

SACRED DANCES :: A Journey to inaccessible places...
A Fourth Way Intensive - Gurdjieff Sacred Movements & much more

"For those who are ready, within the safety of the group, sharing affords the opportunity to explore whatever has come to awareness during the movements, and meditations, under the guidance of a qualified therapist."

The Fourth Way - the work

The term was coined by **George Gurdjieff** to describe his path and to differentiate it from traditional ways.

The **first** way...of the **Fakir**, involving effort in the body... (Hata Yoga)

The **second** way...of the **Monk**, involving devotion and concentration of feeling. (Bhakti - worship)

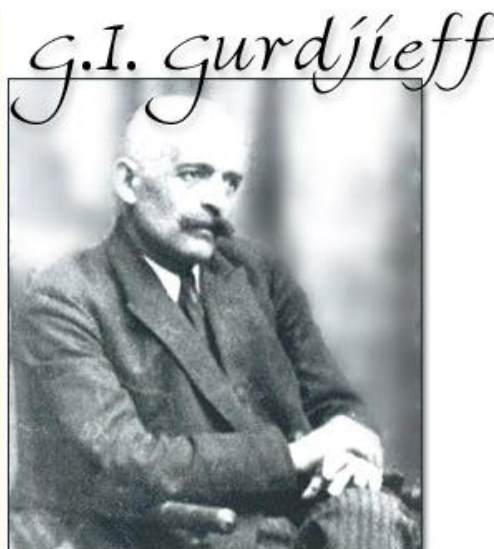
The **third** way... of the **Yogi**, involving largely mental attention...(Gyana - knowledge)

In the **fourth** way, effort is made in all three: **body, feeling, and mind**. This is harmonious development. Also, in contrast with the traditional ways, the fourth does not require separation from conditions of ordinary life. In fact, these conditions are ideal, especially in times of turmoil, for the 'awakening' process which is integral to the effectiveness of this way.

According to Gurdjieff, most of us are **sleepwalking our way through life**, automatically reacting to what happens around us, in habitual, conditioned ways.

Waking up involves "remembering ourselves." As we remember ourselves, & become more aware of our "automaticity", we learn to free ourselves from the prison of our conditioning, to live an authentic life. At the same time, to escape from prison, work with others of like mind is essential...which is why we work together, in groups.

Gurdjieff's concept of the fourth way, & techniques for transformation developed by him, were heavily influenced by his learnings in ancient Sufi monasteries in Asia. The Work... (as it is called) offers an opportunity for deep personal exploration, growth, and healing, using the methods suggested by Gurdjieff, and other Masters of the Fourth Way.



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The Work is not mystical

It does not direct your attention to that which is incapable of being understood

The Work is not a cult

We do not perform rituals and ceremonies for the sake of astounding ourselves, or to impress others.

The Work is not religious

We do not worship any mortally named enigma.

The Work is not a sect

We do not blindly or mechanically revere any human being.

The Work is not a club

It is not a collection of ordinary people held together by similar weaknesses & maladies.

The Work is not a contemporary fad

Its secret paths have been trod by a few since the dawn of the intellect.

The Work is not a popular pastime

Few feel its need, & even fewer can pay the price.

The Work is not a necessity

Life has yet to require that human beings realize their full potential.

WHAT, THEN, IS THE WORK?

It is more than all words,
less than all dreams.
It is a terror to behold,
a joy to experience.
It is the connecting threads
of a great and secret circle
Closing the gap
'twixt all and nothing'.

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Gurdjieff Sacred Dance

For those who are entering this space for the first time, some background...

"Learning to dance is learning to move consciously through life."

George Gurdjieff was an Armenian. A spiritual master and mystic, who lived on earth from 1872-1949. He set out at the age of 20, searching for the answer to the basic question, why am I here, on Earth? His search took him to ancient monasteries & temples of learning, from Egypt, across Central Asia, to Tibet & India. He discovered secret sufi brotherhoods, guarding knowledge of the truth he was seeking. He emerged, 25 years later, in Russia, & began to share the rich learnings from his travels. He escaped, during the Russian revolution, with a small caravanserai of pupils, to France, where he set up the institute for the harmonious development of man.

Among the teachings that were transmitted at this institute, were the sacred dances, movements and gymnastics. Based on The Science of Movements, these are vehicles for inner transformation. A source of living existential teaching.

One has to experience them in one's own body, to understand their impact on body-mind-emotions. They demand an extraordinary kind of attention, divided simultaneously between several different activities of the body and mind.



Each Movement's external form is 'mathematically' predetermined from beginning to end. Every posture, gesture, rhythm has its own place, duration and weight. There is minimal reliance on habit, reflex functioning and symmetry. The dancer's arms, legs and head must often conform to independent, contradictory rhythms.

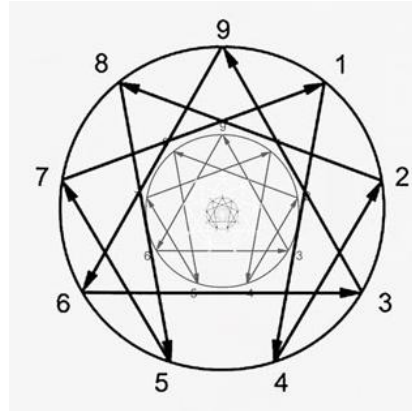
Interior exercises in sensation and counting in canon may be added, and silent or spoken prayer.

You can do all this only if you are completely centered, and present. Emotions come up strongly, and are acknowledged, and dealt with, in the present moment. The process is designed to cut through masks, & many layers of personality, to reach the essence, hidden deep within each of us.

Each dance has its own music, designed by Gurdjieff, and Russian composer, Thomas de Haartman. The strange and beautiful rhythms and melodies evoke feelings and sensations that enhance the process ...

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Gurdjieff designed many movements and dances around the Enneagram:



This 9 pointed star is an ancient Sufi symbol that was re-discovered by Gurdjieff during his search for the Sarmoung Monastery [somewhere in Asia.] This symbol represents the union of two great universal cosmic laws & is central to Gurdjieff's teachings.

The Law of Three...states that every manifestation is the resultant of three forces... Affirming, Denying, Reconciling. Affirming & Denying forces can stand in useless opposition & nothing new can emerge, but when the third force is present, an act of creation occurs.

The Law of Seven...states that when a manifestation evolves, it does so non linearly. This law explains why, when something begins, it does not continue, ad infinitum, Why a rainstorm abates, and why a grudge finally loses its venom... and why there are no straight lines in nature.

This law is very visible in the western musical scale, which is composed of unequal steps. Doh, re, mi are equi-distant, but between mi & fa, there is a half step instead of a full step. As we proceed up the scale, sol, la, si, are equi-distant, and there is a half step between si and doh. These half steps become stoppers, where the movement of energy slows down, & we need additional energy, or SHOCK, for the process to go past the block, on to its conclusion.

According to Gurdjieff, both these laws are present in all processes, from the creation of the universe, to cooking a meal, to building a house, to writing a book... It is a symbol of unity in motion.



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Akash Dharmaraj Writes about Gurdjieff and the work

" A few years ago, I wandered into the Commune in Pune - something I had resisted for 25 years - and found myself drawn to these strange movements.

Impulsively, I signed up for a 6 week intensive training.

What followed was the harrowing, quite terrifying, experience, at the age of 54, of stretching my unfit & unwilling body, to impossible limits.

I stuck on, kicking and screaming, resisting all the way, until one magical moment, a breakthrough, when I emerged completely centered, and peaceful... I then went on to explore a new reality.

I trained as an instructor, and, am now teaching anyone who wants to search for themselves, through (what one of my students calls) this little known form of torture!

We are not dancers. We are all searching for our truth, through the dances, and movements. We have all taken time out, to follow this path, while still engaging fully with life, at all levels.

This work cannot be done as a hobby, or a pastime, or an easy route to fitness and health. It requires a passionate commitment to self and to life.

We have, by no means, reached anywhere close to the standards of precision set forth by Gurdjieff. This is work in progress, and we watch ourselves, as we are, mistakes and all. The process of learning these dances is as beneficial as the actual performance. Through a series of focused movements, learned in silence, accompanied by specific music, we have a chance to become more aware of our inner dialogue. Without the distractions of conversation and the pressure of our "daily rounds," we are able to focus on our feelings, reactions, and location of pain and tension in the body.

We watch ourselves struggle, compare, judge, gloat, give up, get angry, sad, or frustrated, and, eventually, let go and accept.

Then we feel the body go through the gestures without effort, sensing the energy flow that seems to connect us all to something greater than ourselves.

Learning the movements is learning how to move consciously through life.

For those who are ready, within the safety of the group, sharing affords the opportunity to explore whatever has come to awareness during the movements, and meditations, under the guidance of a qualified therapist. "

