

Sufism

Rubaiyat

There have been attempts by Gurdjieff's followers to get in contact with the sources of his teaching and none more energetic than those of J.G. Bennett. Bennett writes about this in his book 'Gurdjieff Making a New World'. Of the places already mentioned Bennett visited Lalish (he calls it Sheik Adi, whose monument has a central place in Lalish). He also recalls that Gurdjieff had studied specially the Liturgy of St. Basil.

Some of the clues Bennett followed come directly from his talks with Gurdjieff or contacts with people who were in direct contact with him. Bennett's main conclusions relate to the Sufis and the various Dervish Orders, which he also attempted to find during his own travels. The following is just one of Bennett's findings.

Many Sufi orders are mentioned: Yesevis have, however, a special place. Bennett writes: 'Direct confirmation of Gurdjieff's connection with the Yesevis has been given from his talks with Anna Durco. When speaking of folk dances, he said that in Tashkent (which he pronounced Djashkent), there were special dances, but that further away there were very very special dances. Before one could see these one had to have a *palalikanina* which both in Sanskrit and Romany means a sponsor. There they taught the Yesevi (pronounced by Gurdjieff yiesef) dances and he had found a teacher who could teach by dancing what others taught by books. He said that only very very few people had the capacity to read the language of symbols. He then made a most significant statement - extraordinary for anyone, but strange indeed made to a child who fortunately remembered it word for word. "In one place symbol, in another technique and in another dance". This corresponds so exactly to the distribution of the Naq'shbandi, Djellali and Yesevi dervishes and shows their common affiliation to the Khwajagan by tying together threads whose connection would otherwise have been a matter of conjecture. He added that Yesevi "teach dancing same as put seed in the ground, but seed very hard, this green plant grow slow because need much time to grow, need very long time to give fruit, even much water will not help grow. Sometime this hard seed stay in the ground for a long time - when begin to grow, change everything, all landscape can change. When symbol and technique grow together then give another plant, then grow quick and for other purpose. Special dance - sacred - very few can do. When symbol, technique, dance come in one place – then dance sacred for very special purpose."

With the above statement Gurdjieff has wiped off all traces of the Sarmoung Brotherhood pretty much the same way Beelzebub could have cleaned the table just by one skillful movement of his tail!

The influence of Sufism on Gurdjieff and what he taught is strongest on the sacred dances, although other sources can be also detected and are reflected in the music. Some Sufi claims, like the origin of the Enneagram and the whole of his teaching originating from Sufism do not have any substance behind them. More likely sources for the Enneagram are the medieval mystics and some later secret societies.