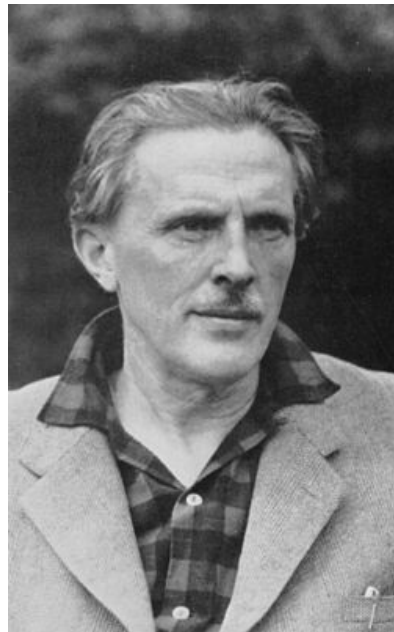


JOHN G. BENNETT. SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY

About the Author

John Godolphin Bennett(1897-1974) – thinker, scientist, the most talented student of GI Gurdjieff. They met after World War II in Turkey, where Bennett represented British intelligence. He was only 23 years old, he knew many languages, important people of the Ottoman Empire turned to him for advice. Bennett's talent for languages and Eastern diplomacy was very useful in life.



John Godolphin Bennett

Bennett became a mediator between the West and the East. In the West he was respected as an active and practical man, while in the East he was valued for his understanding and was entrusted with knowledge previously inaccessible to Europeans. *knowledge*. It was Guzdzhien, the Blavatsky Society that simply flooded the Western countries with their esoteric occult wisdom, and it was extremely painful for Christianity. What to do? Where there is ambiguity, a gap, there the mind and spirit will penetrate to learn the secret and no one will be able to do it stop...Christianity has not explained something to believers.

Bennett spent his whole life learning and teaching others. He was a very independent and sober person, he had a talent for combining tradition and constant search. He thought complexly and broadly, presented his thoughts consistently and precisely, even "scientifically", but what science did not know, he could not overcome through that *white space* knowledge and began to fantasize. He would break down more difficult things into parts, but this simplification of the whole was deceptive, and sometimes

misleading. Bennett cannot be confined to one or even a few teachings. He wanted to encompass everything – man-heaven-mind, and when he was unable to unite everything, he fell into dualism...However, he is one of the most prominent figures in 20th century spirituality.*stalkers*, but the extent of his activities has not yet been fully revealed, and not enough is known about him even in England.

AL Dolgopolsky, the editor of his Russian translations, introduces this work by J. Bennett as follows:

"...after JG Bennett wrote "DRAMATIC UNIVERSE" and "SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY", we can safely say that now finally such a (*combining science and religion*)science exists. Bennett, a brilliant thinker and mystic, far ahead of his time... If the four volumes of THE DRAMATIC UNIVERSE are truly a comprehensive science that has reached the realization of its True Principles and discovered them, then Spiritual Psychology is a part of this science, dedicated to man and his comprehensive nature, consciously written in a language close to the scientific thought of the 20th century. This book clearly and correctly describes the complex structure of the material and spiritual nature of man and the fundamental concepts of body, soul and spirit, so hopelessly confused in religious and mystical literature. Together with THE DRAMATIC UNIVERSE, it not only shows how the most important task of harmonizing science and religion can be fundamentally solved, so that this synthesis becomes practically understandable to every individual. That is why Bennett rightly writes that his **Spiritual psychology is the psychology of human development or spiritual transformation, meaning the providential solution of personal, social, and cosmic problems. In this it differs fundamentally from "scientific" psychology, which ignores the spiritual side of human nature and is therefore only secular psychology or psychology of adaptation.**"

January 11, 2000

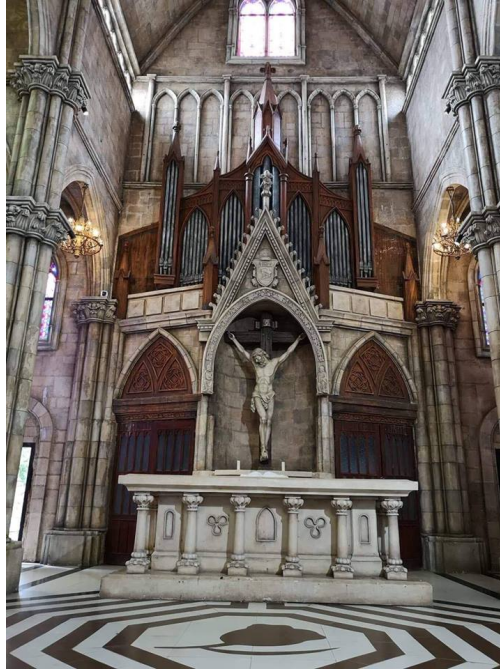
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Part I

SPIRITUAL PSYCHOLOGY

If you are the reader for whom I wrote this book, then you are looking for the answer to the question: "**What is the meaning and purpose of my life, and how can I achieve it?**" I will not naively claim that my book will provide an answer that will be acceptable to each of you. I can only say what seems true to me. So, from my point of view, our role is to maintain the energetic balance in the Solar System, as well as to facilitate its spiritual evolution. We can say that we exist to serve Nature,

and not to exploit it. By consciously serving the purpose of our existence, we become "real" beings. And, conversely, by refusing to fulfill our duty, we remain some kind of "ghosts" living in a dream world. If you agree with this point of view, then our first goal should be to prepare for the life that Great Nature has intended for us.



Those altars hid the living god...

Formerly, man was enticed or compelled to follow this path by the hope of heavenly life and the fear of eternal punishment, but the reasons for both remained hidden. Thus, when promises and threats lost their power, men no longer felt the need to make any effort or sacrifice for it, unless it concerned the welfare of their nearest and dearest. For many centuries, virtually all mankind was quite "content with the way of life to which God saw fit to call us. But now it is different. As early as the eighteenth century, man changed the phrase "God is with us, and we need not worry about the world" to "all Mankind is with us, and we need not worry about heaven." Seventy years ago, Swinburne wrote his *Anthem for Man*, whose refrain was as follows: "**Glory in the Highest to Man, Lord of all.**" We have lost faith in God and will soon lose faith in humanity.

At the same time, a new factor of pacification has emerged: large public and other organizations. This circumstance manifests itself in its extreme form in socialist states. However, even few people in other countries doubt that governments, churches, corporations, and well-organized social societies can at least "guarantee stability for the time being." Science, economics, computers, and the tools of government have already

long ago took on the role of Jupiter with lightning and thunder. It is these strange gods that most people tend to look at as their only support, and any attack from them immediately causes a tremor in society. For millennia, humanity has been looking for solutions to its problems by creating various organizations. It has become customary to consider a person as a kind of elementary unit, the existence of which depends entirely on the structure of society. Today, this point of view is zealously defended by behaviorists, who consider a person to be nothing more than a product of the culture in which he grew up. In their opinion, a person becomes a formless, plastic being from the day of birth, which is later formed by the society around him. It should be noted that although this point of view is relatively new, its roots go back to the ancient belief in the goodness of the social order. Until the 17th century, the only important organizations were considered to be the Church and the State, and also, to a lesser extent, the guilds of merchants and artisans. By the way, this was true not only in the Christian world, but also in the vast territories of Asia and Africa, where Islam had established itself. Moreover, such views were especially characteristic of China, where the search for an ideal form of government was the task of both philosophers and rulers.

It is noteworthy that the sacredness of the person and human rights were self-evident, but only within the boundaries of the established social order. The Old and New Testaments, the Koran, the Bhagavad Gita, and Confucius in their Annals speak of the Divine origin of Organizations and demand respect for them. Since the beginning of the 19th century, many different man-made organizations have appeared. One of the varieties was the joint-stock company, the spread and growth of which led to the emergence of today's financial empires. Another group consists of international organizations - from the Universal Postal Union, founded in 1856, to the United Nations and its derivatives.

Few people doubt the necessity of organizations for the normal functioning of human society, but more and more people doubt whether they can contribute to well-being. In addition, the growing distrust of organizations is complemented by fear of their power. By the way, if earlier people feared mainly their militaristic, political and economic levers of pressure, today the greatest concern is the direct impact of organizations on the inner world of man. As an example, we can cite the works of Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity and Power and Innocence*. Skinner and many other psychologists and sociologists, whatever their contradictory views, unanimously point to the emergence of a new, frightening factor - the use of force to deprive a person of his inner freedom. Apparently, the positions of Behaviorism have weakened considerably in recent years, but it still rings the bells about a danger that many today tend to consider even more serious than

the obvious threat of war, environmental pollution, depletion of natural resources, or even the possibility of global famine.

The behaviorist approach is usually contrasted with the potential for human development, which supposedly should ensure unlimited growth of opportunities for both the individual and humanity as a whole. Such hopes are primarily associated with **with the search for new forms of psychological and religious experience**. Millions of people experiment with various Pentecostal religions and Eastern spiritual directions. Millions also use drugs and other hallucinogenic substances. None of these experiments have yielded convincing results. Various ideas, methods, teachers, and writers have reached the peak of their popularity, sometimes persisted for several years, and then faded into oblivion. The most interesting thing about all these movements is that they tend to achieve a certain stability, when a core of devoted followers is formed and a growing stream of people seeking spiritual fulfillment. Their numbers are constantly increasing, creating the illusion of growth, but sooner or later these people leave the movement.

Today's society is full of all kinds of contradictions and conflicts. However, among all the diversity of views, one can distinguish **three main directions**. Some people are afraid and resist change in every way, hoping **from progress** only the growth of what has already been achieved and the greatest possible stability in this sense. Others joyfully believe in change, but see it only in external achievements. Their hopes are tied to a new world created by the joint efforts of science and technology and the capabilities of various organizations. Such views are held by the majority: from behaviorists to science fiction fans. Most of them would gladly sing the "Hymn to Man" along with Swinburne. Supporters of the third point of view base their reasoning on human potential. At the same time, there are many disagreements and contradictory interpretations among the members of this group, and we can only say that they are based on the search for solutions to emerging problems in the individual himself, and not in the organizations created by him. There are two main currents in this group. One of them can be called **transformism**. This term was first proposed by Ouspensky in 1938 to describe his teaching. This book is almost entirely devoted to transformism, and I will present here only his main thesis: **Man as we know him is an imperfect being with unlimited potential for development and transformation. Man's destiny is entirely determined by his ability to improve. As for the second tendency, it is characterized by a negative attitude towards man. He is nothing, -takes shape in the ordinary course of life**. Currently, this movement is represented by Existentialism. According to it, there are only "conditions of human life" that are formed by what happens to us, and it does not matter what we come into this world with. In this regard, the word "essence" has no meaning for the existentialist. There is no such thing as human nature or human

instincts: a person is what he has made himself. The apostle of existentialism, Sartre, wrote: "A person first of all exists, discovers himself, wanders through the world and only then becomes himself... at first he is nothing. And he will remain nothing for a long time until he becomes what he makes of himself." This position quite often leads to pessimism, which happened to Sartre and many people who share his opinion. This pessimism is very characteristic of the present era, although until relatively recently it was not supported by people who enthusiastically looked at human achievements, ignoring the emptiness of their inner world.

Until the 1950s, society was full of optimism about the future of humanity. Proponents of each of the three main approaches to the development of humanity were absolutely convinced that their way of life would be the only successful one and would ultimately prevail. However, in the past few years, several dramatic changes have occurred. Only professional optimists today can claim to have a clear vision of the future. Neither the political, nor the economic, nor even the financial structure of the modern world inspires peace. Previously, there was always some enemy at hand, on whom everything could be blamed. Today we see a general helplessness and anxiety about the future. No one is completely sure about the end of wars and revolutions. **Contrary to expectations, social reforms did not bring social welfare.** Social engineering has grown out of thin air like a soap bubble, and its collapse has become one of the most spectacular events of the past decade. Behavioral science, the study of human societies, programmable education, computerized welfare, social mediation - all these promising directions of development have essentially led to a dead end. The rising generation is torn between drugs and political protest, from politics to popular music, and from there to spiritual quests. Nothing is achieved, and no one knows why. It is strange that this is happening in an age that prides itself on its pragmatic realism, and when scientific and technological progress seems to confirm the ability of man to achieve anything he desires.

Of course, this problem is much deeper and more serious than is commonly believed. Over the past thousand years, the external picture of human existence has changed beyond recognition, while its inner nature has remained just as mysterious and incomprehensible. While we in the West have been trying to master the material world, the inhabitants of the East have diligently penetrated the depths of man and therefore they know much more about man and his nature than we do, and in this sense we can be called the "backward part of the world." We are trying to catch up by borrowing psychological techniques from the East, just as they borrow technological advances from us. In doing so, we are making the biggest mistake of trying to use techniques that

about whose essence or "know-how" we have not the slightest idea. We even begin a kind of human engineering without fully understanding man.

Somehow we always miss a large part of human potential. Man is often compared to an iceberg, only one-eighth of which is visible above the water. Even those who believe in human perfection tend to take a naive, superficial position on this issue. In this regard, it should be noted that **"The invisible man" is not only a source of enormous potential, but also constantly and completely unpredictably affects the "visible man."** So, if we use the word "spiritual" to define that part of human nature that is inaccessible to ordinary observation and analysis, then we must understand "Spiritual Psychology" as the study of the whole person, including the potential person and the actual person. From this point of view, it can be said that **Human engineering in the West has failed because it ignored the spiritual side of man.**

But all this does not explain the failure of many of the "spiritual" movements of our time. In this book I have tried to answer this question and also to suggest a way that meets the needs of our time. The book is based on more than fifty years of searching and experimentation that I have been doing since, **when I first felt that I could exist outside my body, results. It happened when I almost died on the Western Front on March 21, 1918. At that moment, I realized once and for all that there is something in man that is not mind and body, something that is not subject to the limitations of space and time.** Since then, I have traveled this path through many countries, and many teachers and wise people have helped me in my search. I must say that I have been very lucky in terms of my spiritual environment. In addition, **I have learned from my own experience that the spiritual world is not the privilege of one religion or teaching.** Even among such obscure sects as the Druze, the Yazidis, and the Ale-i-Haqq, I have met very spiritual people. The same is true of many of the newer movements, such as Subud. Finally, the greatest influence on my life has been George Gurdjieff, and much of the spiritual psychology that will be discussed in this book is based on his teachings.

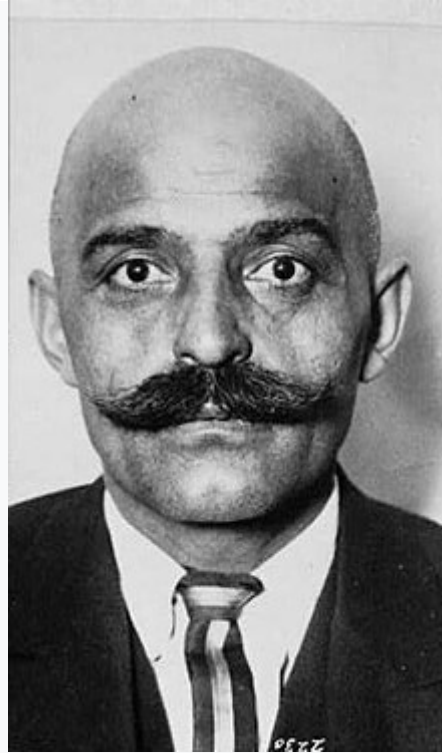
In my opinion, from the very beginning **it is important to define the differences between psychic experience and spiritual development. Our state of consciousness usually fluctuates between sleep and wakefulness.** It is only very rare that we experience moments of special, expanded states of consciousness, or even periods when we perceive ourselves and the world from a completely unusual perspective. These rare states usually leave a lasting impression on a person and give them hope to break through the tense cocoon of our everyday lives. **It is typical that such conditions are usually unpredictable, accompanied by severe stress and illness.** They can also be caused by medications and other artificial means, as well as certain practices such as

fasting, meditation and prolonged sleep deprivation, use. Again, it should be noted that many people can participate in the experience of such a state at the same time, of course, if their attention is focused on the "other world", such as, for example, the return of the reborn. All these changes in consciousness can be attributed to various reactions of the nervous system and changes in the chemical composition of the blood. In themselves, they have no spiritual meaning. However, this does not mean that such states of consciousness cannot arise due to purely spiritual circumstances. They can be compared to the symptoms that can be caused by various diseases. At the same time, the true spiritual development of a person continues beyond his consciousness. This is "supermental", according to the great Indian national liberation fighter and yogi Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. **Cosmic consciousness has fascinated Western thinkers since Bouquet published his immortal, if naive, work. "Understanding God" is another tempting phrase that should not be dismissed.** Of course, there are states that indicate spiritual progress, but they are by no means the goal of our efforts. We make a serious mistake in identifying the concepts of "state" and "stage", in Sufi terminology - *hall and muqam*. So, we can enter the highest states of consciousness and remain the same as we were. **The fact that various states of consciousness were confused with transformations of being had serious consequences.** For example, it is widely believed that since higher states of consciousness are the very goal of our search, the significance of a particular movement should be judged precisely by its ability to induce these states in its followers. Another consequence has been the assumption that the goal of achieving higher states of consciousness justifies any means, including the use of psychedelic drugs. **All these ideas testify to our complete ignorance in the field of spiritual life. Spirituality is primarily associated with the concepts of will and being. This is in no way the opening of the "Door of Perception" as Aldous Huxley and many others suggested.** Huxley's life was quite tragic. I first met him in 1933, when he regularly attended Ouspensky's talks in London. The last time I saw Huxley was shortly before his death, when he had lost his wife, his eyesight, his home, his library, and, worst of all, his hope of understanding the meaning of life. Aldous went quite far in his understanding of the human problem. After publishing his book *Brave New World* (*Brave New World*), he was the first to state that "experience" itself can lead to a dead end. In the book "The Island" (*Island*) he showed that life has more to offer than just a fleeting glimpse into the world of "Eternal Philosophy." **But Huxley failed to make the sacrifices he had to make to become a citizen of this world. This is the fundamental limitation of intellectually gifted people.** They find it very difficult to understand the concept of "supermentality" in its essence. They will appeal to the most difficult doctrines, such as the monism of Vedanta, the case of Huxley, but will not abandon the belief that truth is

more accessible to an intellectually gifted person than to an ordinary person. **It is extremely difficult for an intellectual to grasp the profound meaning of Christ's statement: "... glory to You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes."** A "babe" is able to discern "being," while an intelligent person is attracted to knowledge!

The goal of true human search is a stable, substantial being. We are only ghostly, disembodied spirits who can become real beings. Throughout human history, only a few people have had enough determination to achieve a goal, as well as the sensitivity to solve that task. Such people can rightfully be called spiritual giants. However, people whose spiritual potential is not so great can also become real beings. For this purpose, they must feel a great need, and also independently or with outside help find a way to achieve their goal.

Up to now, all our reasoning has practically not deviated from the orthodox direction. **All religions and all spiritual movements claim that a person can be transformed and that his transformation depends on his own faith and what is most important to him. Usually, the conversation ends there. The previous arguments about the necessity of transformation are completely unacceptable today.** The Hindu and Buddhist doctrines of liberation from the horrors of existence sound very unconvincing to those people who cling to existence because they cannot imagine anything beyond it. At the same time, the Christian-Muslim doctrine of resurrection, followed by eternal bliss or eternal torment, has also lost its credibility. So, although we laugh at Soviet propaganda, which tries to prove to the peasants that the cosmonauts, having ascended to heaven, did not find God, our thinking depends almost entirely on the concept of time and space. We believe that nirvana, heaven, and any form of real existence in general must be "somewhere." Also **One should not place illusions on pseudoscience, which, based on the mutual transformation of matter and energy, considers "spiritual energy" to be the sole foundation of existence.** But we can still rely on modern science. Today, it allows us to abandon the previous view of space and time as a capacity within the "boundaries" of which everything that exists must exist.



George Ivanovich Gurdjieff 1866-1877

The idea that we must transcend space and time in order to understand anything, including the physical world, occurred to me more than fifty years ago. Shortly thereafter, I first met Gurdjieff in Constantinople. By then I was ready to accept that our dormant existence in space and time is only a reflection of what our being can transform into. So it was not difficult for me to move from mathematical physics to Gurdjieff's cosmology. During our first conversation with him, at the palace of Prince Sabaheddin in Kuru Heshme, on the shores of the Bosphorus, I shared with him my conclusion that **eternity is no less real than space and time**. His phrase completely changed the course of my life: "**What is the use of knowing what you cannot be?**" Of course, there are higher dimensions, but that doesn't matter to us until we can live in them." Of course, I asked him what to do. His answer opened up to me the idea of a transformation of being. I clearly understood that although I could infinitely expand my knowledge of the world, I would remain the same person if I did not change myself. I knew myself well enough, so the idea of "**knowledge without being**"—**useless**, it didn't seem strange to me anymore.

This was the beginning of my long search for reality. I traveled from country to country, studying with different teachers. My search led me to various movements, groups and communities, each of which taught me something. And yet, throughout all my wanderings, Gurdjieff's "system" or teaching was my guiding star. It was he who gave me most of what I consider important today for understanding the "meaning of our lives."

Gurdjieff himself began his search at the age of eleven and traveled extensively in Africa, Europe and Asia. He discovered schools of wisdom in Turkey and Tibet, and in some cases had to spend a great deal of time in such schools to absorb the teachings. I have tried to study Gurdjieff's search from its very beginning, and I am convinced that he brought to the West everything that was needed to create a new world.

I studied with Gurdjieff and Ouspensky for twenty years, and then for another twenty years I experimented with large and small groups at Coombe Springs, near London. One of these experiments became the basis of this book. Coombe Springs was my home from 1944 to 1966. Incidentally, in 1948-1949 I spent all my free time with Gurdjieff in Paris and New York. At that time he appointed me "representative for England" and entrusted me with many different missions. However, although I owe much of my spiritual psychology to Gurdjieff, in my opinion each person must create his own picture of "Man, World and God". Such a picture, like a mosaic, made up of fragments coming from different sources, creates a unified picture of our searches and spiritual experiences. Even if we do not succeed in creating our own unique picture of the world, the picture that we accept in the end becomes our property, confirmed by personal life experience.

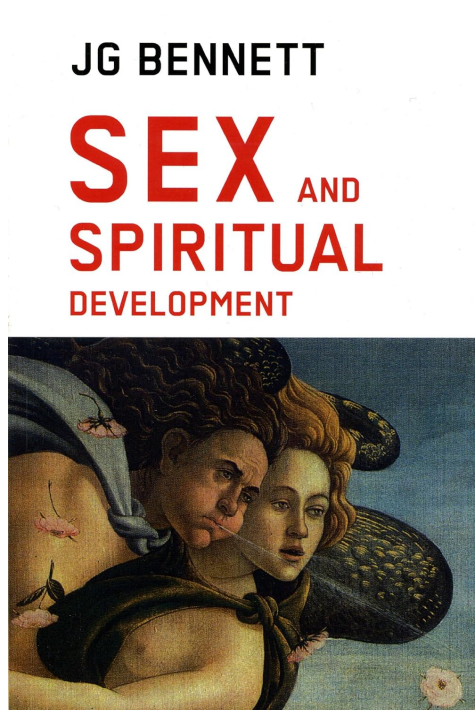
Living a spiritual life is much more difficult than living a material life, because it takes place in a realm nine-tenths of which are beyond our ordinary experience. That is why spiritual people are so in need of any tangible help. And in our time it is extremely difficult to find a spiritual leader who would understand the needs and plight of modern man.

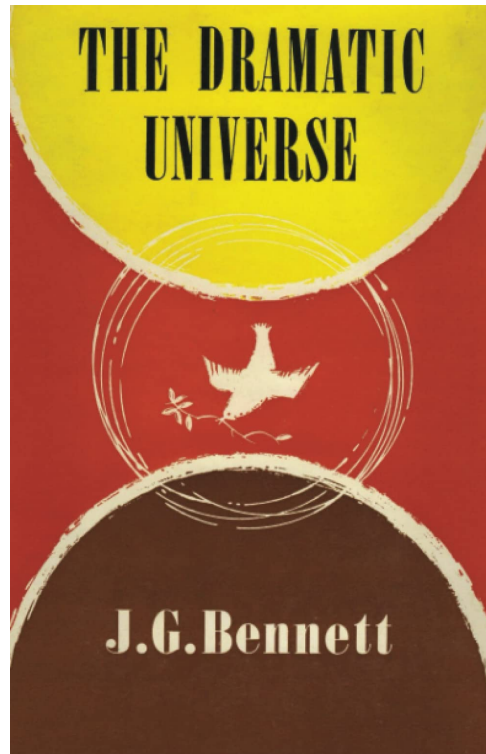
Thus, in describing her life, Saint Teresa, Carmelite reformer and great mystic, repeatedly said that "leaders who know nothing of the spiritual life waste their soul and body in opposing progress." She also stated that "those who follow the path of prayer need a leader even more than others, and the greater their spirituality, the greater this need."

These words of one of the most spiritual of saints have often made me wonder where we should look for spiritual guidance today. There have certainly been great teachers, such as St. John of the Cross, who have left inspiring instructions for those living a spiritual life. But their books are addressed to monks and hermits, whose path is very different from that of ordinary people in the world. At the same time, there have always been quite a few people whose lives have been largely determined by spiritual influences. It is they, as St. Teresa said, who need spiritual guidance more than anyone else. Today, a great deal of ritual literature is published, but **ritual does not necessarily mean spirituality**. Without

Moreover, there are many books on the psychology of religious experience; and yet few of them deal with the problems faced by people who by their nature seek to find the Reality hidden behind external forms. Such people, even in ordinary life, are not satisfied with merely successful actions: they want to know for sure that their actions correspond to values, the meaning of which does not change depending on the reasons for success or failure.

It is these kinds of people that I call "spiritual."They may belong to a particular religion or they may be trying to find what they are looking for without its help.**In general, spirituality should not be equated with religiosity.**Thus, a person who seeks in art those qualities that are not in the world around him is a spiritual person, even if he denies religion. At the same time, a religious person who tries to do as well as possible what he was taught can be quite different from those around him in a good sense, but at the same time be unspiritual, in the true sense of the word.





Before going any further, it would be useful to say a few words about the concept of "Spirituality". Ultimately, it is impossible to define what it is, because by its very nature spirituality cannot be reduced to knowledge or any verbal formulation. It would be best to say that spirit is an essential characteristic of everything that exists.In a sense, spirituality can be called the "ideal" that lies behind actualization. However, the term "essential" is more appropriate when referring to the opposite of "existential," that is, the known and measurable element of our experience. The same can be said, in other words, when distinguishing spirit from matter. We make many mistakes when we talk about matter because we are used to thinking of it as the building block from which everything in this world is made. Today, most people understand matter as energy, although for scientists, especially physicists, the question of matter is a great puzzle. The very **The meaning of the words "matter" and "energy" has changed significantly over the past thirty to forty years..**

So we can console ourselves with the fact that **the concept of "matter" is no easier to define than "spirit"** Recently, physicists have come to the conclusion that materiality is relative, and it is entirely possible that many previously considered "spiritual" properties, such as feeling, thought, and even consciousness, are simply different forms or degrees of aggregation of matter.

It may seem that I have attributed almost all of our experience to the material world, leaving no room for the spirit. This is far from being true. The immaterial world is in no way inferior to the material world in its richness of content. It

represents the realm of quality and value. Values have their own distinctive qualities. Thus beauty differs from goodness, elegance from economy, and truth from justice. Also, each value differs from the others. Thus, there are an infinite number of combinations of primary and derived meanings, which, when combined into a whole, form what I call the "Realm of Values."

The content of the sphere of values consists of "spirit", so it is the totality of all forms of values, that is, all possible properties.

In my opinion, spirituality is as relative as materiality. The singing of birds in spring, the fleeting beauty of an autumn sunset, an act of charity, a painting in which we recognize a true work of art, any daily work done honestly, "the trembling of the soul at the very gates of Paradise" – all these denote certain spiritual qualities. Of course, all these qualities differ from each other, including in the degree of spirituality.

But you may object that all the phenomena I have listed are merely properties of matter. From this point of view, both a great painting by an artist and a bad piece of writing are just different combinations of paint and canvas. The differences are revealed only in our attitude towards them, while thoughts and feelings, as has already been said, appear to be simply special states of matter. **So in the end it all comes down to materialism.****

This is the impression we get if we think about these things solely from a "scientific" perspective. But the world doesn't revolve around (*science*) knowledge. We cannot "know" which of the paintings is a true work of art: we can "judge" its quality by *what* in us is different from knowledge. We know about matter, but we can only reason about spiritual qualities.

If this is still not entirely obvious, let us at least agree that we see properties when we see them. Also, please at least agree with the independent **idea of the properties of reality**. They are real even if they are not tied to specific material forms. For example, "goodness" as a quality is real and will be real even if there were not a single good person left on earth. Of course, you can consider this complete nonsense, but please agree that **the reality of spiritual qualities is different from the reality of matter**. In addition, I would like to draw your attention to **the relativity of spiritual qualities** in the sense that we can distinguish between "higher" and "lower" spiritual qualities.

We only need to point out one more circumstance to continue our reasoning. **All spiritual qualities constitute a world or separate worlds, which we will simply call "spirit."**

You may want to ask me what Saint Teresa and the "spiritual life" have to do with it. You will easily understand this if you study her biography and other books. She calls the spiritual life the desire to develop that quality that turns "inner work" into a duty. But the aspiration is not obligatory. We can quite easily fulfill our duties without the special effort that is required if we want to fulfill the ordinary requirements without major obligations. I have something else in mind. Suppose you are talking to a friend about spirituality and he says, "I don't have time for that nonsense. I try to be a good father and a good citizen. I go to church because I think it is right, I go because it is the sensible thing for modern man to do. And I keep the commandments. If I were to try to do anything else, I would have to devote all my time and energy to only what is obligatory." In that case, you cannot tell your friend that he is wrong and that he has more important goals. That would be unfair, and perhaps even unfair to him. At the same time, for you personally, things may be completely different. You may be very sensitive to your inner problems, which another person may not even be aware of. These problems, if we are talking about real problems, of course, are related to the spiritual realm. These were the questions that tormented Saint Teresa until she finally found a way to solve them.

The point is that those people who are trying to find solutions to problems "for the sake of quality" are in dire need of advice. It is not enough for them to know "what" to do. They are trying to find out the answer to the question "how" they should do it. In this regard, conventional psychology does not suit them. But I will return to this topic later. In other words, I want to say that I call "spiritual psychology" the study of man from the point of view of the "reality" of the spirit and spiritual life. When studying people who are concerned with spiritual problems, one might think that there is something wrong with them and that they need to be "treated." The study of such people from the perspective of religion can be called "pastoral psychology." Later you will understand why I consider pastoral and spiritual psychology to be two different approaches to the problems of humanity. Erich Fromm, whom I met in Mexico City fifteen years ago, drew my attention to the differences between the diseases of the soul and the diseases of the world. One of them is related to the hope of the individual for the future, the other to the hope of correcting the shortcomings of the world. There is adaptive psychology and developmental psychology. True spiritual psychology is based on solving personal, social, and cosmic problems through the will of God.

The need for spiritual psychology arose at a time when many researchers of the human psyche moved from studying humans to studying animal behavior as a way to better understand humans. Thus, ethology, one of the youngest scientific disciplines, has completely changed our understanding of animal life in just a decade. We can no longer say that the concepts of "cruelty", "animal" and "animal instincts" distinguish animals

from humans. The remarkable studies of people like Farley Mowat and Muric have shown that wolf pack life is in some ways much more orderly and “humane” than human community life. Tinbergen and Wolfgang Kohler have shown how primate thinking differs from what was previously believed. Many ethologists, notably Konrad Lorenz, have emphasized the animal origin of human aggression and other features of man and his communities. At the same time, while quite rightly focusing on the animal components of human nature, ethologists have ignored the spiritual aspect of it that distinguishes us from animals. But this does not mean that we should repeat Kant’s words: “Man is the end point. We can ask why animals exist, but the question of the reasons for man’s existence is meaningless” (Gurdjiev, in his lectures on ethics, developed a completely opposite view, arguing that the most important question is: “Why do I exist?”). If this question is indeed correct, then the answer to it should be sought beyond the limits of man, namely in the spiritual realm. **The paradox of man is that, although he has a spiritual nature, he does not know it and cannot know it.** Spiritual psychology describes the spiritual nature of man without diminishing the importance of his animal nature. It studies man as a whole, partly known and partly unknown by the usual methods of observation and analysis.

You may want to ask me if I consider myself competent enough to write a “spiritual psychology.” God forbid! The thing is that it is unlikely that I could refuse to work on this book due to lack of experience. On the contrary, I have seen so much that I have taken my ignorance in this field for granted. I have devoted almost my entire life to finding answers to various spiritual questions, and I began to be interested in them at least sixty years ago. Almost half a century has passed since I began to study spiritual questions with various research groups, and I continue to do so to this day. During this time, I have met thousands of people who were really engaged in spiritual searches or believed in this work. Many of them told me about their problems. All this convinced me of one thing: the secret of man remains a secret. You can help another person by using your experience or simply by doing good, but the secret remains a secret. Over the years I have gradually come to a number of conclusions, mostly as a result of my study of the Gurdjieff system. I have come to the conclusion that there is a **very specific structure that combines the spiritual and material nature of man without violating the relativity of matter and spirit****. Matter can be in coarser or finer states of aggregation. Moreover, its coarsest forms include visible matter, while its subtlest forms include sensations, thoughts, and consciousness. Moreover, **The relativity of spirit also implies a hierarchy of values**** If the spiritual world were not divided into “levels,” then there would be nothing to strive for; the spiritual

the successes and failures of life would have no meaning. As far as I can tell, **this concept of double relativity**** had not been raised in this area before and it helped me a lot in solving my own problems and helping others. Moreover, I realized that if psychology does not consider “will” as a reality, completely different from the reality of matter and spirit, which cannot be spoken of in the same language, then such a psychology can lead very far from the real situation. It is precisely because I found spiritual support for myself in these ideas that I decided to try to write a “spiritual psychology”.

Before moving on to another topic, I would like to **draw a clear line between psychology and theology**. Theology studies the supernatural realm. Any psychology, spiritual or non-spiritual, is concerned with natural phenomena. **Spirit and matter are equally natural, that is, they are not God, although we can consider them to be God's creations****. Speaking of *supernatural action* I mean the direct intervention of God in creation, without any created being being able to understand its essence. It is different from both “spiritual” and “material” action. Supernatural action can occur in nature and due to natural conditions, but it differs from natural processes in its mystery and inexplicability from the point of view of the laws of nature and the properties of the spirit. In this regard, if in discussing spiritual psychology we encounter supernatural action, I will try to clearly show that it does not fit into the framework of any psychology. The point is that if supernatural action comes directly from God, then only God knows what it consists of, and we can know about it only when God reveals it to us. In other words, **everything related to the supernatural can only be known as the result of Revelation**. Therefore, since I do not claim any Revelation, this book will deal only with natural questions, except in cases where I believe it is possible to appeal to sources based on Revelation.

If the structure of my spiritual psychology is almost entirely borrowed from Gurdjieff, I have drawn a considerable part of its content from other sources. Since 1924 I have attached great importance to the Buddhist psychology described in the Pali Pitakas. I studied this work with Rhys Davies, who, together with her husband, brought these ancient texts to the English-speaking world. The main text is the Samana Fala Suttana, a stunning account of the fruits of the life of a Shramana. When I first studied it in the original, I was convinced that this text was an objective description of spiritual development through discipline and meditation. The four Janas, or higher states of consciousness, became an integral part of my own understanding of the spiritual path. I also studied Sanskrit to gain the spirit of the Vedas and Upanishads, including the Bhagavad Gita. Many years later I had the opportunity to communicate with the greatest yogi, Shivapuri Baba, who was one hundred and thirty-five years old when I first saw him. His three disciplines of body, mind and spirit constitute the Upanishads.

the essence of practical psychology, and I used them to fill in some of the missing links in Gurdjieff's system.

But I learned much more from Islam than from Vedanta or Buddhism. I lived for many years in Muslim countries and met many Sufis or dervishes. I finally came to the conclusion that Sufism was the main source of Gurdjieff's teaching and that it is very active today and can give the world much of what it needs at this time. I owe most of my knowledge of Sufism to the unconventional Sufi Hasan Susud, a descendant of the great Konevi, who was a companion of Jellaluddin Rumi. Hasan Susud first told me about the Khwajagan, a wonderful Sufi school that existed in Central Asia from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries AD. Its successor today is the most famous of all Sufi orders, the Naqshbandiyya, founded in the fourteenth century by Bahauddin of Bukhara. Hassan himself held a doctrine of absolute liberation, which made him more akin to Buddhism than to the orthodox mystical Sufism of such teachers as Ibn al-Arabi and Jellaluddin Rumi. From Hassan I learned practical exercises, including breath control and fasting, which were superior to anything I had received in this respect from Gurdjieff. I also had the opportunity to communicate with Syed Idries Shah, whose influence on the Western world as a writer and practical psychologist is clearly visible even today. Shah is so well known for his books that **I can only emphasize the importance of his contribution to understanding the danger that "human engineering" poses to the future of humanity.**

From 1957 to 1961 I worked in Subud. The name of this spiritual movement is taken from Sanskrit: Subud is an abbreviation of Susila Budhi Dharma, meaning "good spiritual discipline". However, Subud is essentially a derivative of Sufism. Its founder, Bapak Muhammad Subuh, came to England in 1957 at the invitation of a small group of Gurdjieff students. They were very interested in what they heard about Bapak's teaching, which was very similar to Gurdjieff's system.

For all practical purposes, Subud offers one technique: latihan. It is a spiritual exercise in the sense that it arises and is directed from positions of power or influence that cannot be expressed in terms of matter. It cannot be "explained" in the abstract by energy transformation.

Latihan consists of two parts: opening or contact and regular practice. Contact is always and in any case established through a simple act of "request and acceptance". Anyone who wishes to receive contact receives it after a three-month trial period, unless there are any contraindications, for example due to mental disability. The contact is transmitted by a person who has already received it, and thus a certain

transmission of influence. The practice of latihan does not require any purposeful thoughts, desires or efforts. It is an act of the will, performed purely by intention. Intention in turn requires allegiance to the "Dharma", that is, to the objective Truth.

In 1962 I concluded that latihan was too limited in its effects to become a full-fledged way of life. I confirmed this conclusion by observing those who practiced it enthusiastically and with conviction. Over time, their own field of vision narrowed considerably as their attachment grew stronger. Thus Subud was transformed into another cult, similar to the Muslim sect. However, I was not interested in the dogma, but in the method itself. As a method, latihan works successfully, albeit in a very specific way, opening the channel between the outer and inner parts of one's "I". This can take, at most, one to two years. In fact, I think that six to ten months would be enough, after which the method ceases to produce results and eventually begins to harm. I would recommend latihan especially to those who are overloaded with intellectual work and are emotionally closed.

Another trend that I followed with great interest was Transcendental Meditation, which was brought to the West by the yogi Maharishi Mahesh. I first met him in 1959, but I was so fascinated by Subud at the time that I didn't dare to practice this meditation. Many of my own students started practicing it and I saw its clear benefits, especially for nervous, hyperactive and impatient people. They became calm and managed their daily activities much better than before. In addition, the health benefits were also obvious.

Finally, I decided to take the initiative myself and practiced Maharishi meditation as part of my discipline. This meditation involves a mantra that is silently repeated in the chest, similar to the way Russian Orthodox monks recite a prayer of the heart. The condition of initiation is a promise not to reveal the mantra. It should be noted that the Transcendental Meditation method is much gentler and more controlled than Subud. It is well known throughout the world and is a natural and effective way to reduce psychological tension and awaken a connection with the reality of the spiritual world. Its value is recognized even by those who, due to their religious beliefs, were skeptical of this method. In addition, one of the attractive features of Transcendental Meditation is that it can be practiced alone or in groups and does not require much preparation.

For all these reasons, the method spread quite quickly.

However, Transcendental Meditation is a rather limited practice, as it does not touch all parts of human nature. In particular, I have not seen any signs of its practitioners strengthening their will and increasing their awareness. However, this type of meditation has a great

value in the modern world. We are too organized, too stressed, and catastrophically lacking in faith. Very few can submit to the strict demands of total transformation. At the same time, millions of people feel that they lack spiritual work to do. In this sense, Transcendental Meditation is quite suitable. Its first results are manifested in physiological changes. Maharishi himself calls it a reorganization of the nervous system. **This definition is remarkable in that it emphasizes the unity of human existence: the depths of our being lie within the nervous system.** Human reality is one and indivisible. Conversations with the Maharishi, whom I greatly respect, have shown me how well he understands the differences between the natural and spiritual aspects of human existence.

If we talk about Subudha and Transcendental Meditation as natural methods for preparing for spiritual work, then what about those movements that **openly proclaims the direct influence of God himself on the human soul?** First among them is the Pentecostal religion, which is spreading very rapidly throughout the world. Having directly and firsthand experienced the inner workings of this and similar movements and having analyzed them, I have come to the conclusion that there is, although not intentional, partial self-deception at work here. Spiritual action is born "outside the mind" and it is very difficult to understand from what level it comes. Most often, people do not think that spiritual action comes from *supramental* level, or attributes it to a much higher level than it may actually be. Almost all spiritual actions arise from our own superpersonal structures. Only occasionally or even unintentionally does a person become affected by a higher level spiritual force. Man is usually unable to endure direct Divine action.

The consequence of not understanding these things is that people begin to sincerely and honestly elevate some teacher, movement or method to an inappropriate status. This situation leads to many conflicts. In addition, excessive hope is replaced by unfounded pessimism and even rejection of previous views. Spiritual people gain a reputation as unreliable and out of touch with reality. This is especially troubling in our time, when humanity is experiencing an unprecedented need for spiritual guidance and help.

All that has been said so far gives us an incentive to study spiritual psychology, but there is no guarantee that our research will yield reliable and effective results. Only material recurring phenomena encourage regular scientific research. Every spiritual activity is unique, and when it is born at a high level, it is impossible to predict or repeat it. This circumstance must be well understood by anyone who undertakes the study of man. Failure to understand this leads to a lot of fruitless "research" of mental and spiritual phenomena.

To understand spiritual actions, it is necessary to develop the ability to discover and feel them within oneself. Observing such an action from the inside, we find that it obeys certain laws of gravity or entropy. At the same time, from the outside, it seems artificial and irrational. However, this does not mean that the human mind is completely powerless against spiritual action. We could gain more understanding by arming ourselves with the right method and learning to conduct experiments without expecting reliable results. The purpose of this book is not to teach the reader anything. I am simply trying to help you learn from my experience by conducting your own experiments.

For more than fifty years, I have observed the work of spiritual teachers in many countries and have concluded that several main directions of action can be distinguished.

1 Short meeting. In India it is called Darshan. People considered saints or sages usually allow visitors to share their company for a few minutes, and sometimes they allow them to stay for hours or days. Sometimes you can achieve amazing results this way. **Many people claim that their lives were completely transformed after one short visit to Sri Ramana Maharishi of Thiruvananthapuram..** My life underwent a complete revolution after an evening spent with Gurdjieff in October 1920. The effect can be unexpected as a result of a single look or a touch. Moreover, one answer to a question asked can determine everything. But the results of such actions are very rarely truly powerful and lasting. Most pilgrims, having visited a saint or a sage, feel strengthened and encouraged, but their lives remain the same.

2. An organization with its own set of ideas and a certain number of followers. The influence is usually from some religious or non-religious ritual. Many people are drawn to organizations that claim to transmit grace, or as the Sufis call it, barakah, influence. Such activities go beyond the bounds of conventional teaching or discipline. It requires faith in those who transmit and those who receive. While the reality of this influence cannot be denied, **he lacks the inner potential to transform people. We have to work on ourselves, and for that we need the help of other people..** Most often, such organizations are unable to meet the relevant requirements and provide the necessary help. This circumstance, combined with the general decline of faith, is the main reason why churches and other religious organizations are unattractive today for those seeking guidance and help.

3. Activities are associated with priests, gurus, sheikhs and spiritual leaders. They have knowledge that most other people do not have due to their laziness or lack of access to it. Teachers communicate with both individual students and groups. In this

in case **A close bond between student and teacher is only established when the teacher does not burden himself with a large group.** Most often, teachers are not diligent in their work, and students in such groups do not move away from the followers of organized religions. In a sense, especially in terms of grace, they may even be in an inferior position. Outwardly, the "personality" of the teacher replaces the "barrack", the source of which is beyond the human. Sooner or later, the unevenness of the source becomes obvious, and the student is left with nothing. It is very difficult to find a teacher today. I am often asked how to recognize a real teacher. First of all, you should never make hasty decisions. If you feel that "this is what I was looking for, that he is my teacher", wait and check the correctness of your conclusions. If your feeling was correct, you will not leave yours. In addition, it is necessary to remember that the first sign of a teacher is the absence of selfish motives. Anyone who seeks personal gain, whether it be money or power, has no right to "climb the throne of leadership". Of course, a teacher must have theoretical and practical knowledge, but this alone is not enough. He must know himself so well and be so humble that the higher energies can pass through him practically without hindrance. All this can be judged by his disciples. A true teacher does not tie his disciples to himself, he allows the energies to act directly on them, and he himself remains aloof. A false teacher keeps his disciples subordinate to himself.

4. There is a so-called "Fourth Way", the main goal of which is to work for the benefit of humanity. Here, teaching is secondary, and one could even say that there are no teachers on this path. At the same time, the Fourth Path is very demanding in its requirements for those who enter it. They can be expressed in the words: **Service, Sacrifice, Understanding** This is my interpretation of Gurdjieff's formula: "Conscious work and purposeful suffering." **A true Fourth Way school must maintain a connection with the Higher Source for strength and guidance.** Those who walk this path, **be prepared to live "in the world, but to be" not of this world". They are rarely required to look different than other people, but they have to be different.** The head of such a school must understand well the tasks that fall to him, as well as his role in the spiritual activities of his time. He must educate his students in such a way that they can first successfully participate in the activities of the school, and then, as far as they are able, begin their activities in the Fourth Way. As far as I know, the term "Fourth Way" was first proposed by Gurdjieff, who indicated the tradition of non-organizational service to humanity, as well as the methods associated with it. According to Gurdjieff, the Fourth Way balances between concentration and expansion, depending on the needs of the world. The history of mankind reveals to us a very slow evolution, proceeding according to cycles of varying duration. /.../

. . . at the age of seventy-four I founded a school at Sherborne, where I now write this preface. The object of my work should not cause any particular confusion. The world needs trained men, capable of acting on their own initiative, capable of working and suffering consciously. In this connection I have decided to put all that I have learned, **to pass it on to those who are able to receive it.**

This book describes an experiment I did at Coombe Springs, which was very helpful in my preparation for Sherborne. The method has proven to be quite successful not only at Sherborne, but also for those people who are forced to work independently.

Before moving from the preface to the main part of the book, I would like to show the significance of spiritual psychology for the fate of all humanity. Question **"Why does man exist?"**, which Kant considered meaningless, becomes for us, on the contrary, the central question. Gurdjieff formulated it as follows: **"What is the meaning and purpose of life on Earth, and especially human life? It is strange that we do not consider this question the most important of all questions. If we see some unknown complex mechanism or device, we certainly want to know what it is and what it is for. The same can be said about everything that man creates.** Life on Earth is the most beautiful and complex mechanism. However, for some reason we no longer believe that someone had to "create" it, not only because we are convinced of the obvious fallacy of such an opinion in Kant's reasoning, but rather because of its groundlessness and worthlessness, which can be judged from the works of Darwin. This is probably the reason why the question "What is the meaning of everything that exists" remains in the center of our attention, even if we no longer ask "Why did God create life on Earth in general and man in particular?"

By denying the existence of a meaning and purpose in life, we return to the path of existentialism. By claiming that the meaning and purpose of our life is to survive and enjoy life, we distance ourselves from the rest of nature, which we are actively destroying today by polluting the environment and depleting its resources. Although we may disagree with the ethological point of view, according to which man is an animal in the full sense of the word, we can no longer deny the unity of nature. Life on Earth is a single and indivisible whole, and if one part of it suffers, all the others suffer too.

We look at the situation through human glasses and are only interested in human survival, well-being and progress. Some people even suggest that with the development of space technology we will one day leave this abandoned and uninhabited planet and recreate human civilization in another solar system. Such an unconditional denial of human responsibility towards Mother Earth should seem to us like a terrible blasphemy, but it does not happen, because the true concept of reality is beyond our comprehension.

It does not occur to us that Nature does not exist to serve us, but, on the contrary, that we exist to serve Nature.

Gurdjieff's great discovery (message or revelation, if you will) was the Law of Mutual Support. He formulated it as follows: "Every form of existence is supported by other forms, and in turn must support the existence of other forms. We cannot ignore this law, and therefore our life must serve as a support for the existence of another form." The Law of Mutual Support certainly applies to our Solar System. Thus, the existence of life on Earth is ensured by the energy of the Sun, as well as by the atmosphere, oceans, and the earth's crust. The plant form of life, by converting carbon dioxide into oxygen, ensures its own existence and the existence of all other forms of life. Ecological studies have shown how closely interconnected and interdependent all forms of life on Earth are. Our task is to generate the energy necessary for the evolution of conscious life on Earth and in the Solar System, including the Moon. This is what the famous saying means: "Man exists in order to feed the Moon."

It is quite difficult to explain what this means. It is necessary to understand that there is an Intelligence of a higher order than man, responsible for the order of existence, as well as for the progress of the Earth and Solar System. Gurdjieff called them "holy persons," for whom I use the Greek term "demiurges," denoting the forces that maintain the world in proper order. In order to do their work, these forces need a certain energy, which man can generate through conscious effort. Everything that exists generates such energies, but vegetation and animals do it unconsciously and automatically. Man differs from them in his ability to do this through conscious and intelligent actions. This is possible because of our spiritual nature. By using it correctly, we not only fulfill our duty to nature, but also transform our own being. This "right use" Shivapuri Baba called Shvadharmā, Pak Subuh

- Susila Buddhi Dharma, and Gurdjieff -**To Be-PartkDolg-Duty*****, meaning "conscious activity and deliberate suffering." It is also "death and resurrection" in the Christian tradition.

All teachings and all religions claim that certain actions are required of a person in this life, but none of them has yet explained why and for what purpose. Gurdjieff offered a very old answer to this question, originating even from Zarathustra, but at the same time very relevant in the sense that it touches on all the problems that concern man today. The preservation of our planet is a sacred duty, and the reward is a better future for our descendants and our own immortal existence.

In this book I have described the first few steps on the path to Shvadharna or Being-Partkdolg-Duty. Once you understand the principles of this work and experience how it can change your life, you will get a taste of it. You will see that what is required of us is entirely possible and that it is the only way to live with dignity.

JG Bennett

Sherborne House

April 25, 1973

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* Here, in my opinion, Bennett makes a fatal mistake: to identify spirit with matter is simply frivolous. These are esoteric reasonings or mind games; and in these games all spiritual theorists "drown". What they create *people*, is not from God...That's why they create trouble for themselves.

* * Thus I marked the places where Bennett clearly deviates "into the arcs". Not only Bennett, not only Gurdjieff, but also many other researchers and even modern quantum physicists - to my great surprise, did not see that this connecting "structure" between spirit and matter is Light-Spirit (these concepts are identical, because this follows from the Teaching of Jesus Christ). Having no arguments to justify the unity of ALL, a holistic view of the Universe, Bennett even descends into materialism or, having recognized "**the existence of a "very specific structure" that combines spirit and matter**", Bennett falls into the pit of dualism...Celestina's note).

* * It is difficult to rationally explain that strange and complex concept of Gurdjieff "**BEING-PARTKDOLG-DUTIES**", which allows a being to perceive *the real reality*, which is dedicated to "conscious work and conscious suffering." That concept is explained as follows:

"1. To perform the duty of being-Partkdolg-means that we do not allow intellectual concepts to pass through our mind mechanically; in other words, we perceive all the intellectual data that comes to mind. How do we perceive that data? This is done by meditating. So if we are reading a book, we should try to meditate on it.

"2. We must be aware of the full activity of our Emotional Center. It is a pity to see people moving on the impulse of emotions, completely mechanically, without any control. So, we must be aware of all emotions.

"3. Habits and customs of the motor center. We must be aware of all our activities, all our movements, all our habits, and not do anything mechanically.

"4. We must become masters of our instincts and tame them. We must understand them thoroughly, comprehensively."

"5. We must transmute sexual energy. We transmute our creative energies through certain alchemical procedures.

"It is obvious that our life unfolds harmoniously when we thus fulfill the Cosmic Duty or Being-Partkdolg-Duty and live in harmony with Infinity, in agreement with the Great Law. In this way we will be able to reach an ecstatic old age, we will achieve mastery and perfection." Samael Aun Weor excerpts from the false functioning of the five centers..." (One can turn one's head away from such esoteric terms, which would be very easy to replace with words - God, Spirit, Bliss, Wisdom...)