

## THE ORAGEAN VERSION

### C. Daly King

pp.6-9

*King has been speaking of his first meeting with Orage. He continues:*

I think what impressed me most at this first meeting was the complete and utter rationality of what I heard. Perhaps I had gone in the expectation of a proselytizing harangue; and certainly I had taken with me an incredulous attitude, prone to raise objection to everything put forward. My incredulity was not admitted; instead, it was demanded that I adopt scepticism toward what I heard, i.e., that I should neither believe nor disbelieve, that for the moment I should not even judge, and certainly that I should be neither credulous nor incredulous.

This is not the place in which to reproduce the discussion that then occurred but I may say that my reaction was without delay, immediate and vivid. Even now, my recollection of this first meeting I attended, is more clearly detailed than that of the many later ones in which I took part. The topics went to the real heart of what had always intrigued me, those questions which I had always hitherto found hedged about by qualifications, by half-statements, sometimes even a shame-faced avoidance, always a lack of specificity which had convinced me that the speaker didn't actually know the truth about such subjects. I was not merely fascinated; I received such an interior lift of pure exultation at the discovery that these questions could be considered seriously, fully and without equivocation, as had never occurred to me before and has never been as fully repeated since. To cap it all was the assurance of scepticism, the rational demand that I must not believe until I myself had obtained the proof. That reassurance was very necessary to me and it set the seal upon my determination to investigate this extraordinary doctrine, or whatever it was, further. I went home exuberantly and made a most unusually excited report to my wife. Thereafter she accompanied me to all of these groups.

They continued though the winter and well into the next year, 1925. There had then taken place abroad the serious automobile accident suffered by M. Gurdjieff (late 1924), which closed the Institute, incapacitated the man himself for a long period, transformed his whole program out of recognition to me (as I now realize) and left Mr. Orage holding the bag, as it were, in New York. The next summer (1926) I was in Europe with my family and essayed a visit to Fontainebleau; however, I found nobody of much authority about when I sought entrance and, not insisting, was turned away.

The following fall, back in New York, Mr. Orage's groups were resumed and he also consented to come out to Orange, N.J., where I was then living, to conduct a weekly group there. At that time I was studying technical psychology at Columbia University where I was accorded the degree of M.A. the next year, having finally resigned from my father's firm and retired from the business. At this time, too, I had written out a careful formulation of so much of the Oragean system as I had yet been acquainted with, submitted it to Mr. Orage himself for correctness and had it acknowledged as accurate. I also wrote a small book, *Beyond Behaviorism*, (1927) in which I sought to show the relation between scientific psychology and the ideas with which O was now becoming more familiar. This took me into the late spring of 1928.

That summer I went to California where I collaborated with Dr. William M. Marston upon Integrative Psychology; he had been the professor under whom I took my Columbia degree and I left there with him in order to help formulate his own approach to

psychological problems, an approach which I continue to think of the highest importance for the science.

In the fall my wife and I were back in New Jersey and resumed our work with the Orage groups. I was now conducting two groups of my own, one in New York City and one in Orange, N.J. These I had undertaken with the encouragement of Mr. Orage but perhaps with a bit of apprehension upon his part, too; however, at first he supervised some of the meetings and later dropped in once in awhile unexpectedly to look them over, at length professing his unqualified approval and withdrawing from any further supervision. But of course he was always in the background, he was always there, and indeed without the possibility of his aid in a perplexity or crisis I should not have consented to take these responsibilities upon myself.

They continued into the year, 1930, while we were also continuing to attend the groups conducted by Mr. Orage in New York City. It should be said here, also, that during the preceding years I had formed a close personal friendship with Mr. Orage; very frequently I lunched or dined with him, sometimes in the company of others and often alone. Thus I obtained an exceptional opportunity to discuss with him all sorts of details of the formulations he was presenting in the work of his groups, to consult with him concerning my own work with the groups which I was conducting, and to maintain with him the closest liaison in regard to the accurate and a rigorous statement of the propositions, doctrines and ideas that formed both the core and the superstructure of this version of the Hidden Learning. It had been in the summer of 1927, three years previously, that Miss Dwight, my wife and I, and Orage had taken a vacation trip together in Canada but even before that he had often been our house guest and our friendship was now of a number of years' standing.

This summer, 1930, Mr. Orage left for England with his wife (Miss Jessie Dwight and he had been married some two years before) and my own wife accompanied them for an extended visit. I remained behind and later made only a brief trip to rejoin my wife and accompany her upon the return journey, spending only one or two days with the Orages at their English home.

Before this vacation trip Mr. Orage had been applying the principles of his version of the Hidden Learning to the interpretation of the early copy of M. Gurdjieff's series of books, the first of which was not to be published until 1950 but which already existed in ms. form. When he left for England, it was decided to continue his groups straight through the year (it had been the custom to close them in late spring and to re-open them in the early fall) and it was in this year, I believe, that in Mr. Orage's absence I conducted his own groups for some two or three months, acting as his deputy.

The winter and spring of 1930-1931 brought the final crisis in all this activity. Mr. Orage, returning to New York, had resumed his groups for the reading of M. Gurdjieff's books and had also expanded the program to include separate groups working upon psychological exercises and upon the principles of literature as seen from this special perspective. All this presented me with a rather full calendar and, since the pupils from my own groups had gradually been fed into the Orage groups, I now discontinued my own.

It was at this point that M. Gurdjieff once more came to New York. During the preceding years he had visited America on a number of occasions, spending by far the greater part of his time in New York City. During such periods the other groups had been discontinued temporarily and their members had met with M. Gurdjieff on a similar schedule for private readings from his manuscripts; there had been also opportunities for personal consultations with M. Gurdjieff. Upon his departure the activities of the Orage

groups had been resumed in the same manner as before their interruptions. Now, however, suddenly and without warning (at least this was true in my case), M. Gurdjieff repudiated Mr. Orage, the latter's previous activities, and in especial the Oragean version of the Hidden Learning; and demanded that the former pupils and associates of Mr. Orage should have nothing further to do with him, upon pain of exclusion from the meetings conducted by M. Gurdjieff. Many of the former members of the Orage groups actually signed pledges to such an effect; naturally I did not, and I remember that there were one or two others who, acting for themselves, joined me in this refusal. Apparently the whole thing was a bluff, for all of us continued to attend the meetings held by Gurdjieff, as did Mr. Orage himself, also. Such an outcome, after all the fuss that had been raised, went far to persuade me at that time that the repudiation of Mr. Orage's formulations was no more serious than that of himself personally. But I have come to the later conclusion that in this I was mistaken.

M. Gurdjieff now departed from his former custom and, in addition to occasional readings, constituted separate groups to which he gave the titles of "esoteric", "mesoteric", and "exoteric" but as between which I was never able to distinguish any difference at all. They were concerned with a series of peculiar, sometimes juvenile, exercises whose significance (if they had any) I was never able to grasp. At one point I conjectured that their real purpose was to re-establish a sort of faith or credulity, which all of Mr. Orage's work had done much to undermine, of course. But, if so, they produced no effect upon me, who am naturally not a very credulous person. And, after all, my notion about them was no more than a wild surmise. These episodes marked, however, the final break between M. Gurdjieff and Mr. Orage; in the summer of 1931 the latter left for England permanently with his family. He never returned to America, nor do I think that he ever again saw M. Gurdjieff. And of course his New York groups were abandoned.

In New York, with M. Gurdjieff's departure, matters naturally were left in some confusion. Certain of the former group members arranged to meet for further readings from the Gurdjieff manuscripts and I myself organized a small group, not conducted as previously, but concerned solely with a particular experimental work in connection with that Method which will be formulated in the body of this treatise. The next year, 1932, I published the *Psychology of Consciousness*, a much more detailed, technical and expanded version of the earlier *Beyond Behaviorism*.