

The Art of G. I. Gurdjieff

An Introduction and English-Language Bibliography
With Notes on his Music and Movements

J. Walter Driscoll

Gurdjieff's Major Writings

A *ll and Everything* is the series title Gurdjieff assigned to his three books;

Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson.

Meetings with Remarkable Men.

Life is Real Only Then, When "I Am."

George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff—named after his father Giorgios Giorgiades—wrote in Russian and Armenian. He referred to his three books as the 'First', 'Second', and 'Third' Series. In *Gurdjieff: Anatomy of a Myth* (1991), biographer James Moore explains Gurdjieff's Anglicised name,

The standard nomenclature George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff, emerged by transliteration and inconsistent national adaptation from the original Giorgios Giorgiades (or Georgiades): the Greek patronym became first Gurdjian in Armenian, then Gurdjieff in Russian; the Christian name, Giorgios, took the western form George; Ivanovitch was interpolated following Russian usage. (p. 340)

Gurdjieff's command of English was very limited, especially when he began writing in 1924 and had been settled in Europe for only three years. Between 1925 and 1930, he drew on his circle of Russian and Armenian followers to undertake rough English translations of *Beelzebub's Tales* and *Meetings with Remarkable Men*. Gurdjieff sent these to his friend and representative in New York City, the renowned editor A. R. Orage, who developed semi-final drafts of both books. After Orage's death in 1934, Gurdjieff engaged several other editors to finalise the English edition of *Beelzebub's Tales*. Beginning in the late 1920s he also supervised translations from Orage's English version, into French with Jeanne de Salzmann and into German with Louise March (née Goepfert). Gurdjieff prepared and supervised the English and German first editions of *Beelzebub's Tales* which were published in 1950. The French edition was published by Jeanne de Salzmann in 1956.

On the opening page of *Beelzebub's Tales*, Gurdjieff's states that the three books in the *All and Everything* Series were

"All written according to entirely new principles of logical reasoning and strictly directed towards the solution of the following three cardinal problems:"

He then identifies the specific problems he proposes to address in each volume. His statements regarding each book are quoted below the title of each book, in italics.

1—BEELZEBUB'S TALES TO HIS GRANDSON

FIRST SERIES: To destroy, mercilessly, without any compromises whatsoever, in the mentation and feelings of the reader, the beliefs and views, by centuries rooted in him, about everything existing in the world.

Much of this gargantuan and rigorous 1238 page novel—with its torrents of alien neologisms and run-on sentences—is disorienting and intimidating, even to readers accustomed to digesting complex text. It is 'difficult' reading—persistence, patience and a growing sense of what Gurdjieff is about, are all required. This book does not yield its treasures to premature or superficial analysis, and one should not be defeated by its initially impenetrable obscurity.

But the book's barriers and intricacies are never mere literary posturing. *Beelzebub's Tales* is labyrinthine because:

- of its scope, depth and the complexity of what Gurdjieff undertakes
- of its mythic underpinning and the epic narrative that flesh out its structure
- its key ideas elude facile or merely theoretical formulation
- it is a translation from Russian and/or Armenian.

A ground breaking science-fiction story conceived and written in the 1920s, *Beelzebub's Tales* contains alien visits and intergalactic travel long before they became clichés. This novel and its story-line are primarily a vehicle for Gurdjieff's philosophical, cosmological, religious and psychological ideas. He attempts precisely what his immodestly titled series announces, *all and everything*. Serious readers heed his seemingly pompous but truly "friendly advice", that it is only with the third and subsequent readings that one should *begin* to "try and fathom the gist" of this book.

The full current title *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man* provides the key to a vast, intricately embroidered tapestry of instructive stories. The setting is mostly on the 'transspace ship Karnak' during an intergalactic voyage. The ship's most important passenger,—his "Right Reverence, Beelzebub"—is on the way to a celestial conference, accompanied by his grandson Hassein. With time 'on his hands', Beelzebub has taken responsibility for his grandson's education and uses their many conversations during the lengthy voyage, to instruct Hassein.

In his booklet, ***The Herald of Coming Good: First Appeal to Contemporary Humanity*** (1933), Gurdjieff points out that during the first few months of recovery from his automobile accident in 1924, he began to dictate his ideas in various fragments without a definite system;

But later on, when my physical strength was more or less re-established I began to write myself; and then, during the reading aloud of one of these scenarios of mine, the subject of which was a legend I had heard in childhood about the appearance, of the first human beings on Earth and of which I had made Beelzebub, as a likely witness of this appearance, the principal hero, I perceived in that scenario a very rich source from which might be extracted numberless corresponding points of departure for an easy comprehension of explanations of various facets of my ideas, and decided, therefore, to cease writing small scenarios and to write a master-work, taking this scenario as the foundation for all my further writings.

From that time on, exploiting to the full this source for a logical development of one or another of the questions, which, in their totality, might provide a clear understanding of the essence of my ideas, I began to expound and elaborate all the material beforehand selected for publication, following the lines of a definite system.

Herald of Coming Good, (1933) pp. 44-45

Olga de Hartmann tells us that on December 16, 1924, she recorded Gurdjieff's first dictations of *Beelzebub's Tales*. Gurdjieff was soon writing non-stop and she found herself taking all his dictation, then typing and retyping his drafts as often as ten times. The translation process went on for several years. Thomas de Hartmann undertook an interlinear English translation from the Russian, using a dictionary. Bernard Metz—Gurdjieff's English secretary—would correct the basic grammar. Orage would then render the text into articulate English. This was followed by many rounds of comparison with the Russian original and re-translation under Gurdjieff's supervision. Olga de Hartmann concludes;

I myself was certain that Orage's translation was very exact. Finally, after many attempts, Mr. Gurdjieff was satisfied. . . . When finally Mr. Gurdjieff approved the English translation, someone read it aloud in the evening to several people and he watched the expressions on their faces. These readings continued late into the night.

Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff (1992) pp. 240-241

Louise March describes how the same precision and intensity of purpose went into her German translation of *Beelzebub's Tales* and how Gurdjieff

. . . considered a single word or the flow of a sentence so very important. . . we translators knew Gurdjieff as 'the teacher of exactness.' With Gurdjieff we came to use words exactly. He stated clearly that philology was a better route to Truth than philosophy. We looked at roots of words. There were many philological rows.

The Gurdjieff Years 1929-1949: Recollections of Louise March by B. McCorkle (1990) pp. 25-26

~ * ~

Thousands of years old by earth's scale of time, Gurdjieff's Beelzebub was banished to Mars for aeons:

... owing to the as yet unformed Reason due to his youth, and owing to his callow and therefore still impetuous mentation with unequally flowing association—that is, owing to a mentation based, as is natural to beings who have not yet become definitely responsible, on a limited understanding—Beelzebub once saw in the government of the World something which seemed to him “illogical”, and having found support among his comrades, beings like himself not yet formed, interfered in what was none of his business.

Thanks to the impetuosity and force of Beelzebub's nature, his intervention together with his comrades then soon captured all minds, and the effect was to bring the central kingdom of the Megalocosmos almost to the edge of revolution.

Having learned of this, HIS ENDLESSNESS, notwithstanding his All-lovingness and All-forgiveness, was constrained to banish Beelzebub with his comrades to one of the remote corners of the Universe, namely, to the solar system “Ors” whose inhabitants call it simply the “Solar System”, and to assign as the place of their existence one of the planets of that solar system, namely, Mars, with the privilege of existing on other planets also, though only of the same solar system. (p. 52.)

Hassein cannot understand why the inhabitants of planet Earth take “the ephemeral for the Real” and questions his grandfather about the ‘strange psyche’ of these ‘three-brained beings’ who inhabit this small planet of ‘the remote solar system Ors.’ Through extraordinary stories—about cosmic order and his extensive observations of human life on Earth during six lengthy visits or “descents” to our planet—we learn how Beelzebub intervenes on earth, earns a full pardon, and returns in glory to the central kingdom of the Megalocosmos to be reinstated as a member of the angelic hierarchy.

Gurdjieff sets out to penetrate the reader's fixed associations and have a direct impact on our being. To this purpose, he repeatedly shocks and challenges conventional thinking. Notions of evil devils as ‘fallen angels’ are one of his targets. Gurdjieff's Beelzebub is no demonic Satan or prince of evil. Instead “the Great Beelzebub Himself” emerges as the narrator-protagonist and chief hero; a kind, compassionate, ‘Grandfather Beelzebub’ a sage and slightly stuffy intermediary between emergent humanity – the “three-brained beings” of earth, and our INCOMPARABLE CREATOR ENDLESSNESS.

Despite his assault on conventional religious thinking, Gurdjieff's profound and extraordinary theism is apparent throughout the book, for example in the care and attention he devotes to the multitudinous [names of God](#). In his *A. R. Orage: A Memoir* (1966), biographer Philip Mairet relates a little known but revealing anecdote about Gurdjieff's intent regarding conventional notions of God;

Gurdjieff was decisive, that his school was a school of individuation, and that a man must find his own work in life. How should he know it, how choose it? That, no one else could tell him. There were certain laws about it, however—three in particular. The goal of achievement which a man decides to aim at must be such that it involves no violation of moral norms. Secondly, he must get something for himself out of it—whether it be money, health and happiness, or honour; some genuine profit must accrue to himself. Thirdly, the task he assumes must be neither too big for him, nor too small. If it be too big, he will incur failure, compensated by megalomania; if too small, his powers will decline even with success and his career will be embittered. But provided these three conditions be fulfilled, it does not matter what any one thinks of a man's work. All that is necessary is that it should fit him; and that it should be his true desire—if you like, his *whim*—to do it. For example, to have the best stamp-collection in the world would not appear to many people to be a life ambition of the highest dignity—and perhaps it is not. But it is a job of a man's size: and if it is your real whim, you had better live for it. Whether you succeed is, of course, another matter.

Whilst they were talking in this vein, someone asked Gurdjieff if he would disclose his own 'whim,' and he said it was to live and teach so that there should be a new conception of God in the world, a change in the very meaning of the word. Orage, taking up the gauntlet, said that for his part, his 'whim' was to produce and edit the best weekly journal in England.

Gurdjieff claimed that his ideas are rooted in traditions now lost or largely unavailable in modern societies. The figure of a pardoned Beelzebub provides a striking example of an authentic but little known mythopoeic tradition that Gurdjieff exploits. His Beelzebub is alien to conventional Judeo-Christian traditions where 'fallen angels' are condemned for eternity – *never* pardoned, let alone elevated to a quasi-redemptive status. A unique scriptural and mythological tradition that was familiar to Gurdjieff and which contains a clear echo of the pardoned fallen angel, can be found among the Yezidis (Pronounced *Ya-she-dees* and sometimes spelled Yazidis), a unique Kurdish tribe.

The Yezidis make up about 5% of the almost 20 million Kurds who remain scattered in Iran, Turkey, Iraq and Syria with small pockets occupying parts of the Caucasus formerly controlled by the Soviet Union. The Kurds are a factional coalition that can be traced back more than a millenium. They were dominated by the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century. After the collapse and partitioning of that empire early in the 20th century, recognition of Kurdistan as a nation was abandoned by Western powers—mainly England and France—during post WW I territorial settlements culminating in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. The Encyclopedia of the Orient indicates that Yazidism has some hundreds of thousands of followers worldwide.

The Yazidi creed has elements from Zoroastrianism, Manicheism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The two religious books of the Yazidis, have Arabic text: *Book of Revelation*, and *Black Book*. The Yazidis call themselves Dasin, while the term 'Yazidism' probably comes from the Persian word 'ized', 'angel'.

<http://i-cias.com/e.o/index.htm>

The Yezidis were first described to European readers, by British archaeologist Austen Henry Layard (1817-94) who visited them for long periods while he excavated Nineveh and Babylon in the 1840s and 1850s. His extensive accounts of the Yezidis first became available in *Nineveh and Its Remains* (London, 1849.)

In *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff describes how, as a youth, he observed Yezidi children in Alexandropol (Gyumri or Gumry, Armenia) and was deeply puzzled when he observed their inability to exit a circle when one was drawn in the earth around one of them.

Although I had already heard something about these Yezidis, I had never given them any thought; but this astonishing incident, which I had seen with my own eyes, now compelled me to think seriously about them. (p. 65)

The ritual importance of Yezidis' circles was more currently observed by Philip Kreyenbroek. In *Yezidism: Its Background*, (1995) he points out (on p. 161.) that their

"... oaths are administered by drawing a circle on the ground. The inside of the circle is declared to be 'the property of Melek Tawus', an observance which is paralleled in Zoroastrianism." So, Gurdjieff's autobiography functions both historically and allegorically.

In *The Religion of the Yezidis: Religious Texts of the Yezidis, Translation, Introduction and Notes* (Bombay, 1940) Giuseppe Furlani notes;

. . . that which distinguishes the Yezidis from other religions and sects is the worship of a being called by them Melek Ta'us, i.e. *King* or better *Angel Peacock*, who corresponds to the Devil in Christianity and Islam. In their doctrine, on the contrary, he is supreme among the angels, who, after his fall and repentance, has been re-installed by God in his original and pre-eminent position. Melek Ta'us is a *good* God; he is in a certain sense, their real God, the active and efficient God, whereas the supreme God is inactive and does not care for the world. He is their Christ.

~ * ~

The structure of Beelzebub's tales provides Gurdjieff with an epic platform poised between a fifty page introductory Chapter titled "The Arousing of Thought" and an equally long, final Chapter, "From the Author." In these two extended chapters, Gurdjieff speaks to the reader in his own voice.

In the final pages of his last chapter Gurdjieff makes reference—and then, in characteristic fashion, only in passing—to our dwindled capacity to concentrate our "active attention" and our dependence on the flow of "automatic associations." He indicates that the flow of "automatic associations" within us takes the place of what he calls "active being mentation." Gurdjieff claimed that the attentive reading of his books can help develop this neglected faculty. He touches on this in an unpublished 1943 Paris meeting;

Question: Sir, I asked you last Thursday, if there was a way to develop attention; you said that attention was measured in the degree that one remembers oneself. You told me to especially look into myself. I especially asked you that because I wasn't able to put my attention on the reading of *Beelzebub's Tales*. During this week I understood that attention was what I was. As many "I's" as there were, so many different attentions. I wanted to ask you if there was, for developing attention, only the method of "I am" or if there are other special methods?

Gurdjieff: One thing I can tell you. Methods do not exist. I do not know any. But I can explain now everything simply. For example, in *Beelzebub's Tales*, I know, there is everything one must know. It is a very interesting book. Everything is there. All that exists, all that has existed, all that can exist. The beginning, the end, all the secrets of the creation of the world; all is there. But one must understand, and to understand depends on one's individuality. The more man has been instructed in a certain way, the more he can see. Subjectively, everyone is able to understand according to the level he occupies, for it is an objective book, and everyone should understand something in it. One person understands one part, another a thousand times more. Now, find a way to put your attention on understanding **all** of *Beelzebub's Tales*.

This will be your task, and it is a good way to fix a real attention. If you can put real attention on *Beelzebub's Tales*, you can have a real attention in life. You didn't know this secret. In *Beelzebub's Tales* there is everything, I have said it, even how to make an omelette. Among other things, it is explained; and at the same time there isn't a word in *Beelzebub's Tales* about cooking. So, you put your attention on *Beelzebub's Tales*, another attention than that to which you are accustomed, and you will be able to have the same attention in life.

Hyperbole about *Beelzebub's Tales* can strike one as understatement. It is possibly the only book written where the author studied listeners' reactions to oral readings so thoroughly in several languages for more than twenty years – and steadily revised his writing with these reactions in mind. Nothing in this book or in the reader's response is accidental. Gurdjieff maintained that “Philology is a better route to Truth than Philosophy” and he wrote accordingly. *Beelzebub's Tales* remains—as Gurdjieff surely intended—a rigorous and public first-meeting-ground for succeeding generations interested in directly acquainting themselves with his ideas.

Manuscripts of *Beelzebub's Tales*

An Objective Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man or Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson – by George Gurdjieff. New York, privately circulated mimeographed copyists' typescript, ca. 1930-1931, 48 individually paged chapters. 102 copies

This typescript is divided differently from the published edition, Book One contains Chapters 1-30, Book Two (Chapters 31-41), and Book Three (Chapters 42-48). Translated into English from the unpublished Russian and Armenian manuscripts under Gurdjieff's supervision. Some chapters are very close to those in the published book; some chapters were extensively revised for publication. The finalised typescript is the result of Gurdjieff's close collaboration with A. R. Orage.

Orage's editorial collaboration with Gurdjieff on the English text of *Beelzebub's Tales* was of the same order as Thomas de Hartmann's collaboration with Gurdjieff over hundreds of musical pieces. In fact these literary and musical collaborations were simultaneous in their first few years. Both started in 1925. The music compositions extending to 1927, and the literary until the English typescript of *Beelzebub's Tales* was issued around 1931, about the time Orage parted company with Gurdjieff. Substantial [summary notes and fragments](#) of these early draft manuscripts for Books One and Two still exist and [copious notes of Orage's talks](#) about *Beelzebub's Tales* are preserved from the period he worked on the manuscript in the late 1920s. See also; C. S. Nott's *Teachings of Gurdjieff* (1961).

Editions of *Beelzebub's Tales*

Except for variations of title, the ongoing correction of errata, and the inclusion of two brief paragraphs omitted from the first edition; the text of the first edition continues to be reissued exactly as Gurdjieff wrote and finalised it over twenty-five years. The posthumous revision issued under Triangle Editions Inc. copyright in 1992, is described below on page 20 in the Adaptations section.

1—*All and Everything*. Ten books in three series of which this is the First Series. New York: [First Edition] Harcourt Brace, 1950, 1238p.; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950, 1238p. A few hundred subscribers' presentation copies of this first edition were issued containing book-plates affixed to the front pasted-down end-paper with Gurdjieff's printed signature. Copy numbers and subscribers' names are penned.

2—*All and Everything: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*. Ten Books in three series of which this is the First Series. New York: Dutton, 1964, 1238p.

3—*Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man*. New York: Dutton, 1973. Three-volume paperback set. Vol. I, 410p., ISBN 0-525-47348-3; Vol. II, 402p., ISBN 0-525-47349-1; Vol. III, 428p., ISBN 0-525-47350-5; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Arkana imprint, 1974 Three-volume paperback set. Vol. 1, 410p ISBN 1-85063-030-5; Vol. II, 402 p., ISBN 1-85063-031-3; Vol. III, 428p., ISBN 1-85063-032-1

4—*All and Everything or Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*. Ten Books in Three Series, of which this is the First Series. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974; New York: Dutton, [1978]; one-vol. cloth reprint of the 3 individually paged pks.

6—*Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man*. London & New York: Arkana, 1985. Three-volume paperback set, a reissue of the Dutton edition (#2 above). Vol. I, 410p.; Vol. II, 402p.; Vol. III, 428p. Complete set, ISBN 185063-033-X.

7—*All and Everything*. Ten Books, in Three Series, of which this is the First Series. Aurora, Oregon: Two Rivers Press, 1993, 1238p. A facsimile reprint of the 1950 1st edition. ISBN0-89756-020-5 (hc).

8—*Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson: An objectively impartial criticism of the life of man*. London and New York: Penguin Arkana, 1999, 1238p., ISBN 0-14-019473-8 (pb.) ISBN 0-525-05222-4 (hc). This reissue of the 1950 1st edition includes correction of errata and insertion of two paragraphs omitted from page 568 of Chapter 32 "Hypnotism" in previous editions. The insertion affects pagination only in Ch. 32.

All and Everything

Posthumous Publications

Beelzebub's Tales is the only part of the English translation of the *All and Everything* series available as Gurdjieff wrote and finalised it. Gurdjieff prepared a manuscript of *Meetings with Remarkable Men* which he edited with A. R. Orage, but the published English-language editions of the *Second Series, Meetings* and the *Third Series, Life is Real . . .*, were edited by Jeanne de Salzmann, after Gurdjieff's death.

2—MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MEN

SECOND SERIES: To acquaint the reader with the material required for a new creation and to prove the soundness and good quality of it.

The "Translators' Note" (note the plural possessive) in the English edition is "Translated from the Note des Traducteurs in the French edition" of 1960. This Translators' Note does not present details, facts and specifics about manuscripts *or* translation process, only praise for the "master". All the reader of this edition is provide with regarding translation, is this isolated statement on the page following the Contents page:

Written in Russian, the manuscript of this book was begun in 1927 and revised by the author over a period of many years. The first English translation by A. R. Orage has been revised and rework from the Russian for this publication.

In his introduction, Gurdjieff confides to the reader that he had become "adroit in the art of concealing serious thoughts in an enticing, easily grasped outer form." (pgs. 6-7) He discusses literature as one of the chief means for developing the mind "that chief impeller to self-perfection" and laments the corruption of contemporary literature in this regard (p. 8).

The chapters that follow are, on the surface, devoted to engaging descriptions of Gurdjieff's childhood, family, schoolteachers, friends, and companions who shared his quest. Underlying Gurdjieff's vivid and convincing personal narratives—few details of which can now be verified after more than a hundred years—is the story of his resolute search for wisdom traditions that could lead to the development of “being” and to “the material required for a new creation.”

Giorgios Giorgiades was accomplished in the oral traditions of the *ashokhs* or storytellers and troubadours. Gurdjieff describes his father's enduring influence, personal wisdom, and his enormous fund of songs, poems and legends from ancient wisdom-traditions. In chapter II, *My Father*, he describes lying on the wood shavings of his family's carpentry shop, listening to a heated debate between his father and his tutor, Father Dean Borsch of the Kars Military Cathedral. (pgs. 35 to 37) They argue late into the night about the twenty-first song of the legend of Gilgamesh, in which Ut-Napishtim tells Gilgamesh the story of the destruction by flood of the land of Shuruppak. Gurdjieff's father was convinced that this legend was the origin of the Hebrew account of the Flood and that it served as a basis of the Christian world view; with only a few details changed. Gurdjieff tells us that, “The twenty-first song was repeated in the course of that night so many times that it was engraved on my memory for life.” (pg.35)

The passionate debate between Gurdjieff's father and his tutor became “a part of his individuality”, that surfaced decades later, just before the First World War. He describes his intense inner excitement on discovering that the *ashokhs*—personified in his father—had preserved *Gilgamesh* accurately for so many generations. This occurs when he reads a magazine article containing a translation of the very passage from Gilgamesh, in almost the same form as his father had recited it so often.

After this occurrence, when the beneficent result of the impressions formed in my childhood from the narratives of my father finally became clear to me—a result that crystallised in me a spiritualising factor enabling me to comprehend that which usually appears incomprehensible—I often regretted having begun too late to give the legends of antiquity the immense significance that I now understand they really have.

Meetings with Remarkable Men, p. 36.

*

Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894) unearthed cuneiform tablets containing the first discovered text of the Epic of Gilgamesh, during his excavations of Ashurbanipal's royal libraries at Nineveh in the 1850s. This is the very epic that—some few decades later and before cuneiform was decoded—Gurdjieff heard his father recite so often that it became permanently engraved in his memory.

The Gilgamesh epic is one of the oldest masterpieces of world scriptural-mythology. It was originally translated from cuneiform tablets in several Mesopotamian languages spoken and written between 2000 B.C. and the end of the first millennium A. D. For her superb three-volume illustrated retelling of Gilgamesh, Ludmila Zeman weaves various fragments from the tablets into a compelling narrative about the heroic adventures of Gilgamesh, who as the story opens, is the inhuman despot-King of Uruk. His development and quest for immortality takes him from being an arrogant tyrant, to a loving friend of the feral Enkidu and the beloved priestess-singer, Shamhat. His final test is the specific episode that Gurdjieff describes hearing from his father. To be worthy of immortality, Gilgamesh must remain awake and listen attentively—for six days and seven nights—to Utnapishtim's story of surviving the great flood of Shuruppak. But Gilgamesh falls asleep and must remain a mortal. Utnapishtim has mercy on Gilgamesh and tells him where to find a magic plant that grants youth. But even that last treasure is stolen by Ishtar, and Gilgamesh returns to his only prize – immortality in the hearts of his people, through this legend.

The Gilgamesh tablets that Layard unearthed in the early 1850s were first translated from cuneiform by George Smith at the British Museum in 1872. His excited discovery led to worldwide astonishment over a Mesopotamian precedent for the Judeo-Christian Flood story. The year of this discovery – 1872– falls midway during the 1866-1877 range of dates ascribed by various biographers, for Gurdjieff's birth. The time of Gilgamesh's emergence into print in Europe, coincides approximately with Gurdjieff's description of childhood exposure to oral versions of this story, from his bardic father.

*

Gurdjieff's geographical and ethnographic descriptions of his travels and expeditions in Western and Central Asia are usually precise and historically accurate, but he tests our naïveté and literalism with some of his 'Arabian Nights' embellishments. For example, the account of his discovery and clandestine copying of an Armenian priest's map of pre-sand Egypt and his fabulous adventures crossing the Gobi desert by climbing on stilts to weather sand-storms.

Gurdjieff is consistently vague about the exact locations of his key discoveries. Two of the most noteworthy and typical, take place in remote esoteric monasteries:

—The Sarmoung 'brotherhood' "somewhere in the heart of Asia." (p. 148; see also pp. 90-91, 148-164)—where Gurdjieff is astonished to meet his beloved friend Prince Lubovedsky with whom he observes a "class of pupils directed by the priestess-dancers who . . . daily performed sacred dances in the temple."

—The "World Brotherhood" a community close "to the central settlement of the Afridis, in a region considered to be the heart of Kafiristan." where Gurdjieff and the archeologist Professor Skridlov are guided by an aged man "said by the brethren to be two hundred and seventy-five years old." During their six months' stay at this monastery, they learn about faith, understanding, being, and the soul - from Father Giovanni, a former Catholic priest. (pp. 228-231, 236-244.)

The final unnumbered chapter of *Meetings with Remarkable Men* consists of a unique, extended narrative—titled "The Material Question"—which is based on notes of a 1924 conversation in which Gurdjieff responds frankly and thoroughly to a question about how his extensive searches and the Institute he led were financed. He describes the versatility, sustained initiative and sometimes devious ingenuity he exercised, as well as the considerable financial burden he shouldered, to achieve his aims.

~ * ~

Editions of *Meetings with Remarkable Men*

The text of various printings of this translation, remains as first published by J. de Salzmänn in 1963.

- 1—*Meetings with Remarkable Men*. New York: Dutton, 1963, 303p.; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963, 303p. First editions can be distinguished by endorsement quotes (on the back of the jacket) from Frank Lloyd Wright, Réalités and Paris-Presses L'Intransigent. Subsequent Dutton printings replaced these quotes with a three paragraph congratulatory letter to the publisher, from Kathryn Hulme.
- 2—*Meetings with Remarkable Men*. New Hyde Park, NY: circa 1963-1965, University Books distributed the Dutton 1963 edition signatures in their own book-club binding and dust jacket, the back of which contains their "Library of the Mystic Arts" book club listings. The cloth cover of the University Books edition, is bright blue, Gurdjieff's signature is embossed at the top of the front cover, there is no publisher's imprint at the base of the spine, the end papers are lime green, headbands are yellow and red and the page tops are stained red. The title page publishing attribution is "New York: Dutton, 1963." The Mystic Arts book listing on the back of the jacket has an entry for and description of *All and Everything* in their edition, but they in fact distributed unaltered copies of Dutton's 1964.
- 3—*Meetings with Remarkable Men*. New York: Dutton, 1969, 303p., ISBN 0-525-47242-8 (pb.)
- 4—*Meetings with Remarkable Men*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971, 303p., ISBN 0-7100-1480-5 (hc), ISBN 0-7100-7032-2 (pb.)
- 5—*Meetings with Remarkable Men*. New York: Dutton, 1974, 303p. ISBN 0-525-47242-8 (pb.)
- 6—*Meetings with Remarkable Men*. London: Pan Books (Picador), 1978, 303p. ISBN 0-330-25569-X (pb.)
- 7—*Meetings with Remarkable Men*. London & New York: Penguin Arkana, 1985, 303p., ISBN 0-14-019037-6 (pb.)

NOTE: Manuscript fragment for chapter II of *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, "My Father" [Orage's hand-written draft.] Librarie Papeterie H. Thiebault 'STUDIO [bound blank] notebook, (Fontainebleau) 21 pg. ms, University of Leeds Library.

3—LIFE IS REAL ONLY THEN WHEN “I AM”

THIRD SERIES: To assist the arising, in the mentation and in the feelings of the reader, of a veritable, nonfantastic representation not of that illusory world which he now perceives but of the world existing in reality.

This fragmentary 170-page work edited and published by Jeanne de Salzmann, contains Gurdjieff's intense, personal 'ponderings' and reminiscences. It consists of a prologue and introduction that take up almost the first half of the book. The second half consists of five short lectures, and an incomplete final chapter titled "The Inner and Outer World of Man" that breaks off in mid-sentence. Drawing on autobiographical material about his decades of searching and his work with groups in Europe and America—particularly with A. R. Orage—Gurdjieff hints at the practices, struggles and intense suffering that are necessary in order to *be* a representation "of the world existing in reality."

Editions of *Life is Real Only Then, When 'I AM'*

A ten-page omission from the 1st private English edition was added—from the French edition—to the 2nd private edition and to all subsequent printings. The verso of the title page of every edition, states; "For the preparation of this authorised text, the latest version of the manuscript was used, but all extant versions were consulted." For the description of a variant compilation of the 3rd Series Talks, see J. G. Bennett's *An Introduction to Gurdjieff's Third Series "Life is Real only then, when 'I AM'".*

- 1—*Life is Real Only Then, When "I Am."* Privately printed, New York: Dutton, 1975, 170p.
Foreword by Jeanne de Salzmann, prefatory note by Valentin Anastasieff.
- 2—*Life is Real Only Then, When "I Am."* 2nd edition. Privately printed, New York: Triangle Editions, 1978, 177p.; includes ten additional pages from the French 1976 edition.
- 3—*Life is Real Only Then, When "I Am."* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, 177p., ISBN 0-7100-0887-2 (hc.)
- 4—*Life is Real Only Then, When "I Am."* New York: Dutton, 1982, 177p., ISBN 0-525-14547-8. Viking Penguin, New York, 1991, 177p., ISBN 0-670-83563-3 (hc.)
- 5—*Life is Real Only Then, When "I Am."* London and New York: Penguin Arkana, 1999, 177p., ISBN 0-14-019585-8 (pb.)

Additional Works by Gurdjieff

Scenario of the Ballet: The Struggle of the Magicians. Capetown: Stourton Press, 1957, 47p. Limited edition of ten copies for private circulation.

In the opening scene of this five-act scenario, Gafar—a jaded, handsome, wealthy, middle aged Parsi prince—strides through a bustling Central Asian market. There he is smitten by a glimpse of the beautiful, compassionate young Indo-Persian maiden Zeinab. The street-scene of Act One, closes with the song of a Dervish who chants sacred verses about God and makes rhythmic movements, resembling gymnastics or dances.

Zeinab lives simply. She is a devoted pupil of a powerful White Magician who wears an enneagram, lectures his pupils on the laws of the cosmos, and trains them to “execute various movements resembling dances.” When Gafar discovers that he cannot seduce Zeinab with his wealth or power he offers to marry her, then is enraged at her rejection. He seeks revenge by hiring a fearsome pentagram-wearing Black Magician to bewitch Zeinab into accepting him. A dramatic struggle ensues between the two Magicians but the White Magician prevails, waking both Zeinab and Gafar from their enchanted sleep. The play closes – at the end of the fifth act – with the White Magician whispering these words “as if in prayer.”

"Lord Creator, and all you, His assistants, help us to be able to remember ourselves at all times in order that we may avoid involuntary actions, as only through them can evil manifest itself."

They all sing, "Forces transmute yourselves for my Being."

The Magician blesses them all and says, "May reconciliation, hope, diligence and justice be ever with you."

All sing "Amen."

The Herald of Coming Good: First Appeal to Contemporary Humanity. Privately published Paris & Angers; 1933, 87p. Reprinted—***The Herald of Coming Good: First Appeal to Contemporary Humanity*** Facsimile paperback edition with blue textured wraps, no date, place or publisher's attribution, [New York: Weiser, 1969 - ?], 87p.; New York: Weiser, 1971, 87p., ISBN 0-87728-049- (pub.); Edmonds, Washington: Sure Fire Press, 1988, 89p., ISBN 0-916411-72-9 (pub.).

Gurdjieff's *Herald of Coming Good* is a medley of autobiography, promotional synopsis and precursor to what he intended in his major writings. It provides a vital and candid glimpse of the struggles Gurdjieff was engaged with in his inner life, with formulating and establishing his ideas, and with experimentation in his groups. It contains passages from [Prospectus No. 1](#) a program issued for Gurdjieff's Institute in Fontainebleau. Despite Gurdjieff's advice to ignore this early and in-some-ways premature book (he retracted it and destroyed the remaining copies), it offers a substantial record, of great interest to anyone studying the development of Gurdjieff's writing.

Notes of Talks by Gurdjieff

Views from the Real World: Early Talks in Moscow, Essentuki, Tiflis, Berlin, London, Paris, New York and Chicago, As Recollected by His Pupils. Foreword by Jeanne de Salzmann. New York: Dutton; 1973, 284p., ISBN 0-525-22870-5 (hc); London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, 284p.; Abridged with a new introduction, New York: Dutton, 1975, 276p., ISBN 0525-47408-0 (pub.); London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, 276p.; London and New York: Arkana, 1984, 276p., ISBN 0-14-019064-3 (pub.)

Notes on forty talks (thirty-nine in the paperback edition) that Gurdjieff gave between 1914 and 1930. The introduction to the paperback edition indicates that "The Talks have been compared and regrouped with the help of Madame de Hartmann, who from 1917 in Essentuki was present at all these meetings and could thus guarantee their authenticity." These notes provide a vital record of the fluid, 'search-demanding,' approach inherent in the oral tradition Gurdjieff emerged from and transmitted. They supplement his writings and provide a glimpse of a practical teaching to be studied through personal application, instead of merely 'grasped' as information. It also contains the article "Glimpses of the Truth," the earliest account of a conversation with Gurdjieff. Ouspensky describes first hearing this account read aloud in 1915 and quotes it in his *In Search of the Miraculous*. (p 9-11.)

In addition to the talks in *Views from the Real World*, a large, undocumented body of [notes](#) of numerous [talks](#) by Gurdjieff—given between 1918 and the late 1940s—are to be found in private collections, a few academic libraries and circulating among Gurdjieff scholars. Although several of these talks have been quoted and excerpted with editorial liberties by a few interpreters, this extensive, scattered body of literature has yet to be systematically gathered, authenticated and published intact in an authoritative independent edition.

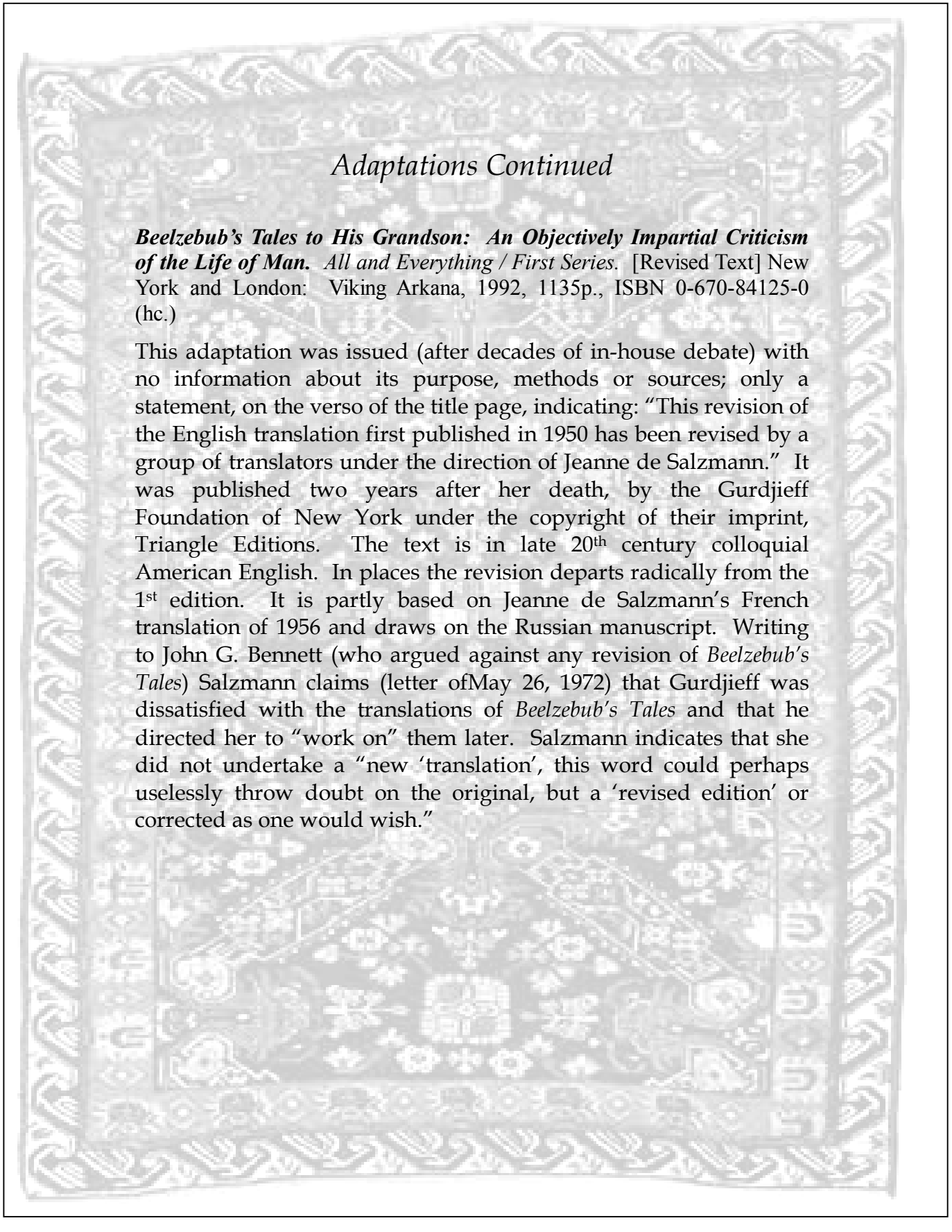
Adaptations of Gurdjieff's Writings

Guide and Index to G. I. Gurdjieff's All and Everything: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson. Toronto: Traditional Studies Press, 1971, 1973, 1979, 1987, 680p., ISBN 0-916808-01-9. *Guide and Index to G. I. Gurdjieff's Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson; the First Series of All and Everything. Second Edition.* 2003, 564p., ISBN 0-919608-12-4.

The 1st edition provides a thorough, vital guide to the many terms and complex relationship between ideas in Gurdjieff's book. Includes errata lists and two paragraphs omitted from page 568 of Chapter 32, "Hypnotism" of the 1st edition. **The 2nd edition** is revised and expanded to include additional citations, more extensive quotes, a pronunciation guide with etymological notes on some terms as well as background notes on obscure references and allusions. It includes page numbers for both the 1950 edition and for the 1992 revision. The printed pronunciation guide is supplemented by a companion cd-rom: *Pronunciation Sound Files for the Guide and Index to G. I. Gurdjieff's Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson.* Toronto: Traditional Studies Press, 2003. ISBN 0-919608-14-0. Four of the seven speakers recorded, heard the words pronounced by Gurdjieff, or read and corrected in his presence.

Meetings with Remarkable Men: a film directed by Peter Brook [and Jeanne de Salzmann]. New York: Remar Productions, 1979, 1hr., 50 min.; VHS Video release with the variant subtitle *Gurdjieff's Search for Hidden Knowledge.* New York: Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition, 1997, a Parabola Video Release.

Filmed largely on location in Afghanistan during the mid 1970s the Salzmann/Brook film provides a visually engaging narrative-synopsis of Gurdjieff's quest for ancient wisdom traditions during the first half of his life. It ends with an arresting demonstration of Gurdjieff's movements—one of the few authentic pieces of movements film-footage available publicly.



Adaptations Continued

Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man. *All and Everything / First Series.* [Revised Text] New York and London: Viking Arkana, 1992, 1135p., ISBN 0-670-84125-0 (hc.)

This adaptation was issued (after decades of in-house debate) with no information about its purpose, methods or sources; only a statement, on the verso of the title page, indicating: "This revision of the English translation first published in 1950 has been revised by a group of translators under the direction of Jeanne de Salzmann." It was published two years after her death, by the Gurdjieff Foundation of New York under the copyright of their imprint, Triangle Editions. The text is in late 20th century colloquial American English. In places the revision departs radically from the 1st edition. It is partly based on Jeanne de Salzmann's French translation of 1956 and draws on the Russian manuscript. Writing to John G. Bennett (who argued against any revision of *Beelzebub's Tales*) Salzmann claims (letter of May 26, 1972) that Gurdjieff was dissatisfied with the translations of *Beelzebub's Tales* and that he directed her to "work on" them later. Salzmann indicates that she did not undertake a "new 'translation', this word could perhaps uselessly throw doubt on the original, but a 'revised edition' or corrected as one would wish."

A Note on Gurdjieff's Music

Although he was not conventionally schooled in composition, music plays a vital role in Gurdjieff's ideas. He was trained in liturgical music and voice from an early age in the Kars Cathedral choir, and in traditional ethnic music by his *ashogh* (troubadour) father. He developed a lifelong interest in music and was competent on the guitar and lap-harmonium. Recordings survive of some twenty hours of his harmonium improvisations. Gurdjieff also left notations for several dozen movements pieces.

Gurdjieff composed several hundred piano pieces in collaboration with Thomas de Hartmann, who—recognising that Gurdjieff “put a great weight on music”, executed the arrangements and notation. In 1923, about forty of these pieces were arranged for a 36-piece orchestra by Gurdjieff dictating to de Hartmann. Between 1925 and 1927, they engaged in an intense period of collaboration, which resulted in hundreds of pieces arranged for piano. Several of these compositions were titled indicating chapters, characters, or incidents in Gurdjieff's writings. In 1956 De Hartmann scored five of these pieces as an “Oriental Suite”. It premiered in Amsterdam on June 29, 2002 with the Metropole Orchestra conducted by Lawrence Renes.

Since the 1979 release of Laurence Rosenthal's orchestral soundtrack for the film of *Meetings with Remarkable Men* and Keith Jarrett's 1980 piano album *G. I. Gurdjieff: Sacred Hymns*, numerous recordings of the *Gurdjieff/de Hartmann* music, have been released, mostly by pianists.

Music Played by Gurdjieff

Improvisations: Premier recueil. Paris: Janus [1950], 10 inch, 78 rpm phonograph disc. Five untitled pieces improvised by Gurdjieff on harmonium in April, May, June and October 1949.

Music of G. I. Gurdjieff. New York: Empire Broadcasting, 1951, 12 inch, 78 rpm phonograph disc.

La voix et la musique de Gurdjieff. [Two 45 rpm phonograph discs. Paris: privately produced, no date.] Disc One: *Twenty-three pieces for piano* composed by G. I. Gurdjieff [and Thomas de Hartmann] played by Carol Robinson Disc Two: *La voix et la musique de Gurdjieff: Variations pour orgue portatif.*

Improvisations. Paris, Janus, 1971. 12 inch, 33 □ rpm. Nine untitled pieces improvised by Gurdjieff on harmonium in April, May, June and October 1949.

Improvisations. Fourth Way Production, undated, AAB 560. A 'Bootleg' reissue of the 1971 Janus compilation described above containing nine untitled pieces improvised by Gurdjieff on harmonium in April, May, June and October 1949.

Improvisations: the Extant Recordings. More than 20 hours of Gurdjieff's harmonium improvisations remastered to cd-rom. Forthcoming 2004.

Music composed in collaboration with Thomas de Hartmann

Gurdjieff / de Hartmann Music in Print

Gurdjieff / de Hartmann Music for the Piano: Definitive Edition Four Volumes

Edited by Linda Daniel-Spitz, Charles Ketcham, and Laurence Rosenthal. Archives and Research, Thomas C. Daly. Mainz: Schott.

Volume I: Asian Songs and Rhythms 49 pieces, notes, 1996, 140p. ISMN M-001-08133-7 (pb.)

Volume II: Music of the Sayyids and the Dervishes 42 pieces, notes, 1996, 140p. ISMN M-001-08134-4 (pb)

Volume III: Hymns, Prayers, and Rituals 51 pieces plus three variants, notes, 2002, 152p. ISMN M-001-12854-4 (pb.)

Volume IV: Hymns from a Great Temple and Other Selected Works. Forthcoming.

Thomas de Hartmann's Recordings of the Gurdjieff / de Hartmann Music

The Music of Gurdjieff/de Hartmann: Thomas de Hartmann, piano. New York: Triangle Records, 1998. A 3 CD set containing 56 pieces.

Recorded in New York between 1951 and 1953 in informal circumstances with limited equipment, these deeply evocative performances are unsurpassed.



Gurdjieff observing movements in Jessmin Howarth's Dalcroze studio, Paris 1922.

To his left; Sophie Grigorievna Ouspensky, then Catherine and Maurice Nicoll. Thomas de Hartmann is seated at the piano and Alexander de Salzmann stands behind it.

Photo courtesy of Dushka Howarth from her forthcoming book "It's Up To Ourselves", A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff: *A Joint Memoir* by Jessmin and Dushka Howarth.

Gurdjieff's Movements Exercises

'Sacred' dances . . . [or] movements have a double purpose, they contain and express a certain knowledge. At the same time, they serve as a method of attaining a harmonious state of being. Combinations of these movements evoke different sensations, produce different degrees of concentration of thought, require special efforts in various functions, and show possible limits of individual force.

G. Gurdjieff — *The Struggle of the Magicians*

Passages about Movements,
in Gurdjieff's books;

Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson (1950) Chapter 30, 'Art', pp. 475-476. Gurdjieff describes an ancient learned society that designed works of art for the purpose of transmitting objective knowledge to subsequent generations. Members divided into seven groups, each devoted to the demonstration and exposition of their productions in religious and civil ceremonies, architecture, painting, sculpture, theatre, music, and dance.

Meetings with Remarkable Men. Chapter VII, 'Prince Yuri Lubovedsky', pp. 160-163. While living in Bukhara with his friend Soloviev, Gurdjieff learns about the Sarmoung monastery, somewhere in the heart of Asia and to which he is invited to travel. After a lengthy and perilous journey through the mountains on horseback, during which they are usually blindfolded, he and Soloviev arrive at the monastery and to Gurdjieff's great surprise, he meets his old friend Prince Lubovedsky, whom he finds bedridden and recovering from a serious illness. Lubovedsky guides them on a tour of the monastery, where they see exercises of the priestess-dancers.

Views from the Real World

pp. 167-170. "The Aim of Movements."

pp. 174-175. "As It is with Everything, So It is with Movements."

pp. 182-183. "Questions and Answers on Art."

p. 31. "Cosmic Laws and Sacred Dance." from "Glimpses of Truth."

A Note on Gurdjieff's Movements

Gurdjieff regarded most conventional art—no matter how expressive, disciplined or virtuoso—as mechanical repetition laced with sentimentality or titillation. An radical choreographer, he composed musical gymnastic exercises as vehicles for meditative practice. The word ‘dance’ usually suggests rhythmic movement that provides artistic expression and entertainment. Nothing could be further from Gurdjieff's movements. As he explained to the audience after a New York demonstration on February 29, 1924, art should be a means of harmonious development,

In everything we do, the underlying idea is to do what cannot be done automatically and without thought. . . . for us, dances and movements are a means of combining the mind and feeling with movements of the body and manifesting them together. . . [of developing] something which cannot be developed directly or mechanically.

Views from the Real World (1984), p. 183.

Gurdjieff's movements are not a performance ‘art.’ They have been described as “meditation in motion” and were originally called simply the “exercises.” If one has never seen or participated in them, they might be thought of as devout gymnastics executed to rhythmic music. Some movements are serene, slow and simple – some incredibly vigorous and complex, requiring exceptional attention, presence, stamina and skill to execute. The play a vital role in Gurdjieff's system. As the Gurdjieff Studies group in London, explains in their Gurdjieff's Dances & Movements article;

Of Gurdjieff's many roles - ideologue, man of action, author, 'physician/hypnotist', etc. - he arguably most rejoiced in being a 'rather good teacher of temple dances' (*Beelzebub's Tales*, p. 9.). Such dances professedly served two vital functions: the harmonious evolution of the dancers themselves and the transmission of esoteric knowledge to remote generations. Today his 250 or so ensemble dances termed 'Movements' (or 'exercises' pre-1928), represent to many Gurdjieffians the Work's immaculate heart - a spiritual legacy of incalculable significance.

<http://www.gurdjieff.org.uk/gs7.htm>

The practice of Gurdjieff's movements is an integral part of his teachings, which they communicate and support in subtle, definite ways. One is customarily introduced to movements as part of group participation in the study of his teaching.

Gurdjieff's movements have been preserved in Jessmin Howarth's extensive and meticulous choreographic notes which formed the basis of a series of documentary films produced by Jeanne de Salzmann. Movements classes are offered to members of established groups of various lineages in major cities of Europe, Australia, and the Americas by trained instructors. These groups rarely stage public performances.

A movement's class depends on an instructor-dancer, and a musician—usually a pianist—both competently trained and collaborating closely to lead the class. They are the vital external resources. For participants, movements are essentially interior—where the conjunction of attention, thoughts, feelings, sensory impressions, rhythmic response to music, and attempts at increasingly complex multifaceted physical movements, meet and are often countered by predictable patterns of mechanical association. A special opportunity and challenge exists during Gurdjieff's movements exercises – not simply to memorise and repeat the complex sequences in an automatic way, but to recognise moments of opportunity when the ordinary mind cannot control movement and the mechanical side of the moving centre has not yet taken over. As Jeanne de Salzmann points out,

In that moment a feeling of urgency may arise that creates a new energy and attention. The movement can then be taken over by the moving centre while still remaining connected with this energy that is able to control it and yet leave it free.¹

Gurdjieff's movements are sometimes called “sacred dance”, but the adjective “sacred” is commonly misunderstood outside conventional religious or spiritual practice. Jessmin Howarth taught movements in Europe and America from 1924 until her death in 1984. She explains her reasons for calling Gurdjieff's movements ‘sacred dance:’

... through the practice of Movements one has direct experiences which lead through the body and feelings to an understanding of the Work ideas which might, lacking this means, have remained simply as theory. . . . And we discover in ourselves many hitherto unexpected possibilities. We find that one can collect one's attention, that one can be ‘awake’ at times and have an overall sensation of oneself;...that quietness of mind, an awareness of body and an interest of feeling can be brought together and that this results in a more complete state of attentiveness in which the life force is freed and one is sensitive and open to higher influences. Thus, one has a taste of how life could be lived differently. Because that is so, the Movements are sacred for us, and we try to keep them as pure as when they were first given and protect them from distortion and superstition.²

¹ Salzmann, Jeanne de The Hidden Meaning of Sacred Dance. *GIR* V (1), Spring 2002, pp. 38-39. This article appeared only in the 1st and 2nd printings of Vol. V (1).

² Howarth, Jessmin. “It's Up To Ourselves”, A Mother, A Daughter, and Gurdjieff: *A Joint Memoir* by Jessmin and Dushka Howarth, forthcoming 2004.

CAVEAT

Was Gurdjieff an authentic avatar of the 20th century with an enduring manifesto and set of practices? What significance does his legacy have and is it maintained by his family or followers? Would he approve of *any* of the innumerable groups that operate under his name, more than fifty years after his death? Gurdjieff cultivated an occultist Svengali mystique that predictably attracts both suspicion and starry-eyed-true-believers, so anyone struggling with such questions will find the quest a challenging exercise in discrimination.

Since his death, a few of the groups established by Gurdjieff's direct followers—some working in concert and others independently—continue to meet and maintain the study of Gurdjieff's writings, movements, music, practical group work and guided individual practices presented in an oral tradition. Gurdjieff groups are human communities, and as such, they can contain fools and the very wise, reactionaries and revolutionaries, manipulators and manipulated – at every level. The evidence of history is that *there can be no guarantee*, even a lineage-guided group can go off course.

In addition to the continuously expanding and frequently misleading literature about Gurdjieff, opportunistic individuals and organisations borrow his name and promiscuously adapt some of his powerful ideas for their own personal and commercial purposes. 'Fourth Way teachers', often self-anointed—sometimes of the worst kind—abound, especially on the internet. Few, despite their occasionally beguiling claims to the contrary, have a genuine connection to the positive application of Gurdjieff's ideas.

Despite all this, the study, verification, and practice of what is authentic to Gurdjieff, *is* well-worth undertaking.

J. Walter Driscoll

Vancouver Island, December 25, 2002

June 29, 2004

Supplementary Reading

On the Yezidis and on Gilgamesh

Bobrinsköy, Count

Peacock from Heaven: A Kurdish Yezidi Tale. Edition of 400 copies. Two Rivers Press: Aurora, Oregon, 1983, [15p]. Also issued as ***Peacock from Heaven: A Yezidi Parable Retold by "Count Bobrinsköy". Discovered in the G. I. Gurdjieff Section of the Kathryn Hulme Papers in the Beinecke Library, Yale University.*** Lexington, Kentucky: Watersign Press, [1997].

Drower, E. S.

Peacock Angel: Being Some Account of Votaries of a Secret Cult and Their Sanctuaries. 1st Edition. London: John Murry, 1941, 214p., glossary, index.

Field, Henry

"The Yezidis, Sulubba, and other Tribes of Iraq and Adjacent Regions."
By Henry Field and J. B. Glubb. Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing, 1943. (General Series in Anthropology) 13p.

Furlani, Giuseppe

Religious Texts of the Yezidis: Translation, Introduction and Notes.
Translated from the Italian with Additional Notes and an Index by Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala. Bombay: Jamshedji Maneckji Unvala, 1940, 97p.

George, Andrew

The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian. Translated with an Introduction by Andrew George. London: Penguin, 1999, 228p. appendix, glossary, bibliography. ISBN 0-14-044721-0 (pb.)

Guest, John S.

Survival Among the Kurds: A History of the Yezidis. London: Kegan Paul, 1987, 1993, 324p., index, notes, bibliography. ISBN 0710304560 (hc.)

Izady, Mehrdad

The Kurds: A Concise Handbook Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, 1992, 268p.

Kreyenbroek, Philip G.

Yezidism: Its Background, Observances and Textual Tradition. Texts and Studies in Religion. Volume 62. Lewiston, N.Y: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, 349p., bib., index. ISBN 0-7734-98004-3 (hc)

Layard, Austen Henry

Nineveh and Its Remains: with an Account of a Visit to the Chaldean Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, or Devil Worshippers; and an Enquiry into the Manners and Arts of the Ancient Assyrians. 3rd Edition in 2 Volumes. London: John Murry, 1849. Vol. I, 399 p. Vol. II, 495p, index. Condensed edition issued as: ***Nineveh and Its Remains.*** Edited with an Introduction and Notes by H. W. F. Saggs. New York: Praeger, 1970, 299p. index.

Leroy, Jules

Monks and Monasteries of the Near East. Translated from the French by Peter Collin. London: Harrap, 1963, 208p., index, b & w plates.

Luke H. C.

“The Yezidis or Devil Worshippers of Mosul”. ***The Times*** (London) August 27, 28, 1994. Reprinted with a Prefatory Note by Sir Richard C. Temple. ***The Indian Antiquary*** LIV (1925), pp94-98.

Meiselas, Susan

Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History New York: Random House, 1997, 388 p. index, numerous maps & historical illustrations. ISBN 0-679-42389-3 (hc.) <http://www.akakurdistan.com/>

Mingana, Alphonse

“Devil-Worshippers: Their Beliefs and Their Sacred Books. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* [Hertford Reissued as a booklet, reprinted by] The Royal Asiatic Society, 1916, pp 505-526. Also reprint as ***The Yezidis, or the Devil-Worshippers of the Middle East: Their Beliefs & Sacred Books***. Edmonds, Washington: Sure Fire Press, 1993, 23p. booklet.

Opie, James

“The Kurds”, chapter 9 in ***Tribal Rugs: Nomadic and Village Weavings from the Near East and Central Asia*** by James Opie. Portland, Oregon: Tolstoy Press, 1992, 328p.

Sandars, N. K.

Poems of Heaven and Hell from Ancient Mesopotamia. Translated and Introduced by N. K. Sandars. London: Penguin, 1971, 183p., glossary. ISBN 0-14-044249-9 (Pb.)

“Yazidism”

The Encyclopaedia of the Orient. <http://i-cias.com/e.o/index.htm> and <http://i-cias.com/e.o/yazidism.htm>

Zeman, Ludmila

Gilgamesh the King [Volume 1] ***The Revenge of Ishtar*** [Vol. 2] ***The Last Quest of Gilgamesh*** [Vol. 3]. Retold and Illustrated by Ludmila Zeman. Montreal: Tundra Books, 1992, 1993, 1995, unpagged with a historical note appended. ISBN Vol. 1 0-88776-283-2 (hc) 08776-437-1 (pb.) Vol. 2 315-4 (hc) 436-3 (pb.) Vol. 3 328-6 (hc) 380-4 (pb.)

The Art of G. I. Gurdjieff
An Introduction and English-Language Bibliography
with Notes on His Music and Movements

© 2004 – J. Walter Driscoll –