already beginning to be free. But God help him if all he wants is the mask the other man is wearing, just because the other one does not seem to be sweating or itching. Maybe he is no longer human enough to itch. (Or else he pays a psychiatrist to scratch him.)

By Thomas Merton

Originally published in *The Literary Essays of Thomas Merton* p. 381

## March Calendar

Visit [consciousharmony.org](http://consciousharmony.org)  
for a complete listing of events

### Special Events

Welcoming Prayer Workshop

Mar 20 9am-3pm &

Mar 21 1pm-3pm

Register in the office. \$30

1/2-Day Centering Prayer Retreat

April 3 8:30am-1pm

### Monthly

Tuesday Enrichment 7:30pm

Mar 2 Sacred Chanting

Mar 16 Gurdjieff Music

Community Workday

Mar 27 9am-12noon

### Weekly

Prayer Circle

Wednesdays 9:15am

Contemplative Lunch

Wednesdays 12noon

Mid-Week Communion Service

Wednesdays 6-7pm

Introduction to the Work Class

Thursdays 7:30pm

### Daily

Weekday Centering Prayer Service

M-F 7-7:35am in Theosis Chapel

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# We Open A Way To A Deeper Experience

by Barbara Cook

Each year since I began my practice of Centering Prayer I have become more aligned with the desire of the Holy Spirit to help me empty myself of self. I am increasingly aware that the false self that I cobbled together in childhood for protection, is now the obstacle that stands between me and God's constant and unconditional love. It also blocks intimacy with others and with life itself. Everyone with a Centering Prayer practice becomes aware of the false self. It is revealed to us through the gentle grace of God's love and by the wonderful teachings we have been given by Fr. Thomas Keating.

Lent provides an opportunity that is especially relished by many of us who are budding contemplatives. It is a time to put aside some attachment that helps hold our false selves in place. During Lent we "die" to some habit for forty days. Through that small gesture of dying, we make room for increased awareness of our Beloved. The space we create helps us see how much we put things, persons and objects before Christ and our true selves. Sometimes we even have to struggle a bit to make that small gesture of love and sacrifice. But this effort helps to strengthen our faith. Through releasing this small consolation, we open a way to a deeper experience of joining Christ in resurrection in the glorious Easter celebration. Even if you didn't choose to participate in a forty day mini-death for your false self this year, your twice-daily Centering Prayer practice still sustains the process. In God's silent embrace we die daily to the false self during each prayer period.

As I'm writing this we are still in the middle of Lent, our time of going into the desert with Jesus. Yet the new life of spring is already bursting forth into flowers as if it can't wait to shout the Good News ... He Is Risen!!! I am already looking forward to the events of Easter week. We will have our annual Taize service, our Good Friday service and then, a 24-hour prayer vigil. On Easter morning we all gather for our sunrise service and a contemplative walk with our Lord. Then we'll have our Lectio Divina service, a quiet time to ponder the events of the day, and finally our Celebration service at 10 am.

Our Lenten preparation is our participation in the dryness of the desert experience. It helps us prepare to experience the rich fullness of Easter in all its glory and promise. It is our foretaste of the interior resurrection that awaits us when we discover and learn to live in The Kingdom of Heaven within us; the promise of the prayer and the spiritual journey.

As with Jesus, we take this journey not just for ourselves but for all those on the way, and for this poor world of ours. Jesus offered Himself so that the whole human race could experience love, forgiveness and union with the Father. But each one of us must personally choose to follow Him by picking up our own personal crosses. We must do it now while we still have the light of day.

I pray that each of us will have a deeply felt experience during this season of preparation for Christ's passion, death and resurrection. ☸

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March - Eucharist

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## PASSION SUNDAY

Christ on the donkey, waving aside the cheers of the crowd,  
is riding to His death. This is His way of revealing  
the heart of God once and for all in such a way  
that no one can ever doubt God's infinite mercy.  
The celebrant says over the bread and wine, "This is my Body."  
The power of those words extends to each of us  
as Christ awakens and celebrates His great sacrifice  
in our own hearts saying,  
'YOU ARE MY BODY.  
YOU ARE MY BLOOD.'  
You, with all of humanity, are manifestations in the flesh  
of the new creation.

*cf* Thomas Keating, *Awakenings*



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## The Eucharist

by Pamela Begeman

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I have always been captivated by the beauty of human hands. I love the form and movement of people's hands. Just like the human face, they inform me of the history, emotions and disposition of the person before me. Hands communicate both the essence of humanness and the acquired enculturation and personality. Like the face, hands *transmit*, communicating both things said and unsaid.

Hands are also an essential element for the transmission of the sacrament of Communion. They are part of the mystery: The hands of Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to His disciples. The hands of the minister do the same. The hands of Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to His disciples. The hands of the minister do the same. They are the same hands.

Hands of farmers and laborers planted the seed and harvested the wheat for the bread. Hands of vineyard workers did the same with grapes for the wine. Potters made the plates and the cups on the communion table, and the table was made by the hands of a wood craftsman.

Human hands connected to human hearts have throughout the centuries participated in the

Eucharist – preparing it, serving it, receiving it. In each of these human hands is the imprint of the Divine ... the divine DNA of Jesus Christ, our inmost center and Self. The interbeing of the Divine and human is as true in us as it is in the Eucharist. “Augustine of Hippo defined a Christian sacrament as ‘a visible sign of an invisible reality.’ The Anglican Book of Common Prayer speaks of them as ‘an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible Grace.’ Therefore a sacrament ... conveys divine grace, blessing, or sanctity upon the participant. It is a tangible symbol which communicates an intangible reality” (see *sacrament* - Wikipedia). As Thomas Keating affirms, we are fully divine and fully human, just as Jesus Christ. The same pattern is recognized and celebrated in the Eucharist – the fully divine nature of all material reality revealed and remembered in both the elements and in the recipient. Grace is present and transmitted in this pattern of interbeing.

What is the expression of mercy-filled grace that comes through the Eucharist?

- The Eucharist is merciful because it reminds me I am forgiven for sin – for living and acting separate from God as if God is not

Ultimate Reality. How am I forgiven? Because Jesus intended it 2000 years ago when he said “this is the cup of forgiveness” and this intention still transforms us to this day through the Eucharist. In his letter to CCH that Tim read to the congregation recently, our friend Frenchie quoted Herman Hesse's definition of mercy as “forgiveness in action.” What a perfect description of the Eucharist! In this participatory act of mercy, Christ unconditionally accepts us and heals us in our mysterious interpenetration with His body and His blood.

- The Eucharist is merciful because it causes me to Remember who I am, and who God is, and who I am in God – “Whenever you do this, remember me.” Once again as I come to the table, I am mercifully awakened from the trance and sleep of ordinary life to the truth of God's presence and action in all life, in all creation.

- The Eucharist is merciful because it reveals the mystery of the Incarnation over and over again – the *incarnatio continua* (R. Panikkar) in me and in all creation. Christ is born again in me and I am reborn in Christ as I come to full self-awareness of the deepest mystery of my being.

- The Eucharist is merciful

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because it is a tangible form of God's presence, action and love for us, here and now. By the transmission of Grace through the literal and spiritual ingestion and digestion of the elements, we are fed spiritual Food for the journey, Food for our awakening. As Tim often says, through the Eucharist God is literally feeding His God-lets. Jesus Christ remains with us here and now and through all eternity. We are not alone and we are given everything we need for our transformation into Love itself.

Our Communion Prayer here at CCH leads us through this awakening ... to the transmission of grace ...

*Abba, we thank you that we know you hear us now and we know that you always hear us. It's you who are giving us words, you who are teaching us to pray, and you who are giving us the faith to pray in that lets us know and be certain that you always hear and answer when we ask.*

We pray in faith to God who hears ... and we claim in faith God who answers. We're aware again of the ever-present and intimate relationship with our Beloved.

*And Abba, we ask: Pour out your Spirit on these elements, that we might recognize, receive and respond to them as the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ. Let them communicate his body to our bodies and his blood to our blood. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, Lord, and transform us in your love. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.*

We pray to awaken to the

already present Presence of Jesus Christ in the bread and wine. We pray to be transformed once again through Divine Love. And we pray this through the human nature of Jesus, the same essential human nature in us.

*During supper on the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread. He broke it, gave it to his disciples and said, "Take this all of you and eat it, this is my body which will be given up for you." This is the body of Christ.*

The body of Christ is given for us and becomes our bodies. Christ once again incarnates in a human body – ours! *Incarnatio continua.*

*When supper was ended he took the cup. And again he gave God thanks and praise. He gave the cup to his disciples and said, "Take this all of you and drink from it. This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Whenever you do this, remember me. This is the blood of Christ."*

Everyone: drink your fill of my promise – that you are all already forgiven and loved! I will never leave you. This is the reminder I left for you so you will remember. I am with you always as love itself ... at the heart of your very self.

*Lord Jesus, living and eternal Christ. We feel your risen presence as the life that pervades and yet transcends our bodies and our minds. We realize you are the way and the truth and we thank you for giving us your body and your blood. May our*

*participation in these divine mysteries transform us into one in your mystical body, the true body of Christ. For the glory of God our father, for the glory of his kingdom here on earth, and so that our joy may be complete. We pray this in your holy and precious name.*

In our Communion prayer, we move from praying for grace to receiving grace, from duality to "feeling the risen presence" as our very life. Our minds and hearts are opened and in union with the merciful love of God. We wake up to our participation in the mystery of Christ present in the Eucharist and in our very being. We are transformed from the separative self-sense into one in the mystical body of Christ.

The very presence of the Eucharist over 2000 years after the physical presence of Jesus Christ on this planet is the tangible evidence of God's infinite mercy toward humankind. The love of God is always and everywhere pouring itself out in material and eternal ways, but most definitely in the presence and celebration of the Eucharist among us today.

During the first Eucharist I attended at CCH about 13 years ago, I cried throughout the whole celebration. It was my own profound experience of the prodigal returning home to this truth after decades of living in a 'far-off country.' It was so excruciatingly beautiful and true I almost could not bear its overwhelming Presence and gift of merciful love. God *is* real and ever-present. Our participation in the Eucharist is the prodigal experience of remembering and returning to this truth. ☉



# The Work

*Inner Silence*

When you are in an unpleasant state, if you observe yourself over some considerable time, you will notice that all sorts of different groups of unpleasant 'I's try to deal with it in succession and make something out of it. This is because negative 'I's live by being negative. Their life consists in negative thinking or negative feeling—that is, in providing you with unpleasant thoughts and feelings. It is their delight to do so for it is their life. In the Work, the enjoyment of negative states must be observed sincerely, especially the secret enjoyment of them. The reason is that if a man enjoys being negative, in whatever forms, and they are legion, he can never separate from them. You cannot separate yourself from what you have a secret affection for. The case actually is that you identify with the negative 'I's through secret affection and so feel *their enjoyment*, for whatever you identify with you become....

...It is necessary to observe *inner talking* and from where it is coming. Wrong inner talking is the breeding-ground not only of many future unpleasant states but also of wrong outer talking. You know that there is in the Work what is called the practice of *inner silence*. The practice and meaning of inner silence is like

this: first, it must be about something quite distinct and definite; and second, it is like not touching it. That is, you cannot practice inner silence in any vague general way, save perhaps as an experiment for a time. But you can practice it rigidly in regard to some distinct and definite thing, something you know and see quite clearly. Someone once asked: "Is practicing inner silence the same as not letting something come into your mind?" The answer is no. It is not the same. What you are practicing inner silence about is already in the mind and you must be aware of it, but you must not *touch* it with your inner speech, your inner tongue. Your outer literal tongue likes to touch sore places, as when a tooth hurts. So does your inner tongue. But if it does, the sore thing in your mind flows into your inner speech and unwraps itself as *inner talking* in every direction. (A)

Pages 214-215, *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky*, by Maurice Nicoll. For more information and experience with these teachings, you are invited to attend the *Introduction to the Work* classes held every Thursday at 7:30 pm at The Church of Conscious Harmony.



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