

## SEXUAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES<sup>1</sup>

By all accounts Gurdjieff was a vigorous, charismatic man with a robust sexual nature, described by biographer James Webb as “a sensual man who enjoyed the pleasures of the bed as much as those of the table.” (1) Gurdjieff's sexual conduct shocked many people in the 1920s and 1930s, especially in conservative America. There were rumours that he had a highly varied sex life and was involved in unusual sexual activities. Some claimed he was a master of exotic Tantric sexual practices learned in the East. While many of the stories surrounding Gurdjieff and sex were clearly fictitious or based on hearsay, there is a body of information on this subject gleaned from the written accounts of his pupils and research by biographers, scholars and academics that can be considered reasonably reliable.

Gurdjieff held many traditional conservative beliefs and attitudes about sexuality, probably based on his upbringing and cultural conditioning. He strongly condemned masturbation, contraception and homosexuality as affronts to the proper order of nature. At the same time he clearly possessed a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the role of sexuality in the process of spiritual transformation, and enunciated a complex model of the transmutation of sexual energy to a higher developmental level. Sometimes Gurdjieff created teaching situations which revealed to his students and others the hypnotic power of their conditioned attitudes and unconscious expression of sexuality.

Gurdjieff's personal sex life appears from all accounts to be complex and sometimes contradictory, with varied expressions throughout his life. At times he was celibate, at other periods highly sexually charged. He fathered numerous children out of wedlock, including many with his own disciples. Student John G. Bennett provides a perceptive assessment:

He spoke of women in terms that would have better suited a fanatical Muslim polygamist than a Christian: boasting that he had many children by different women, and that women were for him only means to an end. The general impression that Gurdjieff produced shocked those accustomed to regard the sex relations as sacred – even if their private behavior might be anything but sacred. Gurdjieff always showed the worst outwards and kept the best hidden. (2)

Critics have roundly condemned Gurdjieff's sexual behaviour as irresponsible and contrary to the actions of an authentic spiritual teacher. But teachers in many other spiritual traditions have engaged in exactly the same kind of sexual behaviour. (3) The notion that spiritual masters must always be celibate and beyond the “base desires of earthly sexuality” is clearly an idealized myth and not congruent with reality.

However, the issue of a sexual relationship between a spiritual teacher and his or her student(s) raises a number of important ethical questions: Is a sexual relationship

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between a teacher and student harmful or beneficial from a spiritual perspective? Is there an imbalance of power between teacher and student that compromises the authentic expression of a loving relationship between two equal partners? Is it possible to separate an intimate sexual relationship from an objective impersonal transmission of spiritual knowledge?

### **Gurdjieff's Beliefs About Sexuality**

Gurdjieff discussed sex with his pupils both in his lectures and in their private conversations. He proposed that sex was a primary energy at the root of both creative expression and the pursuit of pleasure and amusement. But it also served a higher purpose, he contended, involving inner transformation and the development of a 'soul.' He emphasized the powerful role it played in everyday life: "Sex is very important thing, like light, like air you breathe, food you eat. If you are in five parts, two of your five parts depend from sex." (4)

He believed that the primary function of sex was twofold: to ensure the continuation of the human species, and to produce a 'finer energy' to nourish higher spiritual development. (5) He regarded sexual energy as sacred and wrote in *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson* that sex "constitutes and is considered everywhere in our Great Universe for beings of all kinds of natures, as the most sacred of all sacred Divine sacraments." (6)

In talks with his Paris students in 1943, Gurdjieff discussed the nature and function of sexual energy as it relates to human beings. He spoke of three "excrements" which must be eliminated to ensure physical well-being. The first is the elimination of food and liquids, while the third is the removal of "waste accumulated in the brain." He referred to the ejaculation of the sperm during sex as the second excrement, claiming that "it is necessary for health and equilibrium of the body and certainly it is necessary in some to do it each day, in others each week, in others again every month or every six months. It is subjective." (7)

It is not necessary to mingle the acts of sex with sentiment. It is sometimes abnormal to make them coincide. The sexual act is a function. Love is love. It has no need of sex. It can be felt for a person of the same sex, for an animal even, and the sexual function is not mixed up here. Sometimes it is normal to unite them; this corresponds to one of the aspects of love. It is easier to love this way. But, at the same time, it is then difficult to remain impartial as love demands . . . The sexual act originally must have been performed only for the purpose of reproduction of the species, but little by little men have made of it a means of pleasure. It must have been a sacred act. One must know that this divine seed, the sperm, has another function, that of construction of a second body in us. Happy is he who understands the function of sex for the transformation of his being. Unhappy is he who uses it in a unilateral manner. (8)

Gurdjieff claimed that, for most people, the energy of the sex center was "robbed" by the other centers – intellectual, emotional, moving-instinctive. It is rare that the sex

center itself works with its own energy: “When sex is clearly conscious of itself and does not cover itself up by anything else it is not the mechanicalness about which I am speaking. On the contrary, sex which exists by itself and is not dependent on anything else is already a great achievement.” (9)

Gurdjieff was of the opinion that sexual energy in the modern Western world was misused in the pursuit of personal pleasure and gratification. He claimed that, in general, the only two proper ways of expending sexual energy were through a conventional sex life or through spiritual transmutation. In 1916 Gurdjieff spoke to his Russian pupils about the misdirection of sexual energy in the pursuits of everyday life and the self-deception it can entail:

Sex plays a tremendous role in maintaining the mechanicalness of life. Every thing that people do is connected with ‘sex’: politics, religion, art, the theater, music, is all ‘sex.’ Do you think people go to the theater to see some new play? That is only for the sake of appearances . . . What do you think brings people to cafés, to restaurants, to various fêtes? One thing only. *Sex*: it is the principal motive force for all mechanicalness. The evil lies in the constant self-deception. (10)

Gurdjieff told his pupils that a normal sex life is necessary for the proper functioning of the human machine. In *Gurdjieff’s Early Talks 1914-1931*, he stresses the importance of a healthy expression of sexuality:

At the beginning of work on oneself, it is necessary to turn our attention to the question of sex as being one of the main problems . . . Owing to wrong upbringing, a wrong way of living and wrong circumstances, in the case of the majority the state of affairs in this respect is very distressing and needs serious examination. In order to be able to work normally on oneself it is necessary from time to time to have normal sexual relationships. That time depends on the person, so there are no rules about this. So, for this purpose single men should from time to time go to Paris [to a prostitute]. (11)

The sex center rarely worked with its own energy, as the intellectual, emotional, instinctive and moving functions interfered and robbed it of its energy. (12) But when properly used, sex energy can play a pivotal role in spiritual development by creating and nourishing the ‘seed’ of an ‘astral body.’ “A new octave then develops within the organism, not outside it [as in conception]. This is the birth of the ‘astral body’ . . . Complete transmutation, the formation of the ‘astral body,’ is possible only in a healthy normally functioning organism.” (13)

Right work on oneself, Gurdjieff taught, begins with “the creation of a *permanent center of gravity*,” a task which is supported by the correct use of sexual energy:

The role of the sex center in creating a general equilibrium and a permanent center of gravity can be very big. According to its energy, that is to say, if it uses its own energy, the sex center stands on a level with the higher emotional center. And all the other centers are subordinate to it. Therefore, it would be

a great thing if it worked with its own energy. This alone would indicate a comparatively very high level of being. And in this case, that is, if the sex center worked with its own energy and in its own place, all other centers would work correctly in their places and with their own energies. (14)

When his students inquired about the value of celibacy in the process of spiritual transformation to create an ‘astral body’ (the ‘alchemical transmutation’ of ‘coarse’ matter into ‘fine’ matter), Gurdjieff gave a very nuanced and informed answer:

Sexual abstinence is necessary for transmutation only in certain cases, that is, for certain types of people. For others it is not at all necessary. And with yet others it comes by itself when transmutation begins. I will explain this more clearly. For certain types a long and complete sexual abstinence is necessary for transmutation to *begin*; this means in other words that without a long and complete sexual abstinence transmutation will not begin. But once it has begun abstinence is no longer necessary. In other cases, that is, with other types, transmutation can begin in a normal sexual life – and on the contrary, can begin sooner and proceed better with a very great outward expenditure of sex energy. In the third case the beginning of transmutation does not require abstinence, but, having begun, transmutation takes the whole of sexual energy and puts an end to normal sexual life or the outward expenditure of sex energy. (15)

Gurdjieff took a distinctly pragmatic approach to sex and its role in human life, insisting that sex should be separated from the intellect and the emotions: sex was sex. Gurdjieff linked sex to personal development and, as such, considered it to have a different function for each individual:

His teaching about the transformation of the sexual energy is very personal and he was emphatic that there are no general rules that can be given. In some cases he regarded abstinence as desirable, in others encouraged strong sexual activity; in some cases self-control, in others the devotion of one man and one woman to the creation of one single soul between them. In some cases, he demanded at least for a time a completely promiscuous sexual life in order to rid a man of obsession with sex . . . Gurdjieff did not wish to give any rules that people would take to be universally valid and that could lead not only to misunderstanding but even to disaster. (16)

Gurdjieff deplored the modern Western attitude toward sex and the deficiencies of the sex education of children: “When a child is four or five years old, it is the time to begin teaching about sex. Very rarely are children trained normally on this side, and we only find out what is wrong when the damage is done . . . In Asia sex education is a part of religious rites, and the results are excellent.” (17)

Many of Gurdjieff’s sexual beliefs run counter to contemporary thought and have been ridiculed by modern critics. For instance, he described masturbation (18) as a harmful affliction and an evil, and even claimed in *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson* that people were transformed into “psychopaths” by the practice. Further, he endorsed male and female circumcision as a means to prevent masturbation in youth: “This terrible

children's disease of onanism is scarcely ever found among those children upon whom this rite has been performed, whereas the children of those parents who fail to observe this custom are almost all subject to it." (19)

Gurdjieff also insisted that achieving an orgasm before reaching adulthood had serious consequences on an adolescent's mental development: "If even once the sensation of the climax of what is called the 'Oomonvanosinian process' occurs in what is called the nervous system of their children before they reach majority, they will already never have the full possibility of normal mentation when they become adults." (20)

Gurdjieff's conservative ideas also manifested in a strong homophobia. Pupil Fritz Peters relates that "he was puritanical, even a fanatic about homosexuality, and condemned it vigorously . . . he felt that homosexuality – as a career – was a dead-end street." (21) Ironically, many of Gurdjieff's female students, including his group 'The Rope,' were lesbian. It seems unlikely that Gurdjieff subscribed, in a practical way, to the belief that spiritual development was possible only with a "normal" sex life and orientation.

### **Sex, Marriage and Love**

Gurdjieff sometimes suggested that certain pupils form a sexual relationship or enter into marriage. In his memoir *Gurdjieff Remembered*, Fritz Peters recalls an illuminating conversation in which Gurdjieff examined the typical marriage and those based on a higher purpose:

He said that there was something – a kind of relationship that rarely existed in modern times – that was worthy of the term 'real marriage'; that marriage as we know it was nothing more than legal sexual intercourse, and since most people, men and women, were sexually motivated and therefore needed variety, such relationships rarely lasted and ended in divorce. He said that there were occasional exceptions to this rule – when a deeper, more valid relationship developed out of something that was purely sexual in the beginning, but that this was rare. (22)

Gurdjieff made a sharp distinction between the function of sex and the emotion of love. He avowed that the original principal purpose of sex is procreation; "The birth of children is a serious and sacred matter for which one should prepare oneself in a very special manner . . . Man must first cease to be a slave of that function before even dreaming of creating consciously." (23) In talks with his Paris students in 1943, he added more texture to this notion:

One must not mix sex with feeling. Sometimes it is abnormal to bring them together. The sexual act is a function. One can look at it as being outside of oneself, while love is interior. Love is love; it does not need sex. It may be felt for a person of the same sex, even for an animal, and the sexual function has nothing to do with it. Sometimes it is normal to bring them together; this corresponds with one of the aspects of love. It is easier to love in this way; but at the same time it is difficult to remain impartial, as love demands. But if

one considers the sexual function as being necessary medically, why would one love a remedy, a medicine? In the beginning, the sexual act was only meant to be used for the purpose of reproducing the species. But little by little, man made it a source of pleasure. It was meant to be a sacred act. (24)

In *Beelzebub's Tales* he describes conscious or real love in these terms: "The sacred being-impulse of genuine Love [is] impartial and non-egoistic love." (25) Conscious love is on a higher developmental level than ordinary love between the sexes, which is based on polarity. In the book he quotes the commandments of Ashiata Shiemash describing three levels of love:

*Love of body depends only on type and polarity.*  
*Love of feeling evokes the opposite.*  
*Love of consciousness evokes the same in response.*

The higher expressions of love, Gurdjieff asserted, are conscious, impartial and compassionate: "Once you have pity for a person who seems ill, for a child without a mother, for a person who is hungry – then, for each person you will be able to enter into their situation. You will have the taste of another quality of love." (26) In a group meeting with his French pupils in 1943 he compared physical love with the higher forms of objective love:

Real love is the basis of all, the foundation, the Source. The religions have perverted and deformed love. It was by love that Jesus performed miracles, by real love joined with magnetism. All accumulated vibrations create a current. This current brings the force of love. Real love is a cosmic force which goes through us. If we crystallize it, it becomes a power, the greatest power in the world. For the experience of conscious love polarity is an obstacle, naturally. But you can't do anything about it. You are a slave to that law. Sometimes you want, sometimes you don't want. Your body decides whether you love or you don't love. Consciously you can liberate yourself from this law of polarity. But beforehand you must have had a taste of real love. All I can say, meanwhile, is that love exists, objective love. (27)

### **Gurdjieff's Sexual Behaviour**

Gurdjieff was keenly interested in people's sexuality and how it manifested in different personality types. Students report how he was able to describe in accurate detail, and often in salacious and highly entertaining terms, the sex lives and sexual history of some of his followers or the people who came to him for advice. Fritz Peters captures the perspicacity of Gurdjieff's observations:

It seemed to amuse Gurdjieff to describe, always in accurate detail, the sex lives or the sexual history of some of the people who came to him for advice. He said that since sex, by its nature, only permitted a rather limited repertory, it was simple to deduce the particular form of satisfaction which were attractive to certain natures or temperaments. The descriptions were invariably vulgar and often amusing. (28)

Gurdjieff often took advantage of the sexual preoccupations of people to provide a teaching lesson. In 1933, Gurdjieff invited a number of influential New York writers and journalists to a party. Fritz Peters was able to observe first-hand Gurdjieff's striking demonstration of the role of sex in human behaviour:

During the dinner party Gurdjieff subtly switched roles from that of the perfect host to that of satyr . . . The result was the beginning of an orgy. Gurdjieff eventually stopped proceedings by ridiculing his guests and directing them to see from their conduct what they really were. He told them that, as this was an important lesson, he deserved to be paid; and according to Peters collected several thousand dollars. (29)

Gurdjieff's use of the power of sex as a teaching tool also had a light-hearted side, as some of his female students discovered. According to John G. Bennett, he would sometimes encourage young women to visit him late at night, implying that a "special kind of experience" awaited them. When they arrived, their expectations were usually exposed and dashed:

Sometimes young women would come to Paris to visit him. He would flirt outrageously with them, and invite them to come back to the flat late at night when everyone had gone. Often thinking that this was some kind of mysterious test, or just frankly curious, they would go. In all cases that I heard of, Gurdjieff would open the door, look astonished and say: "Why you come now?" give them a handful of sweets and send them away. (30)

Bennett has been accused of rationalizing these encounters with female followers, implying that they were light-hearted flirtations with no serious consequences for the women involved: "There were great numbers of women pupils who aspired to a closer relationship. The story was always going about that Gurdjieff was seducing almost every woman that came to him and he himself lent colour to this . . . It seems that those who were discreet and who understood that by going to visit Gurdjieff they were not receiving any high spiritual benefit but simply a sexual occasion, were able to stay with him and have a relationship." (31)

Biographer Roger Lipsey presents a counter-argument to Bennett's assessment of Gurdjieff's nocturnal interactions with women, noting the imbalance of power between the two participants: "Bennett's conclusion is disingenuous: it doesn't typically work that way between powerful older men and young women. Even after allowance is somewhat blindly made for differences between Caucasian and French sexual mores in Gurdjieff's lifetime and sexual mores today, there is something to face there. What are we to say? Perhaps nothing more than what Solita Solano said in 1935: 'If he could have a weakness, I'd say it was for women'." (32)

But not all female followers were treated to a gentle rebuke. In 1937, Gurdjieff's biological son Nikolai de Stjernvall served as his personal attendant and offers, in his

book *My Dear Father Gurdjieff*, a first-person account of Gurdjieff's nocturnal adventures at that particular time in his life:

In the beginning, my sleep was troubled by the murmurs or the giggles of women who took part in the almost nightly parties which G.I. seemed to appreciate so much as any connoisseur of nocturnal pleasures. His sexual potency astounded me. Apropos, about once a week I would cross paths in the apartment with a certain Olga, who had a sly and furtive look, and was obviously the recruiter of pretty young girls. In the salon, as I retired graciously from the scene behind my screen, I would catch a sight of the attractive faces, tableaux vivants in the process of being prepared for the evening. More and more bothered and at the end of my patience, I took Gurdjieff aside one day before his afternoon nap and told him without equivocation that I would prefer to spend my nights anywhere else than Rue Colonels-Renard. At first he gave me a look of irritation but then the lines of his face relaxed almost immediately into a smile of affability. We had perfectly understood one another. (33)

The most reliable information about Gurdjieff's sexuality is provided by Bennett, who conducted extensive research on almost all aspects of his life:

His sexual life was strange in its unpredictability. At certain times he led a strict, almost ascetic life, having no relation with women at all. At other times, his sex life seemed to go wild and it must be said that his unbridled periods were more frequent than the ascetic. At times, he had sexual relationships not only with almost any woman who happened to come within the sphere of his influence, but also with his own pupils. Quite a number of his women pupils bore him children and some of them remained closely connected with him all their lives. Others were just as close to him, as far as one could tell without a sexual relationship. (34)

A great many stories and pieces of gossip about Gurdjieff's reputed sexual activities surfaced over the years. While many of the claims were exaggerated, there is no doubt that Gurdjieff fathered a number of children. Gurdjieff did not believe in contraceptives and one result of his sexual behaviour was the birth of more than a half dozen children by various women, many of them his own students. (35) A member of a New York group wrote in the 1930s: "His women followers obviously adored him, and some of those who had found favor in his sight had visible mementos: swarthy and liquid-eyed children." (36)

John G. Bennett comments on the effect that Gurdjieff's sexual liaisons with some of his female pupils had on their teacher-student relationship: "There was a tendency on the part of some of the women to convey the impression that only women could really understand him and only those women who had slept with him were really initiated into his work." (37) Although for some women the Work and sexual relationship were inseparable, for most female followers this was not the case. In the words of Bennett, Gurdjieff could be "all things to all women."



The fact that Gurdjieff was sexually involved with pupils raises ethical issues and challenges our notions of the teacher-student relationship. James Webb examines some of the implications of Gurdjieff's behaviour in terms of his use and misuse of power:

There is no doubt at all that Gurdjieff had sexual relations with many of his pupils. The important questions are: under what conditions did these relationships take place and what was the effect of Gurdjieff's promiscuity on the women who became his sexual partners? If Gurdjieff merely used the power of his position to persuade girls to sleep with him, is this a serious offense? . . . But failure to comply with Gurdjieff's plans often led to exclusion from the Work altogether. (38)

In ethical terms, many commentators argue that sex between a spiritual teacher and student is clearly inappropriate and cannot be justified under any circumstances. Others feel that a sexual relationship is permissible, but only if it is helpful to the pupil's spiritual development. Regardless of which view is adopted, there remains the more troubling issue of whether Gurdjieff, with his tremendous power and authority over his female students, was engaging in sexual relations with them consensually or with some subtle or overt element of coercion.

In his writings, especially the second and third series of *All and Everything*, Gurdjieff hints at a powerful inner conflict revolving around his sexual desires. On the one hand, there were the interiorized prohibitions inculcated during his upbringing and education recommending abstinence and sublimation of his sexual urges and, on the other hand, his natural sexual desires. Some have speculated that this early cultural conditioning created a sharply dualistic attitude and behaviour toward women and sexuality that manifested throughout his adult life.

### Commentary

Gurdjieff's sexual beliefs and personal sex life were certainly controversial and widely discussed both during and after his lifetime. But Fritz Peters sounds a cautionary note and questions many of the tales surrounding his supposed sex life: "I have heard a great many stories and a great deal of gossip about Gurdjieff's own reputed sexual practices, most of which were obviously untrue and seemed to stem from the fact that anyone who has set himself up as a leader, or who has a 'school' of an unusual nature, must also, more or less, automatically have an unusual and varied sex life." (39)

However, his numerous liaisons with female pupils and resulting offspring were easy fodder for his critics and fuel for speculative rumour by his followers. But Gurdjieff's sexual behavior raises deeper questions of power, authority, ethics, judgement and the nature of the teacher-student relationship.

Jack Kornfield's survey of the sexual behavior of a broad sample of contemporary spiritual teachers (see Note 2) provides a more universal perspective and is highly instructive: "In fact, teachers are likely to have active and complex sex lives. We have to

re-examine the myth that enlightenment implies celibacy, and that sexuality is somehow abnormal or contrary to the awakened mind.” (40) Spiritual teachers are human after all, and sexuality is a powerful natural force and integral part of life.

Sexual relationships between teachers and students can take a number of different forms. Some of the relationships are loving, conscious and freely chosen. Others, although lacking in emotional depth and commitment, are openly and harmlessly sexual. Instances of true tantric sex or the transmission of spiritual energy may also occur. But many have involved the exploitation of students, secrecy and deception, and clearly contradict the moral and ethical precepts of most spiritual traditions.

Sexual exploitation can take the form of secret affairs, sex in exchange for access to the teacher, or serving a teacher with sexual favours in the name of a “special teaching” or “initiation into tantra.” In extreme cases, sexual misconduct has led to secret harems, abuse of underage boys and girls, and even the transmission of AIDS to male and female students by a teacher who told his unsuspecting partners that his special powers would serve as protection. (41)

It is now recognized in the secular world that a sexual relationship between a person in a position of power (doctor, therapist, teacher) and a person who is dependent on them (patient, client, student) almost always involves an element of coercion and betrayal of trust. The standard code of ethics of universities and professional associations warn against “inappropriate sexual contact,” which can range from verbal sexual innuendo to a long-term sexual liaison with a student, patient or client.

Jack Kornfield spoke with a sample of largely female students who were involved in a sexual relationship with their teacher. (42) Half the students reported that the relationship had harmed their spiritual practice and their relationship with their teacher. It also undermined their feelings of self-worth and caused a great deal of pain and confusion. Many of the teachers also suffered greatly as a result of the relationship.

Female students from many spiritual traditions have admitted that they believed a sexual relationship with their teacher was part of their spiritual training and they felt privileged at having been chosen to service a teacher’s sexual needs. But many of them were also ambivalent about unresolved issues of power, authority and male hierarchy. Some students concluded that relationships between teachers and students were more about power than about sex. (43)

Gurdjieff’s sexual beliefs and behaviour are illustrative of both the complexity of human sexuality and the dynamics of a teacher-student relationship. Is it appropriate for a spiritual teacher to have a sexual relationship with a student? What are the implications on a personal and spiritual level of such a relationship? Are there consequences that cannot be foreseen and may carry long-term spiritual ramifications? These are serious, challenging questions and there are no easy answers.

## NOTES

- (1) James Webb *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Works of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky, and Their Followers* (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), p. 332.
- (2) John G. Bennett *Witness: The Autobiography of John G. Bennett* (Tucson: Omen Press, 1974), p. 258.
- (3) In a study reported in *Yoga Journal* (July/August 1985, pp. 26-28), Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield interviewed a sample of spiritual teachers from a variety of traditions about their sexuality. Almost three-quarters reported that they were sexually active while the rest were celibate. Of the teachers who were sexually active, 87% said that they had had at least one sexual relationship with one or more students. One of the most striking findings of the survey was that many spiritual teachers were no more enlightened or conscious about their sexuality than the average person. There were heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals, exhibitionists, fetishists, monogamists and polygamists. There were teachers who were celibate and happy and those who were celibate and miserable. There were teachers who were married and monogamous and those who had many clandestine affairs. Some teachers were promiscuous and hid it, others were promiscuous and open about it.
- (4) William Patrick Patterson *Ladies of the Rope* (Fairfax, California: Arete Communications, 1999), p. 265.
- (5) In talks with his Russian students, Gurdjieff described the ‘alchemical process of transmutation’ in which the energy of the sex center contributes to the creation of ‘higher bodies.’ The process is outlined in P.D. Ouspensky’s *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), pp. 255-256.
- (6) G.I. Gurdjieff *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), pp. 794-795.
- (7) William Patrick Patterson *Georgi Ivanovitch Gurdjieff: The Man, The Teaching, His Mission* (Fairfax, California: Arete Communications, 2014), p. 409.
- (8) William Patrick Patterson *Georgi Ivanovitch Gurdjieff: The Man, The Teaching, His Mission* (Fairfax, California: Arete Communications, 2014), p. 409.
- (9) P.D. Ouspensky *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), pp. 254-255.
- (10) P.D. Ouspensky *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), pp. 254-255.

- (11) G.I. Gurdjieff *Gurdjieff's Early Talks 1914-1931* (London: Book Studio, 2014), pp. 214-215.
- (12) Gurdjieff elaborated on the misuse of sexual energy in a conversation recorded by P.D. Ouspensky in 1916 (*In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), p. 257.):

Only a person who is completely normal as regards sex has any chance in the work. Any kind of 'originality,' strange tastes, strange desires, or, on the other hand, fears, constantly working 'buffers,' must be destroyed from the very beginning. Modern education and modern life create an enormous number of sexual psychopaths. They have no chance at all in the work. Speaking in general, there are only two correct ways of expending sexual energy – normal sexual life or transmutation. All inventions in this sphere are very dangerous . . . You must understand where lies the chief evil and what makes for slavery. It is not in sex itself but in the *abuse* of sex. But what the abuse of sex means is again misunderstood. People usually take this to be either excess or perversion. But these are comparatively innocent forms of abuse of sex. And it is necessary to know the human machine very well in order to grasp what abuse of sex in the real meaning of these words is. It means the wrong work of centers in relation to sex, that is, the action of the sex center through other centers, and the action of other centers through the sex center; or, to be more precise, the functioning of the sex center with energy borrowed from other centers and the functioning of the other centers with energy borrowed from the sex center.

Gurdjieff then provided some examples of the wrong work of centers in relationship to sexual energy:

Thinking center – arguing, criticizing, subjective opinions and theories, imagination about sex

Emotional center – unbalanced asceticism and abstinence, fear of sin, obsession with hell and punishment, jealousy

Moving center – preoccupation with sports, climbing mountains, wrestling, fighting, popular dancing

- (13) P.D. Ouspensky *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), pp. 255-256.
- (14) P.D. Ouspensky *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), p. 259.
- (15) P.D. Ouspensky *In Search of the Miraculous: Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), p. 256.
- (16) J.G. Bennett *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 233-234.

- (17) Ravi Ravindra *Heart without Measure: Work with Madame de Salzmann* (Halifax: Shaila Press, 1999), p. 72.
- (18) Gurdjieff considered masturbation (or ‘Moordourten’) to be very harmful, especially in males, presumably because of the loss of the seminal fluid in ejaculation. When asked by a French student whose vocation was teaching children he offered his advice. The exchange is recorded in William Patterson’s *Voices in the Dark* (Fairfax, California: Arete Communications, 2000, p.202):
- Questioner:* I have a class in which I am able to follow the pupils fairly individually. Some of the practice onanism. How can I tell them strongly not to continue?
- Gurdjieff:* There are many books in which this affliction is explained. Find these books and read them to them. You can get them together out of class and tell them that whoever lets himself do this will never be a real man, not a real husband. Read to them, and advise them to give it serious thought. Suggest and prove to them how harmful it is. If there are some who are already in the habit of it, who cannot be convinced, who can no longer be stopped, send them to me, and in two weeks I will get them over it – provided they have a fat checkbook.
- (19) G.I. Gurdjieff *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), p. 1008.
- (20) G.I. Gurdjieff *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), p. 1008.
- (21) Fritz Peters *Balanced Man: A Look at Gurdjieff Fifty Years Later* (London: Wildwood House, 1979), p. 43.
- (22) Fritz Peters *Gurdjieff Remembered* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1971), pp. 45-46.
- (23) G.I. Gurdjieff *Paris Meetings 1943* (Toronto: Dolmen Meadow Editions, 2017), p. 35.
- (24) G.I. Gurdjieff *Paris Meetings 1943* (Toronto: Dolmen Meadow Editions, 2017), p. 34.
- (25) G.I. Gurdjieff *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson: An Objectively Impartial Criticism of the Life of Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1950), pp. 357-358.
- (26) William Patrick Patterson *Voices in the Dark* (Fairfax, California: Arete Communications, 2000), p. 120.
- (27) Nicolas Tereshchenko *Mister Gurdjieff and the Fourth Way* (Austin, Texas: Kedjan Publishing, 2003), pp. 209-210.

- (28) Fritz Peters *Gurdjieff Remembered* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1971), pp. 59-60.
- (29) James Webb *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Works of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky, and Their Followers* (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), p. 419.
- (30) John G. Bennett *Witness: The Autobiography of John G. Bennett* (Tucson: Omen Press, 1974), p. 258.
- (31) J.G. Bennett *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 233.
- (32) Roger Lipsey *Gurdjieff Reconsidered: The Life, the Teachings, the Legacy* (Boulder: Shambhala, 2019), p. 287.
- (33) Nicholai de Stjernvall *My Dear Father Gurdjieff* (Dublin: Bardic Press, 2013), pp. 36-37.
- (34) J.G. Bennett *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 231-232.
- (35) Paul Beekman Taylor, whose mother Edith Taylor had a relationship with Gurdjieff that produced a child, attempted to constitute Gurdjieff's family tree through available records and personal communications. In *Gurdjieff's America* (Lighthouse Editions, 2004, pp. xiv-xv), he identified at least seven of Gurdjieff's children, six of whom could be conclusively confirmed: Svetlana (Olga Ivanovna Milalova), Nikolai (Elizaveta de Stjernval), Michel (Jeanne de Salzmann), Sophia or "Dushka" (Jessmin Howarth), Sergei (Lily Galumnian) and Eve (Edith Taylor). Each of the mothers were pupils of Gurdjieff and some were married at the time.
- (36) James Webb *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Works of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky, and Their Followers* (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), p. 332.
- (37) J.G. Bennett *Gurdjieff: Making a New World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 232.
- (38) James Webb *The Harmonious Circle: The Lives and Works of G.I. Gurdjieff, P.D. Ouspensky, and Their Followers* (Boston: Shambhala, 1987), pp. 331-332.
- (39) Fritz Peters *Gurdjieff Remembered* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1971), p. 60.
- (40) Jack Kornfield "Sex Lives of the Gurus" *Yoga Journal* July/August 1985, p. 28.
- (41) Many high profile spiritual teachers were revealed to have hidden sex lives and exploitive relationships with some of their students in published reports which surfaced in the last 30 years:

- Swami Muktananda: William Radamar “The Secret Life of Swami Muktananda” *The CoEvolution Quarterly* Winter 1983.
- Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh : James Gordon *The Golden Guru: The Strange Journey of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh* Stephen Greene Press, 1987.
- Swami Rama: Katharine Webster “The Case Against Swami Rama of the Himalayas” *Yoga Journal* November/December 1990.
- Jiddu Krishnamurti: Radha Sloss *Lives in the Shadow with J. Krishnamurti* Bloomsbury, 1991.
- Kalu Rinpoche: June Campbell *Traveller in Space: In Search of Female Identity in Tibetan Buddhism* George Braziller, 1996.
- Richard Baker: Michael Downing *Shoes Outside the Door: Desire, Devotion and Excess at the San Francisco Zen Center* Counterpoint, 2001.
- Maezumi Roshi: Anne Cushman “Under the Lens: An American Zen Community in Crisis” *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* Fall 2003.
- Chögyam Trungpa and Ozel Tendzin: Jeremy Hayward *Warrior-King of Shambhala: Remembering Chögyam Trungpa* Wisdom Publications, 2008.
- Sri Chinmoy: Jayanti Tamm *Cartwheels in a Sari: A Memoir of Growing Up Cult* Harmony Books, 2009.
- Da Free John: William Patrick Patterson *Adi Da Samraj: Realized or/and Deluded* Arete Communications, 2012.

(42) Jack Kornfield “Sex Lives of the Gurus” *Yoga Journal* July/August 1985, p. 28.

(43) Longtime Zen student Perle Besserman writes in *A New Zen for Women* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), p. 2, that:

In the name of our spiritual quest . . . we surrendered to archaic patriarchal traditions (initially without complaint) by knuckling under and becoming handmaidens, caretakers, and/or concubines to our male teachers. Throwing away all our intellectual questioning and hard-won independence, impelled by the mistaken notion that we were “killing the ego,” we bowed our heads and submitted our better judgement to the enlightened minds of our masters.