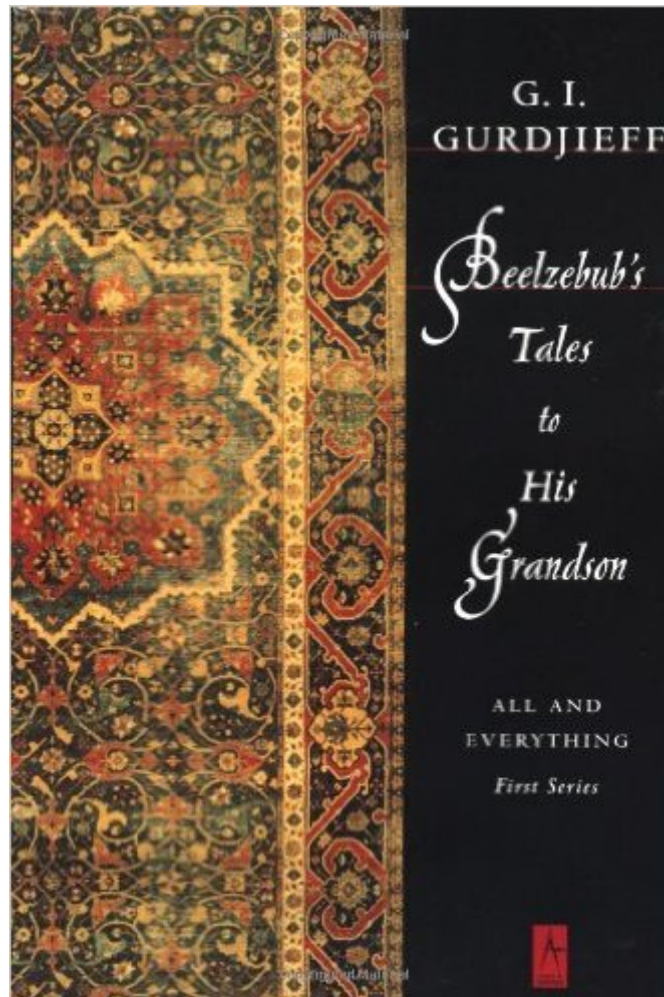


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Beelzebub's Tales To His Grandson: All And Everything: 1st Series (Compass)



Synopsis

With *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, G. I. Gurdjieff intended to "destroy, mercilessly . . . the beliefs and views about everything existing in the world." This novel beautifully brings to life the visions of humanity for which Gurdjieff has become esteemed. Beelzebub, a man of worldly (and other-worldly) wisdom, shares with his grandson the anecdotes, personal philosophies, and lessons learned from his own life. The reader is given a detailed discussion of all matters physical, natural, and spiritual, from the creation of the cosmos to man's teleological purpose in the universe. This edition of *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*--the first single-volume paperback to appear in English--restores the original, authoritative translation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the best works of spirituality ever written. Gurdjieff admits in his forward ("The Arousing of Thought"'s Warning to the reader) that he tried conveying his "wiseacring" in a straightforward, "newsworthy" manner but found that it failed miserably. So, being enamored his entire life by both the form and content of the "1001 Nights", he tried another approach. The genius of his writing is that it not only imparts information to you the reader, but performs or enacts the "cosmic principles" he's discussing in the very way the sentences are constructed (which many people find extremely difficult, overloaded, and dense). But his book was intentionally composed in a rhythmic & musical fashion. The sentences have distinct cadences (many of them have multiple

embedded clauses) which when read aloud, as Gurdjieff recommends, are apt to put one in a strange state of mind. It takes a while to acclimatize oneself to the rhythm, but once one does it becomes easier to intuit--with something other than the "intellectual center"--the ideas behind the words. His neologisms are also meant to dislocate, but they are simply combinations of Russian, Armenian, and newlyminted words. About the content: Gurdjieff's system is often lumped in with many other fads and gurus' elixirs under the moniker "new age". Which is ironic, considering that these ways of being are apparently thousands of years old. But what feel-good new age movement starts with the axiom that human beings are basically in varying degrees of a hypnotic state, possessing only a shred of what Western philosophies call free will? (and that shred only "awakens" sometimes in "peak experiences" when the three centers work together--mortal danger, sexual union, etc., when the ego drops away).

When Gurdjieff discovered that his institute would fall short of accomplishing his aims and his condition after a severe automobile accident forced - or bookmarked - a re-evaluation of what he must do, he turned to writing and produced this "Magnum Opus." He remarked that it was a javalin hurled into the future. I have read the book 3 times, and portions repeatedly, and contrary to the remarks of certain reviewers, I and others giving favorable reviews are not gullible. It took me three decades to see this issue in its true light, and the more I understand, the more I see I have a long way to go. The book is a legominism, to use Gurdjieff's own technical term defined in the text. It exists on several levels, and on occasion I have been able to verify that for myself by the perceptivity of its deeper currents. Actually I will be the first to confess that you cannot tell much about this book by the reviews. The reviews - pro and con - tell much more about their authors than they do about this book. That should be expected. Even my own review reminds me of Beelzebub's description of our species as those unfortunate three-brained beings that breed and multiply upon the face of that ill-fated planet Earth. Gurdjieff held up a mirror, and reviewers - including myself - seem eager to show our faces in it. Without question this is the most important work ever written on the issue of stopping wars, and that singular observation alone among many other comparable ones is sufficient to validate Leary's comment that this is the most important work produced in the twentieth century. But because of its inaccessibility to many audiences, I would also include Ouspensky's account of Gurdjieff's teaching, "In Search of the Miraculous," on a par with it.

This is Gurdjieff's magnum opus, his greatest and most potent work, but also his most difficult. This is not a book for those merely "curious" about Gurdjieff or for the casual reader (for those, I'd

recommend "Meetings with Remarkable Men" or the works of Ouspensky as better introductions to Gurdjieff's teaching.) This is one of the most difficult books I've ever read (and I have a Master's degree in English) but, having read it three times now, judge it to be one of the most rewarding for the effort one puts into it. Gurdjieff dictated this book aloud to a secretary and often had parts of it read aloud in group meetings; if he found a concept too easily grasped, he'd re-write that passage to make it more difficult. It compares to nothing else, though if you can imagine a combination of Swedenborg's "Heaven and Hell," Blavatsky's "Secret Doctrine," the "Thousand and One Nights" (Arabian Nights), Nietzsche's "Thus Sprach Zarathustra," and "Don Quixote" you might have a little idea of the scope of this book. Part of the difficulty of the book is simply Gurdjieff's deliberately archaic prose style, with long sentences that sometimes run for half a page and which require the reader to go back to the beginning of the sentence to find a single verb or noun referent that belongs to the concluding word at the end. If you're familiar with prose written prior to the 18th century, such as the works of Shakespeare, you'll have an easier time of it. Gurdjieff also makes up dozens of words, but usually their meaning is pretty clear from the context. (The final chapter, "From the Author," abandons most of these neologisms and is the easiest part of the book to read.) Gurdjieff's ideas themselves, when put into plain English, are simple, logical (in their context) and powerful.

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