

THE FOURTH WAY



G. I. Gurdjieff (1872(?)-1949)



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Our fundamental idea shall be that man as we know him *is not a completed being*; that nature develops him only up to a certain point and then leaves him, to develop further, *by his own* efforts and devices, or to live and die such as he was born, or to degenerate and lose capacity for development.

Evolution of man in this case will mean the development of certain *inner* qualities and features which usually remain undeveloped, *and cannot develop by themselves*.

Experience and observation show that this development is possible only in certain definite conditions, with efforts of a certain kind on the part of man himself, and with *sufficient help* from those who began similar work before and have already attained a certain degree of development, *or at last* certain knowledge of methods.

We must start with the idea that without efforts evolution is impossible; without help, it is also impossible.

After this we must understand that in the way of development, man must become a *different being*, and we must learn and understand in what sense and in which direction man must become a different being; that is, what a different being means.

Then we must understand that *all men* cannot develop and become different beings. Evolution is the question of personal efforts, and in relation to the mass of humanity evolution is the rare exception. It may sound strange, but we must realize that is not only rare, *but is become more and more rare*.

P. D. Ouspensky. The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution

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