

Exploring Gurdjieff's Teaching of The Fourth Way—The Way of Transformation in Ordinary Life \$7.50

Gurdjieff



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Letters to TGJ

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Well-Oiled Intellect with a Smell of Hubris

Thank you for the Tamdgidi review (TG) #53 "Gurdjieff & Hypnosis", it's quite enlightening. I am astounded that Tamdgidi would write this book while never actually being in the Gurdjieff Work. If true, then the book is really nothing more than what Mr. Gurdjieff calls *imagination*. If he never engaged the teaching by applying it to *himself*, then how can he know anything about it from a three-centered perspective?

The professor apparently has a well-oiled intellect capable of hypnotically weaving word-symbols and pictures onto the correspondingly well-oiled associative apparatuses of his readers who might praise such "genius." Or so he might hope, because anyone with even an elementary, though genuine, training in the Work can smell the hubris. Where is the *understanding*? Perhaps he conveniently skipped the part of the teaching where Gurdjieff instructs that *understanding* is the result of *self-knowledge* and *being*. Note, Gurdjieff didn't say *knowledge*—he said *self-knowledge*.

Yousef Salam
Raleigh, North Carolina

CONTENTS

Letters	2
Sri Aurobindo: The Man & His Teaching Part I.....	3
In Search of the Soul Part XII Confucianism	5
The Art of Love	7
J. G. Bennett & the Inner Barrier Part I.....	9
Some Memories of the Prieuré .	11
Book Review: <i>The Reality of Being</i> by Jeanne de Salzmann	13
Kultur	27

Cover: left to right—Georgette Leblanc, Sri Aurobindo (seated), J. G. Bennett, Confucius (statue), and Margaret Anderson

Learned Being of New Formation

Isn't it the aim of all art forms to so impact the reader/viewer that he suspends his disbelief and becomes one with whatever he is reading-viewing-hearing? So Tamdgidi's hypothesis that Gurdjieff is intentionally hypnotizing is naïve as well as being wrong-headed.

Apart from other things, he needs to become better hypnotized by the material since he makes a number of mistakes. He speaks of Beelzebub being pardoned and speaking his last words at the end of the First Series—"on his way to eventually unite with His Endlessness via a transitional stay in the Planet Purgatory to deal with certain remorse of conscience." But Beelzebub had already been pardoned *before* the First Series begins and had returned home to Karatas where he meets his grandson Hasein. The book begins with a second space flight. Further, it would be impossible for Beelzebub to unite with His Endlessness as He dwells on the Holy Sun Absolute, which is now off limits to any but himself. Tamdgidi also becomes entangled in thinking His Endlessness and God to be the same. Finally, why does he wait until the last page to mention *The Struggle of the Magicians*, Gurdjieff's first writing and one of his most profound? This "learned being of new formation" better stick with Rumi.

Charles Carson
Chicago, Illinois

Sacred Communion Through Conscious Movement

Extrapolating beyond the one-line account of Mr. Gurdjieff and Professor Skridlov's travels into Abyssinia, the article "Gurdjieff & Abyssinia" (TG) #53) was read as though winding through a true labyrinth of intriguing motives that may have led them there, and the sacred sites and religious significance of Ethiopia that might have been revealed.

In the description of the festival of Timkat, the line "In order to protect the laity [the Ark of the Covenant] is wrapped in a special cloth" conveys the intensity of puissant energy contained within the physical embodiment of the Ark. Even with the protective covering the assembled are swept into a state of ecstasy of divine communion with the omnipotent, in complete surrender and integration.

The holy dominion of *conscious movement* and dance is vastly

Continued on page 15

Sayings of Substance

Some of those who attended our lectures remained dissatisfied. Many said that there was neither love nor feeling in G's system, that it was nothing but cold mathematical calculation and mechanistic theories; others said that there was no morality to be found in it, no Christian principles of saving mankind, no altruism, etc.

"It is all hypocrisy," Gurdjieff use to say, when we repeated such conversations to him. "They merely want words, behind which they can hide their vanity, their emptiness and self-love. They want love! Yet they would cut my throat because I don't believe what wonderful Christians they are. It is all a lie! They want emotional development side by side with the intellectual. But they do not know what emotional understanding means. Let them feel their own nothingness, that is, what they really are. Let them look at themselves in a mirror—only they must be sincere with themselves for a moment. If they can feel this nothingness, they will understand of themselves why emotional understanding cannot be taught . . . one must have conscience! Morality is only self-consolation. In Europe there is one morality, in Asia another, in Africa still another; but conscience is everywhere one. They say we have no love. And why do they say it? Simply because we do not encourage weakness and hypocrisy but, on the contrary, take off all masks. Those who want truth will not speak of love or Christianity because they know how far they are from it. Christian teaching is for Christians. And Christians are those who live, who do everything, that is, in accordance with the precepts of Christ. Can they lie in accordance with Christ's precepts? There will always be such conversations, there will always be people who care most about words. But it is a sure sign! He who talks like that is an empty man; it is not worth spending time on him."

—G. I. Gurdjieff
[from Ouspensky's first draft
of Search]

Sri Aurobindo

The Man & His Teachings

Part I



AMONG THE FEW FIGURES OF OUR TIME TO ARTICULATE AND INSPIRE approaches toward a uniting of East and West was India's spiritual leader, mystic, philosopher, poet and nationalist Sri Aurobindo. His vision of a transformed world was influenced by his work for Indian independence, the formation of a yoga based on action and historical evolution, and the emergence of a spiritual community devoted to the creation of a spiritual life—an uncommon pairing of politics and yoga.

On August 15, 1947, the birth of India's liberation from Britain's parliamentary rule, notably on Sri Aurobindo's 75th birthday—which

he saw as "a sanction and seal of the Divine Power which guides my steps on the work with which I began life"—he broadcast "A Message to America," summarizing his aim of a synthesis and harmony of East and West:

The East has always and increasingly put the highest emphasis on the supreme truth of the Spirit; it has, even in its extreme philosophies, put the world away as an illusion and regarded the Spirit as the sole reality. The West has concentrated more and more increasingly on the world, on the dealings of mind and life with our material existence, on our mastery

over it, on the perfection of mind and life and some fulfillment of the human being here: latterly this has gone so far as the denial of the Spirit and even the enthronement of Matter as the sole reality. Spiritual perfection as the sole ideal on one side, on the other, the perfectibility of the race, the perfect society, a perfect development of the human mind and life and man's material existence have become the largest dream of the future. Yet both are truths and can be regarded as part of the intention of the Spirit in world-nature; they are not incompatible with each other: rather their divergence has to be healed and both have to be included and reconciled in our view of the future.

The ascent of the human soul to the supreme Spirit is that soul's highest aim and necessity, for that is the supreme reality; but there can be too the descent of the Spirit and its powers into the world and that would justify the existence of the material world also, give a meaning, a divine purpose to the creation and solve its riddle. East and West could be reconciled in the pursuit of the highest and largest ideal, Spirit embrace Matter and Matter find its own true reality and the hidden Reality in all things in the Spirit.

A Complex Life

An abstract chronicle of Sri Aurobindo's life and teachings can only begin to express the significance of a few recorded events in his complex and varied life: from his atypical upbringing in England; to his reemergence in India as a radical pundit and visionary promulgating freedom for India; to the development of a comprehensive integral philosophy of yoga, which has come to be known as integral nondualism (*purna-advaita*); and lastly, the guidance revealed on his method of practice, *Sadhana* or self-discipline, in devotional union with the Mother (Mira Alfassa, 1878–1973), to evolve higher consciousness for all of mankind. Indeed, Aurobindo stated, "No one can write about my life because it has not been on the surface for man to see." Undisputed, however, is Aurobindo's influence on bringing East to West, by way of transpersonal psychology and the human development movement, impacting our daily lives in health care, social

Above: Sri Aurobindo at his desk, ca. 1915–1918

services, education, business, and community development. Consequently, a return to his source teachings may reveal many basic principles informing transformative potential in Western life today.

Provenance in India

Aurobindo was born near 5:00 a.m. on August 15, 1872, in Calcutta, with the given name Aravinda Ackroyd Ghose (Aravinda meaning "red lotus"). He was born in an era already deeply influenced by the British Raj, the period of British colonial rule and expansion which had officially begun in 1858, bringing British law, education, police, military, transportation and more to India—which also led to a counter movement within the country, and divisions within his own family. Aurobindo's father, Dr. Krishnadhan Ghose, was a surgeon, and after studying medicine for two years in England he returned in 1871 entirely Anglicized and an atheist, with a disgust for everything Indian, and a belief that the English character was ideal. Paradoxically, Aurobindo's maternal grandfather, Rajnarayan Bose, a scholar educated in the English schools of Calcutta, was drawn to the Hindu teachings of Vedanta, becoming a devoutly religious leader of the local congregation of the Brahmo Samaj, a Hindu reform sect, which he asserted was "the key to the 'science of religion.'" In 1866 he published a prospectus advocating the revival of an indigenous culture, one of the first records of nationalist sentiment in India. A prolific speaker and writer, he was a pioneer in both the political and revolutionary movements that would later be led by his grandson Aurobindo. In fact, Rajnarayan is still remembered as the Grandfather of Indian Nationalism.

Together with scholarly brilliance loomed madness; three of Rajnarayan's children, including Aurobindo's mother Swarnalata, were afflicted with insanity. Soon after Aurobindo's birth, his mother's lapses into hysteria gradually took complete possession of her. One of his earliest memories was of his mother beating his older brother, Manmohan, with a candlestick; the brother later lamented, "crying for bread I was given a stone, never love." Throughout his life Aurobindo showed an interest in the theory that genius is linked with madness, reflecting, "The fact that genius itself, the highest result of our developing consciousness, flowers so frequently on a diseased branch is a phenomenon full of troubling suggestions."

Lessons in Austerity

Dr. Ghose's supreme ambition for his children was that they become "beacons of the world" in the Indian Civil Service (ICS), which would require a stringent British school curriculum. So at the age of five, Aurobindo and his two brothers were sent to an Irish convent boarding school in Darjeeling to be educated with the children of European officials. After two years Dr. Ghose took his family, which now included a daughter, to England, where their fourth son, Barindra, was born. By now Swarnalata's illness was severe, so Dr. Ghose sent her and the two infants to live with her father in India. He made arrangements to leave Aurobindo, now seven, and his two older brothers in the care of an English minister in Manchester, with the strict stipulation that he not allow them to "make the acquaintance of any Indian or undergo any Indian influence," determined as he was to have his eldest boys raised as Englishmen, cut off from the culture of their birth. It was the last they would see of their father.

From the age of seven to twenty-one, Aurobindo lived in England, taught by ministers of the Church of England, dons at St. Paul's School and later King's College, and Cambridge. He began writing poetry at a very young age, an activity that continued throughout his life. At ten, in reading Shelley's "The Revolt of Islam," he was touched by the poet's vision of the French Revolution, and at this young age Aurobindo decided to "dedicate my life to a similar world change and take part in it." In school he spoke English and French; read Greek, Latin and Italian; English and French poetry and literature; and histories of Europe. At Cambridge he studied law; economics; Sanskrit and Bengali; and Indian studies in preparation for the ICS exams.

My Life Has Been a Battle

Aurobindo was given the best possible English education toward the achievement of his father's goals. However, from a practical standpoint, the boys were abandoned by their father. At first he sent regular remittances to England for their lodging and care, but after two years they entirely ceased. The boys were moved to lodgings in London where they lived on a meager scholarship, charity, and by what little work the young brothers could find, literally on the verge of poverty. Although their

father continued his work as a doctor, along with two households to maintain, he had a habit of giving his money away to the poor, sending nothing for the care of his sons. He believed that his children should be men of character, and wanted his sons to develop the "virtue" that comes from overcoming adversity. The discipline forged in leading a Spartan subsistence would serve Aurobindo throughout his life.

Later in life, at the ashram he created at Pondicherry, Aurobindo would write of this period and overcoming difficulties:

Good God! My whole life has been a struggle with hard realities, from hardships, starvation in England and constant dangers and fierce difficulties to the far greater difficulties continually cropping up here in Pondicherry, external and internal. My life has been a battle from its early years and is still a battle: the fact that I wage it now from a room upstairs and by spiritual means as well as others that are external makes no difference to its character.

The Idea of Liberating India

After Dr. Ghose returned to India, changes forced on his career quickly embittered him so that he ceased to admire the British, soon falling into alcoholism. He sent newspaper reports to his sons of the mistreatment of Indians by the "heartless" British. On reading these articles Aurobindo found that his general commitment to revolutionary action was "canalized into the idea of the liberation of his own country," so at 14 he "took a firm decision" to work for India's freedom. At this introspective age he also began to be aware of defects in his character—selfishness, fear, a tendency to tell lies—and tried to eliminate them, which became a turning point in his inner life. Recognizing this inner axis, he later wrote, "In those days I was not particular about telling the truth and I was a great coward. Nobody could have imagined that later on I could face the gallows or carry on a revolutionary movement. In my case it was all human imperfection with which I had to start, feel all the difficulties before embodying the Divine Consciousness."

Continued on page 16

IN SEARCH OF THE SOUL PART XII

CONFUCIANISM



FOR CENTURIES, SCHOLARS HAVE DEBATED WHETHER CONFUCIANISM is a religion, a philosophy or a political theory. There is no doubt that the *Analects*, the collection of the aphorisms of Confucius, is one of the most influential books in history. In it, Confucius reflected upon subjects as diverse as self-cultivation, just government, family relations and religious ritual, and it became the basis of education, social practices and the functioning of the imperial government in China for millennia. Confucius abolished the distinction between politics and ethics by blending religion, philosophy and political theory into a teaching of moral

harmony within the individual and throughout society and government. Although Buddhism and Taoism spread throughout China, it was the teachings of Confucius that dominated Chinese religion, philosophy and politics for almost 2,500 years.

Confucianism became a way of life in China through its rituals, social customs, educational curriculum and ideology. At various times and places it was "a primordial religious sensibility and practice, a philosophic exploration of the cosmos, an ethical system, an educational program, a complex of family and community rituals, dedication to government service, aesthetic

criticism, a philosophy of history, the intellectual background for poets and painters, and much more." Confucius saw himself as a transmitter and teacher of the Way of the Ancient Sages, or the Tao, and not as a creator of original ideas or a new metaphysics. In the *Analects* he is quoted as saying, "I have transmitted what was taught to me without making up anything of my own." There was no revelation from heaven or the gods in his teaching, but the veneration of a classical canon that had recorded the words and deeds of the great sage kings of antiquity. While there was no idol worship or priestly caste, ancestor worship and ritual sacrifice were central to Confucian practice and to beliefs about the soul, the spirit and the role of "Heaven" in human life. Because Confucius refrained from developing a metaphysics in his teachings, Buddhist and Taoist beliefs had a significant impact on later Confucian thought, particularly that of the Neo-Confucians developed during the Sung dynasty (960–1279 CE). As a result, during many periods of Chinese history the boundaries between Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism were blurred, and it was not unusual for an individual to identify as an adherent of all three without any sense of conflict or contradiction. For Confucius himself, it was the traditional Chinese religion that was the foundation and background for his beliefs about the soul and the afterlife.

The Life of Confucius

There is little doubt that Confucius was an historical figure. Most historians put his birth as occurring in 551 BCE, in the Chinese state of Lu, which is now part of Shantung province. His father was a *shi*, the lowest stratum of nobility, similar to a knight, whose remote ancestors were aristocrats in the Shang dynasty some 2,000 years earlier. *Shi* were a middle class between the ruling aristocracy and the peasantry, although increasingly disenfranchised and impoverished at the period in which Confucius was born. His father was a soldier who married later in life and died when Confucius was three, leaving him to be raised in poverty by his mother.

At an early age, Confucius showed

Above: Confucius presenting the young Gautama Buddha to Laozi, Qing Dynasty

signs of high intelligence. He supported himself with odd jobs such as granary master and overseer of cattle and sheep, and yet managed to obtain a classical education, though few details about the process of his education or his teachers are known. Fortunately for Confucius, the knowledge of archaic writing systems and ancient literature had been preserved in the state of Lu. As a result, he had access to the materials necessary to research and study the texts of Chinese antiquity.

Confucius began teaching about the ancient texts in an informal school in Lu when he was 23. His aspiration was to serve as an advisor to a king or duke, but he was never able to achieve that goal. Instead, the highest positions he held were minor political posts in Lu, such as police magistrate and minister of public works, which he attained when he was 50. At the age of 56, recognizing that none of the rulers in Lu were interested in his advice, he left his home state and traveled with his disciples from state to state throughout China for 13 years, seeking a ruler who would put his teachings into practice. During that time he suffered many privations and frequent threats to his life, but his reputation spread and the number of his disciples grew.

When he was 69, Confucius returned home to the state of Lu, where he spent his remaining years teaching, studying and editing ancient Chinese texts, which came to be known as the Five Classics. These included the *Book of Changes (I Ching)*, the *Book of History*, the *Book of Odes*, the *Book of Rituals* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. About the *I Ching*, the ancient book of cosmic evolution, Confucius said, "Give me a few more years, so that I will have studied the *I Ching* for 50 years, and I may thereby eliminate major errors."

Confucius died in 479 BCE at the age of 73. About his own life, he stated:

At 15, I set my heart upon learning. At 30, I planted my feet firmly upon the ground. At 40, I no longer suffered from perplexities. At 50, I knew what were the biddings of heaven. At 60, I heard them with docile ear. At 70, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right.

Confucius & the Ancient Sage Kings of Pre-History

Confucius was born in the period of Chinese history known as the Spring and Autumn Period, a brutal era of warring feudal lords and corrupt despots. Yearning for peace and moral government, he looked back to a time in antiquity when the ancient sage kings ruled to provide a model for society and government. These ancient kings of pre-history lived 2,000 years before Confucius, and governed on the basis of virtue. This virtue, or *de*, was a force or power that came to reside in people of a high moral and compassionate character. With the power accrued through kindness and virtue, a ruler could inspire others to be virtuous. Two of these ancient kings, Yao and Shun, were so virtuous they ruled by *wu-wei* (non-activity), simply by sitting in majestic repose facing the south. Confucius believed this virtuous leadership could happen again, without force or laws, with the right rulers. He stated:

Guide the people by governmental measures, and regulate them with threat of punishment, and the people will try to keep out of jail, but will have no sense of honor or shame. Guide the people and regulate them by *li* (proper conduct), and the people will have a sense of honor and respect.

The legends of the ancient sage kings were passed down orally through millennia and recorded in the ancient texts of the Zhou dynasty. It was those texts that Confucius compiled and studied, and it was the founding figures of the Zhou dynasty, King Wen, King Wu and the Duke of Zhou, who served as Confucius' models for a virtuous ruler.

King Wen and King Wu were famous not only for founding the highly cultured Zhou dynasty, but also as the authors of the *I Ching*, which was composed or compiled by King Wen during his imprisonment while his son, King Wu, waged war against a Shang dynasty despot. King Wu later elaborated and added a more detailed analysis to the *I Ching*. In the *Analects*, it is the Duke of Zhou, King Wu's brother, who serves as the primary exemplar of virtuous ruler, for after King Wu died, he acted as the regent for Wu's young son for seven years, never attempting to usurp the throne for himself, the epitome of filial

piety. For Confucius, the texts from the Zhou dynasty were a splendid summary of what culture should be, for the moral actions and character of the early Zhou rulers were examples for anyone who aspired to virtue. It was Confucius' aim to teach the wisdom of the former sages, particularly of the Zhou dynasty, with the goal of creating a virtuous society and restoring the moral integrity of the state.

The Teachings of Confucius for Everyone—Ruler to Peasant

Confucius taught that everyone, from ruler to peasant, must strive to become a *junzi* (chun-tze), or "ideal man" by following the Tao. For Confucius, the Tao was the way or path of goodness of the Ancient Sages set forth in the Five Classics. The goal and path were one process, and in order to understand the goal, one had to understand the path of Tao. The path of Tao consisted of four key aspects: 1) *ren* (*jen*)—full humanity or love, 2) *Chung-Yung*—the Doctrine of the Mean, or the middle, balanced way, 3) *Hsiao*—filial piety, and 4) *li*—ritual propriety/proper conduct.

Ren (Jen). *Ren* is the heart of Confucian teaching. No one word in English can capture the meaning of *ren*. It has been translated as: humanity, humaneness, love, goodness, benevolence, kindness, compassion and true manhood. The term was used 108 times in the *Analects*, yet Confucius provided no definition. The word *ren* has been described as the essence of all positive human attributes, an inner capacity possessed by all human beings to do good, as human beings should. For Confucius, it was a "sublime moral attitude, a transcendental perfection attained to by legendary heroes." Hence, his statement that one "cannot but be chary when speaking of it."

Confucius made the radical pronouncement that all human beings could aspire to *ren*, that it was not limited to the aristocracy. Nevertheless, he made it clear that it was a lifelong process, perhaps unattainable, and that he had not himself attained *ren*:

The Ways [Tao] of the true gentleman [*junzi*—ideal man] are three. I myself have met with success in none of them. For he that is *ren* is never

Continued on page 22

THE ART OF LOVE

BY MARGARET ANDERSON

Following Isak Dinesen's idea of working with sorrow—All sorrows can be borne if you can put them into a story, or tell a story about them—Margaret Anderson writes about Georgette Leblanc.

The life of a Grave 1941

ON A QUIET EVENING IN OCTOBER GEORGETTE'S LIFE CAME TO ITS end. Her tawny eyes opened and looked at us for the last time. Then she sighed gently, and died.

She lay in the room where I am now writing, and I sat beside her in the night and held her hand. As the hours passed I imagined I was hearing Chopin's 20th Prelude played, as I suddenly knew it should be played. The twelve great measures, taken at a new tempo, in a different rhythm, filled the room and the night—played more slowly, very slowly, as if with each measure the hands that touched the piano were enfolding the departing presence. Each chord was taken on a count of three, as if this were the only rhythm in which a farewell could be conceived. Ever since that night I have waited in vain to hear someone play it like this.

... We walked down the hill behind the white hearse, covered with white flowers. In the church the organist was playing Bach's "Viens, douce mort"; then the Bach Chorale, "I Call upon Thee, Jesus"; and Chopin's saddest *Etude*.

In the little Cannet cemetery we filled the waiting grave with tuberose. Around it were nine small graves, each with a tombstone marked "Notre cher petit ange." Monique, with her poor bent back and desperate face, stood rigid and immovable, throwing her tuberose long after it was time to move away. Someone touched her arm, but she pushed his hand away as if defying the whole world to stop her, and went on throwing, throwing. Then we left Georgette there, under the sky, beneath a mound of white flowers, for all the nights to come.

Perhaps one shouldn't try to write about death. The silence of those who hold this theory has often impressed or



Georgette Leblanc and Margaret Anderson; in Georgette, Margaret had discovered, "My basic happiness was founded on this fact—this unmatched fact; that one sometimes finds a human being with whom one can have a true and limitless human communication. The words for this blessing are 'love' or 'understanding.'"

moved me, but it has never satisfied me. Alice Toklas quoted Gertrude Stein's last words and then wrote just one sentence: "They took her to the operating room, and I never saw her again".

I prefer Isak Dinesen's idea: "All sorrows can be borne if you can put them into a story, or tell a story about them."

... In the Chalet Rose, the days that followed Georgette's death were—to my surprise—days of thought. I was conscious of being preoccupied with something beyond deprivation, and I soon realized what it was. I needed to make an impersonal survey of the fact that for years I had known a unique human being; that I had been aware of this fact daily; that I had watched this human being live and die, as if I knew in advance that such observation would one day serve me; and that it was serving me now, with this strange necessity to clarify what I had found unique in her. To do so, and to do it clearly, became an obsession that filled my days, and my nights.

First I had to ask myself whether I was simply doing what everyone does after a great loss—exaggerating virtues, even imagining qualities that hadn't existed. I knew I wasn't, but how to prove it? Such an effort would be

difficult, and it would be unimportant; but it would be comforting. Therefore why couldn't I write down my thoughts as one writes music?—not to prove anything but simply to say something?

What appeared "unique" to me was the two-fold aspect of Georgette's endowment—that of exceptional human being and exceptional artist. But can this combination be called unique? I could, for instance imagine that Marc Chagall is such a human being: a type that is serious, but always with lightness; never solemn or heavy; incapable of unkind thoughts or bad faith or pettiness of any kind; the artist *engagé* in the sense of being both optimistic and pessimistic—optimistic about human progress and pessimistic about his optimism; involved in "helping people," but never undertaking a "great work"—like aiding the natives of Africa or urging nations to stop their wars (knowing that they won't); tempted to propaganda but knowing its uselessness, and always believing that Art is the real, the great, persuader. Of course I didn't know anything about Chagall's daily life and behavior, but after meeting him, watching his face and sensing that he was "*un être tout en vibration*" (as Georgette said of Joyce), I imagined that I knew his category and that it might resemble Georgette's. If it did—and there

must be others?—I would have to relinquish my argument for “unique”.

And in fact I soon gave up the effort to prove any such thing. It was a silly ambition, of interest to no one. Who wants proof of anything so outside the great practical issues of life? Very few—except people like me.

Writing today, twenty years later, I am remembering my thoughts as if I had been thinking them continuously during all these years—as I have. However, I realized that if I wanted to write about them now, vitally, the form most assured of vitality would be a Journal. But since I’ve never kept a *journal in time*, any attempt to use that form now would lead to falseness.

A more natural form for me would be that of a letter—the kind of letter you write unselfconsciously but which, because it is true, holds a reader’s attention; the kind you can read aloud afterward without embarrassment, because it won’t have the tricky atmosphere of having been written to impress.

Once I’ve made my decision about form, I thought, my real difficulties will begin. I must write no single sentence that doesn’t present an experienced fact—real, or that *really* took place in my imagination; I must resist all insertions of hindsight; I must omit much of what I most long to say, pare it down to what I actually did say. In this way, though my recital may not move me, it is almost certain to move my reader. But what *is* the criterion of “moving”? I think it is this: if my letter keeps to the truth and nothing but the truth, I may or may not succeed in writing well, but I will have written in a way to capture attention. If I read the letter aloud to someone I won’t have to watch his eyes wander away from me. This in itself is proof of a good style. It won’t be “fine writing”—(to be avoided in any case); it won’t perhaps be eloquent, and it won’t be comparable to what a real writer could do with my material. But it will be clean writing, it will be my truth, and there’s a chance that it will be moving.

After I’ve got this far, I must pass three other tests. First, my material must be “interesting”—that is, in some way different from anyone else’s. Second, I must *know* when I’m telling the truth: one doesn’t always know. Third, the theory that anyone’s story is interesting if truthfully told is not true. The theory that “everyone has at least one

story to tell” is true, but, unless he has natural genius, or emotions of overpowering intensity, he will write or tell it unconsciously, and it won’t be a good story. Unconsciousness produces those *débordements* of emotion which nauseate a reader. The nausea is caused



Margaret Caroline Anderson (November 24, 1886–October 18, 1973) was the American founder, publisher and co-editor with Jane Heap, of the art and literary magazine *The Little Review*, which published a collection of modern American, English and Irish writers between 1914 and 1929. In early 1924, through Alfred Richard Orage, she came to know of Gurdjieff, and moved to France to visit him at Fontainebleau-Avon. From 1935 to 1939, Anderson and Leblanc studied with Gurdjieff as part of “the Rope.” Anderson continued until his death in October 1949, writing about him and his teachings in most of her books, most extensively in her memoir, *The Unknowable Gurdjieff*.

because the emoting author isn’t aware that he is overflowing. This is embarrassing, in life or in art.

Then comes the final test. Even if I succeed in being truthful, and if I relate interesting facts, I may still fail. I must have some knowledge of *métier* or my writing will have a taint—that curse of curses: domestic writing.

Rules for good writing, I sometimes think, are like rules for good behavior: be yourself, be simple and easy and honest, be aware of yourself and your audience, and don’t exaggerate (dramatize) unless you can do it *à propos*.

But why talk of rules, since a born writer breaks them all whenever he needs or wants to? Or is it true that there are some he never breaks? I think so; principally that one about overflowing.

Not being a born writer, I try to remember most of the rules—especially that one about refusing to lie. Is it true that the emotions I’m feeling today, and trying to write about, are the same ones I felt years ago and tried to write about? Yes, it is true. Because long before Georgette’s death we had all learned something (from Orage) about the seven tests for weighting emotions:

The seven characteristics of emotion

1. What kind of emotion are you having?
2. Its appropriateness (does the emotion fit the occasion?)
3. Its intensity (always a value even if the emotion is so-called mean).
4. Its elevation (the object to which it is applied).
5. Its degree of expression (is it articulate, has it finesse?)
6. Its universality (not common, but affirmed—the authenticity of a human emotion).
7. Its individuality (character of you, unique).

The morning after Georgette’s funeral a strange thing happened. I wakened with my head turned slightly down to the left, as if there were a deep well just below the bed and, as I bent down to listen, I heard her voice coming up to me out of the well, telling me all those special things she alone seemed to know. This is exactly what happened, and it happened several times. But I could never remember what she had said.

Then, in the following days, I had a recurrent dream. It went like this:

I had said *au revoir* to her for a few days, as I sometimes used to do, leaving Paris or the lighthouse or the Chateau with a friend for a trip in the car. In the dream I would try

Continued on page 26

J. G. Bennett & the Inner Barrier Part I

SPRING 1920. CONSTANTINOPLE. MRS. WINIFRED BEAUMONT OFFERS THE drawing room of her apartment in Péra to Ouspensky in which to hold his lectures. Mrs. Beaumont, 47 years old, introduces Ouspensky to her lover, 23-year-old John Godolphin Bennett, who is head of a section of British intelligence in Constantinople. Both Mrs. Beaumont and Bennett are personal friends of Prince Sabaheddin, a nephew of the reigning Sultan and son of a famous Turkish reformer. The Prince also begins to attend Ouspensky's meetings held every Wednesday afternoon. The diminutive Prince, slight and delicate, has an open mind and is well-versed in the subject of self-transformation. He has traveled to the capitals of Europe, and owns a house in Switzerland (where he first met Mrs. Beaumont). Among his many friends is Rudolph Steiner, the founder of Anthroposophy. Also attracted to the lectures is Boris Mouravieff, a rather feline-looking Russian aristocrat, who will later become a friend of a sort of Ouspensky's.

Gurdjieff rents an apartment on Koumbaradji Street and soon sets up his "office" at the Black Rose, the rather dubious café frequented by a cross section of White Russians, officers, whores, alcoholics, drug addicts and assorted denizens of the night.

Ouspensky had broken with Gurdjieff nearly two years before. They had not seen one another since Essentuki. Now the two meet again at the Black Rose.

"In truth," says Ouspensky, "I was expecting Gurdjieff to come to Constantinople."

August 1920. Prince Sabaheddin telephones Bennett to ask if he might invite a newly arrived friend to Ouspensky's afternoon lectures. The Prince tells Bennett that though he had met this friend only three or four times, first in 1908 and the last in 1912, he regards him "as one of the very few men who had been able to penetrate into the hidden brotherhoods of Central Asia." The Prince tells Bennett, too, that he would be meeting "the most remarkable man he would ever know." Coming from the Prince, whom Bennett regards highly, this is high praise.



John Bennett as a young man

The Prince's friend arrives at about half-past nine in the evening, long after the lecture is over and Ouspensky has departed, but the friend shows not the least sign of embarrassment. Bennett observes that the man—his name of course was Gurdjieff—greeted "the Prince in Turkish with an accent that was a strange mixture of cultured Osmanli and some uncouth Eastern dialect."

Introduced to the Prince's friend, Bennett says:

"I met the strangest eyes I have ever seen. The two eyes were so different that I wondered if the light had played some trick on me."

The difference, Bennett realizes, is not because of any kind of cast or defect in either eye but, rather, in their expression.

Of Gurdjieff's general appearance, Bennett says: "He had long, black mustaches fiercely curled upwards. He wore a kalpack, that is, an astrakhan cap [and a shaved head beneath]." Gurdjieff tells Bennett, perhaps for effect, that he was born in 1866, thus making himself 54 years old, practically twice Bennett's age.

As both Bennett and the Prince have a keen interest in hypnotism, the conversation eventually turns there. The Prince asks Bennett to relate the experiments he has been making. Gurdjieff listens attentively.

"I felt," says Bennett, "that he was not so much following my words as participating in the experience. I have never before had the same feeling of being understood better than I understood myself."

As Gurdjieff speaks about levels of experience in relation to hypnotism, it is quickly evident to Bennett that "this man had specialized knowledge of a kind I had not met with before."

At one point, Bennett speaks of his discovery of the fifth dimension—he had had an out-of-body experience during the war—and his belief that it is the region of free will.

"Your guess is right," answers Gurdjieff. "There are higher dimensions or higher worlds where the higher faculties of man have free play."

He explains to Bennett that theoretical understanding is of no use, as one remains where they are. Even the

crystallization of a finer body is not enough in that it, too, is under material laws. He tells him that he himself must change, for, "Within this sphere there is no freedom. Neither your knowledge nor all your activity will give you freedom. This is because you have no *varlik*, no real being."

At one point, Gurdjieff tells Bennett: "You have the possibility of changing, but I must warn you that it will not be easy. You are still full of the idea that you can do what you like."

When leaving, Gurdjieff invites Bennett and Mrs. Beaumont to a demonstration of Temple Dances the next Saturday evening. When Bennett and Mrs. Beaumont go to the demonstration they are surprised to see, of all people, Ouspensky. He had given no indication that he knew Gurdjieff. Though impressed with the dances, Bennett and Mrs. Beaumont resist becoming members of Gurdjieff's circle.

August 1923. Prieuré.

Twenty-six-year-old John Godolphin Bennett arrives. Highly intelligent, a visionary, a natural leader with strong gifts for commanding others' attention,



Mrs. Winifred Beaumont

and a fledgling magician in his own right, Bennett is a promising candidate to fulfill the role of stepping down the teaching, a role Gurdjieff had previously



Bennett (seated third from left) as head of the Military Intelligence "B" office in Constantinople

seen Ouspensky fulfilling.

One day Gurdjieff takes Bennett aside and tells him, "Now only your mind is awake: your heart and body are asleep. If you continue like this, soon your mind also will go to sleep, and you will never be able to think any new thoughts. You cannot awaken your own feelings, but you can awaken your body. If you can learn to master your body, you will begin to acquire Being. . . . Remember yourself as two—you and your body. When you are master of your body, your feelings will obey you."

During the coming weeks Bennett makes some breakthroughs. Gurdjieff, dressed in a smart French suit, as is now his custom, invites Bennett to accompany him on a business trip to Melun. Upon their return Gurdjieff cuts off into a forest road. The two end up in a clearing overlooking the Prieuré some hundred feet below. Speaking Turkish—Bennett is the only student versed in that language—Gurdjieff confides that this view of the château is his favorite. He talks of the future, telling Bennett of his plans to buy more land. He will then build an observatory, there being many facts about planetary movements that astronomy has overlooked. The impression he creates is that there is much to do, much to learn, many opportunities.

A few days later, Gurdjieff again approaches Bennett, declaring—"You have the possibility of learning to work. . . . You have seen that it is possible to be directly connected with the Great Accumulator of Energy that is the source of all miracles. If you could be permanently connected with this source, you could pass all barriers." He goes on to relate that "Ever since I was a young boy, I have known of the existence of this power and the barriers that separate man from it, and I searched until I found the way of breaking through them. This is the greatest secret that man can discover about human nature. Many people are convinced that they wish to be free and to know reality, but they do not know the barrier that prevents them from reaching reality. They come to me for help, but they are unwilling or unable to pay the price."

Speaking about being and knowledge (as he had to Ouspensky and others seven years before in Petersburg),

Continued on page 28

Some Memories of the Prieuré

by Mary C. Bell, M.D.



Mary Bell as a WRN (Woman's Royal Navy)

Visiting Paris in 1949, 25 years after her stays at the Prieuré, Dr. Bell set down her impressions of daily life, ranging from December 1923 shortly before the death of Katherine Mansfield to September 1924 before Gurdjieff set off for the first time to America.

MY READERS I HOPE WILL NOT EXPECT FROM ME ANYTHING profound and indeed, I shall try only to paint lightly some of the happenings in our life at Le Prieuré in 1923. The story, though, really begins on Christmas Day, 1922, when I went over for a week.

Picture to yourselves a long, gaily decorated table, with a bottle of wine in front of each guest—Mr. G. is seated in the middle of one side of the table, with his Mother and family round him.

The guests are mainly Russian refugees and English. The meal begins with vodka and sardines, and some care is needed to avoid catching the eye of any Russian—for if you meet Mr. So and So's eye, he will promptly rise in his seat and toast you; and courtesy demands that at each toast you empty your glass.

It gave the Russians great amusement to try and make the English drunk. The food consisted of Russian dishes—but Mr. G. had told four of the English, under the guidance of Lady Rothermere, to make a Christmas pudding. The materials were there in abundance, but how to cook it? The array of copper saucepans that decorated the kitchen did not meet with their approval, and *faute de mieux*, they cooked the pudding in copper.

After the meal, Mr. Page, a sedate, awkwardly moving city man gave us, involuntarily, a marvellous exhibition of co-ordinated muscular movements. Having honourably drunk his bottle of wine, he threw his handkerchief on to the floor, placed the empty bottle upright on his head, and, without mishap, picked up the handkerchief in his teeth.

At that time the study house had not been acquired, and the evenings were spent in the large salon of the chateau, a spacious room with a beautiful parquet floor. And yet there was no sense of incongruity when the door opened and a bewildered day old calf pushed its head in, gently propelled from behind by Mr. G. It was in that salon that I first heard the moving music for the "Initiation of a Priestess," with lovely Mme Ostroffsky, Mr. G.'s wife, as Priestess and Peropontoff as Priest.

When I returned in March the Study House was being erected. It was an old hangar. Passing through a small lobby, one entered an almost square space with a low stage thrown out at the further end. Against the walls were couches for any who wished to rest, and a six foot foyer to which strangers were admitted; but the centre portion, divided from the foyer by a low partition, was reserved for the pupils alone. Against the partition were slightly raised seats, each covered by a goat-skin, which were allocated to the pupils, men on the right and women on the left. Mr. G's seat was a tented Divan on the right side of the entrance into the Central Square. The floor of the square was covered with Eastern rugs, and in the centre was a fountain with a slowly revolving disc of many coloured glass and the colour of the water appeared to change from

minute to minute. The piano was in the foyer at the left of the stage. The stage was raised about 15 inches and covered with linoleum, and the front sloped in a gentle curve to the floor. Again there was no sense of incongruity when a kid, that was being brought up in the kitchen, came to the Study House one evening and, having discovered the slope, spent a happy hour slithering down it again and again.

The roof was covered with gaily painted cloths, interspersed with sayings from Eastern literature, also painted in large Arabic characters on cloth. All these were the work of pupils, carried out during a period of intensive work, and the thousands of sequins used in the decorations glittered continually in the changing lights of the fountain.

About nine o'clock Mr. G. entered the Study House, where the pupils were already quietly seated after their hard day's work, and the activities would continue until about 2 a.m. Mr. de Hartmann was at the piano. Many evenings we began with the six Obligatory Movements, after which the programme was very varied. The various large groups might be danced—the Initiation of a Priestess,

the Dervish dance, the Big Prayer, the Little Prayer, the Enneagram—or there might be Eastern country and occupational dances. Or the evening might be devoted to the working out of new Movements.

At other times the activities took place in the centre. Seated on the floor we would learn the most complicated exercises, involving in one exercise the simultaneous use of legs, arms, heads, expression of emotions and one or more sequences of words in any language.

On occasion 10 or 12 of us would be picked out, and, seated in the middle of the floor, we had to memorise words in any language supplied to us by the others. We began with 10 and chanted them from 1 to 10 and 10 to 1 until we knew them, and then another 10 was added, and then another 10 and so on, until at the end of an hour, chanting up and down the whole time, we had memorised a list of 70 or 80 words.

We had to learn a sign language of numbers, so subtly constructed that when skilfully done we could communicate numbers to one another in the middle of a large crowd without being observed, and in connection

with this language, we memorised, during our daily occupations, a list of 100 names of animals in Russian, with their numbers in the list, and also 100 operas in the same way. We also learnt the Morse Code. All these were subsequently used for the bewilderment of the large number of people who came down from Paris and other places, by invitation, on Saturday evenings to see the performances. They would be told that if they selected an animal from the list, or an opera, by the power of the pupils' concentration, the choice would be communicated to Mr. de Saltzmann, seated with his back to the audience before a black board on the stage, or to Mr. de Hartmann at the piano, and the animal would be drawn or the opera played. In reality, Mme de Hartmann, at the back of the Study House, communicated the numbers by signs to a watcher, usually Mr. Tchekovitch, who was perched on a ladder in the dark outside the window of the stage, and he signalled it back to Mr. de Saltzmann or Mr. de Hartmann. The Morse Code had, I think, an even more striking use. One of the audience selected from a list the name of a pupil, which was passed on to Mr. de Hartmann, and the audi-

ence were told that Mr. de Hartmann's impressionist improvisation on the pupil selected would be so marvelous that the rest of us would know without doubt who it was. But again we must look for the reality. Interspersed in the short improvisation, accentuated notes in Morse Code soon told us the name of the pupil, and with Mme de Saltzmann often in the lead, we called it out to the astonished audience. Before leaving the Study House, I must speak of one last most beautiful memory.

We were told to run or walk and "stopped." Within my line of vision I saw Vladush, a Polish boy of about sixteen. He was not very tall and his face was pale and aquiline in cast, and that evening he was wearing an embroidered Russian costume with jewelled cap. The



The salon at the Prieuré

Continued on page 20

Book Review

The Reality of Being

by Jeanne de Salzmann

Shambala Publications, 312 pp.

OF THE GROWING NUMBER OF BOOKS THAT ATTEMPT TO DEFINE or in some way speak about the Gurdjieff Work, the recently released *The Reality of Being* is an unanticipated, if somewhat unusual, addition. It is unanticipated because the author, Jeanne de Salzmann, passed on some 21 years ago and during her 101 years of life published very little. The book is of interest for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that Mme de Salzmann had a long and close relationship with Mr. Gurdjieff that began in Tiflis in 1919. Of their initial meeting, she said, "The first impression of Gurdjieff was very strong, unforgettable. He had an expression I had never seen, and an intelligence, a force, that was different . . . a vision that could see everything." When asked his impression of her, Gurdjieff said, "She— is intelligent." By this he meant, as he would later explain, "Intelligent means

he who directs his body. If the body directs, you are a nullity, a peasant—if you direct your body you are intelligent." Having studied and taught forms of music and dancing, including that of Jacques Dalcroze, it was natural for her to become one of the leading dancers in Gurdjieff's dance exercises commonly known as the "Movements."

Indefatigable & Instrumental Force in the Work

She was with Gurdjieff from their first meeting in Tiflis, and then on a dangerous trek across the Caucasus to Constantinople, to Europe, and to the establishment of his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man at the Prieuré in France, to his last years in Paris where she assisted at his meetings. According to the editors, "Before Gurdjieff died he charged Mme de Salzmann to live to be 'over 100' in order to establish his teaching. He left her all his rights with respect to his writings and the Movements, as well as the music that de Hartmann had composed with him."

In the years after Gurdjieff's death, de Salzmann was an indefatigable and instrumental force in creating the framework of institutions that preserved and made available the ancient,

esoteric teaching of The Fourth Way that Gurdjieff brought to the world. It should also be noted that it is commonly believed her second child, Michel (1923–2001), who upon her death in 1990 succeeded his mother as head of Institute Gurdjieff in Paris and nominally the other foundations, was fathered by Gurdjieff.

From the beginning, the unusual nature of *The Reality of Being* quickly becomes apparent. Besides a foreword, introduction and an ending biographical note, it primarily consists of extracts from de Salzmann's notebooks. These give a flavor quite unlike any other Work book. The material is organized primarily by themes, though it is stated that the first four chapters are generally from the notebooks of the 1950s. Otherwise, the material is not organized chronologically (so that one might get a glimpse of her development over time). The pattern is perhaps circular or spiral. The exact origin of the material presented is not entirely clear, but her writings apparently have come out of her personal experiences and ponderings of the Work.

The extracts have been edited by, as it says in the foreword, "a small group of Jeanne de Salzmann's family



Lord John Pentland, Mme de Hartmann and Mme de Salzmann

and followers.” (Why “followers” and not students?) As the original notebooks—with the exception of one snippet—are unpublished, the extent of editing remains a question. The sense is that the editing, perhaps to make the writings somewhat less personal, may have created at times a certain awkwardness to what will be for many, and especially those new to Work ideas, an already difficult text.

Many Monographs Are Rich & Beautiful

The notebook extracts consist of 140 monographs, each generally a few pages long and titled as to their general content. The writing is often quite detailed and of considerable density for those with limited experience of the Work. A typical example: 60. *Only with a stable presence:*

Before beginning any Movement, I must find this energy, this state in which there is a relation between the mind and the body. The feeling comes by itself. The movement is an expression of this state. Without this state, from where will my movement come? At first, I try to open to an energy that comes from a little higher than my head, and that passes in me. This allows a consciousness that I otherwise do not know. I need to keep it within me, while at the same time my body is in movement. The two need to be absolutely together. This energy is more important than anything else. I am in movement, but the energy remains the same and is stronger than the movement. In order to stay related to this energy, I need to be in a rhythm of a certain intensity and strength.... For a relation to appear [between body and mind], there needs to be a movement from one toward the other. The relation creates a new energy, which needs to become a Presence that is stable, like a second body.

Another example: 15. *Hypnotized by my mind:*

An inattentive mind is filled with thoughts. In a passive state it is constantly creating images and applying them to what I observe. The images provoke pleasure or pain, which is recorded in my memory, and illusions form around desires for satisfaction. In observing from a fixed vantage



Jeanne de Salzmann attending a function of Annie Lou Staveley's in Oregon

point, this mind creates a kind of separation, an opposition, a judge that reacts to everything with a preconception based on what has been learned.

The writing, in this case an apt description of the functioning of the dualistic, formatory mind, can at times go into too much detail and thus become difficult to follow. Though the book in places may seem a bit “wordy” and repetitive of subject matter, some of the monographs are rich and beautiful in their subtlety and depth of understanding. They penetrate subjects, such as sensation, that have been presented only in limited ways outside of oral transmission.

To take another example: 99. *Life is in me:*

In the beginning, sensation is almost the only instrument for self-knowledge. It can give a power to watch over many things and to repeat experiences that we can then identify. This creates an inner world. Later, consciousness will have to become deeper, more interior. Yet the impulse to look into the depth of oneself is an indispensable step in the evolution of consciousness. Nothing is either certain or pure without this.

One wonders if there could well be a more serious issue with giving such detailed descriptions. The Work

is an individual work of self-exploration and self-transformation under the guidance of a qualified teacher. Clearly Mme de Salzmann did a tremendous amount of work on herself and gained a great deal of knowledge—self-knowledge. That said, it is questionable if it is advantageous to make such material available to all levels of students in the Work, much less the general public. Gurdjieff gave us the basic ideas, such as the function of the formatory mind—“can’t count beyond two” and “sees everything in black-and-white.” It is a student’s work to verify this, as she did. In this way, the teaching comes alive and understanding in its true sense, that is, a potency, in accord with one’s level of being and self-knowledge, is realized.

The editors’ apparent reply to this is that, “Like every experiential account, the inner journey Mme de Salzmann describes can really be understood only to the extent the reader himself can live the experience. . . . Each person reading or hearing these texts will be able to recognize what he or she knows and, perhaps more important, what he or she does not know, thereby opening to a sense of the *unknown* that Mme de Salzmann would call the threshold to reality.”

Did Mme de Salzmann Really Intend the Book for Publication?

All of this brings up what is really the essential question: *was this material intended by de Salzmann to be published?*

If so, why did it take 20 years to edit and publish and why not a French edition first, as it was presumably written in French? Is it reasonable that Mme de Salzmann, who was responsible for the publication of Gurdjieff's writings, couldn't publish her own writings or at least give instructions in this regard? The editors' answer is that they believe so. They cite a remark she made at age 91, "I am writing a book on how to be in life, on the path to take in order to live on two levels." The editors go on to say, "When she died 10 years later, she left the notebooks intact, carefully preserved. To those closest to her, this was a clear sign of the legacy she intended for this material: to help complete Gurdjieff's writing on a true vision of reality. . . ." Thus, on the basis of a remark that could well be taken either metaphorically or in reference to completely different material, and the fact she didn't destroy her notebooks, the material is published to "complete Gurdjieff's writings." The word *complete* is questionable. Yes, some believe that because *Life Is Real Only Then, When "I Am"* ends with an ellipsis, Gurdjieff did not complete the teaching. But he finished the book in 1933. He had 16 years left to complete it, if that was his intention. Rather than incompleteness, isn't it more reasonable to interpret the ellipsis that the last chapter ends with as a charge to the reader—having been given the teaching and its practices—to now *complete* the teaching in himself?

Preaching to the Choir?

While one may argue that some of the decisions taken by de Salzmann in the course of 40 years following Gurdjieff's death are open to question (the edited version of the *First Series* begun in 1957 but not published until 1992 comes quickly to mind), there is really no question that she worked diligently on all three lines of the Work, mandated all the Movements be filmed so as not to be lost, was highly respected by Gurdjieff's direct senior students, particularly Lord John Pentland who led the Work in America, and came to a very high level of understanding.

But does this material simplify or complexify the Work for a beginner? Or are we once again (the film *Meetings* comes to mind) preaching to the choir? Providing such detailed instruction in book form can easily give readers the sense they have climbed "the stairway" and "passed the last threshold,"

and are now on "the way." The editors, whomever they may be, talk about readers "recognizing what he or she doesn't know, thereby opening to a sense of the *unknown* that Mme de Salzmann would call the threshold to reality" but this demands a high level of self-sincerity and this, as Gurdjieff said, is the "first barrier." A big one.

C. S. Nott asked Gurdjieff, "What about people who have never met you. . . . How will they be able to understand *Beelzebub's Tales*?" Gurdjieff's reply must have shocked Nott, "Perhaps will understand better than many always around me. . . . I not wish people identified with me. I wish them identified with my ideas. Many who never will meet me, simple people, will understand my book." ✍

—Dick Myers

Notes

1. *The first impression*. Jeanne de Salzmann, *The Reality of Being*, 1.
2. *When asked his impression*. Thomas and Olga de Hartmann, *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff*, 122.
3. *Intelligent*. From a meeting, July 22, 1943, Paris, France.
4. *Before Gurdjieff died*. De Salzmann, 299. Over the years the rights to his writings was a contentious issue with members of Gurdjieff's family. It was finally settled with an agreement negotiated by Lord Pentland. The original, unrevised *First Series of All and Everything* is not copyrighted. All subsequent editions are edited and thus copyrighted.
5. *Notebooks of the 1950s*. It would have been interesting to have notes from this period following Gurdjieff's death, giving insights into what Mme de Salzmann was facing and reasons for her visits to René Guénon and Karlfried Graf von Dürckheim and attendance at Krishnamurti's summer gatherings in Switzerland, or the "Salzmanino" of chapter 35.
6. *This book was edited by*. De Salzmann, xviii.
7. *An inattentive mind*. Ibid., 34.
8. *In the beginning*. Ibid., 210.
9. *Like every experiential account*. Ibid., xviii.
10. *Lord John Pentland*. Gurdjieff told him, "You are like Paul; you must spread my ideas." J. G. Bennett, *Witness*, 262.
11. *What about people*. C. S. Nott, *Further Teachings of Gurdjieff*, 77.

Letters

Continued from page 2

underrated and unexplored in Western religious culture. Through certain practices Gurdjieff brought to us the key to understanding through the body. It is possible that Gurdjieff would have participated in dancing within the Armenian Church during the Antasdan Service (Blessing of the Four Corners of the World), where the clergy and the people form a ring around the church, progressing in a "circle dance."

Anika Marie
Sausalito, California

Something Deep in Me Knows the Only Real Certainty

Your "Meaning of Life in the Technological World-Time" (TGJ #53) gives eloquent voice to an anxiety deep in my marrow. The stark violence and vulgarity of today's world is constantly countered with new technological marvels that flood the market showing us where to drive, who's calling, whether someone's in the house, all aimed to "make life a little easier." We don't want to see that the danger we've created is our own, that we vainly try to control our own barbarous behavior as it spins out of control with more sophisticated machinery. It's much easier to while away the years in last-ditch efforts to avoid the discomfort of uncertainty by surrounding ourselves with gadgets that help us forget that we have no control over ourselves.

Time and again, reading an article describing what is taking place at the forefront (or perhaps in a backwater?) of contemporary science, there appears an inner shock of recognition—Gurdjieff wrote and taught this! His language and terminology are not that of standard science but of Sacred Science, a language of the inner world of direct perception whose meanings are informed by consciousness from which words, representationally accurate, emerge only after long study in a deepening inner silence.

Something deep in me knows that the only real certainty I have is my life in the Immediate, in the now. I do have a choice here—I can work to Be and strive to consciously understand what my life means in this Technological Age that I am a part of and that I have helped to create. This gives me hope. ✍

Rachel Callas
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Aurobindo

Continued from page 4

At Cambridge he became part of an association of Indian students, giving his first public revolutionary speeches. Although he performed highly in his studies, he began to question whether a position within the ICS would allow him to work for independence in India, so after he passed the final exam, he found a way to get himself disqualified by failing to attend a required horseback riding exam. He later explained that his father would not have allowed him to refuse the ICS himself and so he forced their rejection of him. At that moment the Maharaja of Baroda was passing

died repeating Aurobindo's name.

Motherland Renewal

The moment Aurobindo landed in India, he experienced a tremendous peace. "Since I set foot on the Indian soil in Bombay," he said, "I began to have spiritual experiences, but these were not divorced from this world but had an inner and infinite bearing on it, such as a feeling of the Infinite pervading material space and the Immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies. At the same time I found myself entering supraphysical worlds and planes with influences and an effect from them upon the material plane. . . ."

In April 1901, Aurobindo mar-

sexual relations with his wife, and there is conviction among his disciples that he never consummated their marriage, as his *brahmacharya*, or dedication to the Divinity of life through celibacy, became a focus of his asana practice soon after they married, when he entered more deeply into the teachings of right conduct in the Upanishads. Later, celibacy was a condition for his disciples for increasing the body's energy along with a strict observance of a strenuous discipline—an exercise of conscious will.

Aurobindo served the Baroda state for just over 13 years, arriving at age 21 and leaving at 35. The work itself he considered exceedingly boring, however his writing skills were recognized by the



The young Aurobindo in 1866, age 13



Aurobindo in 1906, having left Baroda for Calcutta

through London; Aurobindo obtained an interview with the Maharaja, who offered him a post, and in January 1893 he sailed on the *Carthage* to join the Baroda state service.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ghose, elated on hearing only of his son's passing the ICS final exam, but not of Aurobindo's expulsion, telegraphed his son to sail to India on the *Roumania*. However, this steamer sunk off Portugal en route, and hearing of the accident, not knowing Aurobindo was not aboard, his father had a sudden heart attack in the belief that his son had drowned, and

ried Mrinalini Bose—he was 29, she was 14. They lived together only for brief intervals. Due to his absorption in political work and spiritual practice, he had infrequent contact with his wife, who lived primarily with his family in Deoghar. To his father-in-law he confessed, "I am afraid I shall never be good for much in the way of domestic virtues. I have tried, very ineffectively, to do some part of my duty as a son, a brother and a husband, but there is something too strong in me which forces me to subordinate everything else to it." Aurobindo stated that he did not have

Maharaja, and he began helping with documents in English, eventually writing many of the Maharaja's speeches. He was appointed as Professor of English and French at the Baroda government college. But his real interests lay outside this work, in studying Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindu literature, and in the National movement.

Politics & Spirituality in Baroda

During these years in Baroda, Aurobindo published his first writing, titled "New Lamps for Old," a series of articles severely criticizing the policies of

the Indian National Congress. The articles created a furor in political circles and ultimate censure. Deriding the Congress for its impotence and cowardice and insulting the grandee Brits, it was a call to rally the masses toward achieving self-sufficiency. His editor was sent a stern warning charging sedition, and rather than tone down his vehement message, Aurobindo resolved to work covertly, organizing cadres of workers in Baroda and Bengal and contacting leaders who shared his conviction that the direct road to freedom was armed revolution. In the decade that followed, he focused his Nationalist attentions on recruiting anarchists—including his younger brother, Barin, and worked to unite several small secret societies with a common program. He joined a secret society that was rumored to have existed since the Revolt of 1857, and was steered by a “Council of Five” that had several prominent politicians as its members. Aurobindo gave an oath to this society: to secure the freedom of Mother India at any cost and to declare the secret of the society to no one. The Council made Aurobindo the head of their Gujarat circle, which became a formidable factor in the general unrest in Bengal.

During these years he was also deeply engaged in perfecting his knowledge of Bengali and Sanskrit, immersing himself in the Hindu epics and literature. He had a voracious appetite for these enormous works, and wrote English translations to volumes of literary criticism. By 1903 he was drawn intently to the sacred writings of Vedanta, and while reading the Gita he discovered the lost meaning of the Vedas. “They [interpreters] have laid stress on the goal,” wrote Aurobindo, “but they have not echoed Sri Krishna’s emphasis on the necessity of action as the one sure road to the goal.” This summons to action led him to fault aspects of Shankara’s Advaita philosophy, which stressed the illusory nature of the universe and the futility of action, and claimed that yoga would oblige one to renounce life and action. Several spiritual experiences came to him spontaneously, and in 1904 he realized that he might be able to use the spiritual power that was said to be a result of yoga to help carry out his political program. As he mused years later, his was “a side-door entry into the spiritual life.” Beginning with a daily practice of *pranayama* breathing exercises, he received striking results, next meeting

a yogin, Brahmananda, who aroused his worship of the Divine Mother and influenced a deepening into yoga and austerity. From early notes on his yoga practices:

In the beginning, before I discovered the secret of the Supermind, I myself tried to seek the reconciliation through an association of the spiritual consciousness with the vital, but my experience and all experience show that this leads to nothing definite and final—it ends where



Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III of Baroda



Vishnu Bhaskar Lele

it began, midway between the two poles of human nature. An association is not enough, a transformation is indispensable.

Early in 1906 he left Baroda for Calcutta to fully engage in the movement—through open agitation as a political journalist and secret revolutionary action, and as one of the leaders of a branch of the Indian National Congress known as the Extremists. The Congress, founded in 1885 by Indian and British members of the occult Theosophical Society, was initially not opposed to British rule. Now split, activists in the Congress were demanding a greater role in the governing of India, and were leading the *Swadeshi* Movement to boycott British manufactures. Aurobindo took advantage of this movement to popularize the idea of a violent revolt, based on the Irish policy of Sinn Fein. This he explained in an interview in 1907, but years later in

Pondicherry he would deny this association to Ireland’s freedom struggle. He did maintain, “a nation is entitled to attain its freedom by violence, if it can do so or if there is no other way; whether it should do so or not, depends on what is the best policy, not on ethical considerations.” Meeting with abolitionist leaders and uniting forces within the secret society he had joined while in Baroda, he espoused insurrection and military revolt.

With rapidly increasing repression by the British government, it was

made an offense to shout “*Bande Mataram*”—Hail Mother!—the slogan of the movement. Effectively utilizing this ban, Aurobindo started an Extremist publication, *Bande Mataram*, a symbol of devotion to the motherland and defiance of the British. Attending meetings of the Congress in support of the Extremist Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo was the first politician to publically demand *Swaraj*, self-rule. This incited riots in Congress and in the streets, which resulted in Aurobindo becoming the “new idol of the nation.”

Rejecting Thought, Entering Silence

At this point Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, a yogi, entered his life. In three days Aurobindo was shown a way to throw thoughts away until his mind became capable of entire silence. Lele instructed: “There are in fact several ways. My own way was by rejection of thought. Sit down, look and you will see that your thoughts come into you from outside.

Before they enter, fling them back.”

Aurobindo saw that this was so, that he could see the thought approaching and then push it back before it came inside. In this stillness “that had completely replaced his sense of self, there arose ‘the awareness of some sole and supreme Reality’—what he would later identify as the ‘passive Brahman.’” He remained in “a status of an inner passivity and an outer action independent of each other.”

One highly controversial biographer and archivist to Aurobindo writes of this time: “In the underground cause

Spiritual Revolution

The Alipore Bomb Trial was the first in what would be a long chain of revolutionary conspiracy cases. Given Aurobindo’s national reputation in politics, and that he was charged with being the instigator of the terrorists, the trial was a nationwide sensation. For his part, Aurobindo declared, “I wholly deny having any connection with these murderous acts.” Aurobindo spent one year in Alipore Jail, the first month and a half in solitary confinement. While at Alipore, Aurobindo says God placed the Bhagavad-Gita in his hands:



In the 1907 session of Congress at Surat, where moderates and hardliners had a major showdown, Aurobindo led the hardliners.

Aurobindo exercised general control over his brother Barin in his activities in ‘the Garden,’ a home owned by Aurobindo and Barin, where militant youth made bombs and planned attacks while important matters of policy, such as decisions to kill officials, were usually referred to Aurobindo.” In April 1908, two young recruits were sent to assassinate an ICS officer on the revolutionaries’ hit list. They mistakenly threw the bomb into the wrong carriage, killing the wife and daughter of a local barrister. On hearing the news, Barin buried all the arms and munitions in the backyard. The next morning the police arrested Aurobindo and 32 others. The charges included “waging war against the king”—the equivalent of high treason. If proved, the penalty was death by hanging.

“The central ethical injunction in the Gita—‘Fixed in yoga do thy actions’ (II. 48)—this freedom is that yoga of the Gita.” In concentrated *Sadhana* through the year, he meditated on the Gita with the aim of realizing what Sri Krishna demanded of Arjuna: that he renounce self-will and become a passive and faithful instrument in God’s hands. This, together with his ability to still the mind, enlarged itself into an all-encompassing awareness of the Divine, “as all beings and all that is,” widening into a “cosmic consciousness.”

He said he looked at the bars of his cell and “again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna

around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover. I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers, and as I looked at them it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies.”

During his imprisonment, one of the arrested turned King’s evidence—saying in pre-trial hearings that Aurobindo was the *karta* or leader of the secret society. Days later, while in jail, he was assassinated by his former friends. And so the government, with little solid evidence against Aurobindo, released him. Soon afterwards the government attempted to bring the case back to trial again on appeal. Letters were written between magistrates and politicians who wanted Aurobindo retried or deported. Though this persisted for another year, the appeal was eventually denied, but attempts to arrest him on new charges or deport him continued.

He continued to write and publish two journals, blending essays on nationalist politics, the yoga-of-action, and the *sanatana dharma* or “eternal religion” of the Indian scriptures. Just as he was about to undergo another search and arrest in connection with another murder of a prominent member of the Criminal Investigation Department, one of the branches of the British Police, he heard a voice telling him to leave. He obeyed the inner command, and from there he went to live in Pondicherry outside the government’s jurisdiction.

It is said that his brother Barin later wrote a book claiming Aurobindo was the *karta* of the society, but copies remain unavailable. Whatever the truth of the charges against Aurobindo, there can be no doubt that he sanctioned acts of violent rebellion. Aurobindo offered no apology for his past activities. “As a warrior in the struggle for India’s liberation,” he declared, “an Indian’s highest duty must be to fight the just battle because it is just—and in so doing bring the historical situation into proper relation with the divine will,” and, “The sword of the warrior is as necessary to the fulfillment of justice and righteousness as the holiness of the saint.”

Released from Alipore, Aurobindo now entered a new phase of his life that would ultimately culminate with his setting up an ashram at Pondicherry to spur others to the spiritual realization he had received. In answering a question on making this change, Aurobindo

asked, "Do you think that Buddha or Confucius or myself were born with a prevision that they or I would take to the spiritual life? So long as one is in the ordinary consciousness, one lives the ordinary life—when the awakening and the new consciousness come, one leaves it—nothing puzzling in that."

Aurobindo saw his imprisonment at Alipore as, "the end of a chapter of my life. . . . And when I would re-enter the world of activity . . . it would be a new being, a new character, intellect, life, mind, embarking on a new course of action that would come out of the ashram at Alipore." ✎

—Jean Lauderdale

Notes

1. *The East has always*. Sri Aurobindo, "A Message to America," *Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest, The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, vol. 36 (Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 2006), 552–53.
2. *One of his earliest memories*. Peter Heehs, *Sri Aurobindo: A Brief Biography* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7.
3. *Taught by ministers of the Church*. Robert McDermott, *The Essential Aurobindo* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2001), 16.

4. *Dedicate my life to a similar world change*. A. B. Purani, *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo*, Second Series (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1966), 142.
5. *Good God! My whole life*. Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972), 153–54.
6. *In those days I was not particular*. A. B. Purani, *The Life of Sri Aurobindo* (Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press, 2006), 13.
7. *Since I set foot on the Indian soil*. Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself*, 98.
8. *Aurobindo stated that he did not have sexual relations*. Manomohan Gangopadhyaya, *Shruti-Smriti*, Part 1, 1927, 13.
9. *Discovered the lost meaning of the Vedas*. Satprem, *Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1968), 29.
10. *In the beginning*. Sri Aurobindo, "Letters to Disciples, 14-1-1932," *On Himself*, 120.
11. *Aurobindo took advantage of this movement*. Interview with Henry W. Nevinson, December 1907, in *Studies in History (Sage Journals Online)*, February 2007, vol. 23 no. 1), 93–133.
12. *Bal Gangadhar Tilak*. One of the

- primary leaders at that time within the Indian National Congress, he was called by the British colonial authorities "Father of the Indian unrest." He was accepted by many Indians as their leader during the Indian Independence Movement.
13. *In the underground cause*. Heehs, 54–56.
 14. *The central ethical injunction in the Gita*. Sri Aurobindo, "Prison and Freedom," in *Writings in Bengali, IV* (Pondicherry: All India Press, 1991), 322.
 15. *I looked at the bars of my cell*. Sri Aurobindo, The Uttarpada Speech, 30 May 1909, *Karmayogin, Political Writings and Speeches 1909–1910, The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, vol. 8 (Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1997), 6.
 16. *Vasudeva*. In Hinduism, the father of Krishna, sometimes used interchangeably with Lord Krishna, and also another name for Lord Vishnu. Vasudeva may be translated as "divine one who dwells in everything."
 17. *Narayana*. Another important Sanskrit name for Lord Vishnu. Narayana is also identified as the original man, Purusha.
 18. *Do you think that Buddha or Confucius*. Nirodbaran, *Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publications, 1995), 576.



Aurobindo was imprisoned in the Alipore Jail during the yearlong trial.



Aurobindo's solitary confinement cell

Memories of the Prieuré

Continued from page 12

beauty of his pose, with one foot forward for the next step, with head erect and relaxed arms, was so striking that Mr. G. told us all to come and look at him.

As regards the daily occupations, most people were allocated to their work, but some were left to choose. As a broad division, the Russian women did the cooking and housework, while all the men and the Englishwomen worked out of doors. Miss Merston and Miss Gordon were in charge of the garden. Miss Potter undertook the laundry. Miss Crowdy



Students sewing at the Prieuré

at first got up daily at six to milk the cows, but was subsequently put in charge of stores. Then there were the geese and chickens and goats, not to mention the mule—and the men did all the heavy work, the building and wheel-barrowing and felling of trees. The work was always there to be done, but ordinarily we were not driven; if we chose to slack it was our own loss, but during periods of intensive work, which might last for two or three hours when a garden path was chosen for urgent hoeing, or for days when the Study House was being decorated, or orchestral parts were needed for the Paris Orchestra before the first demonstration in Paris, the drive was intense, and “Skurra, Skurra, Skurra” resounded through the grounds. But always, after the spell, came the welcome words “Go, rest.” We were soon taught that pointless, slogging work was of no avail. As Mr. Gurdjieff pointed out to Mr. Pindar when barrow-loads of stones were being moved from one part of the grounds to another, “One stone conscientiously moved is worth all this pile.”

To prevent idle talk and wandering thoughts, and the wise-acring that inevitably occurs when pupils try to discuss subjects they don’t yet understand, great use was made of memory work and lists of words, and three

or four people hoeing close together would almost certainly be helping one another to memorise the words.

The great identification with one’s work also brought its own reward. A superfine dinner would be ordered, but when it was prepared, there was no one to eat it, and when the flower-bed round the large lawn in front of the Château was at its best four or five calves were carefully driven along a section of the bed. I think I am right in saying that inertia over one’s work was also deliberately prevented. One day when we were decorating the Study House, we had all been working for some time very peacefully when Mr. G. appeared. He made one short quiet remark in Russian, and in a second the place was like the parrot house at the Zoo.

The fast excited us a great deal. It was voluntary, but scarcely anyone refused to undertake it. The first two days we were allowed water, but the third day not even that; the fourth day the juice of one orange, and of two on the fifth. Some of us, to our disappointment, were put on to food again at the end of a week, others fasted for three weeks. It was part of my work to weigh everybody and take

the pulse rate two or three times each day. Approximately speaking, people lost a kilo a day for the first four days, after which some remained stationary, and some put on a small amount of weight. We had to prepare ourselves for the fast with enemas, and I am sure that that accounted for the fact that most of us suffered very little from hunger or desire for food. I could sit and talk with equanimity to people eating the well-known English dish of eggs and bacon. Throughout the fast physical work and exercises in the Study House were carried on as usual. At the end of the fast the intake of food during the first 24 hours was carefully restricted. One of my memories of the fast is of vastly improved complexions.

The food was very variable—sometimes, especially in the summer time when there were a good many visitors we lived well—at other times we did not. There were curious restrictions—the English were allowed three lumps of sugar with their tea or coffee—the Russians only two. And although nearly 2,000 lbs. of tomatoes were picked in the garden, we never could understand why so few appeared on the table. I think the bulk of them were made into jam

and chutney. The surplus milk from the cows was made into soured milk (Prostock vacha?) and butter, and the goats' milk into cheese. For some time before Easter even the butter, milk and eggs were, if I remember right, cut off and saved for the Easter Feast—and the kitchen was scrubbed from ceiling to floor for the cooking of the Feast. This wonderful Feast, which began at midnight on the morn of Easter Day, was eaten seated on the floor of the Study House, and is notable in my memory for the beautiful singing of the Easter Mass by the Russians. So many of their men had such lovely voices. Then they suggested that the English should sing part of their Easter Service. The effect was deplorable. None of the English could sing, we had no hymn book, and our memory of the words was very hazy.

As well as the pupils there were two or three patients. Katherine Mansfield, who was dying of phthisis [phthisis pulmonalis or tuberculosis], spent the last month of her short life there. Mr. G. had great belief in the efficacy of the breath and aroma of cows in the healing of chest complaints, and had the hay-loft above the cow-stalls converted into a lounge with couches, where patients could rest. In order to wile away the tedium, the ceiling had been decorated by Mr.

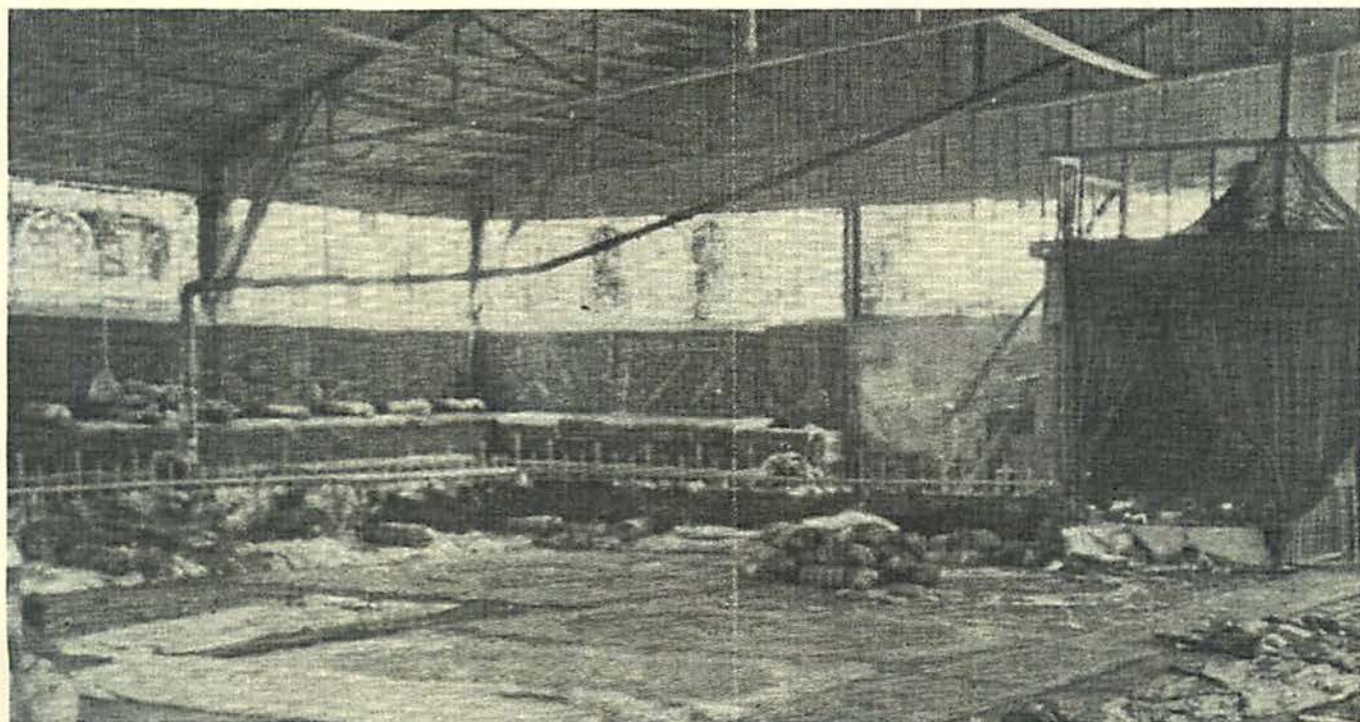
de Saltzmann, with portraits of the people. I always regret that I was not there in time to be included, but I well remember Mr. de Hartmann, a gentle-faced man, with a very noticeable nose, portrayed as a toucan, and Dr. Jimmy Young as an ape.

There were also notable visitors, the Grand Duke Michael lunched with Mr. G. one day, and Algernon Blackwood came to inspect us and Middleton Murry was also there.

In September occurred what I think must have been the first of the trips to Chamonix. The car-load consisted of Mr. G., Mme Ostroffsky, Mme de Hartmann and myself, Dr. Kessiloff, Dr. Maurice Nicoll and Vladush, the Polish boy. We left the Prieuré at midnight, and at 3 a.m. were seated on the grass by the side of the road, under a glorious, starlit sky, supping off sardines and vodka, goat and beet root etc. The journey was broken for coffee at an inn about breakfast time, and for lunch with a rest afterwards by the roadside, after which we pushed on to La Faucille in the Jura mountains where we slept, continuing the comparatively short run to Chamonix the next day. Never shall I forget the taste of the trout at dinner: one has to have undergone a long period of somewhat

monotonous living in order to savour the full flavour of trout. We started back next morning and reached La Feucille in heavy rain. But nothing deterred the indomitable driver. Coming down the Juras, the car skidded. It shot to the right almost on the mountain railway by the side of the road—it was jerked round and went headlong for the precipice on the other side—and when it finally came to rest it was facing up the hill—and a small voice—Vladush's from the back of the car said, "I don't think I was really afraid." Later we stopped at an inn and Mme Ostroffsky lost her heart to a black and white puppy—Philos. It was brought out to the car, apparently surreptitiously, wrapped up in a rug. Dr. Nicoll and I were quite sure it had been purloined. I, personally, would not have been surprised if it had been, after all the tricks we'd been taught! Dr. Nicoll, however, went into the inn and paid for it again. The rest of the journey was uneventful, except that I sometimes wondered whether the various level-crossing gates would give way before the charge that seemed imminent, and we reached the Prieuré at 6 a.m.

In the late autumn, Mr. G., after a demonstration in Paris, took about 50 of the pupils to America to demonstrate the Movements, and I had left the Prieuré before his return. ✕



The study house at the Prieuré

unhappy, he that is wise is never perplexed, he that is brave is never afraid. . . . Has anyone ever managed to do Good [ren] with his whole might even as long as the space of a single day? I think not.

The foundation of *ren* could be found in the Golden Rule of Confucius: "Do not do unto others what you would not have done unto you." It was the ability to measure another's feelings by one's own, and it ran like a thread throughout all of Confucius' teachings. It was the definition of the Tao itself: "The Way of the Master is doing one's utmost (*zhong*) and putting oneself in the other's place (*shu*), nothing more."

Doctrine of the Mean is Moderation Between Two Excesses

Closely related to *ren* and the development of the *junzi* is the doctrine of the Mean. The doctrine is one of the most ancient cultural heritages of the Chinese people, dating back to the Ancient Sage Kings, who took the doctrine of the Mean as one of their chief political and social policies. The text of the Doctrine of the Mean was originally a chapter in the *Book of Rites*, one of the Five Classics that Confucius edited during his lifetime.

As in Aristotle's "Golden Mean," the "mean" for Confucius was the point of moderation between two excesses or vices, such as courage being the "mean" between cowardice and recklessness. In the *Analects*, Confucius stated: "To go too far is as bad as not to go far enough." The Mean was considered the measure and goal for the exercise of all virtues: "Perfect is the virtue that is according to the Mean! Rare for a long time has been its practice among the people."

Confucius himself was described as epitomizing the moderation and balance of the Mean: "He had no foregone conclusions, no arbitrary predeterminations, no obstinacy, and no egoism," and his manner was "mild, and yet dignified; majestic, and yet not fierce; respectful, and yet easy."

Confucius Taught Filial Piety Was a Reciprocal Relationship

Confucius taught that the cultivation of *ren* began in the family, for filial

piety was the very root of *ren*. To Confucius, the parent-child relationship was the foundation for all other relationships throughout society, and family love and family honor took on an almost religious dimension. As taught by Confucius, filial piety was a reciprocal relationship, with a clearly defined hierarchy and set of responsibilities for each role. A parent owed a child physical care, education and moral training; a child owed parents obedience and respect, descendants to continue the family line, and care in old age and after death. The relationship between ruler and subject paralleled that between parent and child, thus making filial piety the basis for social structure.

For Confucius, being a loyal and obedient child and honoring parents was intimately tied to the Tao of the ancients. "To establish oneself and walk according to the right Way (Tao) in order to glorify one's parents: this is the culmination of filial piety." Key to these duties was the responsibility to perform the burial rituals that would assure that parents took their place with the ancestors of the family to be honored and venerated. These duties were part of the *li*, or rituals, that permeated all of Confucian life.

Li, or Ritual

Confucius saw *li*, the social rites of religious worship and public festivities, as the symbols of the ancient Zhou society that were necessary to restore social order to his corrupt and war-torn country. For Confucius, *li* meant not only the rules for ritual, etiquette, and ceremony, but also ideal behavior and moral and righteous action. By shaping moral character, *li*, along with *ren*, love of humanity, and the respect for authority underlying filial piety, was a part of the Tao of the Ancients. Confucius was concerned more about the relationship of ritual as a whole to morality, that is, to the inner reverence and sincerity of the participants, than with the details of etiquette. He stated, "If people are not humane (*ren*), what is the point of ritual?"

Confucius considered deference to be the basis of all *li*, and saw courtesy as an indication of the moral strength of a people for what it showed of their mutual respect and consideration. The elaborate ceremonies and religious sacrifices, the rules of behavior between men and women, parent and child, the

detailed etiquette enunciated for all occasions, represented to Confucius the moral underpinnings of an ideal social order with "everything in its place." The *li* of Confucius was the "guiding principle of all things great and small," encompassing both the religious laws and the laws of civil life in his time, and Confucius saw the two as part of an integrated whole.

Traditional Religion in the Time of Confucius

Confucius was a religious teacher, not a teacher of religion. He taught little about metaphysical problems, although he followed faithfully the religious practices and rituals of his day, transmitting the religious heritage of the Zhou dynasty to future generations. Those religious practices consisted of two aspects, the belief in a supreme power or deity and the belief in a wide range of lesser deities and spirits. In the time of antiquity, before the Zhou dynasty, the Lord on High, or *Shang Ti*, of the Shang dynasty, was worshiped as the Supreme God. Beginning with the Zhou period (1127 BCE), the *Shang Ti* of the Shang dynasty became identified with the *T'ien*, or Heaven of the Zhou, who claimed their overthrow of the corrupt late Shang rulers was *T'ienming*, or the Mandate of Heaven.

By the time of Confucius, belief in *T'ien* was of a nonanthropomorphic yet personal god, a supreme deity that was concerned about and controlled life on earth. In the *Analects*, Confucius stated: "Death and life are the decree of *T'ien*; wealth and rank depend upon the will of *T'ien*." It was the duty of the *junzi* to ascertain and carry out the will of *T'ien*, which Confucius stated he did not learn to do until he was 50: "At 50, I knew what were the biddings of heaven." From what is said in the *Analects*, it appears that for Confucius *T'ien* was not only the all powerful source of moral goodness, but also dependent on human agents to actualize its will, and unpredictable in its associations with mortal actors, functioning not only as a deity but also as fate and nature in the lives of men.

In addition to the belief in *T'ien* as the universal source of power and order, traditional religion in Confucius' time included the belief in a wide range of spirits and gods, deities of a lower order and of subordinate rank, who were engaged in carrying out the

will of T'ien. The spirits were generally believed to inhabit the air and survey the actions of men. Their heavenly abode was a great bureaucracy, a celestial hierarchy like that of the imperial bureaucracy or the dignitaries surrounding a feudal king. There were also the spirits of the sun, the moon and the stars, mountains and rivers and territories. The spirits were to be venerated at shrines and temples, and could be petitioned to intercede on behalf of human beings. Sacrifices to T'ien and to spirits, especially ancestors' spirits, were regarded as one of the most important of all religious duties. While only the emperor could make sacrifices to T'ien, ancestor worship was the duty of everyone, from the emperor to the lowliest peasant, and a key element of filial piety.

Ancestor Worship & the Soul

From antiquity, ancestor veneration was one of the cornerstones of Chinese culture. In the ancient Shang dynasty it was believed the souls of commoners decayed with their bodies; only royalty had ancestors, and therefore souls. However, by the time of the Zhou, ancestor worship was the duty of all, and by Confucius' time even the most humble home had a family altar and ancestor tablets. The belief was that ancestors who were properly propitiated and cared for would watch over and protect the family. Likewise, it was the duty of the family to aid the deceased in their journey into the afterlife, and to assure that they were comfortable in their post-life abode. Thus, there were elaborate funeral and burial rites and daily ancestral rituals before the family altar, which housed the ancestor tablets of three to five generations. The division between the living and dead was porous, as the spirit of the deceased was believed to remain with the family in the ancestor tablet. If the body were not properly buried, however, or

if the deceased died a violent or premature death, then the deceased became a ghost, a dangerous and malevolent force needing to be placated. Proper burial and daily veneration of ancestors were thus essential, serving both the dead and the living.

During the time of Confucius, there were multiple and often con-

trary beliefs about the soul and the nature of the afterlife, most dating back to the Shang and the Zhou dynasties. It was believed that there were two types of souls, the *hun* soul and the *p'o* soul. The *hun* soul was made up of yang energy, which was bright, dry, hard and masculine; the *p'o* soul was made up of yin energy, dark, moist, inert, soft and feminine. *Hun* souls rose up after death, becoming *shen*, or spirits, while the *p'o* soul disintegrated with the body. Beyond this distinction, there were multiple versions of both souls, each with its own role in the afterlife. For example, while the spirit of the deceased ancestor watched over and played a role in the family (a form of the *hun* soul), there was also the belief that a form of the *p'o* soul entered the underworld of hell which, like the heavenly abode, was a complex bureaucracy. It consisted of the Ten Tribunals presided over by the Ten Magistrates, each responsible for trying different crimes. The soul was required to spend a period of time in the various levels of hell appropriate to its sins, after which it would be reincarnated. The family of the deceased could speed the passage of their loved ones through the various hells by their offerings and good works.

Despite the elaborate description of the bureaucracies of heaven and hell, ideas about the exact nature of the soul that was enshrined in the spirit tablets were vague, and there was very little said about the actual conditions of the afterlife. There was no developed metaphysical doctrine in traditional Chinese religion like the Buddhist teaching of the bodhisattva or the liberation from samsara, nor was there the belief in the salvation of the soul like that found in Christianity and Islam. Confucius never indicated in his teaching that the work to become a *junzi*

and develop *ren* would be rewarded by Heaven or the gods, and he spoke very little about the spirits, the soul or the afterlife.

Confucius on Religion & the Soul

The teachings of Confucius did not focus on religion, nor did they focus on theories of the soul or the afterlife. In the *Analects*, his disciples stated that he "never talked of prodigies, feats of



Principal deities of the Chinese, engraving by an unknown Chinese artist reproduced in Athanasii Kircher, *China monumentis: qua sacris qua profanis...* (a.k.a. *China Illustrata*) published in 1667. (A) Buddha; (B) Confucius; (C) Lao Tzu.

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strength, disorders or spirits." Although it was clear that he had a profound belief in *T'ien*, the supreme deity, his disciples declared that he did not discourse on the will of heaven: "Our Master's views concerning culture and the outward insignias of goodness, we are permitted to hear; but about man's nature, and the ways of Heaven, he will not tell us anything at all."

When asked specifically about serving the spirits of the dead, Confucius replied, "While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?" When asked about death, he answered, "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?" He also famously stated: "To give yourself earnestly to the duties due to men, and while respecting spiritual beings, keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom." As a result, some scholars of Confucius have argued that he was skeptical of spirits, citing the above passages in the *Analects*. John Noss, for example, held that, "His position on matters of faith was this: whatever seemed contrary to common sense in popular tradition and whatever did not serve any discoverable social purpose, he regarded coldly."

However, there are many other passages that show Confucius to have "prayed, fasted and attended public worship regularly and reverently." For example, *Analects* 3:12 stated:

He sacrificed to the dead, as if they were present. He sacrificed to the spirits, as if the spirits were present. The Master said, "I consider my not being present at the sacrifice, as if I did not sacrifice."

Given his devotion to ancient texts, particularly the *I Ching*, some argue that Confucius deliberately remained silent regarding the esoteric, choosing instead to focus on moral conduct and the ordering of a harmonious society. While this may be so, and perhaps even likely, it is clear that in the teachings he wished to propagate throughout China, Confucius was more interested in the ceremonies and ritual duties to be observed upon death than the fate of the dead or the nature of the afterlife. He is quoted as saying:

What I have learned is this, that of all things that people live by, *Li* is the greatest. Without *Li*, we do not know

how to conduct a proper worship of the spirits of the universe; or how to establish the proper status of the king and the ministers, the ruler and the ruled, and the elders and the juniors; or how to establish the moral relationships between the sexes; between parents and children, and between brothers; or how to distinguish the different degrees of relationship in the family. That is why a gentleman [*junzi*] holds *Li* in such high regard.

Confucius saw the ritual sacrifices to the spirits and ancestors as tributes of duty and gratitude, morally transforming and key to maintaining the foundations of family and society. To Confucius, whose goal was virtuous government by teaching of *ren* and the development of *junzi*, the rituals of death and the ancestral rites were valuable for what they instilled in the living, rather than their impact on the afterlife.

Later Developments in Confucianism

After the death of Confucius in 479 BCE, his disciples continued to teach and to compile his sayings. Not surprisingly, different schools developed, each emphasizing different aspects of his teachings. The first major split in Confucianism came during the period of the "Warring States," between the schools of Mencius (372–289 BCE) and Xunzi (Hsun-tzu, 310–220 BCE). The debate did not center around concepts of the soul or the afterlife, however, but on whether human nature was inherently good or evil. Mencius taught that human nature was inherently virtuous: "If a man knows his nature, he knows Heaven." According to Mencius, self-cultivation and *li* were necessary to nurture and develop that inherent goodness. In contrast, Xunzi taught that human nature was inherently evil, and that *li*, or ritual conduct and behavior, was necessary to reform and regulate men's base desires.

It is interesting to note that the rationalist school of Xunzi did address the question of the soul and the afterlife, even though it was not the focus of the debate. Xunzi, dismissive of notions of a supreme deity, also taught that there were no spirits, not even the spirits of ancestors. He stated, "once dead, a person cannot be resurrected again." This theory, anathema to Chinese culture and its history of ancestor veneration, did not take hold; it was the school of Mencius that remained prevalent and

eventually became the basis of orthodox Confucianism.

The teachings of Confucius did not enjoy official patronage until several centuries after he died. During the Han dynasty (200 BCE–200 CE), Confucianism was adopted as the imperial philosophy, and the *Five Classics* were made the basis of the imperial civil service test.

Whatever Confucius' personal view of the soul or of the spirits, centuries after his death it was the lack of a metaphysical doctrine in Confucianism that resulted in the significant impact of Buddhism and Taoism on Confucian thought and practice. During the period known as Neo-Confucianism, aspects of Taoism and Buddhism became integral to Confucius' teaching. The brothers Cheng Hao (1032–1085 CE) and Cheng Yi (1033–1107), the founders of Neo-Confucianism, brought the concept of *Li* (not the ritual *li* of Confucius) as the ultimate reality of the universe into Confucianism. For them, *Li* was an ontological substance, the ultimate ground for all existence. Despite the apparent diversity in creation, all things were united in *Taiji* or *Tai Ch'i*, the Grand Ultimate. This concept of an underlying unity, which does nothing but accomplishes everything, was borrowed from directly by the Taoists and incorporated into the key Confucian concepts of *ren*, *T'ien* and the *Tao* or Way of the Ancients. While the brothers disagreed about the relationship of *li* to *qi* (*ch'i*), their introduction of the concept into Confucianism began a development of metaphysics that had not previously existed. Buddhism and Taoism also influenced the Neo-Confucian advocacy of "quiet sitting," a form of meditation which became a central element of self-cultivation during the Neo-Confucian period. As one twentieth century scholar of Confucius noted, the Neo-Confucians were "more Taoistic than the Taoists and more Buddhist than the Buddhists." Despite the development of a philosophical system by the Neo-Confucians, there was no metaphysics of the soul that was developed separately from the concepts that already existed in Buddhism and Taoism.

Veneration of Confucius

By the 1st century CE, during the Han dynasty, sacrifices were being offered to Confucius, temples were constructed in his honor, and a cult was organized around his worship. One

twentieth century scholar has suggested that had the images of Confucius developed during the Han dynasty prevailed, Confucius would have become a figure comparable to Jesus Christ in the history of China, and there would have been no argument among scholars today about whether Confucianism was a religion. However, the status of Confucius as a man and not a god was resolutely maintained. It is ironic, nevertheless, that the man who is considered China's greatest religious figure, and who himself was worshipped for centuries, had so little to say about the soul, spirits or the afterlife. ✎

—Ron & Claire Levitan

Notes

1. *Aphorisms of Confucius*. Thomas Cleary, *The Essential Confucius* (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1992), x.
2. *A primordial religious*. John H. and Evelyn Nagai Berthrong, *Confucianism* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000), 1.
3. *I have transmitted*. Arthur Waley, trans., *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 123, *Analects* 7:1.
4. *No idol worship*. Chen Jingpan, *Confucius as a Teacher* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994), 108.
5. *Conflict or contradiction*. From the middle of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644 CE), proponents of the theory of unity argued that Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism were not mutually exclusive, but different aspects of a larger Way (Tao). Berthrong, 132.
6. *Shi were a middle class*. Cleary, 9.
7. *He supported himself*. Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom of Confucius* (New York: Modern Library, 1938), 57.
8. *Chinese antiquity*. Cleary, 9.
9. *Teachings into practice*. Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, *Confucianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 14.
10. *About the I Ching*. Chen, 3.
11. *Give me a few more years*. Cleary, 67, quoting *Analects* 7:16.
12. *At 15*. Waley, *Analects* 2:14.
13. *Ruled by wu-wei*. Cleary, 7.
14. *Guide the people*. Yutang, 12, quoting *Analects* 2:3.
15. *Texts from the Zhou dynasty*. Berthrong, 11–12.
16. *For Confucius*. Waley, 31.
17. *The goal and path*. Berthrong, 25.
18. *Propriety/proper conduct*. Chen, 325.
19. *Provided no definition*. Chen, 248.
20. *Sublime moral attitude*. Waley, 28.
21. *Be chary*. Waley, *Analects* 12:3.
22. *Radical pronouncement*. Berthrong, 12.
23. *The Ways [Tao]*. Waley, *Analects* 14:30.
24. *Has anyone ever managed*. Waley, *Analects* 4:6.
25. *Do not do unto others*. Yutang, 21, quoting *Analects* 15:24.
26. *The Way of the Master*. Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998), 92, *Analects* 4:15.
27. *The doctrine*. Chen, 289–90.
28. *The text of the Doctrine*. Moore, 36–37. The Confucian text *Chung Yung (The Doctrine of the Mean)* was written during the Song dynasty by Confucian scholar Zhu Xi, and became one of the “Four Books,” or core texts, of a classical Confucian education from 1313 to 1905.
29. *Cowardice and recklessness*. The theory of the Golden Mean was set forth in Aristotle's work *The Nicomachean Ethics*, but it is also present in the teachings of Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato.
30. *To go too far*. Waley, *Analects* 11:15.
31. *Perfect is the virtue*. Chen, 286, quoting *Analects* 6:27.
32. *Mild, and yet dignified*. Chen, 288–89, quoting *Analects* 9:4.
33. *Parent-child relationship*. Chen, 275. This can be seen linguistically, in that the Chinese word for religion comes from the word for filial piety.
34. *A parent owed*. Moore, 56. A husband was to protect and provide, a wife to obey and to maintain the household. The elder brother was responsible for younger siblings, who owed him deference.
35. *To establish oneself*. Chen, 280.
36. *By shaping moral character*. Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom of China and India* (New York: Random House, 1942), 812.
37. *Confucius was concerned*. Waley, 67.
38. *If people are not*. Cleary, 5, quoting *Analects* 3:3.
39. *Everything in its place*. Yutang, 43.
40. *Guiding principle*. Moore, 54.
41. *Confucius was a religious*. Chen, 351.
42. *The Supreme God*. Moore, 12. The first Chinese texts, inscriptions found on Shang Oracle bones, evidence sacrifice made to *Shang Ti*, an all-ruling, personal spirit whose abode was in heaven.
43. *Belief in T'ien*. Moore, 13.
44. *Death and life*. Waley, *Analects* 12:5.
45. *Sacrifices to T'ien and to spirits*. Human sacrifice was common during the Shang dynasty, but faded by the end of the Zhou. Animal sacrifice was common during Confucius' time. Fowler, 20.
46. *Post-life abode*. Fowler, 242. Since there was no hope for a soul that had no one to care for it, having a family to do so was essential.
47. *Two types of souls*. Fowler, 171.
48. *Disorders or spirits*. Waley, 31, *Analects* 7:20.
49. *Our Master's views*. Waley, 30, *Analects* 5:12.
50. *Know about death*. Chen 357, quoting *Analects* 11:11.
51. *May be called wisdom*. Chen, 360, quoting *Analects* 6:20.
52. *His position on matters*. John Noss, *Man's Religions* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1968), 392.
53. *Prayed, fasted*. Chen, 352, quoting *Analects* 7:34, 10:7, 3:12.
54. *He sacrificed to the dead*. Chen, 357, quoting *Analects* 3:12.
55. *What I have learned*. Yutang, 216.
56. *Confucius saw the ritual*. It is not surprising that Confucianism became known as the “religion of the li.” Yutang, 13.
57. *If a man knows*. Chen, 219, quoting *Mencius*, 1:1:1.
58. *Once dead*. Chen, 158, quoting *The Works of Hsun-tzu*.
59. *Concept of an underlying unity*. Welch, 15.
60. *The brothers disagreed*. It is possible that Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi are the twin Chinese brothers mentioned by G.I. Gurdjieff in *All and Everything*, 822.
61. *Buddhism and Daoism*. Two of the most influential Neo-Confucians, Zhu Xi (1130–1200 CE) and Wang Yangming (1472–1529 CE), developed different schools based, in part, on a disagreement about the nature of “quiet-sitting” and its role in self-cultivation. Berthrong, 34.
62. *More Taoistic*. Fung Yu-lan, *Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: MacMillan, 1948), 318.
63. *One twentieth-century scholar*. Internet Encyclopedia, A Peer Reviewed Academic Resource, Confucius 551–470 BCE, www.iep.utm.edu/confuciu/#h9

The Art of Love

Continued from page 8

to telephone to her from Rouen or Caudebec or Les Andelys because I'd had a premonition that she had something to tell me. But the telephone wouldn't work, I couldn't reach her, I became anxious; was she waiting for my call, did she think that I hadn't heard her, or that I wouldn't respond? No, she never thought *wrong*. I decided that I must rush back to Paris or Tancarville, because nothing mattered to me so much as to be where she was.

I drove fast, too fast, and I arrived. I saw her again, looked once more at her incomparable face, felt once more her enfolding presence—that total presence which always came toward me as if she were carrying her life in her arms, putting it at my disposal, rescuing me from all the alien forces of the world.

The dream always ended as she greeted me—*Mon Trésor du ciel, tu es là*—smiling her unforgettable smile, holding out her arms to me across the room; and, waking, I would lie very still and wonder (again) if anyone else in the world had ever had such a friend. No, I said, no one; and I would try to find words for my conviction. When such a presence (I thought) is embodied in the extraordinary beauty that was hers, when such beauty is incarnated in the kind of being that she was, and when such being is expressed in the kind of artist that she was . . . oh, I know that others have beauty, and authority of presence, and resources or art, but never, never—I'm sure of it—have these gifts existed, in combination, with a nature so cultivated, a mind so full of grace, as she was given at birth. Every day for 20 years I was conscious of wonder.

I have always liked André Maurois because of something he wrote long ago—I quote from memory: "The death of a person you have loved in this way leaves you ever after with a serene courage."

Having had what I have had, I now have enough courage for three lifetimes. Or rather, I have a feeling that courage is never needed.



There was never any use trying to explain Georgette's special knowledge to

the unknowing. Whenever I tried to talk about her objectively, there was always someone who longed to help me out, and who killed the conversation by saying, "She was really just *everything* you like, wasn't she?"

I said, "I'm not talking personally."
"Then try to explain what you mean."



Georgette Leblanc (February 8, 1875–October 27, 1941), an esteemed soprano, once Maurice Maeterlinck's mistress, was also an accomplished writer, publishing two volumes of autobiography and several children's books and travel accounts. The second volume of her autobiography, La Machine à Courage, deals with her impressions of Gurdjieff and her long battle with cancer, to which she succumbed in 1941, being the first of the Rope to die.

"I can't explain it quickly or easily or deeply," I said; "all I know is that she was different from everyone else."

"But isn't everyone different from everyone else?"

"Of course. But what was 'different' in Georgette was 'interesting.' It was a different difference—unlike anyone's."

Then I would try to define the difference:

I have always had a passion for

impeccable human behavior, and Georgette's had daily and unfailingly shown me what it is, what it can be. Compared to common behavior, hers was as uncommon as that of Dostoyevsky's "idiot."

I had come to judge all conduct by hers, and I have never found anyone who has acted infallibly from the same standards of excellence. If you tried to emulate her you could surpass your own standards; and if you couldn't understand, she was always willing to respond with illuminations.

But she hadn't only "willingness of heart." Her heart was childlike, therefore unsentimental; therefore discriminating. No one could be more scathing than she about *les bêtises humaines*, but her treatment of people who indulged in them always had the quality of mercy. Her heart gave the years of our lives together a glory, as if we were always living "*les adorables idées*." That is why I can now be alone, and not lonely. Today when I have to face a crisis of grief or despair, I am able to find extra strength, as if someone were fighting beside me. The strength comes from knowing what she would have said and done. I am always remembering that she could have explained it all.

Great behavior, to me, is like great literature—that extra something that becomes Art.

Every day of my life, I think, I have been stating that there is no happiness comparable to knowing that you are always understood, no matter how blithing your conduct may be. This is the guarantee that Georgette offered, and it is the most rewarding of freedoms. Yet I came to know that it is only a by-product of an even higher freedom—impersonal: that of free movement in the realm of "all things counter, original, spare, strange." But I mustn't limit her to an understanding of the happy few. Anyone, in any realm could be understood by a heart like hers. She understood people so well that she never let those capable of understanding nothing suspect their failure. This may have been a mistake—it gave her a reputation of being without judgment. She *had* judgment, she valued true judgment, but she distrusted the judgment of people who hadn't the finesse to conceal their judging. On the principle, I suppose, that everything divine goes on light feet. ✍

To be continued in the next issue.

KULTUR

MOOD BOOSTER. A STUDY BY THE BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF Medicine found yoga boosted mood more effectively than walking. Doing an hour of yoga three times a week for 12 weeks increased GABA—a neurotransmitter in the brain that is lower in depressed people—by 13 percent. “This is the first study to find a behavioral intervention—yoga, in this case—that has an effect on brain chemistry similar to that of antidepressants,” said Dr. Chris Streeter, the study’s author. . . . *Empty Minds.* At the William E. Donaldson Correctional Facility, Bessemer, Alabama, meditation courses are held four times a year in the gymnasium. Warden Gary Hetzl doesn’t understand how but says, “It works. We see a difference in the men and in the prison.” A study of 100 inmates who took the course found they had 20 percent fewer disciplinary actions. . . . *Chronic loneliness.* More than 44 million adults over the age of 45 suffer from chronic loneliness. “Loneliness has surprisingly broad and profound health effects,” says John T. Cacioppo, director of the Center for Cognitive and Social Neuroscience, University of Chicago. There is mounting evidence that loneliness significantly increases the chance of diabetes, sleep disorders and other potentially life-threatening problems. . . . *Narcissism Epidemic.* In 1950, thousands of teenagers were asked if they considered themselves an “important person.” Yes, answered 12 percent. In the late 1980s, the same question, same numbers. But in 2009, “Yes, I’m important,” declared 80 percent of girls, 77 percent of boys. “We have suffered a national self-esteem inflation,” say Jean Wenege and Keith Campbell, authors of *The Narcissism Epidemic*. . . . *Whadda Ya Say?* Data on 11,525 men over 40 years by Gerald McGwin, professor of epidemiology at the University of Alabama, shows an association between hearing loss and Viagra. . . . *So Why Ape the Straights?* The Gay Couples Study by San Francisco State University followed 556 homosexual couples for three years and found about 50 percent have sex with others with the knowledge and

approval of their partner. So, if marriage is not for monogamy and not reproductive, why marry? . . . *Your Inner Neanderthal.* The DNA of up to 4 percent of people who live outside Africa came from Neanderthals, the result of interbreeding between Neanderthals and early modern humans, according to the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary anthropology, Leipzig, Germany. . . . *The Great Spender.* Uncle Sam spends nearly as much on military power as every other country in the world combined, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Uncle spends six times more than the country with the next highest budget, China. Is Uncle paranoid? . . . *Where the Young Things Incubate.* Drawing the largest numbers of young Americans from 2007 to 2009, and replacing Riverside, California, as the most popular destination, is Austin, Texas, according to the Brookings Institution. . . . *Muy Bien.* Hispanics make up 16 percent of the population but are forecast to surge to 29 percent by 2050, according to the Pew Research Center. . . . *Growth Industry.* Abortions in New York City average 90,000 per year, or about 40 percent of all pregnancies, twice the national average. . . . *Senior Druggies.* As the nation’s 77 million baby boomers age, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration expects the number of boomer drug addicts qualifying for senior discounts to double from 2.5 million in 1999 to 5 million in 2020. It found 4.3 million adults age 50 and older had used an illicit drug the preceding year. . . . *Buddy, Can You Spare a Dime?* The Employee Benefits Research Institute says fewer than half of workers have \$25,000 in savings, only a third have \$50,000, 44 percent have saved less than \$10,000 and a quarter have basically saved nothing at all. . . . *Go Pistachio!* Phytosterols are substances that block the body’s cholesterol absorption and the little nuts are full of it. Just a handful a day keeps the doctor away. . . . *Lighting Up.* Some 20.6 percent of the nation’s adults, or 46.6 million people, and about 19.5 percent of high school students, or 3.4 million teenagers are smokers. Each day about 1,000 children and teenagers become regular smokers; 4,000 try smoking for the first time. Some 440,000 people die every year from smoking-related health problems. The cost to treat such problems is \$96 billion a year. . . . *Getting Dumber?*

The U.S. used to lead the world in the number of 25 to 34 years olds with college degrees. Now, among 36 developed countries, it ranks 12th. . . . *Increasing the Odds.* According to the National Center for Health Statistics, couples who live together before they get married are less likely to stay married, but chances improve if they were already engaged when they began living together, according to a study of men and women ages 15 to 44. . . . *B.A. & Broke.* A report by the Project on Student Debt found college graduates had an average student loan debt of \$24,000. . . . *You Go, Tommy!* Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack has authorized the unrestricted commercial cultivation of genetically modified alfalfa, from sea to shining sea. . . . *Up One Day, Down the Next.* Between years 2001–09 vitamin D sales soared from \$40 million to \$425 due to studies linking it to various health benefits. Many people get sufficient D from the sun, fatty fish, eggs and fortified dairy products. Under 70 years, 600 IU is fine; over, 800 IU. Vitamin E sales, because of studies linking it with increased risks of illness and death, fell from \$771 million to \$336. *N*

THE Gurdjieff JOURNAL

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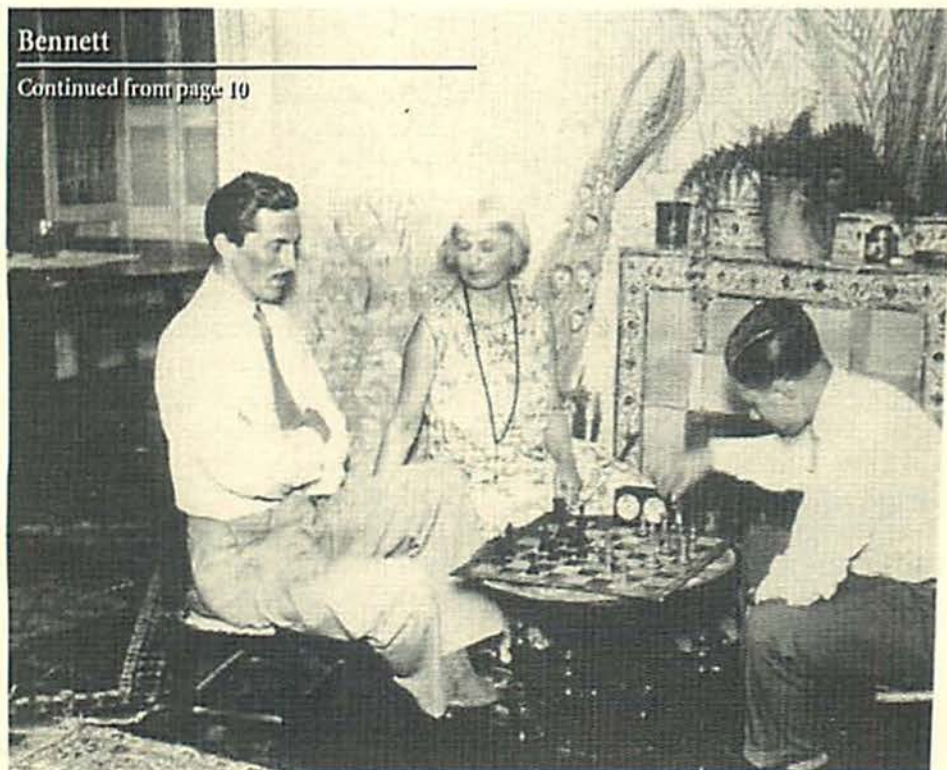
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Bennett and Mrs. Beaumont in Péra

Gurdjieff warns Bennett of the danger of losing everything, if he relies on knowledge alone. Thinking of Ouspensky perhaps, he warns Bennett with great seriousness: "With too much knowledge, the inner barrier may become insurmountable."

Gurdjieff declares: "If you devote all your energies to the task, it may take two years before you can work alone."

You can work alone. Gurdjieff tells him exactly what he wants to hear. Whether or not Gurdjieff meant it, Bennett, rarely doubting himself at the right time, never questions.

A skilled agent of British intelligence, Bennett must sense the trap Gurdjieff has laid. He plays a last card. Bennett says he has no money.

"I am not interested in your money," counters Gurdjieff, "but in your work. There are plenty of people who will give me money, but very few who will work. I will give you the money you need."

Gurdjieff then sweetens the pot. He offers to take Bennett with him on his forthcoming trip to America to act as his interpreter. Bennett is no doubt seeing himself sitting next to Gurdjieff, just as Frank Pinder had in London.

Gurdjieff even ups the ante. He tells Bennett that later on he will be able to give lectures himself.

Then Gurdjieff delivers the masterstroke—"At present you will have to take because you have nothing to give. Later you will be ready to give your last

shirt to help the work—as I am ready to give mine."

Gurdjieff's words make a great impact on Bennett, yet not so great that he stays on. Walking past the Prieuré's flowing fountain, Bennett opens the high wrought iron gate to the street, calming himself with the words, "I will go away and make money, and then I will return." Once closed, it is a gate Bennett will never again open.

—From *Struggle of the Magicians*
To be continued in the next issue.

Notes

1. *John Godolphin Bennett.* Bennett had been wounded in the First World War—"I was partially paralysed on my right side; I had a severe head wound, but the skull was not fractured. I was peppered with shrapnel. . . . The youth who had left England in 1917 was no longer living in my body. And yet I was living his life—the life of a stranger. Even though I could remember his thoughts, I could not feel his feelings." *Witness*, 4. Bennett had previously married on December 20, 1918. A daughter was born two years later. When he and his first wife divorced is not clear.
2. *Mrs. Winifred Beaumont.* Mrs. Beaumont is only six years younger than Bennett's mother.
3. *Two years before.* In a deleted portion of *Fragments of an Unknown*

Teaching (later retitled after his death as *In Search of the Miraculous*), Ouspensky speaks of their relationship as "a collaboration." This suggests he never really took himself to be a student of Gurdjieff's. And while he characterizes Gurdjieff as having many positive qualities, he never speaks of what virtually everyone notices—the force of his being. Could he not sense and feel it?

4. *Hidden brotherhoods of Central Asia.* Apparently, Gurdjieff said nothing to him of his being initiated three times in the Egyptian mysteries and that he had found in Egypt "a Christianity before Christ."
5. *Introduced to the Prince's friend.* Is it to be taken as just a coincidence that Gurdjieff shows up at Mrs. Beaumont's apartment? The Prince's fortunes, financial and political, are at a low ebb and Ouspensky has turned over most of his pupils to Gurdjieff. So why is Gurdjieff there? A possibility may be that he has heard about Bennett, a brilliant, ambitious and clever young man who has an interest in the occult—and has come to recruit him. It is interesting, as well, that Gurdjieff speaks to Bennett of his *idée fixe* of the moment, the fifth dimension. In Petersburg he had insisted Ouspensky abandon his notions of the fourth dimension.
6. *Born in 1866.* He would later say he was born in 1877. The date of his birth is fully discussed in TGJ #51, "When Was Gurdjieff Born?"
7. *Insurmountable.* To a man like Bennett, freedom—his notion of freedom—is everything. When he then asks how long would be needed if he decides to stay, it sounds like he is looking for a way out.
8. *You can work alone.* The words must have singed Bennett's brain. He had expected to be told 20 years. Mercurial, zesting after adventure, what Bennett most fears is being trapped. Raised in a family with a no-account father, he had been his mother's pride and joy, her "young king."
9. *The money you need.* He offers this, though supporting the Russian contingent living at the Prieuré, as well as the expenses of maintaining it and paying the mortgage, has left Gurdjieff financially stressed.