

## To Awaken

“Speaking in general, what is necessary to awake a sleeping man? A good shock is necessary. But when a man is fast asleep one shock is not enough. A long period of continual shocks is needed. Consequently there must be somebody to administer these shocks. I have said before that if a man wants to awaken he must hire somebody who will keep shocking him for a long time. But whom can he hire if everyone is asleep? A man will hire somebody to wake him up but this one also falls asleep. What is the use of such a man? And a man who can really keep awake will probably refuse to waste his time in waking others up; he may have his own much more important work to do.

“There is also the possibility of being awakened by mechanical means. A man may be awakened by an alarm clock. But the trouble is that a man gets accustomed to the alarm clock far too quickly, he ceases to hear it. Many alarm clocks are necessary and always new ones. Otherwise a man must surround himself with alarm clocks which will prevent him sleeping. But here again there are certain difficulties. Alarm clocks must be wound up; in order to wind them up one must remember about them; in order to remember one must wake up often. But what is still worse, a man gets used to all alarm clocks and after a certain time he only sleeps the better for them. Therefore alarm clocks must be constantly changed, new ones must be continually invented. In the course of time this may help a man to awaken. But there is very little chance of a man doing all the work of winding up, inventing, and changing clocks all by himself, without outside help. It is much more likely that he will begin this work and that he will afterwards pass into sleep, and in sleep he will dream of inventing alarm clocks, of winding them up and changing them, and simply sleep all the sounder for it.

“Therefore, in order to awaken, a combination of efforts is needed. It is necessary that somebody should wake “the man up”; it is necessary that somebody should look after the man who wakes him; it is necessary to have alarm clocks and it is also necessary continually to invent new alarm clocks.

“But in order to achieve all this and to obtain results a certain number of people must work *together*.

“One man can do nothing.

“Before anything else he needs help. But help cannot come to one man alone. Those who are able to help put a great value on their time. And, of course, they would prefer to help, say, twenty or thirty people who want to awake rather than one man. Moreover, as has been said earlier, one man can easily deceive himself about his awakening and take for awakening simply a new dream. If several people decide to struggle together against sleep, they will wake each other. It may often happen that twenty of them will sleep but the twenty-first will be awake and he will wake up the rest. It is exactly the same thing with alarm clocks. One man will invent one alarm clock, another man will invent another, afterwards they can make an exchange. Altogether they can be of very great help one to another, and without this help no one can attain anything.

“Therefore a man who wants to awake must look for other people who also want to awake and work together with them . . .”

~ G.I. Gurdjieff in ‘In Search Of The Miraculous’ by P.D. Ouspensky