

A Grandchild's Odyssey

EXPLORATIONS IN ACTIVE MENTATION
RE-MEMBERING GURDJIEFF'S TEACHING

Keith A. Buzzell



The third:
the conscious striving
to know ever more and more
concerning the laws of World-creation
and World-maintenance.

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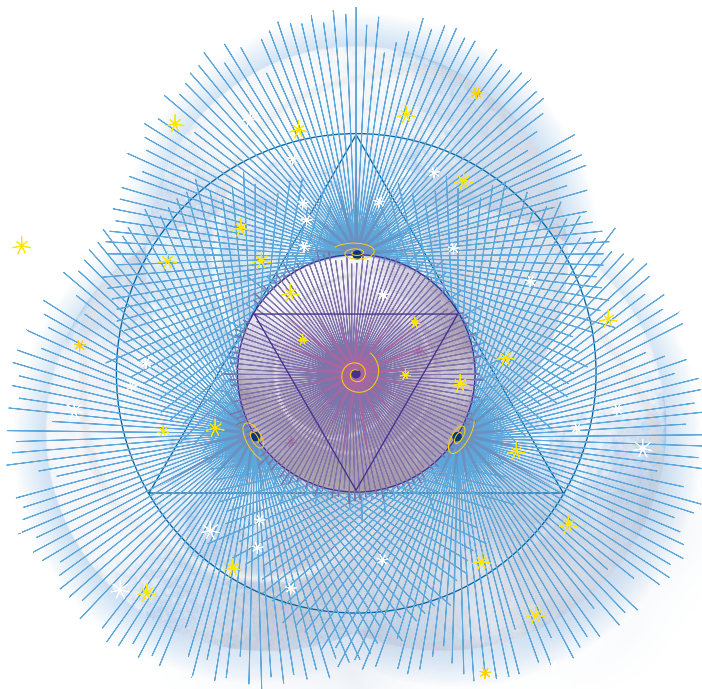
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TO ALL SEEKERS, LEARNERS AND STRIVERS

The third obligonian striving: "... the conscious striving to know ever more and more concerning the laws of World-creation and World-maintenance."¹

"... And only thirdly—try and fathom the gist of my writings."¹¹

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1 Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch. "An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man" or "Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson," *All and Everything/First Series*: Facsimile republication (Aurora: Two Rivers Press, 1993), p v. In further references, we will use *Beelzebub's Tales*, *The Tales* and *BT*.

2 *Ibid.*, p 183.

DEDICATION PAGE ENDNOTES

I Gurdjieff, *Beelzebub's Tales*, 386.

II *Ibid.*, vi.



“Beelzebub himself had to sweat to *understand* what he already *knew*.”^I

“Common aim is stronger than blood.”^{II}

“To be alive is a unique miracle—to have the possibility of Being in place of non-Being. Think of what it has cost Nature in the preparation of planetary conditions, the long periods of experiment perhaps, so that, in addition to serving her, we might become sons of the father. And in return, what do we do?”^{III}

“Man still has a conscience. It is possible for us, we are told, to unbury this organ which is in touch with that which is higher. That is, it is possible for me to have this, as it is called, ‘representative of the Creator’ in me. In fact it is already there—waiting... waiting....”^{IV}

“We have to begin by realizing that we do not know what others need.”^V

CHAPTER 13

THE TASK

There is always a great task to be undertaken whenever the Work appears in the life of mankind. The availability of esoteric knowledge and method, to quite ordinary folk like you and me, is an astonishing *accident* in the line of our lives and seems directly tied to whatever crisis requires the overt manifestation of Work. The degree to which you and I can be helpmates in that task is a primary determinant of what we may come to in our own potential self-transformation. Said in another way, we can become part of that great Work impulse only if we give our sustained effort, in value, actions and reason, to goals that lie beyond our individual lives. We cannot grow *unless* we are a part of that great *impulse-of-Work*. Worse yet, if our egoism is fed by a distorted, non-resonant aim—as, for instance, my thinking that *my* personal transformation is of any importance independently of the great task—then we become thieves, stealing from the ultimate Source of this Work and thus adding to the sorrow of ENDLESSNESS.

We have not been told what this great task is and it thus appears that part of our long preparation is to come to a clearer and clearer realization of the interstices of the crisis that evoked this manifestation of Work. Discovering the causes and the origin of the causes of the crisis is itself an essential *separation* of the coarse from the fine within *us*.

How to respond (what to do) relative to those causes is another matter altogether. This is the test of our Being and of our “degree of Reason.”¹ At one level, it seems clear that we must be a contributing, supportive part of a great process, which is intent on creating new ‘B’ influences;² influences that will help to neutralize our current, catastrophic slide toward savagery.

This is an enormous undertaking which demands a patient resolve and a Work-toward-Understanding and this will need to be sustained well beyond any of our lifetimes. Gurdjieff stated this with clarity.

The spiritualizing ways of the past *cannot* be fully formative here. On the opening page of the *First Series*, Gurdjieff speaks about his aims and the requirement of a *new* conception. If this conception has a sufficiently high level of resonance with Cosmic Law, it will incorporate all the best of the past; the best of its religious forms and rituals, their wholesome and “good customs,” as well as images of ultimate purpose, which is the true sense and significance of life. This reconciliation of the past with the future demands a level of Objective Reason far beyond our individual capacities.

For this reconciliation to succeed, we are obligated to a struggle to form the strongest, most harmonious Being possible. While there is much—virtually unlimited—help for that process, it is, in the end, *our* individual Work on ourselves that forges the physical, emotional and intellectual aspects into one *Being*. Strangely, Will both precedes *and* follows Work on the Being capacities of Faith, Hope, Love and Conscience. The Will-to-Be-and-Become is transmuted, in its proper blending, into the Will-to-Do; to be of service.

Withal, it is the degree of our Objective Reason that will be the ultimate determining factor of our usefulness. We must increasingly come to a greater understanding and capacity in manifestation of a *resonance* in high cosmic law between our physical body, our emotional world of values and responsibility and our intellectual world of concepts and images of law. Beyond even this degree of harmonious balance lies the challenge of spontaneity and creativity when Reason informs Will in the potency of the present moment.

If we are to avert this crisis, the ‘B’ influences must have sufficient power and resonant forms to last centuries. They must incorporate all the insights and knowledge of the whole of the modern sciences and, simultaneously, contain resonant and powerful images of the fundamental truths underlying each of the Great Traditions. The principle of reciprocal maintenance and relationship based on consideration and reason must underpin each level of the reconciliations that are required among all things, events and teachings, including both an enablement of, and respect for, *follower* and *leader* at each level of life and each level of humanity. It is truly no less than the creation of a new world that Gurdjieff has set as the Great Work of which we can become, independently, a particle.

1 Gurdjieff, *Beelzebub's Tales*, P 1175.

2 ‘C’ influences originate from conscious humanity directly; ‘B’ influences are conscious in their origin but are mixed with the mechanical influences of ordinary life (religion, literature, philosophy); ‘A’ influences are created in life (desire for riches, power, fame, etc.).



“With understanding comes the responsibility of a being for his own development.”³

3 Orage, *Commentaries*, P 75.

CHAPTER 13 PAGE 288 ENDNOTES

- I Orage, *Commentaries*, 36.
- II Paul Taylor, *Gurdjieff's America*, quoting Gurdjieff.
- III Orage, *Commentaries*, 124.
- IV A.L. Staveley, *Themes I*, 11.
- V Bennett, *Making a Soul*, 102.

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WITH GRATITUDE

Curtis and Laile Amo
Ocke de Boer
Colin R. Hebb
Bruce Kennett
Staff at Phillips Gallery

COLOPHON

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Gurdjieff, *Beelzebub's Tales*, p 769.