

THE GREEN TABLETS OF THE SORCEROR OF THE MAGIC BASEMENT

To David Daniels: my most valued guide: teacher and friend: I write this now to recount my tale: from the beginning when I was far from my true self: through the efforts I made under your guidance: to that time when I became myself: As in the tale of Mushgil Gushah: I tell my tale for myself: and for others: who may benefit from hearing it: Growing up: I was very shy: but also very smart: I never had any real friends: but felt that my intelligence made me important: and my father's approval: my childhood goal: I never felt I fit in with any group of people: felt isolated and alone: but felt it was because I was superior to them because of my intellect: I went on to Massachusetts Institute of Technology: one of the best institutes of higher learning in the world: feeling I had finally attained my father's approval: I studied: played sports and tried to overcome a terrible fear of girls and learn how to have a girlfriend: But something was not right in my mind: I kept asking myself: what am I doing here: why am I here: why am I trying to learn all this: I didn't have an answer: but I knew something was wrong: Then in my last year: I took the one and only course that ever meant something to me: It was Religions and Philosophies of Asia: and during that semester: we had a special visit from Baba Ram Das (aka Richard Alpert: for this was the late 60's): Ram Das sat on the desk at the front of the room: in a lotus position and recounted his story: from LSD with Timothy Leary to searching in India and his enlightenment: I had no idea what he was really talking about: but something about him: stirred something in me: So my search began: Books: and more books: Be Here Now: Alan Watts: Hermann Hesse: Robert DeKopp: I read and read: looking: The Master Game: what was that: is that what I was looking for? Also at this time: my father died: and my entire aim in life: to finally gain his approval: crumbled: and I felt lost and without direction: He never did get to see me graduate from the school he wanted me to attend since I was 13 years old: Had I been living my dreams or his all these years? I graduated: and began to travel: seeking: For a while I ended up on an island: where in the one very small bookstore I found a copy of the 4th Way: I was enthralled: This is it I thought: I have found the book: found the teaching: now I have to find a teacher: a school: somewhere: someone who could teach me this: While living on the island: I met some travelers who were returning to New York after having been at a school in Chile: It was a 4th way school and I thought finally I know where I must go: Soon after that: my traveling companion and I headed south: island by island: (I actually had managed to find a girlfriend: and a very pretty one at that: will wonders never cease): I hitch hiked on planes and boats island by island down the Caribbean chain: I was on my way to a school in Chile: Then: on one particular island: while on a drive: (mis)fortune struck: How is one ever to know at the time: what the value of an unexpected event that changes our course forever really is? As I was driving on a small island road: as another car approached: I pulled off the edge of the road so it could pass: Hidden in the tall grass was a cement culvert: Between a Volkswagen beetle and a cement culvert: the culvert wins: The car spun and overturned: A concussion: lost tooth: cut lip: nothing so serious but enough to change course and head right back to where I began for some medical attention: So now: after a year of heading south to find a teacher and a school I was back where I had begun my quest: I needed to rest and recuperate before I took off again: planning to venture south to Chile the school I had heard of: Nothing was going to stop me from finding a teacher: not a culvert: not a car accident: not vast oceans: I would just start over again: For now then: it was back to the books: I had read the 4th way: but not the others: books Ouspensky had written: and those of Gurdieff himself: Where else could I look now: what else could I do but return to reading about it: Real teachers were so far away now: in the only place I had heard there was one: I went to this small mystical occult bookstore and looked for the next book to read: Inside a book I picked up was an index card which had the following typed on it: It said simply Workshop: Ideas of Gurdieff: Ouspensky: Shah and their source: and a phone number to call: There was no name: nothing else at all: on the simplest of index cards: Later that day I called the number enquiring about the workshop and was told to come to a certain address at a certain time the next day: The next day I went to this address: a simple room in an old Victorian house near the university that had rooms for rent: I knocked

: heard a man say come in: which I did: and sat down in a chair facing a bearded man who was not old: but not young: I was about 25 then and as I learned later: he was 38: He talked quietly with me: asking me about myself some: about why I was there: At a certain point: he stopped and told me he was going to show me how to do something: It was then and there that I first learned an exercise about how to pay some attention to myself: I cannot put into words how I felt that day with this man who would become my guide and teacher: and eventually my friend: I felt for the first time in my life that I met someone who even saw me: I felt that finally I was not completely isolated and alone: Even now as I write this: many years after this first meeting: I am close to tears: The first stage of my journey: to find a teacher had ended: and so much like a tale from a Sufi story: right back where I first started: I had found a teacher: I thought my difficulties were over and I was on my way to enlightenment: to waking up: I was determined: to either wake up or die trying: Nothing else mattered to me: nothing: This was my life: my aim: my purpose and now I had found my teacher: At that moment: the next phase of my journey began: far more difficult than the first stage: far more difficult than I had ever imagined: But I did not know that then: The journey to find myself began: Over the next few months: I went to meetings in this one room: several evenings a week: At first there were a few people: then more: until the people coming to meetings filled the room: maybe 30 or so: We sat crapped together: on the floor: our knees bent to make space: My legs ached: my back ached: but I was enthralled by what I heard: There was only one rule: speak for yourself and leave other people alone: Sometimes someone would ask a question: other times they would talk on a subject: But always: we were all trying to remember ourselves: pay attention to ourselves: observe ourselves: Easy to pay attention to aching knees and backs: And the charge for all this: all the meetings: the knowledge: a whopping 20 dollars a month: One person even brought their dog to meetings: who also seemed to sit quietly among all the people: It was a new place I had never been before: On one hand it was a room with people listening to someone talk: but not like any class I had been in: 30 people all paying attention to themselves creates something: What it was: I could not say: but I could feel it: feel it in how easy it was for me to pay attention to myself in a way I had never done before: After some months: D announced he had found a house to rent: and would be moving meetings there: At long last: relief for my aching knees: We would sit around a circle in chairs in one particular room for small meetings: D added a large meeting in addition to small ones: There were about 40 people now: so the small meetings were for a part of the group: usually 10 to 15 people came: These focused much more on individuals: who asked questions or related experiences: There were four of these each week: At some point I started going to several of these meetings each week and was never told to leave: so I went as often as I could: One night a week: we would have a big meeting with everyone: The first 2 hours we would have a job to do: something like clean the bathroom mirror: D explained that we should try to observe ourselves while doing the job: that it was not the job that was important: but the one doing the job and where their self they were doing it from: After the chance to work like this: we would have a meeting where ideas were presented: talked about: parts of books read: After a few months: we began excavating the basement on weekends: and created a beautiful place for meetings: later covered with oriental rugs: bookshelves: a central sitting area: paintings: What had been a ratty cobweb ridden old New England basement: was completely transformed: All the while: I was doing the exercises I learned: trying to get a hold of my attention so it wouldn't fly off in all directions but would be in myself: Meetings continued: and my work on myself continued: I tried to observe myself as much as I could: I tried to understand what I heard: what I read: little by little: I began to be able to keep my attention on myself more and more: for longer and longer periods of time: Eventually I could keep my attention on myself: or sense my self: almost continuously: I thought I was understanding so much: After I could keep attention on myself no matter what was going on around me: I needed to learn to stop the endless noise in my head: I tried and tried: with some but little success at first: Then D explained: that if you cannot just stop your thoughts: then put something

win your head that you decide : So I began with counting exercises that Orkge describes in one of his books : I would do a counting exercise endlessly : until it became automatic : then choose another harder one : I would walk for hours : doing these in my head : sensing myself : looking around : Or sometimes I would sit for hours watching people : sensing myself : trying to see : Then I heard a mystical verse of poetry that had an inner meaning : so for weeks : from the moment I got up : until the moment I went to bed : I would repeat this verse over and over again trying to experience its inner meaning : Meeting were progressing : so much read and discussed : In Search of the Miraculous : All and Everything : Sufi tales : works from psychology : buddhism : discussions : people & experiences : This went on for awhile as the group grew : and then D discussed buying a farm in the country : which we did : There were about 60 of us then : Every weekend we went to the lake : for there was a 32 acre lake : on 160 acres of forest and farmland : We did everything : We fixed up the small house and barn : where we would all sleep : We cleared fields : planted : raised some animals : had dog ponds : the list is endless : Sometimes in the winter a group of us would go out Friday nights and clear the snow on a section of the pond and go ice skating at Z in the morning : Through all this : several years : I was always working to wake up : I learned to keep attention on myself all the time : I learned to stop my thoughts : I learned to stop my feelings : I knew more and more : At meetings sometimes : I would present Ouspensky's food diagram and explain it : D would call me Little Ouspensky : I felt I was progressing : was one of the advanced students : I was part of a special work group at the lake that helped D building a cabin and more : I knew so much : could talk about the work : I knew still the same : still trapped in my Miraculous : I had learned the hidden secrets in All and Everything about the different ways to breathe : I practiced and practiced until I could breathe in special ways : I learned of locations : and how to focus attention on them and produce states : Every waking moment of everyday : was work on myself to wake up : But : even though I could do all this : I had not awakened : I was so much more aware than I had been years before : but I was still the same : still trapped in my personality : I could see that : feel that : but I could not change that : I had had moments of certain states that were beyond what I knew : but they never lasted : So much filled these years : it would take an entire book to tell of it : but that is not my intention here : And then one night : at a large meeting : D turned his attention towards me and began to talk to me : It was here that D would focus on one particular person at these meetings : For the next several hours D talked to me about how I was the most hopeless student he had ever had : that my mind was the worst tangled bank he had ever seen : This went on and on : I was in shock : I listened : my heart in my throat : my eyes near tears : All I had thought of myself as on the way : as one of the advanced students : as having learned so much was crumbling as I sat and listened to D tell me how hopeless I was : I don't even remember what else he said : I sat there stunned : beyond the sound of D's words : was only the sound of my own breath : When it ended : and the meeting dismissed : as I was leaving D made one last comment to me : He said to me : one must know how to take a shock : I heard it : but it didn't change how terrible I felt : I walked out of the meeting completely devastated : Everything I had been working for : everything I thought I had learned : everything I thought and believed I was : was gone : My aim of all my years of hard work : and here I was : the man I respected most in the world : had just told me I was the worst most twisted hopeless and helpless student he ever saw : Even now as I recall this and write about it : once again I am near to tears : simply to remember that night : I walked all night : near tears : frightened and alone : until morning : I no longer had any sense of time : I was somewhere I have never been before : For weeks I walked through life : in a state I cannot put into words : except that I was devastated : always near to tears : I didn't know anything : I no longer believed anything : My feelings : a sadness beyond words to describe : A deep empty black hole where I once had feelings of value and happiness : Everything in me was empty : a nothingness : deep and dark : I went to meetings and sat quietly somewhere in the back : always near to tears :

just watching : I went to the lake and worked : and D at times talked to me as if nothing had happened : But something had happened : All I knew was I was alive : and that I was aware : Beyond that I knew nothing anymore : I felt so helpless : so empty : and very frightened all the time : I no longer had to try to remember myself : I could not forget myself : not for a moment : except when I slept at night : and even sleeping at night was hard to do : I lost track of time : how long this went on before the fear started to subside I don't even know : Fortunately I knew how to stop my emotions with breathing exercise so at times I did that : but the fear would come back : Then somehow : and I am not sure how : I began to notice things : inside me and outside me : I had no idea who I was anymore : but I knew I was seeing : the one who was watching : Whenever D spoke to me : he was just normal : D spoke to me just the same as before : as if nothing had happened : But now : I picked up something else : whenever I looked at life : inside or out : it seemed different to me : clearer somehow : something more subtle was there and I began to see it : even if I didn't understand it : And I had heard for years sayings like : what you need to know is very very little : it is like a speck of dust in a beam of light : to find a needle in a haystack : burn down the haystack and look for something shiny that reflects light : In the darkness : the inner silence : I looked : little by little I became less frightened : and realized I didn't have to know who I was : for I was the one watching : I realized I didn't have to know : I could look to see : look to understand what I didn't understand : and back then : what I didn't understand was almost everything I saw : inside and out : But : I did know how to tie my own shoelaces : and feed myself : For a long time I could hardly talk : because I didn't have anything to say : I didn't have any thoughts left to express : or so it seemed : After months of being like this : I began to realize what had happened : D had talked about our personality and essence being like a hard shell containing and protecting a soft inner fruit : When the fruit ripens the shell will crack and fall away : I realize that all my years of hard work must have ripened something inside of me : and some cracks had appeared in my hard shell : That fateful night : one I shall never forget : D applied the final pressure and heat to destroy completely the shell that had encased my young ripening essence : that had been hidden since I was a young child : All my years of work on attention : observing : breathing : states : locations : all of this had built in me an observer : a part that no matter what : was able to observe and with the ease of a slight breeze : direct my entire being : From that time : and after enduring an experience which felt so terrible and frightening : so lost and helpless : I began to live : to learn from my direct perceptions of life : I was always there : the one observing and gently directing my life : No longer did I need to work to remember myself : I realized how my entire life I had been working to forget my real self : I no longer had the need : for I could endure seeing myself as I was : nothing more : nothing less : And thus : a new phase of my journey began : To see the deepest parts of my mind : what had happened to me : but not through delusions and thoughts : but through direct perception into the dark recesses : There was life around me : to begin to see people as they really were : not as I once thought they were : It was an entirely new way of seeing : without thoughts : without feelings : at least not as I had known them before : Instead of thoughts : I had realizations : when the light of an understanding would dawn : I began to live a life from myself : my real self : I continued to go to meetings and learn : and I found my own directions and aims as I journeyed through life : My teacher : guide : over time became my friend : Actually he was always my friend : I just couldn't see that through my beliefs that he was a teacher : and somehow better than me : When nothing is left but the real essence of a human being with the full potential of their mind alive and unfettered : one sees all descent people as simply human beings like themselves : I am most grateful to my friend D : who guided me to myself : To my friend : thank you And to all who read my story : or at least this part of my story : for my story continues still : but not a tale told here : my sincerest hopes it will aid you in your quest to find your real self and to live from it in the full potential that a human being is capable of : Dying to become oneself is not fun : and one must endure the loss of everything they think : believe : and feel they are : to become who they really are : Preparation is necessary : Prepare : That is the work ahead : I hope when your fruit is ripe : your hard shell will crumble : And your roots will sink down and fill a tangled bank with a plant that grows beautiful flowers that the special bees love and from which they can produce a fine substance :