

## THE RAY OF CREATION

*'The law of unity is all-embracing. Everything in the universe is One, the difference is only of scale; in the infinitely small we shall find the same laws as in the infinitely great. As above, so below.'*

*G.I. Gurdjieff*

The universe perceptible to our senses is analogous to an iceberg which is largely hidden beneath the surface of the ocean; it is only a part of a much vaster reality which includes spiritual as well as physical dimensions. "The elegance of some of the laws discovered by science is a clear indication of the existence of some directing intelligence; and this must of necessity be of a higher order than that of the world which it directs. The causes of the events of life lie in the vastly greater unmanifest world beyond the interpretations of the senses; but to understand this it is evident that a different kind of knowledge is required, derived from the much finer perceptions of the spiritual realms."

Science tells us that our senses are curiously limited in perception. There are many sounds which our ears do not detect, while our eyes respond to less than one trillionth of the vast spectrum of electromagnetic waves known to science; and there are other influences not perceived by the ordinary senses. Hence it is clear that the world we know is merely a tiny fraction of a vastly greater *unmanifest* world. This idea of an unmanifest world is of enormous importance. It is, in fact, the essential key to the mystery of the Universe. But this invisible background is not just an extension of the physical world. It is a realm containing vibrations and energies of an entirely different order from those perceived by the senses. In religious parlance it is called Heaven; but it should not be thought of as an isolated and remote state. Esoteric legend tells us that the Universe comprises a hierarchy of world-orders created by a Supreme or Absolute Intelligence as a living and evolving structure. These world-orders are not physical though some of their activities create the appearance of the material world. They should be envisioned as patterns of possibilities which are brought into being by the intelligence appropriate to that particular level. The affairs of our planet are administered by a very lowly world-order, nearly the lowest in the structure. It is, nevertheless, a highly intelligent creation of which the physical attributes perceived by the senses are a mere shadow. It is a structure which is required, in its own vast period of time, to grow in stature so that its energy may be returned to the Source. (1)

According to certain esoteric teachings, everything that exists in the universe (both physical and spiritual) issues from an unknown 'Source of All' that forms an incomprehensible Whole or One. From this perspective the physical universe that we perceive is only the outward appearance of a vast living Intelligence emanating from a Supreme or Absolute Being in a succession of stages of increasing complexity, in which each level is imbued with its own intelligence and

consciousness. This indivisible Absolute, or *Brahman* in Hinduism, is the ultimate principle underlying the world of form: "The Absolute is the primordial state or ground of Being out of which, by division and differentiation, arises all the diversity of the phenomenal world."

## Gurdjieff's Creation Myth

The mystery of the origin and nature of the universe has been a recurring source of speculation, exploration and wonderment for all peoples of all ages. G.I. Gurdjieff's contribution to this universal quest to understand the source and meaning of the cosmos is both traditional and innovative: "Gurdjieff's creation myth is wholly in keeping with traditional teachings. It is a story with continuous ideas and occasional discontinuities and sub-stories. The story resonates at times with portions of prior creation myths but has significantly different emphases at several critical junctures."

In the development of his creation myth, Gurdjieff drew on his depth of knowledge and personal experience with the Western and Eastern religious traditions. By including his understanding of modern science and the implications of its findings, he brought to his myth an appropriateness for our age that is unmatched in its power to reconcile past and present views of man's life, responsibilities and possibilities. In the Western world, the majority of us have been raised in an environment strongly influenced by Judeo-Christian teachings and by the later stages of Greek philosophical and scientific thought. In both of these sources, there is an emphasis on the creation of images of how the Universe came to be. The Eastern traditions, however, (primarily in India and China) did not explicitly explore the question of an ultimate beginning, and, in fact, developed perspectives that are opposite in a number of ways from those which emerged in the West. Gurdjieff attempted to reconcile both models while contributing his own unique ideas. (2)

The Fourth Way teaching that Gurdjieff brought to the West contained both a psychological and a cosmological component, forming two complementary expressions of a universal, comprehensive and timeless teaching of the human condition and the nature of reality: the study of one inevitably increased the knowledge and understanding of the other:

It is impossible to study a system of the universe without studying man. At the same time it is impossible to study man without studying the universe. Man is an image of the world. He was created by the same laws which created the whole of this world. By knowing and understanding himself he will know and understand the whole world, all the laws that create and govern the world. And at the same time by studying the world and the laws that govern the world he will learn and understand the laws that govern him. In this connection some laws are understood and assimilated more easily by studying the objective world, while man can only understand other laws by studying himself. The study of the world and the study of man must therefore run parallel, one helping the other. (3)

In the earlier phases of his teaching, Gurdjieff used a “scientific” terminology to present his cosmological ideas. In later years, especially in his magnum opus *Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson*, his method of communication was allegorical and mythical, and much more challenging to the reader or listener. In his writings he employed a style of language replete with numerous neologisms (invented words) and long, complicated sentence structures, demanding a high level of attention and persistence in order to unravel their hidden meaning. Instead of a straightforward presentation of ideas, Gurdjieff offered “contradictory notions, incomplete pictures and the stimulation of conflicting feelings and conclusions, forcing us to look again and more deeply into what he has said and, perhaps, metaphorically inferred.”

Creation myths, of course, are allegorical in nature rather than statements of literal truth. They are intended to bring meaning and purpose to human life by offering an intuitive, non-linear representation of reality. According to Gurdjieff, myth is the language of the ‘higher emotional center.’ “Gurdjieff’s myth expresses, in varied and provocative images, a multi-layered conception of the Universe, its laws and of the relationship between and among its levels. ‘HIS ENDLESSNESS’ is situated at the apex and is both separated and not separated from the lower levels of the Universe.”

In Gurdjieff’s cosmological teachings, as presented in *Beelzebub’s Tales*, certain neologisms were employed for the key concepts forming the core of his creation myth. These include:

- ‘ENDLESSNESS’ = The prime Source and Maintainer of everything existing in the whole of the Universe; God; Creator
- ‘Sun Absolute’ = Fundamental dwelling place of ENDLESSNESS; Protocosmos
- ‘Etherokrilno’ = Primordial cosmic substance filling the whole universe
- ‘Theomertmalogos’ = Emanations of the Sun Absolute or creative Word-God
- ‘Heropass’ = Flow of time
- ‘Trogoautoegocrat’ = Law of reciprocal maintenance; mutual exchange of energies
- ‘Triamazikamno’ = Law of 3; Trinity
- ‘Heptaparaparshinokh’ = Law of 7; Octave
- ‘Megalocosmos’ = The Universe

The essence of Gurdjieff’s creation myth is succinctly described by biographer James Moore:

In the beginning, only the Sun Absolute was physically concentrated in endless space, which was already charged with the primordial cosmic substance *Etherokrilno*. Because this nebulous *Etherokrilno* was in static equilibrium, the super-sun existed and was maintained by our Common Father, quite independently of outside stimulus, through the internal action of his laws and under the dispensation termed *Autoegocrat* (‘I keep everything under my control’). There and thus Our Father might have existed forever, but for the Merciless *Heropass* (time) . . . Immediately Our Common Father perceived time’s remorseless entropic effect – the infinitely slow but irreversible diminution in volume of his dwelling-place the Sun Absolute –

he urgently sought a remedy. Bending all of his divine will, he issued from himself the 'Word-God' *Theomertmalogos*, which reacted everywhere with the *Etherokrilno* to create our *Megalocosmos* or great universe. Henceforward this sacred and living creation was nourished by an open system of symbiosis or reciprocal maintenance, termed by Gurdjieff *Trogoautoegocrat* ('Eating myself, I am maintained'): through a vast holistic eco-system, each order of beings now produced the very energies or substances which guaranteed the survival of other groups. Such was God's amended scheme of things and time itself would not prevail against it . . . Henceforth all God's inferior creation was necessarily maintained in its new and dynamic equilibrium not by him directly, but through the mechanical action of two primary sacred laws: *Triamazikamno*, the Law of Three, and *Heptaparaparshinokh*, the Law of Seven – the former governing the causality of each isolated phenomenon; the latter governing the trajectory of every process or series of phenomena. (4)

Gurdjieff's creation myth encompasses a series of sequential stages:

### Pre-Creation

The idea of an Absolute principle existing *before* the beginning of the universe is very difficult to conceptualize in any logical or rational manner: "How to approach, in word and image, that primordial and singular state of affairs that obtained, paradoxically, before our universe came into being? In that non-moment prior to creation, lies the substrate of ALL AND EVERYTHING. This state is so elusive and difficult to comprehend that it has been approached in the past largely through poetry, mythic allegory and metaphor."

Gurdjieff spoke of THE ENDLESSNESS as a state of Oneness without any differentiation or division, serving as an embryonic womb of potentiality waiting to be fully actualized; a plenum of the infinite possibilities of manifestation. He described the three inseparable attributes of the Absolute as Divine Reason, Divine Will Power and Divine Love. In *Beelzebub's Tales* he characterized the qualities of THE ENDLESSNESS as All-Embracing, Universal, Omnipotent, Unchanging and All-Foreseeing, as well as All-Loving, Merciful and Just, and, enigmatically, as Burden-Bearing and Long-Suffering.

According to Gurdjieff, only endless empty space existed before the creation of the universe, inhabited by a *Presence* which he called "the prime-source cosmic substance *Etherokrilno*." It later filled the universe and is the basis for the arising and maintenance of everything existing. Fourth Way author Keith Buzzell proposes that the *Etherokrilno* is a substrate or supportive matrix with the infinite potential "to generate all possible forms (material *and* non-material) of our existential world."

In his creation myth the 'Holy Sun Absolute' was the dwelling-place and Being or *Amness* of THE ENDLESSNESS, from which all possibilities of manifestation and form emerge. "In the great Universe, all phenomena are simply successively law-conformable fractions of some whole phenomenon which has its prime arising on the Most Holy Sun Absolute." Before creation the

Sun Absolute was maintained by a system called *Autoegocrat*. The Sun Absolute was in a state of stability, without any influence from outside, by a principle of inner independent forces consisting of two interacting laws: the Law of 3 and the Law of 7. ENDLESSNESS modified the two laws so that the Sun Absolute would not be diminished by the flow of time (*Heropass*). In this pre-Creation state, the two fundamental principles (laws of 3 and 7), which would eventually determine the unfolding of the Universe were modified so that a closed system of forces would become an open system:

In Gurdjieff's myth of the pre-Creation circumstances, he has HIS ENDLESSNESS concluding, because of the gradual diminishment of HIS Abode (Holy Sun Absolute) caused by the Merciless Heropass, that HE must change the fundamental 'Laws' (Principles) that govern Holy Sun Absolute. The changes in these Principles reflect the Divine Reason of HIS ENDLESSNESS and they will guide the unfolding of the Creation. The Creation Itself is required for the maintenance of Holy Sun Absolute. There must be set in motion a mechanism that will maintain HIS Abode by feeding back energies that will 'replace' those forces expended from within Holy Sun Absolute in the creation of the Universe. It is also required that Divine-Love and Divine-Reason be 'reflected' or 'radiated' back to Holy Sun Absolute from created entities – to balance the outflow of these aspects of the Triune Will from within Holy Sun Absolute. The resulting balance (outward from Holy Sun Absolute and inward from the Universe) would maintain HIS Abode without diminishment. The Principles of Three and Seven are the most fundamental of all Laws in that they spell out at each level of the unfolding Universe, the conditions or circumstances under which secondary laws will operate. In an elemental way, they express Being (the Law of Three) and Becoming (the Law of Seven). (5)

### Emanation and Creation of the Universe

The initial emanation from within the Sun Absolute, following the changes to the laws of 3 and 7, was a flow or motion into empty space which subsequently created the various worlds of the universe. Keith Buzzell: "After changing the functions of the laws, God directed their action from the Sun Absolute outward into the space of the universe by an emanation of his own force known as 'Word-God,' so that in a chain of concentrations of energy, this emanation would flow back into the Absolute. Once this was accomplished, the effects in the change of the laws carried on the processes of the universe automatically and the effects of the changes in the laws continue, so that each of the concentrations in the universe operates according to the altered laws of 3 and 7."

Within each level of the Universe, the possible motions must be reconciled (as resonant phenomena), in order for that level of the Ray of Creation to persist and to remain in full relationship with higher and lower worlds. When we try to bring together the infinite plenum of all possible motions, we can gain a fleeting notion of just how *intelligent* the reconciliation must be in order to create and

maintain the existent Universe . . . The motion that initiates the Creation is a reconciliation brought about by a blending of the Will Power, Pure Reason and Divine Love. This initial act also produces the first level of cosmic phenomena, linking Holy Sun Absolute with the worlds that are about to come into being. As successive levels in the Ray of Creation appear, more aspects of the plenum of all possible motions appear, appropriate to that level and determinate of the flow of Time in that level. Behind the *potential* of both force and motion lies *potency*, which can be taken as the infinite capacity for all *conceivable* in our Universe. When Gurdjieff refers to the One Law of World One, he is referring to this incomprehensible state of blended potencies. (6)

The action of the creative Will Power of THE ENDLESSNESS is limited to the empowerment of the initial emanation (*Theomertmalogos*) and, as Gurdjieff emphasizes, "The subsequent creation went on automatically, without the direct participation of the Divine Will Power. The Laws of World-Creation and World-Maintenance never again change and ENDLESSNESS does *not* (indeed *cannot* – by His own fiat) re-enter the *Megalocosmos* with His Will Power."

Gurdjieff taught that time is relative and relational, lacking any independent existence. "Rather than a linear, incremental and measured progression that knows no limit, he has removed Time's existence as a single extension (from the past to the future) and given its conception significance in terms of 'cosmic phenomena' at each level of the Universe."

Gurdjieff described time (*Heropass*) as the "Ideally-Unique-Subjective-Phenomenon" in which the cosmic phenomena of each level of the Ray of Creation define the time of that world. For instance, there are great difference between the nature of time of the Milky Way, the Sun, the Earth, human beings and microbes. For human beings the limitations of our sensory apparatus determine our experience of time:

Human beings have quite well-defined limits to their perception of the passage of Time. We do not register a flow of Time when the cosmic phenomena are taking place at speeds or frequencies that exceed our nervous system's ability to register them. In these contemporary times, we are embedded in micro- and radio waves of photonic energies that reflect processes (cosmic phenomena) that are taking place so briefly, that we have no receptors that can register them. There are a host of processes within us that complete themselves (go through a cyclical exchange of energies and forms) which, for us, have no subjectively measurable Time. Neither do we experience a flow of Time when we consider the gradual wearing down of a mountain range (that occurs over many millions of years). Nor do we experience a flow of Time when we flip a light switch in a darkened room. We cannot experience Time passing when an electron is knocked out of its orbit by an ultraviolet photon or when the photosynthetic process is taking place in a leaf. We experience a flow of Time *only* with respect to the cosmic phenomena occurring at our level of the Ray of Creation. (7)

## Fundamental Laws of World Maintenance

Two fundamental laws or principles and one system guiding the interaction between levels of the universe determine, according to Gurdjieff, the functioning and maintenance of the universe. The first law, *Triamazikamno* (or the Law of 3), consists of three fundamental forces: Affirming, Denying and Reconciling. These three separate and independent forces manifest simultaneously in every action and phenomenon in all worlds of the universe, both small and large. In *Beelzebub's Tales* he describes this law: "The higher blends with the lower in order to actualize the middle and thus becomes either higher for the preceding lower, or lower for the succeeding higher."

The second law, *Heptaparaparshinokh* (or the law of 7), regulates process, change and transformation. It is based on the musical octave and contains two 'intervals' which change the direction of the flow of energies throughout the universe. In *Beelzebub's Tales* he describes this second law in these terms: "The line of the flow of force constantly deflecting according to law and uniting again at its end."

Gurdjieff conceived of the universe as a great whole, a vast cosmic matrix of universal interdependence where everything is in perpetual energetic movement. THE ENDLESSNESS created the *Trogoautoegocrat* process as a system to protect and maintain the existence of the Sun Absolute from the inevitable ravages of time. "It is the opening of the overall system, by interaction with other subordinate systems, which prevents its degeneration, its death, through the inevitable degradation of energy, through increasing disorder. By establishing diversity within unity, with a concomitant exchange of energies between the various levels of the universe, the continuation of the creative source of existence, the Sun Absolute, was safeguarded." Gurdjieff describes this process in *Beelzebub's Tales*:

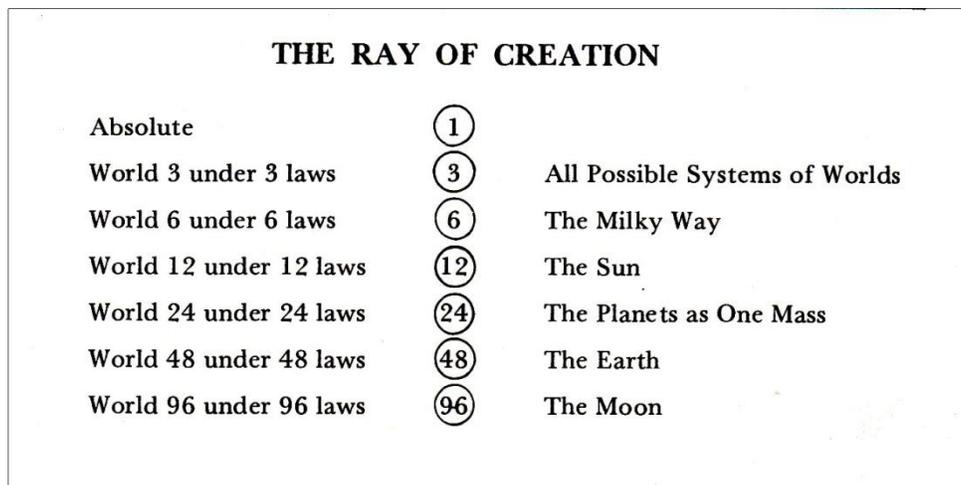
Everything in the Universe, both the intentionally created and the later automatically arisen, exists and is maintained, exclusively on the basis of what is called the common-cosmic Trogoautoegocrat process; this process was actualized by our Endless Uni-Being, when our Most Great and Most Holy Sun Absolute had already existed, on which our All-Gracious Endless Creator had and still has the chief place of His existence; this system, which maintains everything arisen and existing, was actualized by our Endless Creator in order that what is called the exchange of substances or the Reciprocal-feeding of everything that exists, might proceed in the Universe and thereby that the merciless Heropass might not have the maleficent effect on the Sun Absolute. (8)

## Model of the Ray of Creation

The Ray of Creation has been described as "a shaft of divine light, pure Consciousness, shining out from the Absolute to create the known universe in a descending octave of energy and matter." The Ray is not strictly material in form, but rather represents degrees of intelligence

descending through successive levels of manifestation. The Ray of Creation which links the earth to the Absolute is only one among many possible rays emanating from the Source of All. "Our particular ray of creation does not include the 'world' in the widest sense of the term, since the Absolute gives birth to a number, perhaps an infinite number, of different worlds, each of which begins a new and separate ray of creation."

Figure 1. The Ray of Creation



Gurdjieff first introduced the Ray of Creation to his Russian students in 1915. One of his principal pupils, P.D. Ouspensky, was struck by the depth of knowledge contained in the model: "The 'ray of creation' seems at the first glance to be a very elementary plan of the universe, but actually, as one studies it further, it becomes clear that with the help of this simple plan it is possible to bring into accord, and to make into a single whole, a multitude of various and conflicting philosophical as well as religious and scientific views of the world."

The different levels of the Ray have different qualities and are governed by different kinds of 'laws.' Along the Ray the transformation of matter and energy proceeds in two directions: *involution* or descending movement from fine to coarse (greater density) and *evolution* or ascending movement from coarse to fine (higher vibration and intelligence). "The Ray of Creation is not a static pattern, but is a representation of a living and evolving cosmos in which each level uses the material at its disposal to raise its stature to that above. It has been likened to a yoyo flung out by the hand of the Absolute, to which it will return in its appointed time."

A ray of creation creates a finite series of levels or 'worlds' of increasing density and decreasing energy, like a spectrum of colour. Each successive level is subject to double the number of constraining orders of laws which determine the nature of that level. Each level is a complete 'world,' ruled by its own unique combination of laws, new laws arising at its own level in addition to the laws of all worlds above it. Each level or 'world' has its own individual and specific form of materiality, made of 'atoms' that constitute the smallest amount of material that retains all the intrinsic

sic properties of that particular 'world.' These 'atoms' – not in any scientific sense – of each successive world are increasingly complex and dense. In the Absolute, vibrations are most rapid and energetic and matter is least dense. At successive descending levels, vibrations are slower and matter more dense. As well as having its own particular materiality, each level is pervaded by the vibrations of all the worlds above as 'inner octaves.' Each note of an octave of vibrations in the matter of Earth (48) is permeated by a whole octave of vibrations conveying the matter of the Solar System (24) and each note of this octave is in turn permeated by a whole octave of vibrations of the Sun (12), and so on . . . Starting from the bottom, each level is wholly contained by the one above, like a series of Russian dolls. This is a holistic concept in which each level is a complete whole for itself (a 'holon') but also forms an intrinsic part of the next complete whole above it. The level above is always more expansive, more energetic, with fewer constraints and more freedom; each world or holon is more than the sum of its parts. The series of such worlds within worlds may be finite or infinite. (9)

Each of the seven levels of the Ray is governed by a certain number of laws or forces which increase as the Ray unfolds from the Absolute to lower levels of manifestation. Each level of the Ray contributes three forces or laws of its own which are added to the laws of previous levels. "The fewer laws there are in a given world, the nearer it is to the will of the Absolute; the more laws there are in a given world, the greater the constraint and degree of mechanicalness, and the further it is from the will of the Absolute."

World 1	Absolute	1 [Unity]	
World 3	All Worlds	3 Laws	
World 6	Milky Way	6 Laws	(3 + 3)
World 12	Sun	12 Laws	(3 + 6 + 3)
World 24	All Planets	24 Laws	(3 + 6 + 12 + 3)
World 48	Earth	48 Laws	(3 + 6 + 12 + 24 + 3)
World 96	Moon	96 Laws	(3 + 6 + 12 + 24 + 48 + 3)

In the Absolute there is only one force and only one law – the single and independent will of the Absolute. In the next world there are three forces or three orders of laws. In the next world there are six orders of laws; in the following one, twelve; and so on. In our world, that is, the earth, forty-eight orders of laws are operating to which we are subject and by which our whole life is governed . . . The will of the Absolute is only manifested in the immediate world created by it within itself, that is, in world 3; the immediate will of the Absolute does not reach world 6 and is manifested in it only in the form of mechanical laws. Further on, in worlds 12, 24, 48 and 96, the will of the Absolute has less and less possibility of manifesting itself. This means that in world 3, the Absolute creates, as it were, a general plan of the rest of the universe, which is then further developed mechanically. The will of the Absolute cannot directly manifest itself in subsequent worlds apart from this plan, and, in manifesting itself in accordance with this plan, it takes the form of mechanical laws. (10)

Each level or world-order of the Ray of Creation is saturated or impregnated with energies and influences of all the levels above: "The Universe is brought into being by the will of a Supreme Creator, of inconceivable and ineffable intelligence, through a series of world-orders of increasingly detailed manifestation. Because of this sequence, each world-order is directed not only by its own intelligence but is also subject to the laws of all the higher orders, so that the whole creation is a living structure continuously vivified by the influence of the Absolute which permeates all the inferior levels."

Each world-order is not only subject to the laws of its parents but is actually impregnated with the materials of the higher levels. We usually interpret materiality in physical terms; but we know that this is an illusion of the senses. The familiar substances are really loose assemblies of tiny disturbances of the void called electrons separated by relatively enormous distances. These interfere with the passage of light waves and so create the appearance of solidity and colour. Within this virtually empty space there is clearly room for vibrations of a finer quality, which will not be detected by the ordinary senses but may have a significant influence on our behaviour. We can, moreover, envisage that the higher world-orders are similar structures involving progressively finer vibrations, so that each will possess its own materiality; and each level will be impregnated with the vibrations of all the superior orders. (11)

Keith Buzzell, who has studied Gurdjieff's teachings for many decades and explored many different fields of science, has tentatively identified correspondences between each of the seven worlds of the Ray of Creation and various states of matter and cosmic bonding processes. These states and processes reflect a continuum of increasing vibration (evolution and unification) and increasing density (involution and separation). (12)

World 1	unification of all forces; highest vibratory rate
World 3	nucleon and radiation (mass-energy)
World 6	galactic 'cloud' interaction – order of all matter/energy (hydrogen/helium radiation)
World 12	plasma state
World 24	gaseous (atomic-ionic)
World 48	liquids (water, solutions)
World 96	solids (crystals, minerals, metals)

Buzzell has also been able to identify numerous parallels between the Ray of Creation and current scientific models of the creation of the universe:

With the Emanation of Theomertmalogos from within Holy Sun Absolute, World Six appears. At this level the laws are in their 'purest', *essence* form. This is, in part, due to the fact that the first creative manifestation is in the form of pure energy. Mass (in electrons, protons, neutrons and neutrinos) has yet to appear. In this brief moment, *all* possibilities are held in the state of *essentiality*, with no matter yet present to open into the descent of the Ray of Creation. At each downward

step of the Ray of Creation, *matter* enters into the expression of the laws more and more until, at the level of World 96, a circumstance of atomic/molecular crystallization has been reached with absolute dependence on *outside* forces to enable any change . . . At the level of World Six, Creativity is the infinite potency/potential for creation. The pure, essence impulse is *unconditioned* when it is pure energy. As soon as the earliest forms of mass appear (0.5 seconds after the Emanation) Creativity expresses itself as Growth and Expansion. The complex world of mass-based particles appear as lower energy levels are reached and the expansion of the Universe (and the possibilities of mass-based interactions) continues. Galaxies and suns coalesce (are *created*), each level opening to another area of *growth* and *expansion*. When life on Earth appears (in the interval between World 24 and World 48), Procreation, as an expression of this same law of Creativity, appears, with focal expressions of growth and expansion. At the level of World 48-96, this law is manifested in strict *causation*, the deep penetration of automaticity into the world of mass/energy. (13)

There are a number of important metaphysical and philosophical implications of the Ray of Creation:

- Statements concerning reality are always relative; there is always more to understand
- Determinism and free will both exist, but in different worlds and at different levels of consciousness
- No *thing* is more essential or important than anything else; every *thing* is of equal value to the Whole
- The Absolute and the relative can co-exist at the same moment as a higher dimension can interpenetrate a lower dimension, thus acting as the “absolute” for the lower level
- Everything is connected to everything else; involution and evolution are inextricably intertwined
- Change is constant in the universe; everything is in motion, entering into existence and dying in a perpetual ‘dance of life’
- Nothing in the universe is static; everything is in constant movement, either ascending with increasing energy, or descending with decreasing energy
- All laws in the universe are patterns of ordered relationships; the components of anything always reflect a pattern, but the pattern itself does not exist in the same world as the components
- Service and the desire to nurture all that exists is the heart of love and the purpose of evolution

## Fundamental Laws and Principles

The unfolding of the Ray of Creation is governed by two fundamental laws or principles – the Law of 3 and the Law of 7. The Law of 3 is responsible for creating the existence of the myriad

phenomena in the universe. The law states that every phenomenon, irrespective of scale (from molecular to galactic), is the result of the simultaneous action of three different and separate forces – affirming (+), denying (-) and reconciling (=).

A triad is a functional arrangement of the three forces in the right relationship. The created universe is an immense structure of countless interconnected triads: “The first world-order is brought into being by the combination of the three primal forces in their simplest form, and is therefore called World 3. It is the highest, most comprehensive level of created intelligence, subject only to the will of the Absolute. It is responsible for the direction and maintenance of all the 1,000 million galaxies in the physical Universe, but this is only a fraction of its activities, most of which are beyond our comprehension.”

In the Absolute, as well as in everything else, three forces are present: the active, the passive, and the neutralizing. But since by its very nature everything in the Absolute constitutes one whole the three forces also constitute one whole. Moreover in forming one independent whole the three forces possess a full and independent will, full consciousness, full understanding of themselves and of everything they do. The three forces of the Absolute, constituting one whole, separate and unite by their own will and by their own decision, and at the points of junction they create phenomena, or ‘worlds.’ These worlds, created by the will of the Absolute, depend entirely upon this will in everything that concerns their own existence. In each of these worlds the three forces again act. Since, however, each of these worlds is now not the whole, but only a part, then the three forces in them do not form a single whole. It is now a case of three wills, three consciousnesses, three unities. The three forces together form a trinity which produces new phenomena. The will of the Absolute creates the worlds of the second order and governs them, but it does not govern their creative work, in which a mechanical element makes its appearance. (14)

The Law of 7 determines the order of manifestation of the Ray of Creation in terms of a progressive development through a succession of seven stages, culminating in a return to the initial state, but at a different level. The complete pattern, from one level to the next, forms a series of eight, called an octave. “Nothing remains at rest; each thing moves either in the direction of evolution or in the direction of involution. In every line of development there are two points where it cannot proceed without extraneous help. In two definite places an additional shock is needed coming from an external force.”

The Law of 7 has been described, using the terminology of the conventional musical scale, as a progression from one note to its octave, passing through seven notes: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do. At two points (called *intervals*), between mi-fa and si-do, there is a gap or restriction where normal development is impeded. “The intervals between mi-fa and si-do which cannot be filled by the intensity of the energy of the process in operation, and which requires an outside ‘shock,’ connect by this very fact one process with other processes. From this it follows that the law of octaves connects all processes of the universe.” In the descending cosmic octave of the

Ray of Creation, the first interval is between do (Absolute) and si (All Worlds) and the second between fa (All planets) and mi (Earth):

The first 'interval' is filled by the will of the Absolute. One of the manifestations of the will of the Absolute consists precisely in the filling of this 'interval' by means of a conscious manifestation of neutralizing force which fills up the 'interval' between the active and the passive forces. With the second 'interval' the situation is more complicated. Something is missing between the planets and the earth. Planetary influences cannot pass to the earth consecutively and fully. An 'additional shock' is indispensable; the creation of some new conditions to insure a proper passage of forces is indispensable. The conditions to insure the passage of forces are created by the arrangement of a special mechanical contrivance between the planets and the earth. This 'transmitting station of forces' is *organic life on earth*. Organic life on earth was created to fill the interval between the planets and the earth. (15)

Gurdjieff placed great importance on the octave structure of the Law of 7, based on the musical scale, and the critical function of the two gaps or intervals in the completion of any process: "The musical scale, in the form in which it now exists, was constructed in ancient times by those possessed of great knowledge, and you will realize how much it can contribute to the understanding of the principal laws." The laws of 3 and 7 interact at sensitive points (such as the two intervals) to create the basic structure of the universe:

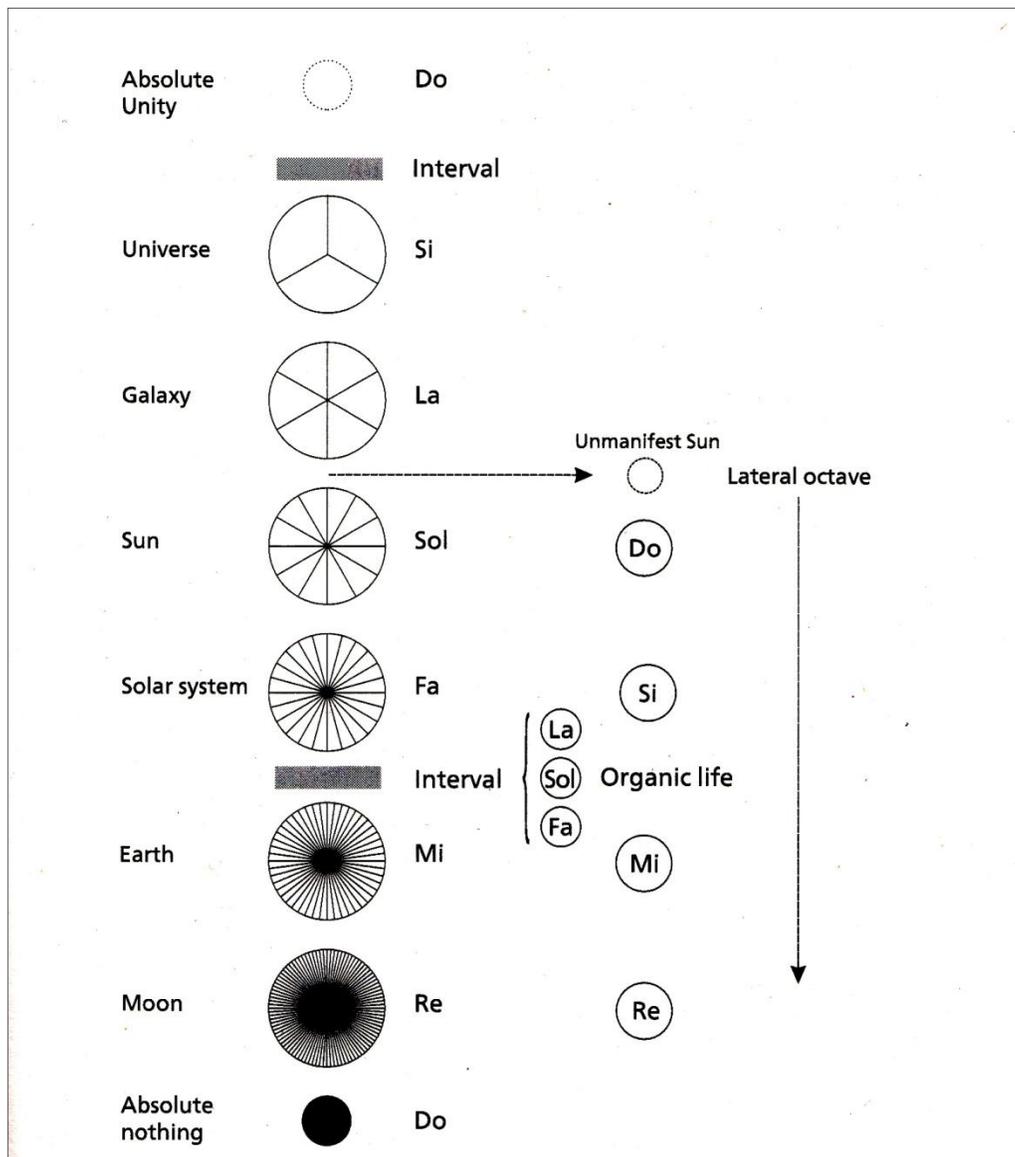
Between mi-fa and si-do there are missing half-tones, in both the ascending and descending scales. While in the ascending development of the octave, the notes do, re, fa, sol and la can pass into the next higher tones, the notes mi and si are deprived of this possibility. These two gaps, according to certain laws depending on the law of tri-unity, were filled in by new octaves of other orders, these octaves within the gaps playing a part similar to that of the half-tones in the evolutionary or involutory process of the octave. The principal octave was similar to a tree trunk, sending out branches of subordinate octaves. The seven principal notes of the octave and the two gaps, "bearers of new directions," gave a total of nine links of a chain, or three groups of three links each. (16)

According to Gurdjieff, organic life on Earth is an essential component of the whole cosmic scheme, as it provides the essential force required by the Absolute to fill the interval between mi and fa in the Ray of Creation: "This function is produced and maintained by what is termed the 'lateral octave' – a subsidiary octave which starts in (or just above) the sun. Three notes, la-sol-fa of this lateral octave, makes up the biosphere, all that we see as living things."

It is necessary to realize that every note of any octave, in the present instance every note of the cosmic octave, may represent *do* of some other lateral octave issuing from it. In the present instance sol begins to sound as do. Descending to the level of the planets this new octave passes into si; descending still lower it produces three

notes, la, sol, fa, which create and constitute organic life on earth in the form that we know it; mi of this octave blends with mi of the cosmic octave, that is, with the *earth*, and re with the re of the cosmic octave, that is, with the *moon*. We at once felt that there was a great deal of meaning in this lateral octave. First of all it showed that organic life, represented in the diagram by three notes, had two higher notes, one on the level of the planets and one on the level of the sun, and that it *began in the sun*. (17)

Figure 2. The lateral octave of the Ray of Creation



The function of organic life is to serve as a medium to transmit influences from higher levels (Sun, Planets) to the Earth. "The 'side octave' originating from the Solar level (World 12) comprises a succession of subsidiary intelligences which at the notes la, sol, fa create the manifestations of organic life on earth and then blend into the notes mi (Earth) and re (Moon) of the main octave. This side octave provides a ladder up which energy can pass from the lower regions back to the level of the Sun and so replenish the system."

The structure of the universe embodied in the Ray of Creation depends on an interdependent relationship and exchange of energy and substances between all levels. Gurdjieff referred to this principle of a vast chain of interrelated systems as 'reciprocal maintenance' or the *Trogo-autoegocrat* process:

The principle of universal interdependence is certainly not found only in the teaching of Gurdjieff. It appears in many traditional teachings. But his convincing exposition of it is indisputably original. A generalized nonseparability characterizes the universe of Gurdjieff: 'Everything is dependent on everything else, everything is connected, nothing is separate.' Systems on different scales have their own autonomy, for according to the terminology of Gurdjieff, the Absolute only intervenes directly at the creation of the first cosmos. The other cosmoses formed themselves freely by self-organizing principles – always, however, in submission to the law of three and the law of seven. In this way the diversity of the universe is assured. On the other hand, the interchange of the different cosmoses by means of the universal exchange of energy-substances assures unity in diversity. Life itself appears not as an accident, but as a necessity in this universe of universal interdependence. Gurdjieff's universe is not a static universe, but a universe in perpetual movement and change, not only on the physical plane, but also on the biological and psychic planes. Evolution and involution are always at work in the different worlds. And when we consider the important number of different matters, characterized by different degrees of materiality, we can understand the essential role of the universal exchange of substances in evolution and involution. (18)

Theoretical physicist Basarab Nicolescu has found a number of correspondences between Gurdjieff's concept of reciprocal maintenance and the 'bootstrap' principle formulated by American physicist Geoffrey Chew. Bootstrap theory is predicated on the concept of 'self-consistency,' whereby each part is a reflection of the whole. "According to bootstrap theory a system is what it is because all other systems exist at the same time in a nexus of interactions and interrelationships. The role of self-consistency in the construction of reality should be emphasized – a self-consistency which assures the coherence of All." The theory suggests that the universe is capable of self-creation and self-organization without any "external" interventions; a universe composed of an infinite chain of systems regulated by a system of universal interdependence and mutual support.

Such a universe exists as unity in diversity, maintained by a dynamic intelligence in permanent evolution and operating at every level of nature. Each level is what it is because all other levels exist concurrently. Primary laws produce different effects at different levels.

## Sun, Planets, Earth and Moon

According to Gurdjieff everything in the universe has emanations which enter into the mutual exchange of energies between various levels of the Ray of Creation. "The interaction of emanations produces new combinations. Emanations penetrate everywhere according to their possibilities. Thus emanations also reach man."

Every entity emanates, sends forth certain matter. This refers equally to the earth, to man, and to the microbe. The earth on which we live has its own emanations, its own atmosphere. Planets are also entities, they also emanate, as do the suns. By means of positive and negative matter new formations resulted from the emanations of the sun. The result of one of these combinations is our earth. The emanations of every entity have their limits, and therefore each place has a different density of matter. After the act of creation, existence continues, as do emanations. Here on this planet there are emanations of the earth, the planets, and the sun. But the emanations of the earth spread only so far, and beyond that limit there are only emanations coming from the sun and the planets, but not from the earth. (19)

In the evolution of the universe, over vast eons of time, the creation of galaxies (World 6) led to the formation of stars or suns (World 12). The Milky Way influences our Sun and the Sun in turn influences the planets of the solar system:

Within each of the galaxies, thousands of millions of stars will gradually form, becoming, in Gurdjieff's words, the "second order suns" or *Deuteroscosmos* (World 12). The expansion of the entire universe continues, with the separating aspects being the galaxies themselves but not their contents. The Universe has taken on its fundamental form. It will be a Universe of galaxies (World 6) – each a great whole of its own, bounded by the laws which will underpin the formation and life of the second order singularities (suns). They are second order because they are balanced, singular condensations of matter/energy that recreate higher temperatures and pressures. In a sense, they are analogous to the Holy Sun Absolute but with far less matter/energy and, consequently, return to temperature/pressures that are only a portion of those present at the Initial Moment. They are also analogous to the Holy Sun Absolute, in that they become creative sources (through their entire lifetime) of the entire atomic table of the elements. This creative expression, along with their wide range of radiated energies, is the potency that underpins the potential appearance of planetary systems, i.e. planets and moons. (20)

The Sun is a living, conscious Being endowed with divine intelligence which, like all living things eats, breathes and receives impressions. "The Sun, via its radiant energy output, warms the Earth's surface and provides the fundamental powers that make life on Earth possible. It does this for all of the Earth, impartially giving, sharing its manifestation of creative actions with its system of planets and beyond."

The planets of our solar system constitute World 24 of the Ray of Creation. In talks with his students, Gurdjieff described the planets as living beings with a certain span of existence and capable of "possibilities of development and transition to other planes of being." The planetary sphere has been equated with the 'Astral world.' "It is the realm containing the unseen patterns which control the behaviour of the visible world. It can be envisaged as a kind of fabric of possibilities – not events – through which certain lines or tracks have been laid down by the Astral intelligence."

Organic life on Earth is influenced or coloured by the vibrations and emanations of planets, especially by the planet nearest to the earth at any given moment. At the same time, planetary influences are not permanent and can change, waxing and waning in intensity. Human beings, both individually and collectively, are highly sensitive to the pattern of planetary vibrations: "All great events in the life of the human masses are caused by planetary influences. Human society is a highly sensitive mass for the reception of planetary influences. And any accidental small tension in planetary spheres can be reflected for years in an increased animation in one or another sphere of human activity."

The earth and all other planets are in constant motion, each with a different velocity. Sometimes they approach one another, at other times they recede from one another. Their mutual interaction is thus intensified or weakened; or even ceases altogether. Generally speaking, planetary influences on the earth alternate: now one planet acts, now another, now a third, and so on. Schematically we can picture these influences in the following way. Imagine a big wheel, hanging upright above the earth, with seven or nine enormous colored spotlights fixed round the rim. The wheel revolves, and the light of now one and now another projector is directed towards the earth – thus the earth is always colored by the light of the particular projector which illuminates it at a given moment. All beings born on earth are colored by the light prevailing at the moment of birth, and keep this color throughout life. Just as no effect can be without cause, so no cause can be without effect. And indeed planets have a tremendous influence both on the life of mankind in general and on the life of every individual person. It is a great mistake of modern science not to recognize this influence. On the other hand this influence is not so great as modern "astrologers" would have us believe. Man is a product of the interaction of three kinds of matter: positive (atmosphere of the earth), negative (minerals, metals) and a third combination which comes from outside and meets these two matters. This neutralizing force is the planetary influence which colors each newly born life. This coloring remains for the whole of its existence. If the color was red, then when this life meets with red it feels in correspondence with it. (21)

World 48 of the Ray of Creation encompasses the Earth and includes organic life originating from the lateral octave issuing from the Sun. Organic life – the plant, animal and human kingdoms – is a complex phenomenon in which the separate parts mutually support each other and respond to influences from the Sun, Moon and planets. “Organic life is an indispensable link in the chain of the worlds which cannot exist without it just as it cannot exist without them. Organic life has to evolve, to adapt itself to the needs of the planets and the earth.”

The development of organic life on our planet has occurred over an immense period of time, through a process of experimentation (trial and error), leading to both evolutionary dead ends and intelligent, adaptive successes:

The creative thrust underpinning the appearance and development of the Lateral Octave has been in motion for over three billion years. It is impossible for a human being to fully appreciate and comprehend a 3,000,000,000 year process. We can only stand awestruck – overwhelmed by questions concerning the constancy, the seemingly endless experimentation and refinement, the patience, the power and the *aim* of such an accomplishment . . . With regards to our solar system, this process of reconciliation, this working out of all the involutions/evolutional pathways down to, and including one-celled and multi-celled life, occupied several billions of years. We can try to imagine what this unfolding of life processes involved: the intricate ‘miraculous’ chemistry, the explorations of one-celled life into every niche on the surface and deep within the oceans of Earth, the endless cycle of generation, birth, living a daily existence and death, the eruption of multi-celled life forms, of early plants and the solar ‘miracle’ of photosynthesis and, finally, the appearance of a multi-celled life form that could *automatically* but *independently* move on the surface of the planet. (22)

Organic life processes influences emanating from higher worlds in the Ray of Creation and also radiates energy back to these higher sources. Professor Jacob Needleman: “Life on earth is understood by Gurdjieff as arising in the interval of the passage of energies between stellar and solar levels to the level of the planet Earth. Organic life on Earth functions in a manner somewhat comparable to a ‘transformer’ which enables a relatively intense energy to be available to human beings as a gradient of intensity that corresponds to their needs and capacities. Organic life transforms the more intense energy of the sun, passing it into the earth, and is meant to function by transforming and emanating a specific quality of energy for both the earth and the moon and, in the reverse direction, for the sun itself and perhaps beyond.”

Organic life represents so to speak the *earth's organ of perception*. Organic life forms something like a sensitive film which covers the whole of the earth's globe and takes in those influences coming from the planetary sphere which otherwise would not be able to reach the earth. The vegetable, animal and human kingdoms are equally important for the earth in this respect. A field merely covered with grass takes in planetary influences of a definite kind and transmits them to the earth. The same field with a crowd of people on it will take in and transmit other

influences. The population of Europe takes in one kind of planetary influences and transmits them to the earth. The population of Africa takes in planetary influences of another kind and so on . . . Organic life is the organ of perception of the earth and it is at the same time an organ of radiation. With the help of organic life each portion of the earth's surface occupying a given area sends every moment certain kinds of rays in the direction of the sun, the planets and the moon. In connection with this the sun needs one kind of radiations, the planets another kind, and the moon another. Everything that happens on earth creates radiations of this kind. And many things often *happen* just because certain kinds of radiation are required from a certain place on the earth's surface. (23)

Organic life on Earth plays a critical role in the evolution of the planet. "The role of organic life in the structure of the earth's surface was indisputable. There was the growth of coral islands and limestone mountains, the formation of coal seams and accumulations of petroleum; the alteration of the soil under the influence of vegetation, the growth of vegetation in lakes, the formation of rich arable lands by worms, change of climate due to the draining of swamps and the destruction of forests, and many other things that we know of and do not know of."

For the earth to evolve it must be able to receive influences from higher levels, for which purpose there has to be a suitable medium through which these influences can be transmitted. This is the function of the strange phenomenon of organic life. We can understand this to a small degree in physical terms. In the absence of vegetation the energy from the sun on which the earth depends would be reflected uselessly (as it is from the moon). The film of organic life entraps the energy and passes it into the earth. The unmanifest earth is subject to far more subtle influences which are received by the psychological aspects of organic life, including man who has a particularly important role to play in the scheme. These influences are of a quite different quality from those which direct the physical behaviour of the world, and it is with these conscious influences that esoteric teaching is concerned. It is clear, therefore, that organic life has been created for a specific purpose and is directed by an intelligence of a high order. Nature arranges that all living creatures are obliged to make constant effort for survival and the energy so expended maintains organic life as a whole in a suitably active condition for the exercise of its required functions. (24)

The Moon is World 96 and is the densest and most restricted level of the Ray of Creation. Yet, Gurdjieff claimed that the Moon was slowly developing and evolving over time: "The moon is still an unborn planet, one that is, so to speak, being born. It is becoming warm gradually and in time (given a favorable development of the ray of creation) it will become like the earth and have a satellite of its own, a new moon. A new link will have been added to the ray of creation." He also taught that the Moon "feeds" on organic life, including humanity:

In our system the end of the ray of creation, the growing end, so to speak, of the branch, is the moon. The energy for the growth, that is, for the development of

the moon and for the formation of new shoots, goes to the moon from the earth, where it is created by the joint action of the sun, of all the other planets of the solar system, and of the earth itself. This energy is collected and preserved in a large accumulator situated on the earth's surface. This accumulator is organic life on earth. Organic life on earth feeds the moon. Everything living on the earth, people, animals, plants, is food for the moon. The moon is a huge living being feeding upon all that lives and grows on the earth. The moon could not exist without organic life on earth, any more than organic life on earth could exist without the moon. (25)

The Moon also exists, in a psychological sense, in relation to our inner world (microcosm). According to Gurdjieff, the Moon represents a passive force equated with involution and mechanical passivity. Liberation from this 'inner moon' occurs through the development of understanding and consciousness. "The moon is man's big enemy. We serve the moon. We are like the moon's sheep, which it feeds, cleans and shears, and keeps for its own purposes. Passive man serves involution; and active man, evolution. You must choose. If you know what your moon is and does, you can understand the cosmos."

## Humanity and the Ray of Creation

Human beings living on Earth are subject to 48 orders of laws, some of which derive from the planet but others which belong to higher worlds (planets, Sun and Milky Way). According to Gurdjieff, the goal of humanity is to become free from terrestrial laws and submit *voluntarily* to higher influences in an evolutionary ascent of the Ray of Creation. Human beings have the possibility of acquiring a 'higher being body' that can perfect itself into 'objective reason' and thus attain unity with the Creator, thereby fulfilling the divine purpose of creation: "The perfection of reason constitutes Objective Consciousness, the hope and aim of Creation."

Like all living creatures, humanity's role on Earth is to transform energies, principally from the Sun and the planetary world. Jacob Needleman: "Gurdjieff considered living bodies and especially the human body as instruments for the accumulation and development of energies. The human body is uniquely designed to contain and foster the development on earth of a cosmically very high order of energy that no other creature on earth is capable of developing."

Gurdjieff taught that a fully developed human being possessed four 'bodies' of increasingly finer density and higher vibration. These bodies are described in different terms by different philosophical and spiritual traditions:

	<u>Theosophy</u>	<u>Christianity</u>	<u>Eastern Teaching</u>
FIRST BODY	physical	carnal	'carriage' (body)
SECOND BODY	astral	natural	'horse' (feelings, desires)
THIRD BODY	mental	spiritual	'driver' (mind)
FOURTH BODY	causal	divine	'master' (I, consciousness, will)

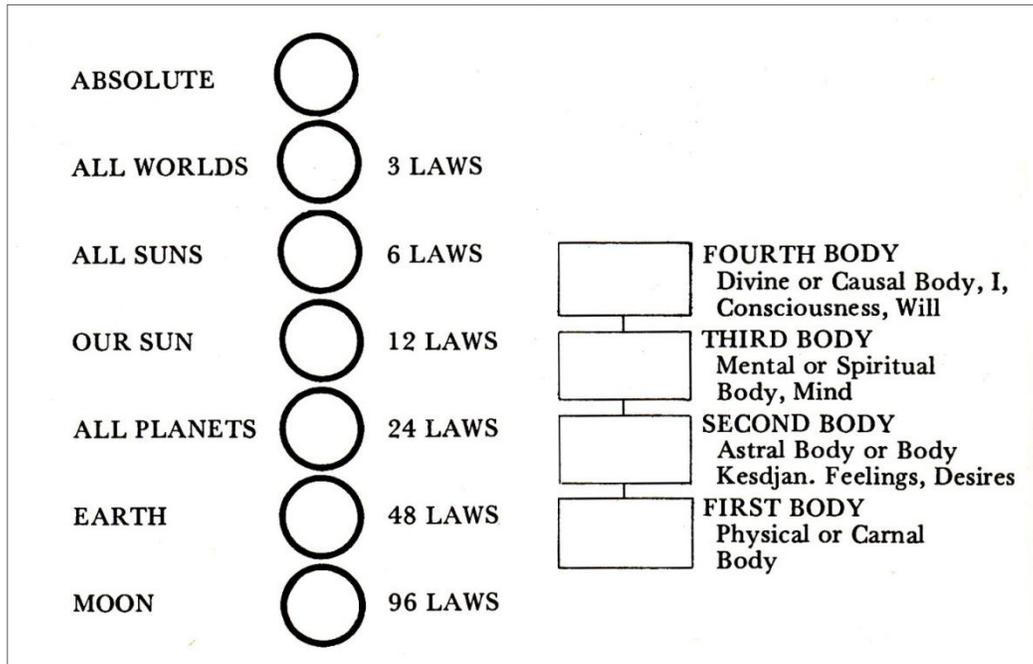
Gurdjieff stressed that human beings are not born with the finer bodies and that they must be consciously cultivated through inner work, provided favorable internal and external conditions are present. "All the fine substances necessary for the growth and feeding of the higher bodies must be produced within the physical organism, and the physical organism is able to produce them providing the human factory is working properly and economically."

According to an ancient teaching, traces of which may be found in many systems, old and new, a man who has attained the full development possible for man, a man in the full sense of the word, *consists of four bodies*. These four bodies are composed of substances which gradually become finer and finer, mutually interpenetrate one another, and form four independent organisms, standing in a definite relationship to one another but capable of independent action. The reason why it is possible for four bodies to exist is that the human organism, that is, the physical body, has such a complex organization that, under certain conditions, a new independent organism can grow in it, affording a much more convenient and responsive instrument for the activity of consciousness than the physical body. The consciousness manifested in this new body is capable of governing it, and it has full power and full control over the physical body. In this second body, under certain conditions, a third body can grow, again having characteristics of its own. The consciousness manifested in this third body has full power and control over the first two bodies; and the third body possesses the possibility of acquiring knowledge inaccessible either to the first or to the second body. In the third body, under certain conditions, a fourth can grow, which differs as much from the third as the third differs from the second and the second from the first. The consciousness manifested in the fourth body has full control over the first three bodies and itself. (26)

In the Ray of Creation, the physical body corresponds to World 48 (Earth), the astral body to World 24 (Planets), the mental body to World 12 (Sun) and the causal body to World 6 (Milky Way). "We have in us materials of Worlds 24, 12 and 6, although only in vestigial form; but with appropriate effort it is possible to organize a concentration of the material of each of these levels which acquires a certain permanency, and these constitute the higher bodies which can be created in us."

The astral and mental bodies can survive following the death of the physical body but only for limited, finite times. "At the death of an ordinary man, his physical body disintegrates into its component parts; the parts from the earth go to the earth ('Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return'). Parts which came with planetary emanations return to the planetary world; parts from the earth's atmosphere return there. In this way nothing remains as a whole." But with the causal or fourth body there is a greater possibility. "The fourth body is composed of material of the *starry world*, that is, of material that does not belong to the solar system and, therefore, if it has crystallized within the limits of the solar system there is nothing within this system that could destroy it. *This means that a man possessing the fourth body is immortal within the limits of the solar system.*"

Figure 3. The four bodies and the Ray of Creation



According to Gurdjieff, the physical body of a human being reflects the complex interaction of planetary emanations and the earth's atmosphere with matters of the earth. But with the development of an 'astral body' it is possible to receive and process solar emanations:

If the second body succeeds in becoming crystallized in a man before his death, it can continue to live after the death of the physical body. The matter of this astral body, in its vibrations, corresponds to matter of the sun's emanations and is, theoretically, indestructible within the confines of the earth and its atmosphere. All the same, the duration of its life can be different. It can live a long time or its existence can end very quickly. This is because, like the first, the second body also has centers; it also lives and receives impressions. And since it lacks sufficient experience and material of impressions it must, like a newborn baby, receive a certain education. Otherwise it is helpless and cannot exist independently, and very soon disintegrates like the physical body. (27)

With the formation of the third and fourth bodies, new knowledge and powers, unimaginable to the ordinary person, are acquired. Only then does a human being possess the fullest range of spiritual possibilities, including the sense of an inner unity, a permanent and unchangeable I, consciousness and will:

When the third body has been formed and has acquired all the properties, powers, and knowledge possible for it, there remains the problem of fixing this knowledge and these powers, because, having been imparted to it influences of a certain kind, they may be taken away by those same influences or

by others. By means of a special kind of work for all three bodies the acquired properties may be made the permanent and inalienable possession of the third body. The process of fixing these acquired properties corresponds to the process of the formation of the fourth body. And only the man who possesses four fully developed bodies can be called a 'man' in the full sense of the word. This man possesses many properties which ordinary man does not possess. *One of these properties is immortality*. . . In this connection certain teachings compare man to a house of four rooms. Man lives in one room, the smallest and poorest of all, and until he is told of it, he does not suspect the existence of the other rooms which are full of treasures. When he does learn of this he begins to seek the keys of these rooms and especially of the fourth, the most important room. And when a man has found his way into this room he really becomes the master of his house, for only then does the house belong to him wholly and forever. The fourth room gives man immortality and all religious teachings strive to show the way to it. There are a great many ways, some shorter and some longer, some harder and some easier, but all, without exception, lead or strive to lead in one direction, that is, to immortality. (28)

Gurdjieff contrasted the functioning of a normal, undeveloped person with that of an individual possessing all four bodies. "The chief difference between the functions of a man possessing the physical body only and the functions of the *four bodies*, is that, in the first case, the functions of the *physical body* govern all the other functions, in other words, everything is governed by the body which, in its turn, is governed by external influences. In the second case, the command or control emanates from the higher body."

In the first case, functioning proceeds in the following order: (1) automaton working by external influences; (2) desires produced by automaton, (3) thoughts proceeding from desires; (4) different and contradictory "wills" created by desires.

In the second instance, with all four bodies developed, the order of functioning is: (1) I, ego, consciousness, will; (2) thinking functions obeying consciousness and will; (3) emotional powers and desires obeying thought and intelligence; (4) body obeying desires and emotions which are subject to intelligence.

In relation to the functioning of a man of physical body only, the automaton depends upon external influences, and the next three functions depend upon the physical body and the external influences it receives. Desires or aversions – 'I want,' 'I don't want,' 'I like,' 'I don't like' – that is, functions occupying the place of the second body, depend upon accidental shocks and influences. Thinking, which corresponds to the functions of the third body, is an entirely mechanical process. 'Will' is absent in ordinary mechanical man, he has desires only; and a greater or lesser *permanence* of desires and wishes is called a strong or weak will. In the second case, that is, in relation to the functions of the four bodies, the automatism of the physical body depends upon the influences of the other bodies.

Instead of the discordant and often contradictory activity of different desires, there is *one single I*, whole, indivisible, and permanent; there is *individuality*, dominating the physical body and its desires and able to overcome both its reluctance and its resistance. Instead of the mechanical process of thinking there is *consciousness*. And there is *will*, that is, a power, not merely composed of various often contradictory desires belonging to different "I's," but issuing from consciousness and governed by individuality or a single and permanent I. Only such a will can be called "free," for it is independent of accident and cannot be altered or directed from without. (29)

In order to ascend the ladder of spiritual development a certain crystallization or fusion of an individual's inner qualities, leading to an independence from external influences, is required. "The fire by means of which fusion is attained is produced by 'friction,' which in its turn is produced in man by the struggle between 'yes' and 'no.' If a man gives way to all his desires, or panders to them, there will be no inner struggle in him, no 'friction,' no fire. But if, for the sake of attaining a definite aim, he struggles with desires that hinder him, he will then create a fire which will gradually transform his inner world into a single whole."

Fusion, inner unity, is obtained by means of 'friction,' by the struggle between 'yes' and 'no' in man. If a man lives without inner struggle, if everything happens in him without opposition, if he goes wherever he is drawn or wherever the wind blows, he will remain such as he is. But if a struggle begins in him, and particularly if there is a definite line in this struggle, then, gradually, permanent traits begin to form themselves, he begins to 'crystallize.' But crystallization is possible on a right foundation and it is possible on a wrong foundation. For instance, a fanatical belief in some or other idea, or the 'fear of sin,' can evoke a terribly intense struggle between 'yes' and 'no,' and a man may crystallize on these foundations. But this would be a wrong, incomplete crystallization. Such a man will not possess the possibility of further development. (30)

Much like ore that needs to be refined before it can be of practical use, the experiences of life on Earth must be refined and transmuted so that food for the higher bodies can be usefully extracted. "If the mind is awakened it can provide new programmes for the brain which will then create different ranges of thought and emotion relating to higher levels of the universe; and these again can be of differing quality because the mind can operate at different levels."

This refinement that esoteric teaching is concerned with involves the conscious participation in the events of the day. We have of necessity to manipulate the situations of life to practical advantage; yet this begins to be accompanied by an - expanded awareness which is not exclusively concerned with personal desires. We become conscious of the objects around us – including other people – as living beings contributing to the drama of existence; and we find unexpectedly that there is time to take in a vast number of impressions which are not normally noticed. This, of course, does not just happen. It requires a conscious effort to make room

for the interpretations of the deeper levels of the mind instead of allowing all our attention to dwell in the affairs of life, which are quite adequately handled by the established Personality. If this is done it is clear that the quality of the experience is transformed. The raw material of events has been refined to a condition in which it can provide the nourishment which Essence is seeking. So this is the task. It involves the gradual creation of new qualities of associations, new programmes whereby the brain translates the same experiences much more vividly; and if the effort is maintained these more significant programmes become established and begin to operate automatically. This is the formation of a second, or Astral body, which now exercises some control over our behaviour, and maintains an increasing supply of refined material for the growth of Essence. (31)

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