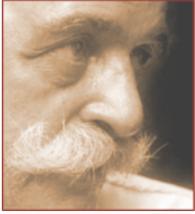


# The Gurdjieff Chronicle

#1 - Jan 2020



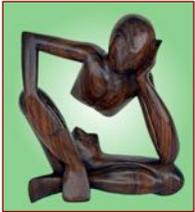
## The Gurdjieff Legacy

Gurdjieff has no historical precedent. This becomes crystal clear when we step back and take a comprehensive view of his legacy: the complete inventory of what he left behind for those who cared to ponder and explore. By any reasonable measure it is extraordinary, in both its depth and its breadth...



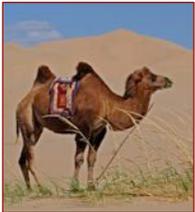
## I Am The Great Sun

This poem was, as it declares, inspired by an inscription Charles Causley saw on a crucifix from 1632, found in Normandy. It is his most popular poem, occasionally included in sermons in Christian churches in the UK, especially during Easter.



## Inconvenient Information #1

Gurdjieff made a number of statements that some people in the Work prefer to ignore. In some instances it may be that they simply fail to understand the words (as reported) on the page. It may also be that their mind chooses to reject the information. It is difficult to know for sure, but nevertheless it is a phenomenon. This series of articles chronicles such inconvenient information.



## The Camel Seeker

In each issue of the The Gurdjieff Chronicle we will include a reading—that is, a passage (with a spiritual and possibly allegorical theme that is intended to be read out to a group. The first we have included is the Camel Seeker, a fairly well-known passage that comes from Islamic sources and was first discovered by J G Bennett.



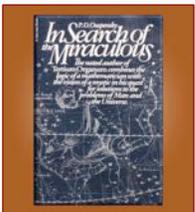
## To Fathom The Gist #1

The aim of this series of articles is to provide the reader with useful information that may assist their efforts to profit from reading All and Everything, Gurdjieff's collective writings. To penetrate these writings, which many readers find difficult, it will help to assume that these books are objective..



## Objective Science #1

In both *In Search of the Miraculous* and *Beelzebub's Tales* Gurdjieff discusses objective science. The description in *Beelzebub's Tales* may prove far more difficult to fathom, but as far as we can tell, the two accounts do not disagree. This series of articles seeks to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of Objective Science and its implications.



## Books and Links

In the final part of the magazine we provide a short review of one of the many books about the Work that are now available. We also provide information about books and posters sold by The Austin Gurdjieff Society and a set of links to other work groups and work resources of which we are aware and which we recommend.

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## By Way of Introduction

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*Never visit someone only to pass the time. ~ Gurdjieff*

The Gurdjieff Chronicle is created by The Austin Gurdjieff Society and edited by Robin Bloor. The group's intention is that it will be published regularly, at least once per month, and possibly every fortnight. Time will prove whether that intention will be reliably realized. Initially, it will be circulated free of charge. If it attracts enthusiastic readership, it will be offered on a subscription basis.

Its purpose is simply to provide useful information to those involved in The Work.

### A Crisis in The Work?

It is now over 100 years since Gurdjieff appeared in Moscow and began to teach a selected group of pupils. Following his death in 1949 various work groups formed, some under the auspices of The Gurdjieff Foundation and others beyond its influence. Gurdjieff's pupils of "the first rank"—those who were taught by him directly—formed most these groups. Nowadays, as far as we are aware, the groups that exist are at best led by pupils of the pupils, and some by pupils of pupils of pupils.

The ages of gold and silver have passed. We exist in an age of copper, fated perhaps to descend to an age of lead. In discussions between members of different groups we sometimes hear the comment that the Work is "in trouble," because "few young people now come to the Work."

It was not the case thirty or forty years ago. In those days, the Gurdjieff Work was the height of spiritual fashion and a far more powerful magnet to seekers than it now is. The vibrant energy that once possessed many Work Groups no longer flows so strongly. Older group members have passed away and many once enthusiastic acolytes have moved on to other pastures, or even given up their search entirely. In locations in the USA and in other countries too, some properties that were established and maintained as Work environments are now rarely used or even lie empty.

We can view this as inevitable (or law-conformable, if you prefer). The initial "Do" of the creative octave Gurdjieff struck had to descend.

### Nevertheless...

Rina Hands, one of Gurdjieff's pupils, once heard someone ask Gurdjieff whether it was possible for someone to work successfully on their own without the aid of a teacher or group. He replied, "possible in theory, but have never heard of such."

The Work, as described in *In Search of The Miraculous*, involves three distinct lines: work on oneself, work with others and work for the work. This Chronicle is intended to occupy a place in the second line of work, distributing information that may prove useful to individuals or work groups.

As for ourselves, we do not believe that Gurdjieff introduced his extraordinary teachings only for the force they created to evaporate in the space of a few generations. It is our expectation that in our era some other individual will arise, an Ashiata Shiemash, to feed the fire that Gurdjieff set burning.

In harmony with our expectation, the first article in this magazine tips its hat to Gurdjieff's Legacy.



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# The Gurdjieff Legacy

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*The obstacle is the path. ~ Zen Proverb*

**G**urdjieff has no precedent. This becomes crystal clear when we step back and take a comprehensive view of his legacy—the sum total of what he left behind for the world to ponder and explore. By any reasonable measure it is extraordinary, in both its depth and its breadth.

Before we provide an inventory of his work we need to acknowledge that we have no knowledge of who taught him and precisely what he was taught. Thus it is not always possible to distinguish between his personal contribution and what he brought from elsewhere.

## A World View

Gurdjieff's world view was that the universe was alive at every level from its entirety to the smallest particle. This conformed with ideas expressed in many religious and mystical traditions. Gurdjieff used the concepts of "subjective" and "objective" to place the individual man within this world view. By his definition, something was objective if it was perceived in exactly the same way by people **on the**

**same level**. It was subjective if two people might perceive it differently. Thus, for example, two people with the same acuity of hearing would perceive a given sound objectively. However, irrespective of levels, they might judge the beauty of a particular butterfly differently.

This is a more important distinction than it may appear at first blush. It allowed Gurdjieff to define both art and science in terms of objectivity and subjectivity. Objective art is art that has an identical effect upon all individuals **of the same level**. The impact of subjective art varies. Objective science provides theories and perspectives about which everyone **at the same level** will agree. Subjective science (modern day science) depends upon subjective consensus agreement between scientific authorities.

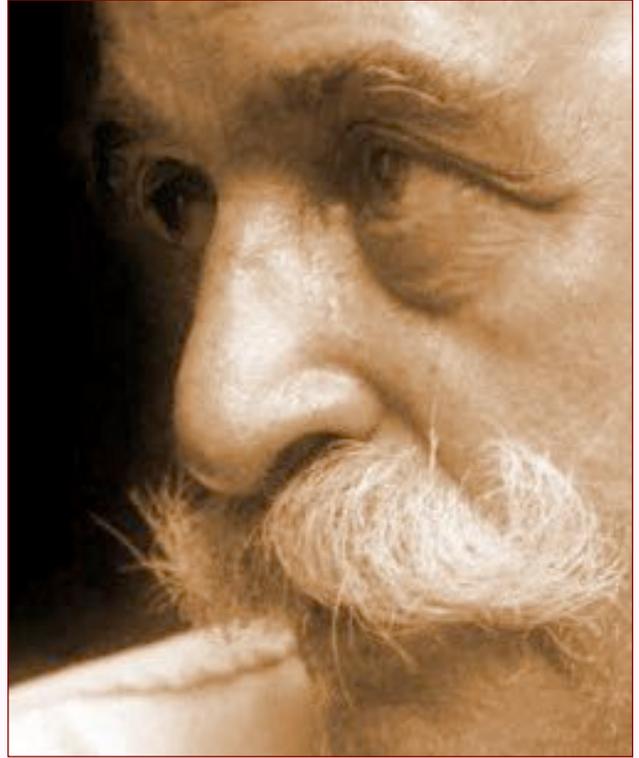
Having described this distinction we can now list what can be regarded as Gurdjieff's Legacy.

## The Movements

Gurdjieff was a talented choreographer and dancing master. The dances he choreographed go by the general name of The Movements but are better thought of as sacred temple dances. They demand a special kind of attention and hence are more complex than simple dances. Those who have a deep experience of performing them will likely agree that they are an objective form of dance. Gurdjieff spoke of them as a way to teach knowledge to a man's centers that was otherwise difficult or impossible to impart. Certain physical postures or combinations of them would invoke entirely new thoughts or emotions in the dancer, and the dancer would thus learn new things. Most Gurdjieff groups regard the Movements as a necessary part of the Work

## Gurdjieff's Music

Gurdjieff composed his music with the assistance of the musician Thomas de Hartmann. About half of the compositions they jointly created were pieces intended to accompany the movements. The rest were free-standing compositions. Gurdjieff claimed that it was difficult to create objective music using



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## The Gurdjieff Legacy...

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Western musical instruments as such instruments did not cater to the inner octaves between individual notes. With de Hartmann, Gurdjieff used half-tones and quarter tones to try to create objective effects.

### Gurdjieff's Written Works

The idea of objective literature is difficult for the Western mind to grasp as Western fictional literature is, without exception, subjective. However, we may suspect that poetic forms (compare for example the sonnet with the limerick) have an objective impact. Some scripture may have an objective (uplifting) impact.

An analysis of Gurdjieff's magnum opus, *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, points to it being objective in many ways: its use of the philological meaning of words, its allegorical nature, its use of the grammar of associations, its use of repetitive phrases and its rhythm when read out loud. To this we can add that Gurdjieff observed its impact on audiences at public readings and subsequently made changes to the text. Gurdjieff created scripture of an entirely new kind, a strange and original blend of philosophy, historical events, religious thought and fiction. While it might not seem so yet, in the future his literary influence will be profound. It may attract comparisons with the extraordinary works of William Shakespeare.



### The Keys to the New Testament

Of particular importance to Christians and those raised in a Christian culture is that Gurdjieff revealed the "keys to the new Testament" by explaining its symbolism to some of his pupils which they in turn passed on. He employs Christian symbolism in different parts of *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* although many readers may miss this. The clearest and most practical expression of this teaching is to be found in the writings of Maurice Nicholl: his primary books covering this topic are *The Mark* and *The New Man*.

### Objective Science

An aspect of the Gurdjieff Work that few people have pursued so far is Gurdjieff's explanation and articulation of what he calls "Objective Science," which is described clearly in *In Search of The Miraculous*. It embodies an a new and original approach to science based on the Ray of Creation, the Law of Seven and the Law of Three. It completely opposes modern science, proposing that the universe is alive at every level from the Megalocosmos to the smallest particle. As such it has been ignored by modern science and it is likely to remain ignored for a while yet.

Nevertheless Gurdjieff's Objective Science is intended to be taken seriously. Few individuals ever tried to introduce a whole new basis for science—not even Newton.

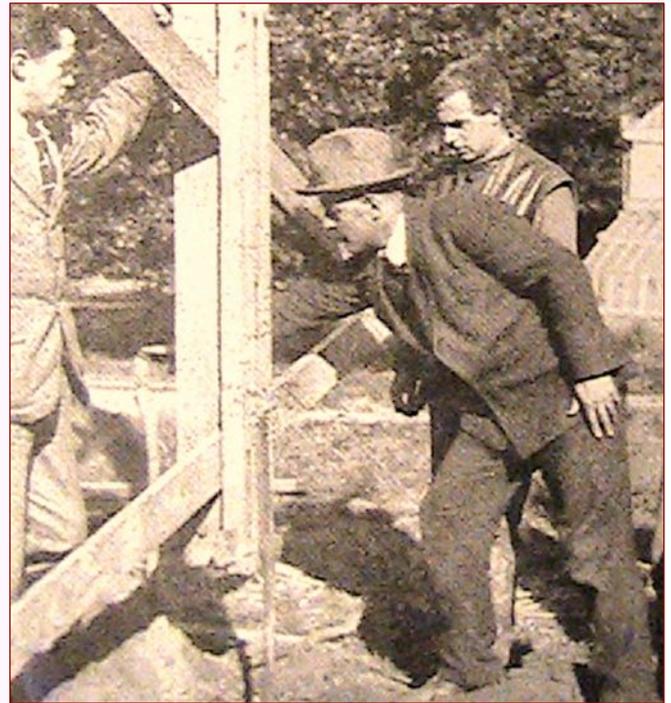
### A Psychological Teaching and Method

What has been described so far could be regarded as less important than the psychological and spiritual ideas and practices Gurdjieff taught. The psychological landscape that Gurdjieff painted of

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man as a three-brained being, attracts most of those who join Work Groups in the hope that in some way they will be able to profit from their application. The practices, which include self-remembering and self-observation, are described and applied in terms of a psychological model of the inner world that was new when introduced. Practitioners become familiar with inner world behaviors such as inner considering, keeping accounts, identification, the expression and withholding of negative emotion, imagination and fantasy, formatory thinking, and so on.

Those who work with Gurdjieff's psychological practices increase their knowledge of themselves and in doing so are likely to change some of their less useful habits. Practitioners usually become aware that the methods of the Work are not self-help practices but a path to personal evolution. The Ancient Greek injunction, inscribed in the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi applies: "know thyself."



### Work Communities

By means of the work community Gurdjieff established at the Prieuré, Gurdjieff developed a model for a Work community that has since been applied by other groups, with the kitchen forming the heart of the community. Gardening and various kinds of craftwork were complementary activities. Additionally there was study meetings, theatre, readings and movements. The various work weeks, weekends and days that work groups hold usually try to apply this model.

### Taken Together

Taking all of this together it is difficult to imagine anyone developing even a partial understanding of everything Gurdjieff brought. The curious thing, perhaps, is that there's no record of what Gurdjieff expected his pupils and the groups they formed to do with this remarkably rich legacy.



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## I Am The Great Sun

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*Why is it that, what I want to do, I do not do, but what I do not want to do, I do all the more?  
~Romans 7*

As the remarkable poem below suggests, it was inspired by an inscription Causley saw on a crucifix from 1632, found in Normandy. It is read and included in sermons in many churches in the UK, especially during Easter.

### I am the Great Sun

From a Normandy crucifix of 1632

I am the great sun, but you do not see me,  
I am your husband, but you turn away,  
I am the captive, but you do not free me,  
I am the captain you will not obey.

I am the truth, but you will not believe me,  
I am the city where you will not stay,  
I am your wife, your child, but you will leave me,  
I am the God to whom you will not pray.

I am your council, but you do not hear me,  
I am your lover, whom you will betray,  
I am the Victor, but you do not cheer me,  
I am the holy dove whom you will slay.

I am your life, but if you will not name me,  
Seal up your soul with tears, and never blame me.

~ Charles Causley



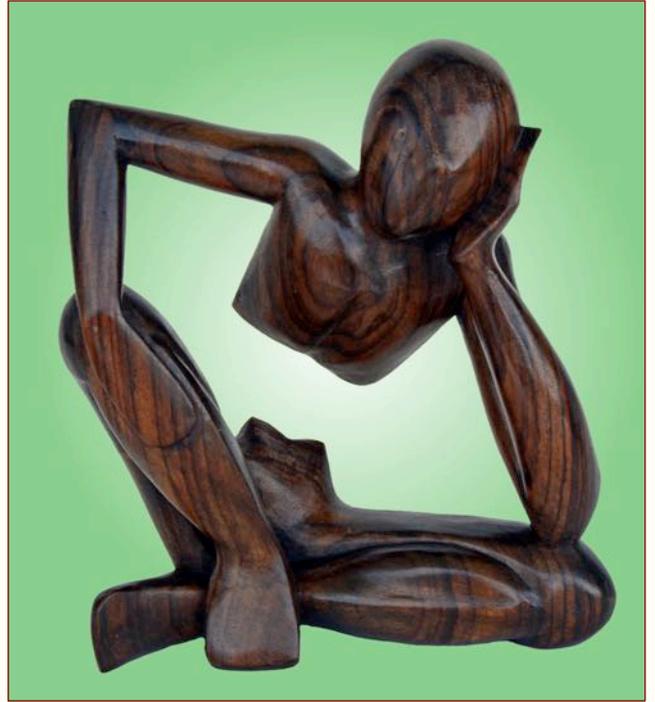
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## Inconvenient Texts #1

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*Never blame the mirror. ~ Russian Proverb*

We have noted several times that certain passages that most people in the Work have read more than once, and even several times, are not well digested. It is difficult to understand precisely why this is, but certainly it can be the case that the reader simply does not want the information on the page to be true. Discussing this, one person noted that it was probably the case that we spend a good deal of time reading books on the Work in an entirely mechanical fashion, and that this might explain the phenomenon. Perhaps so. The following excerpt from *In Search of The Miraculous* is one passage that readers never seem to remember well.



### The Accumulators

*"A very important role in the human machine is played by a certain kind of accumulator. There are two small accumulators near each center filled with the particular substance necessary for the work of the given center.*

*"In addition, there is in the organism a large accumulator which feeds the small ones. The small accumulators are connected together, and further, each of them is connected with the center next to which it stands, as well as with the large accumulator."*

*G. drew a general diagram of the "human machine" and pointed out the positions of the large and small accumulators and the connections between them.*

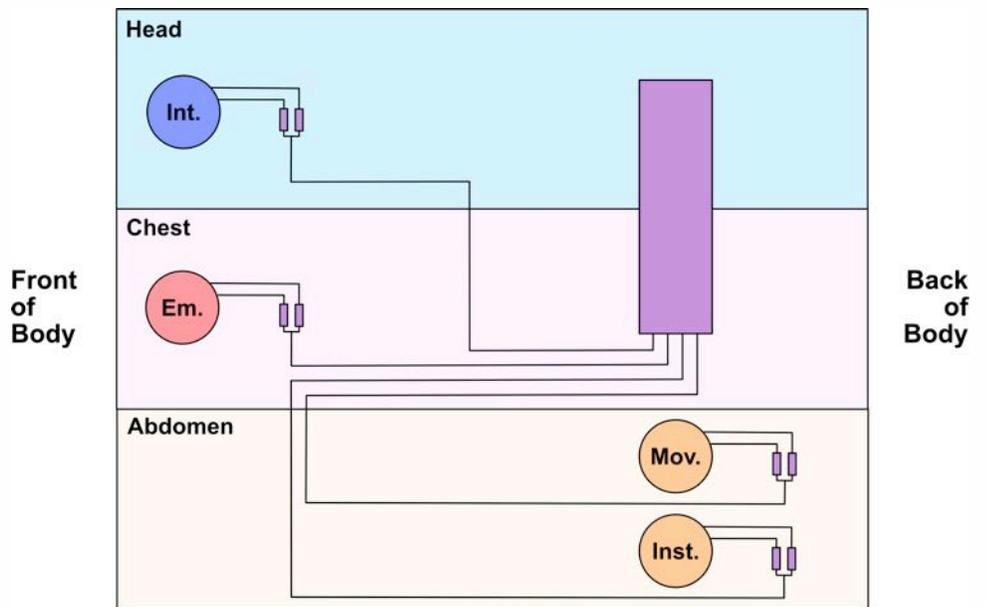
*"Accumulators work in the following way," he said. "Let us suppose that a man is working or is reading a difficult book and trying to understand it, in which case several 'rolls' revolve in the thinking apparatus in his head. Or let us suppose that he is walking up a hill and is getting tired, in which case the 'rolls' revolve in the moving center.*

*"In the first instance the intellectual center, and in the second the moving center, draw the energy necessary for their work from the small accumulators. When an accumulator is nearly empty a man feels tired. He would like to stop, to sit down if he is walking, to think of something else if he is solving a difficult problem. But quite unexpectedly he feels an inflow of strength, and he is once more able to walk or to work. This means that the center has become connected with the second accumulator and is taking energy from it. Meanwhile the first accumulator is refilling with energy from the large accumulator. The work of the center goes on. The man continues to walk or to work. Sometimes a short rest is required to insure this connection. Sometimes a shock, sometimes an effort. Anyway, the work goes on. After a certain time the store of energy in the second accumulator also becomes exhausted. The man again feels tired.*

*"Again an external shock, or a short rest, or a cigarette, or an effort, and he is connected with the first accumulator. But it may easily happen that the center has drawn energy from the second accumulator so quickly that the first one has had no time to refill itself from the large accumulator, and has taken only half the energy it can hold; it is only half full.*

*"Having become reconnected with the first accumulator the center begins to draw energy from it, while the second accumulator becomes connected with and draws energy from the large accumulator. But this time the first accumulator was only half full. The center quickly exhausts its energy, and in the meantime the second accumulator has succeeded in getting only a quarter full. The center becomes connected with it, swiftly exhausts all its energy, and connects once more with the first accumulator, and so on. After a certain time the organism is brought to such a state that neither of the small accu-*

The diagram taken from *In Search of The Miraculous* represents a man standing sideways. The four centers are provided with energy for their normal operation by a large accumulator that is located in the chest and head, which feeds two local accumulators for each of the four lower centers. There is no physical indication within the our biological bodies of such a set of structures, nor is there evidence of centers themselves. Hence we must assume that such structures are constructed from fine matter that is invisible to the naked eye. One possibility is that the triple-warmer or triple-burner that is mentioned in Chinese medicine, particularly in acupuncture, is the large accumulator or is somehow related to it. Note that this is merely speculation. The only link between the Chinese medicine's triple-warmer and Gurdjieff's description of the accumulators is that there is currently no scientific evidence of either.



**The Accumulators**

mulators has a drop of energy left. This time the man feels really tired. He almost falls down, he almost drops asleep, or else his organism becomes affected, he starts a headache, palpitations begin, or he feels sick.

"This means that the center has become connected directly to the large accumulator. The large accumulator contains an enormous amount of energy. Connected with the large accumulator a man is literally able to perform miracles. But of course, if the 'rolls' continue to turn and energy which is made from air, food, and impressions continues to pour out of the large accumulator faster than it pours in, then there comes a moment when the large accumulator is drained of all energy and the organism dies. But this happens very seldom. Usually the organism automatically stops working long before this. Special conditions are necessary to cause the organism to die exhausted of all its energy. In ordinary conditions a man will fall asleep or he will faint or he will develop some internal complication which will stop the work a long time before the real danger.

"One need not, therefore, be afraid of efforts; the danger of dying from them is not at all great. It is much easier to die from inaction, from laziness, and from the fear of making efforts.

"Our aim, on the contrary, is to learn to connect the necessary center with the large accumulator. So long as we are unable to do this, all our work will be wasted because we shall fall asleep before our efforts can give any kind of results.

"Small accumulators suffice for the ordinary, everyday work of life. But for work on oneself, for inner growth, and for the efforts which are required of a man who enters the way, the energy from these small accumulators is not enough.

"We must learn how to draw energy straight from the large accumulator.

"This however is possible only with the help of the emotional center. It is essential that this be understood. The connection with the large accumulator can be effected only through the emotional center. The instinctive, moving, and intellectual centers, by themselves, can feed only on the small accumulators.

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The tendency for readers of this passage to genuinely forget the information it contains is surprising. Perhaps it is especially surprising because Gurdjieff's words state precisely: ***It is essential that this be understood.***

You may also remember Gurdjieff saying: "Only super-efforts count."

There can be no doubt what these words mean in this context. They mean that a super-effort is one that connects you to the large accumulator. But who knows how to make such an effort?

In *In Search of The Miraculous*, those words of Gurdjieff's occur immediately before the passage we have reproduced above.



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## The Camel Seeker

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*The greatest jihad is to battle your own soul, to fight the evil within yourself.  
Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)*

If you have lost a camel and sought it busily, how could you not know, when you find it, that it is yours?

What is that straying camel?

You have lost a she-camel: she has fled from your herd into a veil of concealment. The caravaneers have begun to load, but your camel is lost and has disappeared from the midst of the caravan. You are running to and fro with parched lips; the caravan is now far away and the night is near. Your baggage is left on the ground, lying on the road of peril, whilst you are running about in search of the camel.

You cry "Oh Moslems, who has seen a camel which this morning escaped from my stable? Whoever will give me a clue to finding my camel, I will give so many dirhems as a reward."

You are requesting clues from everyone; every rascal is making a mockery of you on this account. One says, "We saw a camel going in this direction, a reddish camel going to yonder pasture." Another one says, "It was crop-eared," and another says, "Its saddle cloth was embroidered." One says, "The camel had only one eye." and another says, "It was suffering from mange and had no hair."

For the sake of a reward, every rascal at random sets forth a hundred clues.

You have lost a camel, Oh friend, and everyone is offering you a clue to the camel. You know not where the camel is, but you know that these clues are wrong.

And he that has not lost a camel—he too in envy seeks a camel just like him who has really lost it, saying, "Yes; I too have lost a camel; I have brought a reward for anyone who may find it."

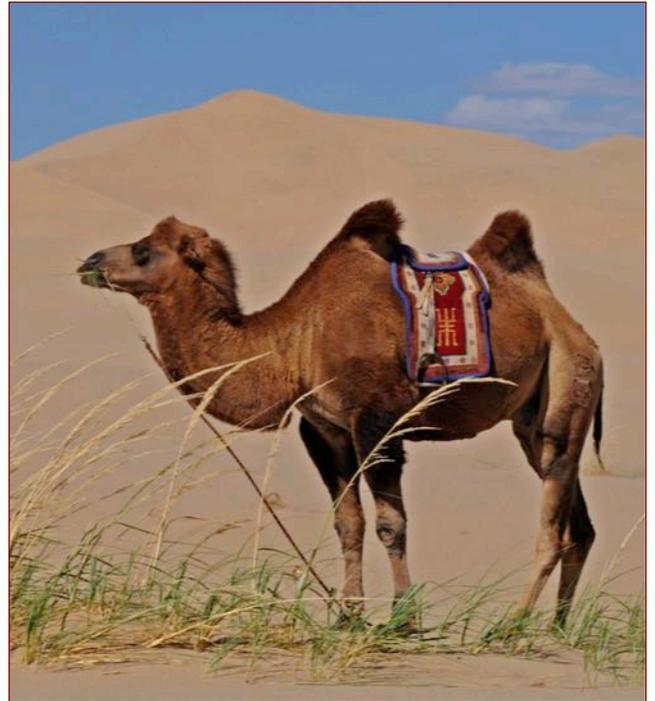
He says this so that he may take a partner's share with you in the lost camel; he plays this trick on you because he covets the camel. If you say to anyone, "That clue was false," that base imitator says the same. He does not know wrong clues from right, but your words are a cue to him.

When one mentions a true clue, then to you comes the certainty in which there is no doubt. That clue becomes balm to your sick soul; it brings color to your face and health and strength to you. Your eye becomes bright, your foot nimble; your body becomes soul and your soul becomes spirit.

Then you will say, "Oh trusted friend, you have spoken the truth: these clues are a clear deliverance. Within there are manifest signs, sure information, distinct evidence: this is a title deed and an ordainment of salvation."

When he has given this clue, you will say, "Go before me! It is time for the enterprise: be thou the leader! I will follow thee Oh truth-teller; thou hast got scent of my camel: show me where it is."

But to that person who has not lost his camel, and who is engaged in this quest for the camel for envy's sake, his certainty is not increased by this right clue, save through reflection from the camel seeker. From the true seeker's earnestness and ardor the imitator gets an inkling that these wild outcries are



## The Camel Seeker...

not mere babble. The imitator had no just claim to this camel, but he too has lost a camel: yes he has.

Desire for another's camel has become a veil to him, so that he has forgotten what he himself has lost. Wherever the owner runs, the imitator runs: from cupidity, he becomes a partner in the owner's pain. When a liar sets out with a truthful man, his falsehood suddenly turns to truth. In the desert, whither that camel had wandered, the imitator also found his own camel.

As soon as he saw it, he remembered his own camel, and ceased to covet the camels of friend and kinsman. That imitator became a true seeker when he saw his camel browsing there. Only at that moment did he become a seeker of the camel: he was never truly seeking it till he saw it in the desert. After that, he began to go alone: he opened his eyes and went towards his own camel.

The sincere seeker says, "You have left me although till now you were paying regard to me."

He replies, "Hitherto I have been an idle scoffer and, from cupidity, have been engaged in flattering thee. But now as I have become parted from thee in the search, I have become sympathetic with thee in spirit. I was stealing the camel's description from thee; but when my spirit saw its own camel, it had its eye filled with seeing. Till I found it, I was not seeking it; now the copper is overcome, the gold overpowers it.

My evil deeds have become pious acts entirely—praise be to Allah!

Jest is vanished and earnestness is realized - praise be to Allah!

Since my evil deeds have become the means of my attaining unto Allah, do not, then, throw blame on my evil deeds. Thee, thy sincerity had made a seeker; for me, toil and search opened the way to sincere feeling. Thy sincerity led thee to seek; my seeking led me to a feeling of sincerity. I was sowing the seed of fortune in the earth, though I fancied it was labour without wages and hire. 'Twas not labour without hire; 'twas an excellent earning: for every grain that I sowed a hundred grew."

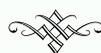
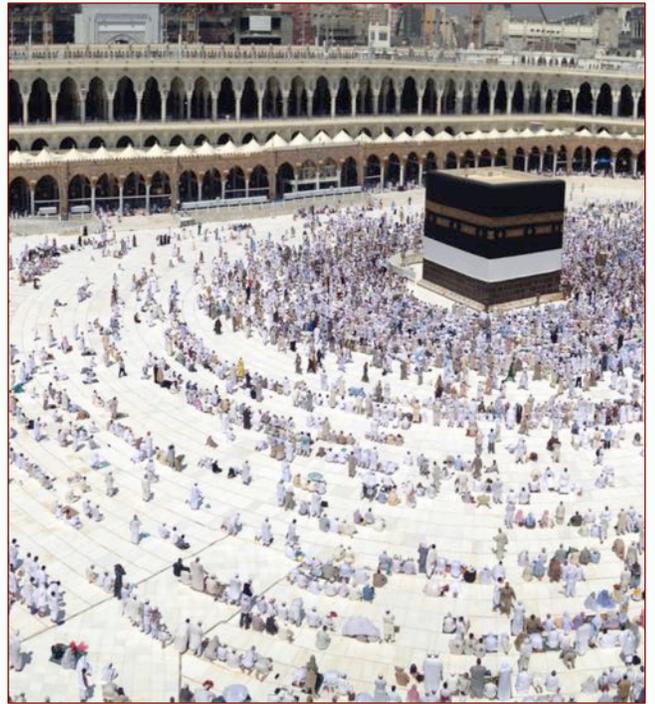
"The thief went by stealth to a certain house: when he entered he saw that it was his own house."

Be hot, Oh cold one, that heat may come: put up with roughness, that ease may come.

The subject of my discourse is not two camels: it is a single camel. Verbal expression is confined, the meaning to be expressed is very full. The expression always fails to reach the meaning: hence the Prophet said, "Whoso knows Allah, his tongue falters."

Speech is like an astrolabe in its reckoning: how much does it know of the sky and the sun?

Especially, of that Sky whereof this heaven is no more than a blade of straw; that Sky of whose Sun the terrestrial sun is but a mote?



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## To Fathom The Gist #1

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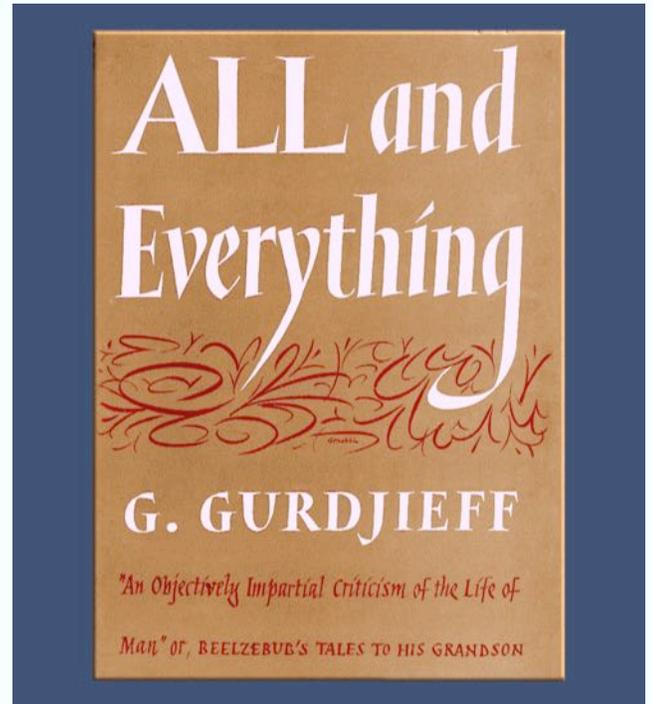
*I have buried in this book certain bones, so that certain dogs with great curiosity and strong scent may dig down to them and, strange thing, when they have done so, are men. ~Gurdjieff*

The aim of this series of articles is to provide the reader with information that may assist their efforts to profit from reading Gurdjieff's collective writings. It is no secret that many people find Gurdjieff's writings difficult. Significant effort is required even to read the *First Series*, *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, just once. Gurdjieff provides the following advice on almost the first page of the book. He writes:

### *Friendly Advice*

*[Written impromptu by the author on delivering this book, already prepared for publication, to the printer.]*

*ACCORDING TO the numerous deductions and conclusions made by me during experimental elucidations concerning the productivity of the perception by contemporary people of new impressions from what is heard and read, and also according to the thought of one of the sayings of popular wisdom I have just remembered, handed down to our days from very ancient times, which declares:*



*“Any prayer may be heard by the Higher Powers and a corresponding answer obtained only if it is uttered thrice:*

*Firstly—for the welfare or the peace of the souls of one's parents.*

*Secondly—for the welfare of one's neighbor.*

*And only thirdly—for oneself personally.”*

*I find it necessary on the first page of this book, quite ready for publication, to give the following advice:*

*“Read each of my written expositions thrice:*

*Firstly—at least as you have already become mechanized to read all your contemporary books and newspapers.*

*Secondly—as if you were reading aloud to another person.*

*And only thirdly—try and fathom the gist of my writings.”*

*Only then will you be able to count upon forming your own impartial judgment, proper to yourself alone, on my writings. And only then can my hope be actualized that according to your understanding you will obtain the specific benefit for yourself which I anticipate, and which I wish for you with all my being.*

**AUTHOR**

It will serve the reader well to read this advice carefully and take it seriously. Clearly, the first way he recommends for reading the book is habitual with no more attention than you would normally give to a book.

The second way he recommends—as if you were reading aloud to another person—is, as far as we know, unprecedented. It is a mode of reading that we never engage in. Few of us are well-practiced in

reading aloud, and probably none of us are practiced in reading "**as if** out loud." This is not the same as reading out loud to an audience, the expectation of the audience acts as a force upon you, causing you to pay attention to how you emphasize and enunciate each word. When you read "**as if** out loud," the force of the audience is entirely absent.

Reading out loud to others is a three centered activity. The moving center moves the vocal chords, the thinking center translates the printed word into sound taking note of punctuation, and the emotional center adds nuance. It is the same when you read "**as if** out loud," even if you make no sound. (When you think the sentence, the vocal chords move anyway, even if you make no sound). The difference is that there is only your personal attention acting to motivate you. It is more difficult than reading out loud.

To read the whole of *The Tales* "**as if** out loud" will take a long time—somewhere in the region of 50 hours. If you do it for two hours every day, then it will take about a month.

Note that Gurdjieff does not suggest that you only need to do this once. The words "*Read each of my written expositions thrice:*" should, we believe, be taken to mean: Read each of my written expositions in three different ways.

If we take Gurdjieff's advice seriously, which only makes sense, then it quickly becomes clear that he is asking a great deal of the reader.

### Objective Art

Orage insisted that Gurdjieff's writings constituted an objective work of art. 'The book [Beelzebub's Tales] is an objective work of art. Objective art consists of conscious variations from the original according to the plan of the artist or writer who strives to create a definite impression on his audience.'

That may be so, but we can only discover that for ourselves. Gurdjieff's **Friendly Advice** informs the reader what effort he expects. We cannot form a reliable opinion without making that effort.

In the next article in this series we will begin to examine the proposition that Gurdjieff's writings are indeed objective. As we progress with this series we will discuss how to read *The Tales* in the third way. Gurdjieff explains this, but he does not do so in his **Friendly Advice**.



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## Objective Science #1

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*If we do what we don't like doing the reward must come later. It is a mathematical law and all life is mathematics. ~Gurdjieff*

**B**efore we discuss any aspect of objective science we need to acknowledge two features of our behavior. The first of these is that we are suggestible. If someone who we deem an authority in any given area of knowledge passes us information, we are on the habit of believing it to be true. We often do so without even pondering whether what we have read or been told is true. Secondly, because of our mechanical behavior, we are likely to pass such information on as if we ourselves knew it to be true.

This is for most if not all of us how our education proceeded. In only a small part of our schooling were we ever required to prove that we thoroughly understood something. In most circumstances all that was required of us is that we were able to repeat what we had been fed to us. For this reason, we most likely we have a number of ingrained beliefs that we accept as facts and that we have never questioned.



For example, in the realm of physics, consider the idea of “the aether.” In 19<sup>th</sup> century physics it was presumed (theoretically) that all of space was filled with a substance (or field) which acted as the transmission medium for all electromagnetic waves. Light moved in waves and hence the question was “what is the medium in which these waves occur?” This was a reasonable question because all other waves that had been encountered (waves in liquid, sound waves through the air) happened within a medium.

In the wake of Einstein’s theories and various astronomical experiments (particularly the famous Michelson Morley Experiment) modern science concluded that there was no aether. The world of Physics accepted this conclusion and the aether idea was abandoned.

In his descriptions of Objective Science in *The Tales*, Gurdjieff states that there is an aether (which he calls Etherokrilno). Quite specifically the book states:

*“Etherokrilno is that prime-source substance with which the whole Universe is filled, and which is the basis for the arising and maintenance of everything existing. (P137)*

For the person who wishes to investigate Objective Science, as described by Gurdjieff, there is no compromise available to them. Either they accept the prevailing theories of modern Physics or they reject them and accept (as a theory) what Gurdjieff proposes.

The aether is by no means the only point of disagreement. In truth, there are many points of disagreement, three of which we will list here:

- Objective Science regards all cosmoses (for example galaxies, suns, planets, moons) as alive. Modern science does not.
- Objective Science defines all life in terms of three foods (normal food, breath and impressions), implying that although we may not see how, planets eat, breathe and perceive. Modern science has no “official” definition of what constitutes life, but tends to think in terms of open systems that

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## Objective Science #1...

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can maintain homeostasis (a steady state) and have a life cycle.

- Objective Science defines an atom as the smallest particle of something that retains all its properties, including its psychological properties. Modern science defines atoms entirely in terms of chemical elements (as illustrated in the Periodic Table). It does not conceive of such atoms as having psychological properties, as that would imply that they had a mind of some kind..

In general, Objective Science models the universe as being composed of living "cosmoses," and substances which exist within cosmoses that pass from one cosmos to another, (and may be composed of lesser cosmoses) and modern science does not.

There are thus many fundamental differences between the two, perhaps the most important one being that Objective Science considers the universe itself to be alive at every level whereas modern science thinks of life only in terms of creatures near to the level of man.



### Why It Matters

This is not about disputing the theories and beliefs of modern science. Even if we are convinced of the rightness of Objective Science we can no more demonstrate its correctness to someone else than can a representative of modern science prove his own view. It is about realizing that there can be no productive debate between the two sides.

This naturally leads us to ponder about what value modern science has for us. In our view it has, or can have, considerable value.

In carrying out repeatable experiments the modern scientist is accumulating data that could be valuable for the objective scientist, no matter what the cherished hypothesis of the scientist is. A clear example of this is provided by the extraordinary amount of data that NASA has gathered and continues to gather with its many satellites, measuring devices and particularly the magnificent Hubble telescope.

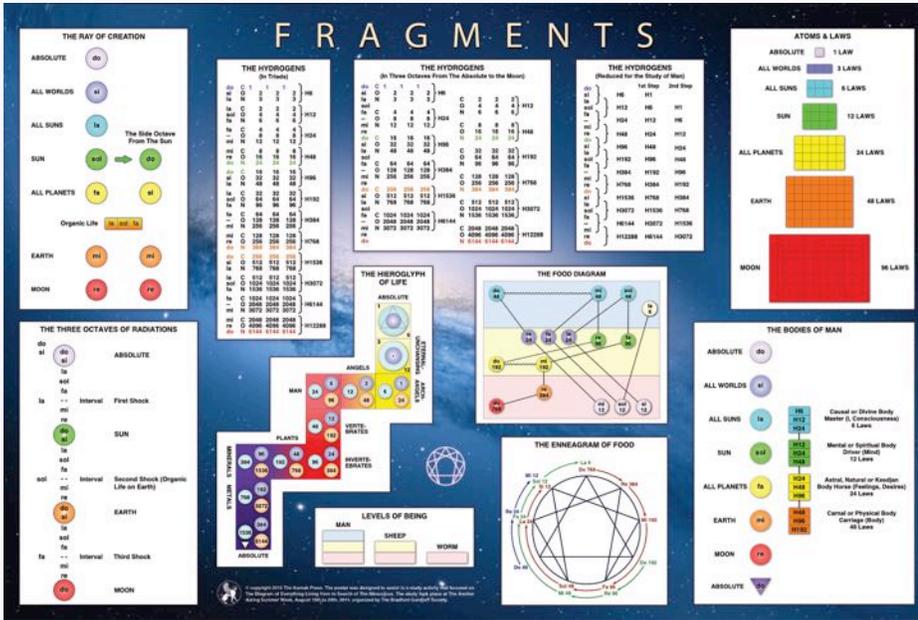
If we cannot help but be deeply skeptical about modern science's Big Bang theory, the theoretical age it has assigned to the universe and the existence of dark matter or dark energy, we ought also be grateful to modern astronomers for their data gathering—their detailed mapping of the universe with its trillions of planetary systems and its dramatic variety of stars and galaxies. We have vastly more data than we once had and humanity is, in our view, richer for that.

As objective scientists, we can put that data to work.



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*The alphabet is the first step to wisdom. ~ Russian Proverb*



The **Fragments Poster** assembles together most of the diagrams that are found in *In Search of The Miraculous* by Peter Ouspensky.

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