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Gurdjieff Internet Guide



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Gurdjieff, George Ivanovitch



Gurdjieff brought to the West a psychology and cosmology of the development of man. He started 'helping people to develop' around 1912 in Russia and continued until his death in 1949 in France.

The Last Hour of Life

Imagine, that you have only a few minutes, maybe an hour left to live; somehow you have discovered exactly when you will die. What would you do with this precious hour of your stay on Earth? Would you be able to complete all your things in this last hour, do you have a conscious idea about how to do it?

And letting go your last breath would you feel satisfaction from knowing that you have done everything possible in this life to fulfil that you are constantly present, always vibrating, always waiting, like the son is waiting for the father-sailor? In the manifested world everything has its beginning and its end. In the Real World everything is always present and one beautiful day you will be allowed to forget everything and leave the world "forever".

Freedom is worth a million times more than liberation. The free man, even in slavery, remains a master of himself. For example, if I give you something, let's say, a car, in which there is no fuel, the car cannot move. Your car needs a special fuel, but it is only you who is able to define what kind of fuel is needed and where to get it.

You have to define yourself how to digest my ideas to make them yours, so that they belong only to you. Your car cannot work on the same fuel my car is working on. I suggest you only the primary material. You have to get from it what you can use. So, more bravely, sit down at the steering wheel.

The organic life is very fragile. The planetary body can die at any moment. It is always one step from death. And if you could manage to live one more day, it is only a chance accidentally given to you by nature. If you will be able to live even one more hour, you can consider yourself to be a lucky person. From the moment of conception we are living on borrowed time.

Living in this world you have to feel death each second, so settle all your life affairs, even in your last hour. But how can anyone know exactly his last hour? For the sense of security make up your things with nature and yourself in every hour given to you, then you will never be met unprepared. The man has to be taught this starting from the school: how to breath, to eat, to move and to die right. This has to become a part of an educational programme. In this programme it is necessary to include the teaching about how to realize the presence of "I" and also how to establish consciousness.

Question: How to act if you do not feel that there is something unfinished?

Gurdjieff answered after a pause. He took a deep breath and replied:

Ask yourself who will be in difficulty if you die like a dog. At the moment of death you have to be wholly aware of yourself and feel that you have done everything possible to use all, within your abilities, in this life which was given to you.

Now you do not know much about yourself. But with each day you dig deeper and deeper into this bag of bones and start knowing more and more details. Day by day you will be finding out what you should have done and what you have to re-do among the things you have done. A real man is one who could take from life everything that was valueble in it, and say : "And now I can die". We have to try to live your lives so that we could say any day : "Today I can die and not be sorry about anything".

Never spend fruitlessly the last hour of your life because it can become the most important hour for you. If you use it wrongly, you may be sorry about it later. This sincere excitement that you feel now can become for you a powerful source of the force that can prepare you for perfect death. Knowing that the

next hour can become the last one for you, absorb the impressions which it will bring to you as a real gourmet. When lady death will call you, be prepared, always. The master knows how to take from each tasty piece the last bit of the most valuable. Learn to be the master of your life.

When I was young I learned to prepare fragrances. I learned to extract from life its essence, its most subtle qualities. Search in everything the most valuable, learn to separate the fine from the coarse. One who has learned how to extract the essence, the most important from each moment of life, has reached a sense of quality.

He is able to do with the world something that can not be done by just anybody.

It could be that in the last moments of your life you will not have the choice where and with whom to be, but you will have a choice to decide how fully you will live them. The ability to take the valuable from life – is the same as to take from the food, air and the impressions the substances needed to build up your higher bodies. If you want to take from your life the most valuable for yourself, it has to be for the good of the higher; for yourself it is enough to leave just a little. To work on yourself for the good of others is a smart way to receive the best from life for yourself. If you will not be satisfied with the last hour of your life, you will not be happy about the whole of your life. To die means to come through something which is impossible to repeat again. To spend your precious time in nothing means to deprive yourself the opportunity to extract from life the most valuable.

In this world, to live life through, from the beginning to the end – means another aspect of the Absolute. All greatest philosophers were carefully preparing for the last hour of their life. And now I will give you the exercise to prepare for the last hour on the Earth. Try not to misinterpret any word from the given exercise.

The Exercise

Look back at the hour that has passed, as if it was the last hour for you on the earth and that you have just acknowledged that you have died. Ask yourself, were you satisfied at that hour?

And now reanimate yourself again and set up the aim for yourself. In the next hour (if you are lucky to live one more) try to extract from life a little more than you did in the last hour. Define, where and when you should have been more aware, and where you should have put more inner fire.

And now open your eyes wider, and by this I mean – open more possibilities for yourself, be a little more brave, than you were in the previous hour. Since you know that this is your last hour and you have nothing to lose, try to gain some bravery - at least now. Of course, you don't have to be silly about it.

Get to know yourself better, look at your machine as if from the outside. ... Now, when you are dying, there is no sense to keep your reputation and your prestige.

And now onwards, until the real last hour, aspire with persistence to receive the most you can from life that is of value, develop your intuition. Take just a few moments each hour to watch at the hour that passed, without judgement, and then tune yourself to extracting more from the following hour.

If we look at each hour like at a separate life unit, you can try to do as much as you can to use every unit totally. Force yourself and find the way to make the next hour much more than the one before, but also be aware that you have taken care of the debts you collected till now. Increase the self-sensing and self-knowledge of yourself, and also increase the ability to master yourself, this will change the work of your machine, which is always out of your control. And these abilities can become the indication of the real changes. And it is absolutely unimportant what the machine is thinking about this.

...To live the rest of your life rehearsing your death hour by hour – is not at all pathological. None can receive more from life than the cancer patient, who knows approximately when he will die. And since he already recognized how he wishes to spend the rest of his life, he will not have to make the total change in

it, but he will be able to go somewhere, where he always wished to go, but would not do it in other circumstances.

The man who knows that he will die soon, will try to use to the maximum every hour of the rest of his life. This is exactly what Christ meant when he said that the last days will come soon – the days before the Last Judgement. We are all standing in front of the Judge, but it is not the others who are judging us, but we ourselves do the last estimation of our life. We do not have to fail the most important examination, where the most serious judge is ourself.

Each moment, taken alone, represents the particle of the eternal Creation. Therefore each moment we can extract the most subtle substances, that we can call "the essence of life".

Imagine yourself the substance "air" or the substance "impressions". Finally, draw in your mind the substance "moment". Yes, even the moments of time are the substances.

If we will be able to extract the finest substances from the coarser, sooner or later we will have to pay for it. This law is called The Law of Balance. That is why we will learn how to pay immediately for those what we receive from life. Only then we will not have any debts. To pay immediately – this is what is called "real doing". "To do" – is to think, to feel, to act, but "real doing" – is to pay immediately.

To do – may mean only one thing: to extract the essence from each moment of life and at the same moment to pay all the debts to the nature and yourself; but only when you have "I", you can pay immediately.

Real life is not a change of activity, but a change of the quality of the activity. Destiny – is destiny. Each one of us has to find himself in the whole order of things. It is not too late yet to start doing it now, although you have spent the greater part of your life in sleep. Starting from today you can begin to prepare yourself for death and, at the same time, to increase the quality of your living. But do not delay with the start – maybe you really only have just one more hour of life.

Question: Can we share this with others? I think it is very important what we have heard about this evening.

- You can retell it word by word, but until you will not do this for yourself, it would mean nothing for others. Existence is the means, or the instrument, for action. Think about this and you will find out why it is so.

Question: Therefore, we cannot pay the debts, if we do not exist, or if our "I" is absent?

- Why do you have such a need to pay? Pay for what? If life is only a coincidence, then there is no sense to go on. This does not mean that you have to end your life with a suicide. Opposite, you have to put all your effort into 'to live'. Ordinary man always lives, just going with the flow. He is not just sleeping, he is absolutely dead. To really live, it is necessary to support the efforts of nature, to take actively from life, and not to act passively – wherever it flows.

Extracting from life the most precious, you have to be able to operate your emotions. See how fairly you can estimate yourself. Look attentively at yourself and you will see many remarkable ways to be fair. Each time notice for yourself different moments when the desires appear. Act as before, but always be aware of their presence. Transport to the world the part of your blood, but one of the higher level.

At the end of each hour after you have estimated its usefulness, imagine that you just woke up in the absolutely unknown in comparison to the previous one gone by. It is important to note that the apparent continuation of the last hour is in reality changing with every hour, although things and people seem the same as before. With the time you will learn to see yourself as a spirit of a special substance, who is coming from one world to another, as an uninvited guest of nature.

Looking from this point of view evaluate everything you do in your life. Looking

at the results of all your efforts of the past and think what sense they all have now, in the last hour of your life. Those who are engaged in the Work, are dead to this world and at the same time they are more alive in this world than anyone else. Work... something strange, imperceptible, but for many it is impossible to live without it.

The ordinary way of understanding life is vanity of vanities. However big the result is according to earthly measures, sooner or later it will fail. Even the sand is being rubbed into dust by time. Even the most significant people of history are being forgotten. To understand the real possibilities of this world, it is necessary to find what we can reach in this world that will be very useful in the Real World.

Attentively look at the lives of all the greatest people, those who were commanding armies, who had power over others. What is the benefit for them from all their great actions now, when they are dead? Even when they were alive, all these great actions were no more than empty dreams. We are not here to praise ourselves and to prove ourselves, the most disgusting in the ordinary man is the ability to quickly satisfy his flesh.

The majority of people find many excuses not to work on themselves. They are in a complete prison of their weaknesses. But right now we do not speak about them, but about you.

Understand me right, I do not need followers, I am rather interested in finding the good organizers, the real warriors of the new world. I understand the weakness of the organization, because right now we do not speak about the usual organisation which would consist of initiates.

I remind you once again, learn to live each of your hours with a bigger benefit. Create a detailed plan of the last hour of your life. To understand how one should die, you should grow deep roots into life, only then you will be able to die like a human being, not like a dog. Although, it is not given to everyone - to die. You can become manure for our planet, but it does not really mean to die. To die to this world forever - is an honour. For this honour you have to pay with Conscious Labour and Intentional Suffering. You have to earn this right.

Try to imagine yourself relatively clearly the last hour of your life on earth. Write a kind of a script of this last hour, as if you were writing the script for a film. Ask yourself: "Is this how I want to dispose my life" . If you are not satisfied with the answer, rewrite the script until you like it.

Look at life like at business. Time is your money for life . When you came into this world, a definite amount of money was given to you and this you cannot exceed. Time is the only currency with which you pay for your life. Now you see, how you used the biggest part of it in a stupid way. You have not even reached the main goal of life – to have rest. You failed as a businessman, and as a user of life – you deceived yourself. All your life you thought that everything is given to you for free, and now suddenly you discovered that – it is not free. You pay for using the time, that is why each moment of your stay here costs something.

So how would it be possible for you to reimburse at least somehow these losses? Check, if the deficit on your bank account is only temporary or is it perhaps constant? Did you loose the time or could you invest it successfully? If you have spent all your money on vacations, then there is nothing to do but to be sorry about the past.

For many years you have been spending you life as if your parents gave you a bank account with unlimited credit. But now the amount is used and you see that you are all alone and that there is none to rely on. There is no more time on your bank account. Now you are forced to earn each hour of your life. All your life you behaved like a child and spent time just like a newly married couple on their honeymoon.

Our main enemy, which is hindering us from applying the necessary efforts – is hopelessness. I know, you will have many excuses not to prepare yourself for the last hour of your life. The habit is a big force, but starting once, you can learn to do each time more and more.

Do not fiddle all day, force yourself at least one hour a day to make an effort,

otherwise you will loose everything. Think about the rehearsal of your last hour as if it was ballet exercises – you have to do it all your life.

I dedicate four hours a day for this exercise, but when I was young, I spent on it two times longer.

Translation from Russian by Alexandra Kharitonova, with free English rendering by Reijo Oksanen - unearthed by Ilya Kotz & Avi Solomon of the Jerusalem Nyland Group

Comments

THE LAST HOUR OF LIFE

Sirs,

I read this text with great interest. I find it very mouving and enlighting

The "taste" sound from M.Gurdjieff but coul you give me some information on its origin

It is mentioned in the article "translated from the russian..." but yet is it a group repport and when did it take place.

Thank you very much if you could give me some more specific details.

Sincerely

david

DAVID RIBEIRO, France

ribeiroduy@free.fr

added 2004-08-05

Origin of the Last Hour

On the article the origin is said to be a book: "Conversations about the secret. From the archives Of g.I.Gyurdzhiyeva". I don't know this book.

The text itself looks very much like Gurdjieff-origin. I am sure someone knows more.

Whatever the origin, even if not from Gurdjieff himself, I would like to ask: what would it change if you knew?

Reijo, Switzerland

added 2004-08-06

origin of Last Hour

regardless of its origin, the content of the article inspires me and i appreciate it being published. thank you.

glenn sharron, United States

mediawks@polaris.net

added 2004-08-07

The Last Hour Of Life

It's interesting to note my reactions and those of others who have posted thoughts regarding this article. We share feelings of the importance of the subject; questions about its authorship, authenticity, and sources. I, for one, sense that, as interesting as they are, these are not the words of Gurdjieff. But really it doesn't matter. For me to argue for or against the authenticity of this article reveals my own tendency to form conclusions and will polarize my readers in one way or another. Really, what, in my view, matters most, is the need to be clear about the idea of levels of consciousness, so that we continually see our failure and misunderstanding in trying 'to do'; that is, to change our state, to improve our functioning. What matters is the birth of an authentic question about who and what I am, an active seeing that connects all my centers, is without words, ideas, or manipulations. In other words, seeing from an altogether different level, beyond my education in the Work ideas, beyond my efforts at exercises and the results I grasp for. So as I read with interest these various writings, watching my mind associate, my feelings judge, my body fidget inattentively, I also sense from deep inside a call to receive a 'look from above', a look that alone can influence my functioning and qualify as the beginning of the development of Being.

Brian Shiers, United States

2rivers@sbcglobal.net

added 2004-08-09

The authenticity question

You ask the question:

"Whatever the origin, even if not from Gurdjieff himself, I would like to ask: what would it change if you knew?"

My response would be: "Everything".

I would suggest posting texts purporting to be by G without scrupulous authentication serves no one and nothing.

Chris Dickman, France

added 2004-08-10

Does it matter?

Dear Chris,

We found the original russian text here:

http://www.lib.ru/URIKOVA/GURDZHIEW/r_last.txt

Ideally we would also like to know the origin of the text and its history! Maybe you can research & follow the leads to the 'horse's mouth'?

For me in the end what matters is the effect such texts have on me- I trust my inner compass enough to guide me through the minefield of attribution and find the jewel of truth.

Maybe you should read the Dalai Lama's book 'Advice on Dying'- it has the same truth but in 'authenticated' form:)

Best Wishes,

Avi

Avi Solomon, Israel

avisolo@yahoo.com

added 2004-08-10

Authentic or fraudulent?

If this is an authentic report of a talk by Mr. Gurdjieff, then why hide its source. Who kept it hidden for 55 years? Tell us who it is, I say. All around the world today, there are people who are profiting from the crumbs they picked up at Mr. Gurdjieff's "ideas table." Is this another example. Yes, the text has the tone and sound of authenticity, but

that does not mean it is really from Mr. Gurdjieff. I could write a "talk" by Mr. Gurdjieff and most readers could not tell whether it came from him or not. And if they are gullible, they will believe it is the real thing.

I am just very, very, very suspicious of something that suddenly appears after more than a half-century, something that is touted as being authentic, and yet the person who kept it secret all these years will not reveal his or her identity. Bah!

Dwight Ragle, United States

[dmrage@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmragle@sbcglobal.net)

added 2004-08-10

It does not have the right tone

My comment, above, (complete with errors!) was written before I really studied this article. Now I have read it thoroughly. It appears to me to be a fraud. Many sentences are meaningless. I have many verbatim meeting reports of Mr. Gurdjieff's group meetings and, believe me, he never expressed himself in generalities. Nor would he have ever said something like: "Extracting from life the most precious, you have to be able to operate your emotions." That is simply laughable, as are many other statements in this article, which is an unorganized hodgepodge of unconnected and poorly expressed thoughts, most of which Mr. Gurdjieff would never have expressed. He NEVER spoke in generalities. He always gave specific, almost scientific, directions. To compare this fraud to the way Mr. Gurdjieff really taught, read the book "Views From The Real World."

Dwight Ragle, United States

[dmrage@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmragle@sbcglobal.net)

added 2004-08-10

Further Research

Dear Dwight,

-I would also like to know who 'they' are and why they 'hid' it for so long:)

-Would you be specific about who is profiting from this text?

It appeared for 'free' on the internet

-Remember that this is a translation. Have you read the original russian version here?:

http://www.lib.ru/URIKOVA/GURDZHIEW/r_last.txt

Hopefully someone who 'knows' will fill us in on the origins and history of this text!

Cheers,

Avi

Avi Solomon, Israel

avisolo@yahoo.com

added 2004-08-11

Interesting article

Yes, Mr Gurdjieff is correct, this short life should be spent on selfperfection and on pursuit of higher level of being (as best as one can).

But they who have not tasted the higher level..don't believe it's existence and therefore don't strive for it as one should and have esotericism as a mental fantasy.

I wish people had a taste of the higher it would help them dedicate their time to selfperfection and creating of higher being.

Gurdjieff is an ideal, as his life is recorded and he has being as one can sense in his writings. His better points bulldoze idiotic fantasies out of people and should reach more people.

Is article is real or fake?, who cares as long as the message has substance.

Mika Kerttunen, Sweden

added 2004-08-11

The Last Hours Of Life

When I read this version of the exercise in this newsletter I took exception to the use of the word 'aboriginal', specifically the context it was used in. I brought this up in correspondence with Reijo who has indicated to me that it has now been changed from 'aboriginal' to 'just anybody'

I quite agree with this change, as the version of this exercise I have, does not use the word 'aboriginal'. The original sentence reads " ... one who practices the art of making essence from every moment of life has special conscience. He cannot do those things a savage would do to his world."

In 1979 I aquired a copy of this exercise. It was chapter 24 of a private publication of VOLUME II of Secret Talks With G. It was published by IDHHB associated with E.J.Gold. Each chapter was an exercise (the entire practical Method for work on oneself). The last exercise was this Chapetr 24 The Last Hour Of Life.

As well, there is a book by E.J. Gold titled " Practical Work On Self " that was made available to the public in which the last chapter 24 was titled " The Last Hour Of Life ". However this public version was different in words but the gist of it was similar.

The proof is in the pudding; do the exercise and you will know if it is real; or you can simply come up with an excuse to not do it, which is much easier to do. I have been doing it for over 25 years now.

Reijo is correct when he says " What would it change if you knew ? "

For anyone who has applied the method of G.I. Gurdjieff and aquired a taste of this "some definite "something"" they will realize that the exercise is in accordance with the 'ideas' of G.I. Gurdjieff. I am quite sure he was the source, directly or indirectly.

Jerry Huget, Canada

gjhuget@shaw.ca

added 2004-08-11

The Authentic Gurdjieff

Beelzebub's concluding chord "All & Everything" 1950 "Result of Impartial Mentation" page 1183:

"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."

Reijo Oksanen, Switzerland

added 2004-08-12

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Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM Men As Learners and Elders