

Chapter 1

WHAT WAS GURDJIEFF LIKE? HIS STUDENTS' VIEWS

(Passages of Gurdjieff speaking are written in non-bold italics.)

(As several students of his have noted, Gurdjieff lived his teaching—not just conveying it in words. Thus the in-depth portrait presented here of his way of being in the world assumes far more than anecdotal significance to those of us drawn to his Work.)

∞ CHARACTER ∞

“He was the only human being I have ever seen or known who was never involved in human stupidities, who was not led around by his physical drives, be they sex, hunger, or whatever... He was the most sensible, logical, interesting, benevolent, wise, course, gross, obscene, funny and all-around human being I have ever encountered in my life, or ever expect to run into. In fact, one is enough.”

Fritz Peters, “Balanced Man,” pp. 106, 24

“When you enter, Mr. Gurdjieff greets you and makes you welcome, with a smile that has both sweetness and spirit-quality. You get a first impression of a nature of great kindness and sensitiveness. Later you learn that in him is combined strength and delicacy, simplicity and subtlety. That he is more awake than any one you have ever known.”

Maud Hoffman, “Taking Life’s Cure in Gurdjieff’s School,” p. 55

“He gave advice and reprimands, generally with lots of good will, frequently with humor, rarely with harshness. He was a gentleman. His tone was that of a grandfather, but a rather demanding grandfather.”

Pierre Schaeffer, “A Man of Merciless Compassion,” p. 423