

**The Struggle
with Doubt
and Fear**



THE OUTWARD JOURNEY

- **Doubt**
 - Ganesha
 - The Doubting Idiot
 - Faith and Belief
 - Christ and the Centurion
 - The Struggle with Doubt
- **Fear**
 - The Great Chord of the High Emotions
 - The Root of Emotional Fear
 - Negative Imagination
 - Inner Considering
 - Death
 - Emotional Skills
 - The Transformation of Fear



GANESHA AND THE RAT

- Among the “deities” of the Hindu tradition is Ganesha, who signifies Wisdom.
- He has an elephant’s head, a rotund human body and four arms. He is also usually depicted in the company of a rat.
- The rat signifies doubt.
- The idea is that doubt is a necessary aspect of wisdom.
- If wisdom has nothing to struggle with then it cannot lead to understanding.
- Doubt is its natural partner.
- Statues of Ganesha are usually gilded.
- “Oskiano,” the word Gurdjieff uses in The Tales to describe a true education, means making gold.



To the health of all Doubting Idiots!

He is the lowest form of life. He doubts he is an Idiot. After all he sees here, he still has doubts. After twenty years he still doubts! I do not like him. I am sorry for him.

If he really doubts from sincerity and not because he thinks doubt will impress others, then with this Idiot I will drink all night.

- Gurdjieff



GURDJIEFF'S PERSPECTIVE ON DOUBT

- [Everyone is idiot, even God is idiot.]
- There are two behaviours that Gurdjieff is contrasting in his toast to the doubting idiot.
- One kind of doubt, is that of the cynic or skeptic, whose doubt a posture of personality usually associated with intellectual pride or arrogance.
- The other kind is sincere doubt - an intellectual and emotional posture with which one builds one's being.



FAITH AND BELIEF

- Belief is either:
 - a mechanical reaction of the formatory apparatus
 - or
 - an emotional attitude towards a lie.
- However, it can ascend, especially if it walks hand in hand with doubt.
- Faith is an emotional state that resides within a genuine understanding of the human condition, and in particular my personal situation.



CHRIST AND THE CENTURION



Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.”

And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.”

The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!

And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that same hour.



TO STRUGGLE WITH DOUBT

- When a doubting “I” ask it what triggered it. If it involves negative imagination, consider the opposite idea. Try to be vertical and sense your body.
- Cultivate an inner world of pondering. Think in this way: there are many ways to look at something - so I will also consider other perspectives also.
- Cultivate asking yourself questions. Make all your doubts become part of your skill in creating questions.
- Consider the idea that at our level it is impossible to see the whole truth of anything. We see through a glass darkly.
- Consider the idea that nihilism has no kingdom. It offers no place to stand.



THE GREAT CHORD OF THE HIGH EMOTIONS

The Tales p361

Faith of consciousness is freedom

Faith of feeling is weakness

Faith of body is stupidity.

Love of consciousness evokes the same in response

Love of feeling evokes the opposite

Love of body depends only on type and polarity.

Hope of consciousness is strength

Hope of feeling is slavery

Hope of body is disease.

The opposite of Faith is fear.

The opposite of Love is hate.

The opposite of Hope is despair.



INSTINCTIVE FEAR AND EMOTIONAL FEAR

- There are also two types of fear.
- The first of these is instinctive fear - fear of dangers in our environment (snakes, vehicles, drowning, extreme weather, etc.).
- It is a denying emotion rather than a negative emotion.
- Such fears are healthy, natural and inevitable.
- The second kind of fear is a true negative emotion. As such it was learned, and is not natural.



THE ROOT OF EMOTIONAL FEAR

- All emotions originate in the instinctive centre.
- In a small child centres are not divided. The negative emotions that form in a child are created from material taken from the instinctive centre. This material legitimately belongs to the instinctive centre and is wrongly borrowed from it.
- The emotional centre borrows material from the instinctive, and with the negative half of the instinctive centre and the help of imagination and identification, it creates negative emotions. This is usually driven by imitation.
- Destroying negative emotions very difficult work; but as long as they exist no development is possible.
- We are in a strange position. Positive emotions do not belong to our ordinary emotional centre but to the higher emotional centre, and negative emotions do not belong to the ordinary emotional centre but exist in an “artificial centre.” The right work of the ordinary emotional center is mundane affirmation and denial.



NEGATIVE IMAGINATION IS DRIVEN BY FEAR

- Negative imagination is the primary active force in our lives and our human world.
- Almost all news (reliable or otherwise) is either presented through the lens of negative imagination or tinged in some way with it.
- All of marketing is based on imagination rather than accurate description. The imagination varies between negative and positive.
- People's judgements of each other are largely based on negative imagination.
- Consider your behavior when you encounter a stranger. It is normally a combination of negative imagination and inner considering.



INNER CONSIDERING IS FOUNDED ON FEAR

- Our false personality has imagination about the judgement of others. We fear their disapproval and we behave in a way that we imagine will meet with their approval.
- However, because we are behaving mechanically, we have no idea what will or will not garner their approval.
- In this circumstance our only intelligent recourse is to put ourselves in their position - to represent how we might behave in their position.
- But to do this requires divided attention and this is impossible for us, when we are mechanical.



PHOBIAS AND MUNDANE FEARS

- The standard cure for phobias is exposure therapy (gradual exposure to the object of fear) - often mixed with cognitive therapy (cultivating rational reasons not to have the phobia).
- Some fears can be effectively neutered by turning to face them (the mantra is: “feel the fear and do it anyway”).
- This is the fastest and most effective technique.
- It is surprising that the fear of death is not the greatest fear man has. For example a survey suggests that fear of public speaking is slightly greater than the fear of death.



TO PROVOKE THE FEAR OF DEATH

“The sole means now for the saving of the beings of the planet Earth would be to implant again into their presences a new organ, an organ like Kundabuffer, but this time of such properties that every one of these unfortunates during the process of existence should constantly sense and be cognizant of the inevitability of his own death as well as of the death of everyone upon whom his eyes or attention rests.

“Only such a sensation and such a cognizance can now destroy the egoism completely crystallized in them that has swallowed up the whole of their Essence and also that tendency to hate others which flows from it—the tendency, namely, which engenders all those mutual relationships existing there, which serve as the chief cause of all their abnormalities unbecoming to three-brained beings and maleficent for them themselves and for the whole of the Universe.”



THE ACQUISITION OF EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- As we are we cannot command our emotions.
- And yet emotions are very necessary. They provide us with energy.
- And emotions can be used as definite instruments for acquiring knowledge - but only if you can control them. (Which means preventing identification and considering.)
- First we need to study and then we need to control.
- All emotions—fear, anger, fear, boredom—they can be reversed from our their normal manifestation.
- Fear of ignorance is useful. Fear of dying before I have perfected myself is useful. Fear of the consequences of mechanicality is useful. Fear of the deadly sins is useful.
- Using emotions in this way we become closer to seeing the world in a balanced way.



THE TRANSFORMATION OF FEAR

- We are afraid of our nothingness and we hide from it. Emotional transformation begins with the acceptance and ultimately realization of our nothingness.
- If we are nothing then there is nowhere that fear can attach. We can be impartial to fear because it carries no threat.
- From this we can contemplate the nature of Christ and the remarkable transformation of negativity (the negativity of the whole world) that he achieved.
- In my view, this requires faith. Only one of the twelve doubted, and he was turned around.



THE JOURNEY HOME

- **Doubt**
 - Ganesha
 - The Doubting Idiot
 - Faith and Belief
 - Christ and the Centurion
 - The Struggle with Doubt
- **Fear**
 - The Great Chord of the High Emotions
 - The Root of Emotional Fear
 - Negative Imagination
 - Inner Considering
 - Death
 - Emotional Skills
 - The Transformation of Fear



Questions?

