

MR BENNETT AND DAGLINGWORTH – Anthony Blake



This article was written in 1980 when I was running an experimental course at Daglingworth in Gloucestershire and we were experiencing an influx of Hindu ideas. It was published in the Bulletin of the Institute for Comparative Study and is reprinted here for its survey of John Bennett's ideas and its questioning of then current assumptions about them. I would not go along now with some of my comments but the spirit of the article remains sound.

Daglingworth Manor in Gloucestershire

"Man decides God." JGB 1968 Kingston-upon-Thames

My main problem in writing this article has been the fact that I cannot assume that my audience knows what I am talking about when referring to Mr. Bennett's ideas. What I have tried to do, therefore, is to give brief explanations and references to books so that any comments I make can be investigated and verified.

The simplest truth is that Mr Bennett helped us to be where we are now. He is an integral part of the whole thing. For a time, he was our leader. But now I realize that the relationship involved a meeting of souls and was more than an external arrangement of teacher and pupil. As Mr B. would put it, we came together because of an influence from the 'hyparchic future'. The hyparchic future is where liberation is made possible on this Earth. It is the workshop of the Way and all its manifestations have the dual appearance of inevitability and unexpectedness.

The Fourth Way is difficult to find. It cannot be made into an enduring form of activity with consistent signs indicating itself. In some respects, Mr Bennett did a disservice by making the idea of the Fourth Way appear reasonable and comprehensible. But that has a truth, too. It is not hidden so much by its protagonists as by the wilful blindness of the majority of seekers. Not often is it realized that seekers usually embody in extreme form all the psychic tendencies of the people of their time. The present Western seeker is predominantly intellectual, arrogant, full of expectations and lacking in honesty.

Those who wish to study what Gurdjieff had to say about the nature of the Fourth Way must delve into *In Search of the Miraculous*. The index gives little help and the relevant passages have to be dug out of the mass of text. What is not portrayed in Ouspensky's book is that the Fourth Way is a gathering of friends. The real School begins when those individuals in it have woken up to their own individuality -when there are 'conscious assistants'. Then it is a true community. This is the flavour of Gurdjieff's *Beelzebub's Tales* and *Meetings with Remarkable Men* and it is something that Mr Bennett pointed out in so many words in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount and in the chapter "Cataclysm not according to law" in the book *Talks on Beelzebub's Tales*. But neither Gurdjieff nor Bennett brought out into the open the issue of how the School forms in the first place.

The Fourth Way is not an expression of any particular tradition - e.g. it is not just a part of Naqshbandi Sufism - nor is it some eclectic amalgamation from several traditions. There is a directness of connection with the Source which bypasses the established chains of transmission while, at the same time, being able to tap into these.

I believe that behind Mr Bennett's intense search for the origin and sources of Gurdjieff's teaching was the realization that there was no source but God himself. He said this in *The Image of God in Work* (p.74) " . . . by having our part in this Work we have our part in God; but when we come to the moment of perfection, then the part disappears and we are God."

The Fourth Way may, indeed, be under the greatest teacher on the Earth, the supreme liberator.

Very few people ever begin to ask: "Where does the Work come from? What is it about?" The idea of Work is turned into something that fits ordinary personal aspirations. How many times Mr Bennett laboured to make it perfectly clear that this was not and could not be the case! The message did not get across and, perhaps, was not even noticed at all. Mr B's strength of clear rational explanation was also his weakness - because it made it so easy for an audience either to glean a false sense of understanding or to treat his concerns as suitable for only a highly developed intellect.

The Work is not about improving personalities but about breaking the chains that bind us to delusions that are constantly maintained by our own efforts. What has just been written is the practical essence of JGB's monumental work on triads. The triad teaching - as in *The Dramatic Universe Vol II* and in *Deeper Man* - depicts different worlds governed by different 'laws' or forms of willing. The more conditioned the world, the greater the number of laws. How are the increased number of laws sustained? The answer is: by our own will, which in ordinary language is the same as desire, habit and so on. It is plain for all to see in the teaching that it is our 'doing', our 'experiencing' and so on that keeps the charade going.

When the will 'relaxes', the Individuality appears - which 'has been there all the time'. In the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali this is portrayed as the revelation of the *svarupa* (self-form) of the constraint of mind fluctuation. It is the same idea.

So we return to the question of School and its arising. The very act of self-realization described above is part and parcel of the emergence of a Fourth Way School. Everything else is preparatory. Again, JGB described this in abstract form in writings on the 'Octave of Salvation' (which will appear in *The Way to be Free*). There he describes the different levels of School and teaching and how, at the mid-point transition from the second-hand life to the integral life stands self-realization. The School of Individuals is the true School - but then the School is no longer needed.

But how do they meet? Just as an Individual appears from behind the scenes of his life as the ultimate agent of being alive at all, so the gathering of friends appears as the source of all that urges them to meet together. They will appear as 'sleepwalkers', because they are not yet fully aware of what they have to do even though they may be engaged in doing it.

The transition is made possible by a teacher operating on a certain level. Without the teacher, the situation could not be sustained. The Fourth Way is predominantly a co-operative effort, but the reality of the co-operation or synergy has to be entrusted to the teacher. The teacher, therefore, is the link with the hyparchic future. He lives in a different kind of time.

Very rarely did J.G.Bennett tackle directly the question of the Teacher. For most of his life he did not regard himself as able to deal with direct individual development. What he did was to share as far as possible his perception of the need for some kind of link with the hyparchic future. The whole spirit of the Work that I got from him centred in this. Whatever were the outward activities, I always had the feeling of a man well aware of their limited character.

It is very unfortunate that a particular talk given by JGB at Beshara was not included in the published collection *Intimations*. During this talk, he was asked whether in these times mankind had outgrown the need for a teacher or guru. His reply was along the following lines:

The true guru-disciple, teacher-student relationship is, and always has been, rare. People imagine that they have teachers and that the public figures with large followings are exemplary of the genuine learning relationship. This is a false idea. What is true of these times is that a great deal of 'help' is coming into the work to offset the destructive and chaotic forces. This general kind of baraka is to be contrasted with what is available in the personal relationship which embodies far more than spiritual energization.

I think that this answer shows very clearly that JGB was aware of the different levels of capacity in the seeking population. Again, it is something that he explored in abstract terms

in *The Dramatic Universe*, chapter 41 "Human Societies". There are two main elements which seem to have been missing or underplayed. Firstly, that no explanation is given for the arising of individuals with different capacities for spiritual work. Secondly, that the dynamics of the learning relationship are left unexplored. The first is a question of many lives; the second, something that was left to Idries Shah to delineate.

Mr Bennett's social scheme was based on a three-fold categorization of men: static, kinetic and teleios (asleep, seeking and realized). He made a great effort to construct a scheme through which a sense of a pattern of realization existing on this Earth could be conveyed. Each of the three groupings were themselves divided into four subgroups. It has become easier to understand this scheme through exposure to the essential cosmology of all ancient traditions.

In any total cosmology or system, there is a basic dyad of the Absolute and the Relative. Where there is manifestation - the relative - it is three-fold. Therefore, we can always speak of four worlds or of three worlds immanent in one world. In the Hindu tradition this is according to the Samkhya doctrine of the three *gunas*. In Bennett's cosmology, the three *gunas* correspond to function, being and will.

The fourth element is the Wholeness within which the three worlds are contained and in which they culminate. The non-hierarchical arrangement that Bennett used in *Deeper Man* should also be kept in mind. There, the fourth element is shown as the tip of a triangle pyramid the base of which is composed of the three elements. In this light, Bennett's three categories of men are unified in the ultimate category of man. This is the Atman, the Self. The Hindu teaching has it that there is one being who is the Teacher of all mankind. Like God, the Work is both personal and impersonal - so that the Work is identifiable with certain individuals, in their individual way.

There was always a kind of ambiguity in Mr B's teaching concerning the ultimate reality of man and the will in him. More than once he seemed to say that this reality was the will and that will had the property of remaining identical, though both one and many. In truth, Individuality is the reality tinged or polluted by will. In the hierarchical view, will is nearest to reality. It is, from that perspective, the first conditioning, the first restlessness or disturbance. That is why we can say that will 'begins' with the *gunas*.

In talking like this, I have become aware of how much Mr B's teaching has become clearer and simpler in my mind. For so long some of us have felt that all the authentic traditions must embody the same principles in their teachings. But the actual taste of this essence has been missing. Mr Bennett himself struggled to make us aware of the inherent unity of all valid doctrines and understandings through his scheme of Systematics. Without the direct contact in oneself, systematics must remain an external complication. We have known in theory that there is one source of work, one cosmology, one yoga; but have not known how to be in contact with this essential reality.

It is now clear how much JGB intuited in his work with the triads. In his treatment of the existential and essential kinds of forces, he was being informed of the truth of our situation. The diagrams and symbols of Vol II of *The Dramatic Universe* are coded messages.

I find myself unable to isolate Mr B's teaching from my understanding of the Work as a whole. The more I realize in my present condition of learning, the more Mr B's teaching opens out to me and is seen as an expression of some direct knowledge of what is going on. It has always struck me as an absurdity when people speak of 'Mr B's teaching' as something that they know. His teaching had a thread of truth in it and this has to be seen directly and not taken externally. I think it is also the case that this teaching of Mr Bennett is not finished and is even now through our work cleansing and realizing itself.

If someone is surprised by these words, then they have failed to study Mr B's ideas in an important aspect. One of his favourite notions was that any piece of work consolidated as an event continues to evolve in its own time whether this is an event as such, a mind, a work of art or whatever (*The Dramatic Universe Vol.IV* chapter "The War with Time"). He could

affirm this because he realized that the primary reality in manifestation was action and that beings, time and space are secondary concepts (*Talks on Beelzebub's Tales* p.63).

So, I consider Mr Bennett's teaching as a 'work in progress' and not something that was done in time past that has simply left its traces in us and our surroundings. Let us try to dissolve the materiality of the books, the existence of the Institute and the knowledge of our memories. His work is simply if it is alive in us now.

I have to say this: If there is anything that sums up Mr Bennett's work it is that it was to enable some people to search for the truth - or, perhaps, to be prepared to learn how to search for the truth. It was a training in questioning, however much the majority of people responded to it as an acquisition of answers. Soon after he died, it did cross my mind that the greatest service I could perform out of respect for him would be to mercilessly criticise everything he taught. I did not have the guts to try. What Mr Bennett's work means can only be understood in the wider context of the search for the whole truth about our situation.

In the unfolding of what he had to communicate, there were imperfections and things that were not resolved. One of the most difficult areas to clarify is that of his treatment of God and Higher Powers. When I first met him, he was becoming very insistent on the need to find a way of communication with what he called 'Demiurgic Intelligence' as the only way through which men could have access to an intelligent perception of their situation and what they have to do. At the same time, in other contexts, he echoed Gurdjieff's warning that the Higher Powers were predominantly concerned with overall evolution and stability and not at all with the welfare of the individual soul seeking liberation. But the echo was not clear, and remained buried in his talks and writings.

Gurdjieff followed the ancient traditions in affirming that only those intelligences who had actually been through what it is like to be a man could possibly be of help to the individual. "Trust devil, not angel - angel always want to become archangel!". It is one of the central themes of *Beelzebub's Tales*, where the whole human predicament is laid at the door of well intentioned higher powers.

What I have so far learnt of the high Hindu tradition is a great clarification. There it is taught that this whole solar system is a creative work of Brahma, the Creator. The Gnostics called him the 'Demiurge', a term borrowed from the Greeks which Bennett himself adopted to describe Higher Intelligence. In the Hindu scheme, the Creator is portrayed as a great ego, inevitably identified with his creation. He is the God against whom we must work that Gurdjieff referred to.

Interestingly enough, Bennett often referred to the Sun as the God accessible to our understanding (cf *The Sevenfold Work*, final chapter]. However, he consistently attributed all spiritually significant events - such as the arising of life to interventions coming from beyond the sun (cf *The Dramatic Universe Vol.IV*, p.117). But he never caught hold of the 'fact' that the Creator should be treated as an enemy of liberation. The human individual has to get out of the trap that is His Creation and it is not to Brahma's advantage to let too many souls achieve their goal. Gurdjieff's solution was that everyone has to work for the Creator whether he wishes to or not: but the intelligent way is to find a means of doing this that also leads to liberation.

The fact about the Demiurge or Creator that the Gnostics brought out was that he fails to realize His true situation and has Himself to be awakened - let alone the small mental egos we feel to be ourselves.

Reverting to the Hindu terminology, what lies beyond the Sun is Vishnu, represented by the Milky Way - that is, our galaxy. Vishnu does not create: He is the substance of Unity or Love. Literally, Compassion comes out of the centre of the galaxy and appears on our far-flung planet as Krishna, Christ and so on. All the Creators such as Brahma are like bubbles of imagination within the presence of Vishnu.

Bennett's abstract work was very clear about this. The Sun as Creator corresponds to the 'Personal Individuality'. Beyond that is the 'Universal Individuality' that we see in terms of the galaxy. Beyond that is the 'Cosmic Individuality'. In the Hindu scheme He is Shiva, the

supreme liberator, totally free. Therefore, there are three Gods, a Holy Trinity. In Bennett's scheme of energies they are depicted very well.

Shiva E1 - Transcendent Energy

Vishnu E2 - Unitive Energy

Brahma E3 - Creative Energy

In *Needs of a New Age Community*, Mr Bennett writes (p.13) "The Missions of God in the world are creative, redemptive and enabling." We must mention that in the Hindu terminology, energy equates with *shakti*. Where energy 'ceases' to apply there is only the Nirguna Brahma, World 1, the Absolute without any conditioning.

Liberation is the link with Shiva. In it, there is no concern with creation, or identification with the casual realm that gives rise to egoism and belief in an external world standing over and against the individual.

In the higher realms, scale ceases to be important. That is why we can cheerfully speak of whole galaxies and clusters of galaxies in the same breath as speaking of the true nature of human individuals. However, scale is a factor for the collectivity of mankind which is influenced in cycles of time which have to be measured over thousands of years.

Bennett spoke of two main cycles: the Epoch and the Great Cycle. He identified the Epoch with influences governed by the Demiurgic Intelligences and the Great Cycle is correlated with influences coming from beyond the Sun. The Great Cycle is usually described as due to the precession of the equinoxes. What it means is that the direction of the Earth's axis of rotation slowly revolves to make a circle across the heavens over a period of approximately 25,000 years. Many people have related this phenomenon to the signs of the Zodiac. However, ancient Hindu science declares that what is essential here is a revolution of the Sun around another 'more spiritual' Sun situated nearer to the centre of the Galaxy. What this means is that mankind comes into regions of space which are 'more or less intelligent'. I must add that the usual time scales favoured in Hinduism, measured in thousands of years, are inventions. The real science proclaims that we have already left the midpoint of the current cycle and are no longer in the Kali Yuga, the 'dark age', but in the Dwapara Yuga when the general intelligence is being enhanced. What Mr Bennett taught corresponds to this very closely - though he never disclosed his own sources of information.

I have noticed over the years how frequently people assume that Mr Bennett proposed the 'new Age' as a time of general liberation. This is not so. Some useful material is to be found in pages 131-2 of *Creation*. He was quite clear that the Epochs correspond to small changes in mental attitude, whereas changes in human nature are to be measured in terms of hundreds of thousands or even millions of years.

"In looking at the history of human life we can come to see that there is some kind of pattern that repeats itself but in a different way each time. It is not a circle but like spirals within spirals." (p.43 *Needs of a New Age Community*). In answering a question I put to him on another occasion he said, "I can see the working of the Demiurgic Intelligence as clearly as I can see the working of human intelligence."

He regarded Compassion as beyond the workings of Demiurgic intelligence. Making Compassion the ultimate principle - for all practical purposes - had an enormous influence on Mr B's thought. It led him to write a book such as *Gurdjieff - Making a New World* in which he tried to make a compromise between the Gurdjieff teaching of accelerated subjective evolution for the very few and the widespread social needs of the world at the present time. Make no mistake, Mr. Bennett was infused with Compassion; but Compassion is still a limited condition.

He made great use of the principle of sacrifice; but gave it an external form in the way of putting others first. This influenced a lot of people so that they got the idea of service as the main ingredient of work. It is fairly easy to grasp, I think, that the idea of putting others first is a social substitute for submission to a guru.

The book on Gurdjieff also misses the central question: is there an authentic Way that can arise in the West? The practical hints that he gave in *Transformation* (published posthumously) were never developed. There is a great need to confront the question of a Western Way and how the seeker in the West should comport himself.

But I have no doubt that Mr Bennett knew the taste of the direct truth. Interestingly enough, it is in the book *Hazard* that some of this comes through most strongly. There he speaks about how one can get it right, act in truth, go to the core of reality in any kind of situation. Honesty and truth are the main issues. He is quite definite that methods, training, knowledge and so on are factors on the periphery of the essential reality.

Mr Bennett's ideas are a resource of great value for those able and willing to work with them, sift through them, look at them with fresh eyes and practice them. If this is not done, they are of little account.

Part of my own motive for publishing books which tend to be raw, untidy and piece-meal is that, in such a form, they can be of use to people of capacity. I hope that some people will struggle with *The Way to be Free* in this spirit and not expect a smooth ride through spiritual scenery.

One of the main themes of the book I have just mentioned is the difference between essence work and personality work. Essence work is organic; it is not thought out and is not imitative. Personality work is the reverse. Bennett points out that we begin the Work from our personality or mind. This is inevitable at the start, but if we continue in this way we increase our state of delusion. Another way of working needs to arise and the way in which this will happen cannot be taught externally.

At Sherborne, Bennett hinted time and again that the external efforts and conditions were merely special forms of conditioning that increased the probability of direct perception into what was really going on. With that perception, real work could begin. What was really going on was the spiritual action that 'does the work'. The ordinary view of 'my efforts' and 'my perceptions' and so on is a smoke screen.

He established and worked on a daily pattern of inner work that to me, even in 1974, had a pattern and a tendency in it. The morning work came to consist of: body (effort and relaxation), breath (energization and purification) and concentration (entry into the subtler worlds through sensation, feeling and thought). The evening work of meditation consisted of opening and quietening the mind. During the day there were practical activities or duties and, increasingly, some kind of devotional practice. The parallels between this trend and the 'integral day' [see note below] struck me as quite amazing. What surprised me even more, however, was how few people recognized the parallelism!

It is necessary to say that there seemed to have been a trend over the period from Coombe Springs to Mr B's last days that can be expressed as 'opening up more and more to the higher that is there'. This is particularly true of the 'decision exercise' -which should not be explained here. The change over from effort as such (well illustrated by entries in Mr B's diaries that you can read in *Idiots in Paris*) to a fuller way of working was not completed. It is in progress now. What it amounts to is the adoption of the attitude that the True Self is already there and conscious of us. We have to realize that this is true. Then real decisions become possible.

The Integral Day was, of course, only approximated at Sherborne. But it itself is an approximation. Briefly, the structure of work requires that there be *hatha* yoga in the morning, *bhakti* yoga at mid-day and *jnani* yoga in the evening. The issue of bhakti yoga or devotional work needs to be emphasised. Just before he died, Mr Bennett told me that he considered his main personal task consisted in finding a way of enabling the Western people he had to deal with to practise devotion. In our present terminology, this amounts to getting the 'heart current' going. In his language it is the "spiritualization of the feeling centre".

In *Deeper Man*, the principles are stated clearly. Each of the three centres has to be spiritualized by inner work. This then gives the basis for an integral way, a true fourth way, the way of the unity of man.

There were the movements to spiritualize the body, giving something of the 'fakir' element. Bennett was exploring the *zikh* and similar methods to acquire the 'monk' element. Through his writings, talks and meetings, he hoped to stimulate the 'yogi' (knowledge) elements. It is, of course, the latter which remained in the most primitive condition, in spite of Mr Bennett's own development in that line. Systematics was a tool he created for people to work on their third vehicle of thought.

The integral way of working - which Gurdjieff refers to in *In Search of the Miraculous* - is called *purnayoga* in Hinduism. The Hindus use the term, but probably those who realize it in practice are very rare.

We come to the concept of *The Sevenfold Work*. When I attended the meetings Mr B. gave on this theme I knew something big was up. I could see how the idea of the seven lines was being revealed through him. He did not invent it or think it out. It was a primary idea which he clothed in examples and explanations to convey to others. I knew it had to come out in a book and be made available to people. It may well be something that can unite all people who claim to be interested in Mr Bennett's ideas. But we have to take it very seriously.

I think I can best sum up the trend of the present situation by reference to Mr Bennett's ideas on time. Just as with all his seemingly abstract and far-flung ideas they were based on direct seeing. It is impossible, for example, to grasp the ideas of *The Dramatic Universe* without a great deal of practice of visualization and understanding practice of inner exercises. 'Space' is to be understood through visualization, 'eternity' through meditation, 'hyparxis' through grasping the action of the moment. I find that the work we are currently involved in is the practice of eternity and hyparxis. The words used are not the same. The practice is not derived from Mr Bennett's teaching. But the sense is the same. The truth is always the same!

The seven lines are not techniques or exercises as such. They are much nearer the centre, nearer the truth of the situation. Because they are nearer the centre, they indicate more strongly the way of absolute liberation. The seven lines are an essential part of our work in Daglingworth.

1	ASSIMILATE	Seek the whole truth. Find out for oneself. Open the mind to all knowledge.
2	STRUGGLE	Make efforts, but in the right spirit. Useful suffering. Transform energies.
3	SERVE	Renunciation of the fruits of action. Doing what is needed. No hang-ups.
4	MANIFEST	Perfection in role. 'Great Function'.
5	RECEIVE	Tune in to sources of help: saints, shrines, friends, nature, objects, books, etc.
6	SUBMIT	Put aside imaginary will so that real will can enter.
7	ACCEPT	Accept everything. The way to realization of God in every moment.

Note The Integral Day was modelled on the Hindu *sadhana* and ascribes different qualities to each part of the day making different yogas or practices more suited to different times.