

Anastasia NOVYKH

SENSEI



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The Primordial of Shambala

The original of this book, as well as other books by Anastasia Novykh, is written in the Russian language. It must be understood that everything that is subject to translation of these books into other languages is no longer the original as such. These are rather translations of meanings and understandings of the people who make these translations in an attempt to convey this information to others. The truly cognising ones read these books only in the original in order to understand not only its primordial meaning but also the impressive power and the spirit of the truth of this book.

At first glance, the story of a Youth finding **Wisdom** seems naïve. But this ordinary perception is just an illusory barrier, a skilful trap set by our ego on the path to discovering the perfect **Spirit**. The one who overcomes such a trap **will discover** more than **he** would dare to hope for. Hail to the Winner — because **Knowledge** will be his prize and **the secret** will become a reality.

This book was written based on the personal diary of a former high school girl in her senior year, reflecting the events of 1990-1991.

The phenomenon of the creativity of Anastasia Novykh is that everyone sees, like in a mirror, something of his own, purely internal. The “Sensei. The Primordial of Shambala” book reveals the inner world of a sixteen-year old girl who suddenly finds herself face to face with death. This prompted her to rethink her life and the search for answers to eternal questions: “Why does a person live, what is the meaning of life? Who am I really? Why are most people on earth — believers? After all, if they believe, that means they are hoping for something. How do the great ones achieve inner immortality? What is hidden behind the concept of the essence of Human?”

The unbridled energy of her inner search leads her to a meeting with an unusual, highly erudite man, a master of martial arts and a very mysterious Personality — Sensei. Impacting one to the depths of the soul, Sensei’s extraordinary worldview, his fascinating philosophy and knowledge about the world and a human being, dynamic martial arts, the wisdom in everyday situations, the alternative medicine and ancient spiritual practices (including effective techniques of fighting negative thoughts), the phenomena of human capabilities — the heroine comes to know all this and much more by coming into contact with Sensei’s world. But most importantly, she finds the answers to her main inner questions and learns from her own experience that humans have been granted the most powerful creating force from above — the power of faith and love.

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PROLOGUE

The silent, warm summer night was well underway, relieving the bustling day of its tiresome activity. Its deep, dark veil was calming, sweetly lulling all living beings and slowly submerging them into a deep sleep. Its charm didn't only affect the hearts of those in love — for them eternity passed as an instant. On the sea shore, in an uninhabited place, a lonely fire crackled, casting mysterious shadows. A formless creature sat alone in its presence. Its only witness was an infinite Universe, brightly illuminated by starlit worlds, and the Moon, inviting eternity with its silvery sparkling path on the water's surface. All around there was a stillness that even the sea wouldn't dare disturb with the noise of its waves. Time seemed to stop, losing all meaning. It was the moment of eternity.

The creature started to move, making strange sounds, and slowly divided itself into two separate parts. Human voices could be heard in the air, saying,

“God, life can be so good sometimes in this sinful world.”

“Honestly, I don't even want to leave.”

“That's what I'm telling you.”

The fire was blazing brightly, jealously trying to occupy some space in the night. Its luminous glares with varying success were first swollen by the darkness, then fearlessly cast far ahead, illuminating nature with its natural tones.

“So, what will your decision be, Rigden?”

“My conclusions are, of course, sad. But I think it's still worth waiting a little while for a final decision... I suppose it's worthwhile to remain here for some time.”

“It’s not all that bad. What’s more, since you’ve decided to stay, give them another chance and let me...”

Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a light breeze flew over the sea, breathing life into the moonlit path, which charmingly sparkled with its silver hues, leading the way into a hazy distance. It was as if nature was teasing the creature, embracing it on the one hand with its eternity, and on the other, with its natural earthly beauty. Apparently, some innermost mystery, known only to itself, was hidden in this delicate gust.



1

It's no secret that Destiny guides us through a complex journey of interrelations, natural phenomena, and intricately bound paths of occurrences and coincidences. At the very end, it leads to a tangible event, a final crossroads in life's path. And here, a human may dare to hope that he is given a chance to choose. But the same implacable power of Destiny, through a series of logically-bound circumstances, unnoticeably helps a person to make his own choice. Because a chain of events, according to its plan, inevitably should draw people together, people who don't yet know each other and who, living in their own small world, don't even suspect it at the moment. But this convergence will make them work together, mutually seeking the same goal, generating a great number of key events in the lives of other people.

I shared the same fate. I was born in a remote Russian village. My parents were in the military, fulfilling their duty in an honest and fair way. That is why their command, in the same honest and fair way, was sending us into different parts of our boundless motherland — the Soviet Union. That's how our family got to Ukraine, "the country of blooming chestnuts," where we settled down in rose-scented miner's land.

I should say that I'm quite an outgoing person with various interests. It was never a problem for me to find common language with new people. That's why my persona quickly joined a group of like-minded individuals in my new home. Together we visited different hobby groups, including ballroom dancing, going to the cinema, cafe, and the theatre. In general, as they say, my life took its normal course.

Everything was great but... up to a certain moment. Because Destiny has its own plans. Unexpectedly for my relatives and especially for me, at the very peak of my youth, destiny threw me into a vortex of such difficult trials that I almost died in it of complete hopelessness and an animalistic fear of death.



2

At the beginning of my last school year, I began having chronic, strong and long lasting headaches. My parents took me for a check-up. The doctors only discussed the results with them which made me very apprehensive. It gave rise to a number of concerns that one after another, started to torment my soul. The complete uncertainty was the worst thing of all.

And all those circumstances were terribly scary until, by chance, I overheard my mother's conversation with a doctor:

"...but there must be a way out?"

"Of course, there's always something that can be done. You see, this small tumour can grow progressively larger over time, and that's very dangerous. It's best to operate now before it's too late... By the way, there's a very good clinic in Moscow that specialises in these kinds of problems... they have excellent specialists. The only problem is that it's hard to get an appointment there. The waiting list is scheduled for years in advance and the girl needs the operation as fast as possible. Otherwise...it's hard to predict the development of the disease, especially if it's a brain tumour. Sometimes people can live a year, and sometimes even longer. In any case, you shouldn't lose hope. Maybe you have connections that will help you get in there..."

I didn't listen to the rest of the conversation. Only one phrase was pulsating in my head: "One year...and the end!" Emptiness and hopelessness gripped my soul. The noisy hospital fuss gradually faded out, giving way to a rising whirl of thoughts: "I will die in the prime of my life! But I haven't even started to live...Why me? What have I done to deserve this?!" I was in utter despair. Tears streamed down my cheeks. It became unbearably stuffy in this hospital tomb, and I ran to the exit. The

doctor's voice was ringing in my ears like a threatening echo: "One year! One year...One!"

The fresh air hit me in the face with its dizzying aroma. Little by little, I came to my senses and looked around. The rain had just fallen and the trees stood as if in a fairy tale, with brilliantly sparkling pendants. Purity and renewal was shining all around. Warmth from the ground covered the asphalt with a light haze — creating a surreal impression. God, how wonderful the beauty of nature was! This natural beauty that I had never noticed before now gained some new meaning, a new charm of its own. All the small problems that had brought me so many worries every day now seemed to be so trivial and stupid. With bitterness and anguish, I looked at the bright sun, the fresh green grass, cheerful birds flitting, and I thought: "How foolishly I have spent my life. It's a pity that I didn't have time to do something really worthwhile!" All previous resentments, gossip, vanity — all lost their meaning. Now all those around me were lucky people, and I was a prisoner in a death castle.

For some time, I was terribly depressed. I lost interest in school, everyday life, and all of my previous hobbies. I avoided my parents, locking my bedroom door and indifferently turning pages of books and magazines. I really wanted to cry on somebody's shoulder, to tell someone how afraid I was of dying before I had even started to live. My closest friend was, of course, my mother. But how can a mother's heart endure such a soul-wrenching confession from the lips of her own child? One day, sitting at the table, alone with my heavy thoughts, I took up a pen and described all my feelings on a piece of notebook paper. I felt a lot better. Then I started a diary. Afterwards, it would become my best friend, a friend that patiently endured all my thoughts about my extraordinary destiny.

The only thing that distracted me from my gloomy thoughts was communication with my friends. Of course, I didn't tell them anything about my disease. I didn't want to see them with mournful eyes and faces full of condolence like my parents' — that would have killed me once and for all. Their funny chatter amused me, they discussed problems that seemed to me a complete absurdity in this life. Now I looked at everything in the light of some kind of new vision, with jealousy of a person who must leave this mysterious, still undiscovered world in his heyday. Something inside me had definitely changed and broken down.



3

When my friends finally managed to drag me out to the cinema from my voluntary home imprisonment, I was surprised to find that I started to perceive things completely differently — even movies. It was around the time when martial arts started to come into fashion. In new cafes, they showed the most popular martial arts hits for a ruble or three. The mastery of the athletes, unusual cases of their self-recovery, their will, and their spiritual power intrigued me. Of course, I knew that it was all acting. However, I couldn't stop thinking that many scenes were based on real phenomenal facts from the history of mankind. This inspired me to search for articles, books, and magazines on the subject. My evident interest in these phenomena spread to my friends. With relentless passion, they began searching for rare books wherever they could.

Amazed by the extraordinary capabilities of these people and by the depth of their understanding of this world, I felt that it had awoken some kind of internal power in me... a kind of hope, or vague anticipation that death of my body **wouldn't be my end!** This insight so touched and inspired something inside that my depression started to lift and I somehow felt a new taste for life. Even though my mind, like before, was aware of inevitable death because few people had ever recovered from cancer. But this new understanding didn't dispirit me and didn't cause fear. Something inside of me simply refused to believe it. And what's most interesting, is that it unconsciously started to resist my heavy, dark thoughts.

This new feeling made me revisit my life again and contemplate how foolishly I'd lived it. Although I hadn't done anything bad, it was absolutely obvious that every day, every hour, I was justifying my own selfishness, excusing my own laziness, I wasn't striving to know myself but rather how to

gain more prestige in society through this knowledge. Or, to cut a long story short, in all my life, through my studies and family life, only one thought was hiding behind it all: “Me, myself, and I.” And the realisation that this small bodily empire of “me” was coming to its big end, that is, to its real death, awoke all that animal fear, horror, despair, and hopelessness that I had been experiencing so intensely in the last couple of weeks. I realised that death is not as fearsome as its foolish anticipation. Because in reality, it’s not the bodily death you are waiting for, but the crash of your egotistic world, which you’ve been “working so hard” to build all your life.

After this realisation, I clearly understood that the life I had lived and what I’d done is a sandcastle on the sea shore, where any wave will wash away all my efforts in a second. **And nothing will be left**, only emptiness, the same emptiness that was there before me. It seemed to me that most people waste their lives with sandcastles, meticulously building them, some closer and some further from the coastline. But the result will inevitably be the same for all of them — one day all will be destroyed by the wave of time. But there are people who sit on dry land and impartially observe this human illusion. Or maybe not even observe, but look beyond it, at something eternal and unchanging. I wonder what they think about, what is their inner world like? After all, if they have comprehended this mortality, it means that they have realised something really important, something really worth spending their life on?

These questions began to worry me more than anything else. But I didn’t find answers to them. Then I turned to the book sources of major world religions of humankind. However, the great figures, such as Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed — were those who had already been observing from the shore. But how did they get there? It’s written everywhere: by concentration, faith, prayer. But how? Explanations of their followers were so confusing, so odd and veiled, that my brain was falling asleep when my eyes were making the effort to read the same words ten times over. The teachings of those geniuses were interesting, but they only reflected the common truth of all mankind. Perhaps the essential grain of knowledge was hidden in between the lines. But, alas, I was just an ordinary human being, not the “chosen” one, so I wasn’t able to grasp it with my mind, although the reading of certain lines did evoke something inside of me.

Then a new question arose. Why are there so many people in this world who believe? If they believe, it means they hope for something in the future. In all world religions, there is life after death. Even after throwing away the shell of legends and myths, there lies the possibility that there really is **Something** — but what? How does it express itself? How does it manifest itself?

I tried to get deeper into the paths of religion but just got more confused. The only thing that I understood was that there is one thing that unites all the world religions — it is the power of people's faith, their aspiration to understand God and themselves. And to my surprise, I discovered that phenomenal people, who managed to achieve the initial real results on their path, were searching for the very same thing in their cognition. And in fact, many of them did not belong to any religion. They were just intelligent and talented individuals.

So, what is it all about? Why is such phenomenon inherent in human nature? What's behind it? There were plenty of questions, but too few answers. That gave me cause to search further.

Gradually, everyday life was getting back to normal. Moreover, some unusual courage started to arise in me because in my case I had nothing to lose. Therefore, I had to quickly fulfil all my desires. "If I spend every remaining day productively, that could make up for my whole life." Arming myself with such a motto, I started to look intensively for literature of interest, I played sports, caught up with school, and attended different hobby groups. All my days were completely filled up, and I didn't have time to think about the bad. Even though the headaches reminded me of the worst, despite them, I kept eagerly searching and attempting to learn everything new that I wasn't aware of or didn't know how to do.

While my parents were trying to find different loopholes in order to get into the Moscow clinic, my unbridled aspirations brought me to study Kung Fu. Our group didn't miss any films about our eastern martial arts heroes, and with a sinking heart we watched the triple somersaults, overturns, undercuts, and jumps of these sportsmen. And when they started to open Wushu schools in our town, where they were actually practicing Kung Fu, our group was overtaken by the thrill of battle once and for all. We visited one school after another. But in the first school, the teacher was too angry and ignorant; in the second, the teacher considered himself to be practically Bruce Lee, even though he was only teaching ordinary wrestling mixed with boxing; in the third, the guy was simply a cheater and a drunkard. We were looking for a Teacher who would be like the heroes we had seen in the eastern martial arts films. And, as they say, the one who seeks will always find. But what we found was more than unexpected — it surpassed all of our ideals even in our dreams.



4

After a few unsuccessful visits to several schools, we were told to try a school located on the outskirts of our town, near an old mine. We didn't believe that we would see anything better than what we had seen in the town centre, but something was definitely drawing us there. After spending half a day questioning a great number of locals, we finally found it.

"Indeed," my friend Tatyana confessed in a low voice, "this place is certainly quite scary. If we are going to be practicing here, I will die from fear. I already have goosebumps."

I too felt a slight shiver, even though the weather was quite warm. Approaching a dilapidated old building, blooming with moss, even always-silent Slava couldn't keep quiet:

"Well, well! I think we've just wasted our time. Don't tell me that someone trains in this hole? I bet only mice practice here at night."

Andrey, whose face and figure were slightly reminiscent of Russian Schwarzenegger, concluded, "Generally speaking, the outside form always corresponds to its contents. It's very likely that now we'll find proof of that once again."

And pulling the handle of a worn-out door, he heard crafty words cited by Kostya with regret:

"Oh, how noticeable still within you is a desk scientist."

With loud laughter, we rushed into the gym. But our cheerful mood quickly changed to mute amazement because inside there were around sixty people.

"Wow," Slava whistled, "this is something else!"

But I wasn't listening to my friends' puzzled remarks. My eyes were immediately fixed on a fair-haired man. Even though he was no different

from the others standing in the crowd, something about him intrigued me. "God, his face looks so familiar," I thought. His appearance reminded me of someone I knew well a very long time ago. But who? I started to dig deep in my memory, recalling all my friends from different cities, my numerous relatives and their friends. But all my attempts were in vain. I was awoken from my wild stream of memories by the melodic voice of Sensei (the Teacher) who turned out to be that mysterious young man.

"So, newcomers," he said with a smile, "why do you stand like a girl after her first kiss? Here you either practice or leave. It's your choice."

That voice!... I was so amazed. For sure I'd heard his voice before. But where and when?

Our small group went through to the locker rooms. All the while, buzzing thoughts continued to demand satisfaction of their useless curiosity. Getting ready for the training, I tried to ask other people around me about Sensei, to find out where he was from. But it turned out that nobody knew anything for sure. This intrigued me even more.

Unlike slow Tatyana, I quickly put on a white kimono and went to the gym hoping to find more answers there. But there I only found more questions. What struck me at first was the fact that there were people of all ages, from fourteen to fifty years old, and that was strange by itself. I hadn't seen anything like this in any previous school. My persona thought: "What can unite so many people of different beliefs, ages, and life experiences? If it's only martial arts, then what kind of master and psychologist do you have to be in order to attract and keep all of them interested?"

When the training began, the second thing that struck me was the ideal discipline and friendly atmosphere that surrounded us. Nobody here forced anybody to do anything, but no one ever thought of breaking the discipline. Everyone sincerely tried to do their best, and that was astonishing in comparison with our previous unfortunate experiments. Our group tried to show our best sides, intensely puffing, groaning, and sweating. But even during this activity (painful, as it seemed, for my badly trained extremities), one thought didn't leave me: "How was it possible to create such discipline without, as they say, carrot and stick? What have all these people found here for themselves that they train their bodies with such enthusiasm? And why do they all train in silence?!" My feminine mind finally rebelled. "Why won't anybody say at least one word!" For my curious, talkative nature, this was a complete disaster. But I hoped to gain at least something during the training.

After the warm-up, we heard three strong claps from the sempai (senior disciple). It was a kind of signal. People started to form a circle and sat with

their knees on the floor. When everybody sat down, the Teacher calmly made his way to its centre. He began to tell the history of Tiger style as if he were telling it not to the crowd of disciples, but to his old friends. For the first time, I learned that Tiger style is the only style that preserved its original martial spirit without any changes. It appeared in China. One of the Shaolin masters observed the behaviour of tigers and created his own style, distinguished from the others by greater aggressiveness and danger. The style has no sportive roots. Its martial spirit was passed from Teacher to disciple, changing his consciousness to the level where he begins to feel and to think like a tiger. By its wisdom, it's only inferior to a more ancient style called Dragon.

"Alright, theory is just theory; it's time to warm up a little," Sensei said.

He called three fighters — strong, tall, athletic guys to the tatami and demonstrated a couple of defence and attack techniques from this style. First, he showed the moves at speed that the real blows, as he considered, were happening. Honestly, I and probably many others too didn't even notice when the Teacher struck the blows. All that my eyes could record was the fact that Sensei passed by three fighters and waved his hands for a fraction of a second. I didn't even realise what had happened until they fell. The same thing happened during the demonstration of defence techniques. The speed of the blows seemed to be unreal to me. And my brain, unwilling to comprehend that, suggested artfully: "Maybe they fell down on purpose, probably pretending." But it was impossible that the men's expressions, distorted by pain, were faked. Sensei approached them calmly and helped restore their breathing by poking his fingers into some points on their bodies. After that, the boys were able to recover from pain and shock and continue the training. That entire scene was accompanied by silent contemplation of the amazed crowd.

After this, the Teacher started to explain the technique of the Tiger style in detail, slowly showing each movement and the targets for the blows. I thought that these movements would be too complicated to have time to strike blows in a fraction of a second.

Having split up into pairs, people did their best and repeated diligently what they had just seen. A plump man of about fifty years old was puffing not far from me, comically ejecting his short hands and legs. His face, with chubby, bulged-out lips, looked like a big dumpling and was neatly shaved. His wise eyes looked through thick glasses. A small bald spot, with errant hairs turning grey, was shining on his head. "And how did he get in here?" I thought. "It would be hard to believe by his appearance that he has been

practicing martial arts all his life... What is he looking for here? Has he decided to master Kung Fu in his old age?!"

My thoughts were interrupted by Sensei's voice correcting the attack technique of a pair of young, strong boys near me.

"Who strikes like that? What are you doing, Valentin Leonidovich? You are a future doctor, aren't you? You should understand why you strike, where you strike, and what is going on during this process. Your goal is to cause a painful shock, not just to flap your hands. A blow should hit the exact location of the nerve or nerve plexus. It should be momentary, instantaneous. The faster the better. Why? To cause a spasm in the muscle tissue. In turn, the transmitted nerve impulse, through reflex channels of the nervous system, will cause intense irritation of the nerve-knot, which will inevitably lead to inhibition of a certain part in the brain cortex. In other words, the man will fall into kind of a stupor caused by the shock of pain..."

A crowd of curious guys began to gather around him during this conversation. Sensei continued to explain, "But the blow should be delivered taking into consideration that every human being has his own anatomical peculiarities. That's why not everyone will be affected by an ordinary blow to this anatomical point. So, in order to be one hundred percent sure, you should strike not with a straight "tsuki" (blow) but a blow with a twisted fist at the moment of contact, so that the blow goes deep inside. As a result, a large "damage zone" will appear...

"This strike goes into the point between diaphragm and solar plexus. Why exactly there? Because at this point, there passes one of the twelve pairs of cranial nerves, the so-called "Nervus Vagus", or the vagus nerve. It not only passes that point but also forms the nerve plexus which forms two vagus trunks close to the esophageal opening. And what is the vagus nerve? It is, first of all, innervations of respiratory organs, the digestive system, the thyroid and parathyroid glands, adrenal glands, kidneys. It also takes part in innervations of the heart and vessels. Therefore, the correctly delivered blow to this point causes an intense irritation of the nervous system, which temporarily distorts functioning of the cerebellum. And the cerebellum, as you know, is responsible for coordination of all movement functions. Person is momentarily disoriented. In other words, it means that you have time to make a conscious decision. For example, to deliver another blow or to run away.

The last remark caused a lot of smug smiles on the faces of the surrounding people, including myself. "What? To run away?!" I thought to myself dreamily. "If I've just dealt such a powerful blow, I would, I would... well, I wouldn't chicken out, that's for sure!"

At this moment, the Teacher looked at the smiling crowd and said seriously, “And why not run away, if that’s the best way out in this situation? In some cases, it’s a lot better to get hit ten times in your own face rather than kill... to take somebody’s life.”

His words made me flinch and turn red, ashamed by my own egoistic thoughts and megalomania. With bitterness, these words brought me back to the tough reality of my existence.

“Because human life is invaluable,” Sensei went on, “your objective is to cause only a muscle spasm, a painful shock, in order to prevent an undesirable development of the situation. And in no way, should you injure internal organs, break ribs or anything else; that is, you should not cause serious after-effects to your opponent. That’s why we spend so much time here, in order to master the right technique of blows. Otherwise, if you deliver a powerful, uncontrollable strike, it is possible to cause great harm to the body or even death. And what’s the point?!... You should respect human life because one day you may happen to be in his place... Or maybe one day he will save your life. Because it is very likely that when you are in trouble it will be this human who will appear to give you a helping hand and save you. **Because life is unpredictable and anything might happen in it — even the most unbelievable things that you cannot imagine.**”

Throughout the rest of the training, my persona was very impressed by this peculiar, easily understood lecture of profound anatomy and unusual philosophy. It completely captured my thoughts, and from time to time, I found myself thinking about what I had heard.

Three claps from the senior sempai meant the end of the training. When everyone traditionally lined up, he commanded:

“Dojo ni rei” (which means a bow to the martial spirit of the sports hall).
“Sensei ni rei.”

The Teacher also politely bowed in response and said, “We’ll meet as usual at the same time. And now whoever needs to, change, and whoever needs to, stay.”

“Oh boy! And who needs what? Who stays? I want to stay, too...” I thought to myself. But the majority ran in single file to the changing rooms, carrying me along. Running past Sensei, I saw the chubby man in glasses approaching him.

“Igor Mikhailovich,” he said to the Teacher, with respect in his voice. “Concerning our previous conversation. Here, I brought something for you to...”

I couldn’t hear the rest in the noise of laughter and the jokes of the guys running close to me. In the women’s changing room, a storm of emotions

already began to roar, caused by the discussion of the most vivid moments and Sensei's explanations. All this was happening amidst women putting on many layers of clothes on their wet bodies.

A girl with bright curls was changing next to me. Getting acquainted with her, I asked, "Have you been training here for long?"

"No, only for three months."

"And does he often tell and show such things?"

"Well, probably when it's necessary. But, when he is in a good mood, he shows much more... Today was nothing out of the ordinary."

"Not so bad, nothing out of the ordinary", I thought to myself. "I can't imagine what something special would be then?!"

"What style did he master, the Tiger?"

"Not only that. I've heard from the senior guys, who have been training here for a long time, that he has perfectly mastered the Dragon, Snake, Wing-Chun, Cat, Mantis, and Monkey styles, and a whole range of other styles that I just can't remember."

I gave her a distrustful gaze, "When did he have time to master all that? He looks like a young man. People sometimes spend their whole life mastering just one style."

"I was also surprised at first," she went on. "But the guys say that, according to the teacher, **a young body is not at all an indicator of the age of the soul.**" My new acquaintance answered, shrugging her shoulders.

"Who is he, then?!" I started to become nervous, and my old thoughts, together with this new information, once again began tormenting my unsatisfied curiosity.

"An ordinary man," I heard in reply.

Once we had changed, our group crowded before the exit and contemplated with admiration the unusual technique of a couple of athletically built guys who were training with the others who had stayed. I'd never seen such genuine, naturally beautiful undercuts, overthrows, and nimble, smooth withdrawals, even in movies. But what struck me the most was the speed of their movements. "Is it really possible to move at such speed and still be able to orientate yourself so well in space?" I thought to myself. "Nice work! And where is Sensei among them?"

Sensei turned out to be sitting quietly aside, looking through a pile of papers and books with bookmarks, presented by Dumpling. Two more men were sitting nearby carefully listening to the Teacher's explanations. Then Dumpling unfolded a yellowed map, and all four leaned over it as if it were a priceless treasure. Sensei started to mark something on the map with a pencil, constantly commenting and explaining it. I really wanted

to get my curious nose in there, but we were gently pushed by tall guys trying to get out.

“Hey, guys! Why are you standing here? Don’t you know the law of this dojo? Here you either train or stay outside. If you want, go back in, and if you are going out, go out, don’t disturb the others.”

Together we headed outside. “It’s not fair!” my persona thought jealously. “They’ve stayed, why can’t we?” But, of course, I didn’t say anything aloud.



5

We spent almost a whole hour waiting for the only bus in that district, strenuously tamping down the patch of ground that was called the “bus stop”. But the bus didn’t come. So we walked to the tramway, which the locals said was fairly close: only a thirty or forty-minute walk. But because we weren’t familiar with local ditches and potholes, we spent an hour and a half getting there. However, nobody paid attention to the unpleasant circumstances. Everybody excitedly shared their impressions of the training.

“So,” said Kostya smiling, “are we going to the next training?”

Almost simultaneously we all said, “Yes!”

“I don’t know about you,” said Andrey, the biggest fan of martial arts among us, “but I think I found what I wanted, at least for now. Cool training!”

“Yes,” Kostya interrupted him, “today I learned a lot more than in the whole month of our wandering around other schools.”

The guys nodded in agreement. Suddenly Slava stopped, tapped himself on the forehead, and said with horror, “Shoot! We forgot to ask how much it costs!”

Andrey placed his hand on Slava’s shoulder and reassured him, “Don’t worry, old man, I asked Sensei. He said: ‘The more the better. But not more than five rubles. Preference will be given to pure gold of royal coinage’.”

Everybody laughed. Slava even took a deep breath of relief which was understandable because he was a good guy but from a poor family. He could not afford to pay for the training in the other schools. To pay fifteen or twenty rubles a month was a real fortune for him. Loudly recalling some episodes that happened during the training and the teacher’s funny jokes, we didn’t even notice how we arrived at the tram stop.



6

The working week had begun. We got very interested in the vagus nerve story and body innervations in general. For the remaining days of the week, we tried to find out details from our biology and anatomy teachers. But they didn't give us any concrete answers, saying only that most likely it had to do with advanced anatomy, which was studied in medical universities. This fanned the fire of our interest even more and gave us an impulse to search for these kinds of books through our friends and relatives.

All that time, I was trying hard to search through my memory in order to figure out where I knew Sensei from. I even took the time to go through all my family photo albums. But my attempts were in vain. As before, life went on as a continuous search for answers to unknown questions.

We could hardly wait for the next training. So as not to be late, we departed two hours early. When our group arrived at the gym, we were surprised to discover that we weren't first, even though there was still half an hour until training started. There were thirty people already waiting, like us, unwilling to miss something interesting. Our guys, getting acquainted with some of them, jokingly came to the conclusion that we, in comparison to those poor guys, live quite close by. Because they lived in such distant districts, some people had to spend almost half a day getting there, changing transportation a couple of times and wearing out their soles walking a great many miles. And only a few lucky ones drove here in their own cars.

"So, guys," Andrey concluded, "I guess we can show off seeing as we are locals!"

Sensei arrived soon after, surrounded by a group of guys. People started to smile and act friendly. Separate groups merged into a single crowd to

greet the Teacher as he entered the open gym. We also got caught up in this wave of good feelings. But our joy didn't last long.

At the very beginning of the warm-up, two respectable looking men walked in and, approaching Sensei, began whispering something to him in a familiar way. Having agreed upon something, the Teacher entrusted the senior sempai to continue the training and, slipping a jacket on right over his kimono, walked out with them. From that point forward, endless suffering of our extremities began.

The senior sempai, obviously planning to train us the same way he trained his muscular body, carried out a warm-up in such a tough tempo, as if we were being trained for a gold medal. There was such a difference between Sensei, with his graduated exercises, and the senior sempai, who tried to make us Olympic champions with a full set of medals before Teacher returned. At the end of the warm-up, we heard the command to relax, which for some reason was called the "dead body pose" by sempai. People in the gym, including my persona, fell down to the floor with such a loud sound that it really looked like exhausted dead bodies were lying all around. Later, I found out that the sempai interpreted some commands in an unusual way because he was a policeman.

After that exhausting warm-up, we started to follow our chief instructor's basic exercises of mastering blows, blocks, and stances. I felt as if I was in the Japanese army, where soldiers executed commands in an exact and simultaneous manner, counting loudly in their native language.

When Sensei walked in, my persona breathed a sigh of relief. He took his jacket off and continued the training as if nothing had happened. Noticing a mistake made by a young man standing in the first row, he corrected him courteously: "The correct blow should be delivered with this part," he said, as he circled the area of bones on the forefinger and middle finger. "This way... You shouldn't use these two neighbouring fingers (ring finger and pinkie finger) because an incorrect blow can seriously damage your wrist."

Addressing the crowd, he added: "You have to work long and hard on yourselves not just to correctly deliver blows, but so as not to harm yourselves. A straight fist blow, as I have already said, is one of the basic martial arts techniques. And without thorough preparation, the fist can be easily hurt. If you practice the correct blow every day, the flexor tendons of the fingers, which are located over here, will part over the sides of the metacarpophalangeal articulations of the second and the third fingers in such a way that the bones will become protected and dense. Then will you be able to deliver blows easily without harming yourselves."

Someone then asked, “In order to develop our joints in such a way, should we start hitting something very hard?”

“No need for such a sacrifice,” objected Igor Mikhailovich. “Start hitting a punching bag. Or, if somebody doesn’t have one, use a sandbag. I’m sure everyone can make one at home. But what’s important is to develop the blow every day, gradually increasing speed. And don’t be lazy, really work conscientiously, at full capacity. Then results won’t take long to appear.”

The training ended with another demonstration of new techniques from the Tiger style and practice of the previous moves. Again, after the training, puffy Dumpling glued himself (there is no other way to say it) to Sensei with his questions. There were many people around who wished to talk to Sensei or to listen to him. But Dumpling impudently made his way through the surrounding crowd, including us, and took the teacher aside, obviously considering his question more important. Giving up waiting for the end of their conversation, we went home.



7

A couple of days later, we got good news: somehow Kostya managed to get the university manual of anatomy through friends of his parents. Our joy was infinite. First, of course, we satisfied our curiosity about the vagus nerve by touching and feeling its routes in our bodies. Kostya wasn't too shy during this experiment and conducted his diagnostics right on Tatyana, making her squeak and giving rise to a squall of jokes from us. Then we examined the structure of our hands more thoroughly. And later we started to examine in detail, with evident interest, our bones, muscles, tendons, nerves, organs, and brain. I can't say that I knew it all before. In general, we studied all of this during anatomy classes. But it was the first time that I looked at it from a different point of view. And it was the first time I was interested in it not because of school, but rather to know it for myself.

I really wanted to examine my muscles and joints in order to understand why and how we move. How do muscles take part in our exercises, and how is it reflected on our internal organs? What happens during the blow? What is pain from the physiological point of view? Why do people suffer at all? And finally, what is going on in my own brain? Perhaps, the last thought was the most important because subconsciously it had been tormenting me.

The guys commented on what we had seen during the training just as passionately, but they were motivated by their own reasons. We agreed unanimously that we didn't know anything in this sphere and that we should fill this gap in our knowledge together. In order to do this, we spontaneously created a special card game. We drew separate cards for bones, muscles, blood and nerve vessels, the lymphatic system, organs, and the brain. Then we made attempts to put the puzzle together, one by one, trying to identify them not just by name, but also by the corresponding functions. At first, it

was hard. But the experience was accompanied by such jokes and such an excited atmosphere that, whether you wanted to or not, you'd remember.

Before the next training session, we formulated a couple of questions on biomechanics of the blow and decided to ask Sensei after the training in order to find a reason to stay longer. But that day, life itself gave us an opportunity to do this without our secret conspiracy plan.

At the end of the training, Sensei organised sparrings. People sat down on the floor, creating a big circle, and fighters were selected and invited by Sensei two by two into its centre. Andrey was chosen, and his opponent was a novice, also brawny and athletically built. After making a traditional bow to each other, the guys started the fight. For some time, they fought as equals. But Andrey turned out to be faster and nimbler, and that enabled him to win. The approving clap of Sensei meant the end of the fight. Our guy helped his competitor stand up. Bowing to each other and to the teacher, they took their places.

And when more serious fighters began to walk out onto the improvised ring, Andrey couldn't stand watching. Inspired by his recent victory, he volunteered to fight again. He lost almost immediately. This incident greatly fanned his disappointment with himself. Infected by his emotional mood, our group worked up the courage and we asked Sensei if we could stay for additional training. The teacher answered smiling, without objections, "You know the law of this dojo: If you want to train, you stay and train."

That day, fortune was on our side because Dumpling was not present at the training to irritate us with his importunity. Access to Sensei was free, and we could ask him about all aspects of the training that interested us.

While the majority of the crowd was leaving, all the rest were perfecting their weak sides of the blows. The ones we named "speedy guys" worked on their own level, and the rest of us on our own. But Sensei was closely watching all and correcting the mistakes he noticed. In the already deserted building, he showed us new kata (shadow boxing), which united the speed of undercuts, blows, overturns, and sharp withdrawals. When I started to practice them, Sensei suddenly came up to me from behind and, putting his hand on my shoulder, said "And you better not do this."

I turned to him in surprise: "Why?"

At this moment our eyes met at a close distance. I had such a drilling feeling as if someone were looking through me from head to toe with an X-ray machine. I'd never seen such a gaze. It was very unusual, piercing, and strange.

"Because."

That answer puzzled me a little. I stood quite confused, not knowing what to say.

After a short silence, he finally added: "It would be better for you to do these kata."

Sensei showed me movements that smoothly changed one into another, with deep breathing following them. All this time I was repeating after him almost automatically. And when he went to help others, endless questions started to flash in my head: "What did he mean? Can it be that he knows about my diagnosis? But how?! I didn't tell any of my friends, and so far, I didn't show it in any way during training." And during this process of thinking, I made an unbelievable discovery. At school, home, at ballroom dances, I sometimes had a sudden, throbbing, continuous headache, but here, no matter how much I tortured my body, this headache never appeared. "Why? What is the reason for this?"

While I was deep in thought working on new techniques, I didn't notice everyone crowding around Sensei, having interrupted their exercises. And when my persona finally realised it, I joined the listeners in order not to miss something important.

"Can you tell us how we can learn a technique of the real blow, is it just by training our muscles?" Andrey asked.

"No. First of all, by training your mind," Sensei replied.

"And how is that?"

"Well, to be clearer, let's put it this way... A muscle is like a mechanism that executes its function. It has certain programs coming from the brain in the form of neuron impulses. As a result of the work of such programs, signals arise in the brain that cause contractions of a group of muscles. Thus, it results not only in movements of extremities but also in complex moving acts. It means that our training leads to a purposeful perfection of our brain and therefore of our muscles. The point is that the better and faster the trained brain works, the better and faster the muscles work."

"And what about the highest mastery of martial arts fighters?" Kostya asked, joining the discussion. "I've read somewhere that masters can deliver a blow before they even think of it. How does it happen and why?"

"Well, guys. You touch upon such a serious subject. But I'll try to explain in a few words... The trick is not to simply train your muscles but to imagine a concrete situation, an opponent. And the most important thing is to know exactly where you hit, into which tissue, and what is happening inside of that body — what's the power level of the blow, and so forth. If a man strikes thoughtlessly, just to practice, then all his efforts are in vain! A true fighter, while practicing on a makiwara, first of all works with an

image. He imagines how the opponent opens up, and at that moment he delivers a blow, being conscious of all possible consequences. In other words, he trains his brain."

"And what happens in the brain during that?" one of the senior guys asked.

"The brain evaluates the situation through visual perception, analyses it and makes a decision. Then it sends that command to the cerebellum or, in other words, to the motion centre. And from there, through the nerves, the corresponding signal arrives into the muscles. All that activity is being fixed in the memory. Then, during the fight, this memory unconsciously returns but without a complex chain of analysis and commands in the brain. In other words, when an opponent just opens up, a master has already counteracted automatically. Let's say it's a different frame of mind, a different innervation, and different workings of the brain.

"Does it happen on a subconscious level, from the physiological point of view?" asked Kostya, showing off his erudition.

"You are absolutely right. Complex reflex motion reactions occur now on the level of unconditional reflex," said Sensei smiling. He added, "In the school anatomy program, such things are described as conditional and unconditional reflexes. The unconditional are genetically designed by nature. They determine the regulation of the internal environment of the body and preservation of the species. And conditional reflexes include the acquired reflexes arising as a result of accumulated experience and new skills. But even they are based on unconditional reflexes. Human beings have a lot of unconditional reflexes, connections, reactions regulating the spinal-brain, the after-brain, and the midbrain, the subcortical sections of cortexes of the cerebral hemispheres, and the cerebellum..."

"And is this 'the highest Art' that you told us about in the beginning?" Andrey asked with excitement.

"No, it's only a first step to real mastery. In 'the highest Art,' the major work is based on foresight. It is the work of epiphysis which is located above the cerebellum in the epithalamus area of the thalamencephalon.

"And is epiphysis just a section of white matter?" asked Kostya.

"No, it's the so-called pineal gland that weighs only one carat. However, it plays a huge role in the vital activity of the body. It is one of the most mysterious parts of the human brain and of the human as a whole. Unfortunately, science doesn't know anything about its true functions."

"And who does know?" asked curious Kostya.

"Those who need to know," Sensei answered with a sly smile and went on. "So, working on foresight, a master subconsciously develops the ability to

catch his opponent's thoughts. It means that, as soon as the opponent thinks about striking somewhere, the master has already simultaneously taken the exact counteraction that is necessary. All this happens unconsciously, in a split second.

"I wonder if only masters of martial arts encounter these phenomena of instantaneous velocity?" Andrey asked thoughtfully.

"Why? Not only. Many people often face these phenomena of mind. Some acquire it after long special training. For example, circus acrobats that catch knives or arrows at great speed. Other people have experienced the influence of unconditional reflexes in their lives. Let's say, you are seriously scared by someone or something, for example, by a dog; you can momentarily execute a series of movements. And only later, when the danger has passed, you realise how fast you have done it. This ability is implied from the very beginning in human genes. Otherwise, people wouldn't have survived in ancient times when they had to save themselves by running from mammoths, sabre-toothed tigers, or other predators.

We stood silently, enchanted by Sensei's words. And then we were suddenly interrupted by somebody knocking on the door. It caught me off guard, and everything inside of me contracted. It didn't sound like the knock of someone out for an evening walk. Sensei calmly approached the door and opened it under the watchful eyes of our group.

"Oh, it's good that I've caught you here," an unknown man greeted him, shaking his hand. "I was just about to look for you at home. You see, there is this case..."

"All right, wait a second," remarked Sensei. Turning to us, he said, "Guys, you have fifteen more minutes and then we have to go home."

Half an hour later, we were standing outside, waiting for the others. Igor Mikhailovich closed the gym and quickly said goodbye to us, then drove off in a car.

"Well," I was angry with myself, "I wanted to ask Sensei after the training about his mysterious 'because,' but it didn't work out. I should have asked him in the gym. But there are too many curious ears over there. That's the trouble!"

On the way home, everyone thought about their own experiences. And this wasn't a strange thing, after such trainings there was always something to think about. Some of us thought silently and some aloud. For almost half of the journey, Andrey was trying to convince us — or most likely himself — that he had lost just by accident.

"It's a pity that I didn't have nunchaku with me. Never mind, I will bring them to the next training. And then I'll show them!"

That spectacle promised to be really thrilling, as we knew how good Andrey was with nunchaku. It was his strong point.



8

Our group looked forward to this training like no other before. We came early. The gym was open. Some guys, having already changed, began to warm up. Sensei stood aside and talked with enthusiasm to a gangly old man who was so skinny that his kimono was hanging on him like a coat-hanger. Close by, standing with a group of men, was Dumpling. By the expression on his face, one could see that he didn't hear the funny jokes his group were telling. It was as if his ears had turned into a radar and were picking up the slightest sound coming from Sensei and the old man. "Gosh!" I thought with indignation, "He is here again!"

Following us, a couple of guys from our dojo walked in loudly, in an elated mood. They were accompanied by an untidy, yet proud looking man, about forty years old, with a week's worth of old bristle on his face. The guys greeted Sensei and announced with evident pleasure:

"We just met a very interesting man, an extrasensory individual... His name is Vitaliy Yakovlevich."

With these words, the dishevelled man made a ceremonious bow with his head and again put on a self-satisfied air.

"He possesses extraordinary abilities, and he has kindly agreed to demonstrate them to our group..."

Sensei made a polite bow in reply and said, "It would be very interesting to see."

"And very instructional," added Vitaliy Yakovlevich meaningfully, raising up his forefinger.

Our huge curious crowd began to gather around him. Meanwhile, "the extrasensory one," with an air of great expertise, reached into the torn pocket

of his jacket and pulled out a dozen common kitchen spoons wrapped in a dirty rag.

“What do you think,” Kostya quietly whispered to Andrey. “Where did this Neanderthal man get these treasures of human civilisation?”

“I think he has stolen them from somewhere, probably,” replied Andrey.

“I wonder, does he even know how to use them?” Kostya remarked, smiling.

Meanwhile, Vitaliy Yakovlevich, in an emphatic manner, undressed down to his waist and, having uncovered his wrinkled fat stomach, began to diligently stick the back sides of spoons to his chest. Our guys burst out laughing, and Kostya added:

“Wow! That’s why they say that equipment in the hands of a savage is just a pile of metal!”

A slight wave of amazement ran through the crowd. The spoons became really stuck, and “the extrasensory one” was now grandly walking with a puffed-out chest as if it he was covered with medals of honour.

One of the guys asked, “How are you doing this? How can you explain it?”

It seemed like this was the question Vitaliy Yakovlevich was waiting for. With obvious pleasure, he started to talk instructively about bioenergy and informational fields, biological human magnetism, its phenomenal manifestation only through chosen people, and its all-powerful influence. His speech finally reached its culmination. Walking in front of the astonished crowd with his naked torso covered with the hanging spoons and convincingly gesticulating, “the extrasensory one” was passionately declaiming:

“...this powerful, pulsating emanation born from the Power of the World’s Universal Reason embodies the last step to the perfection of spirit. It is able to surround the human mind with the power of its aura. And not only to separate itself from the human body but also to exist out of the body together with the soul. I would say, existence beyond the border is quite conscious.

Having accumulated the energy of this cosmic emanation, I have discovered fantastic superpowers in myself. I have an invaluable gift of magnetism, clairvoyance, and healing. I have the power to miraculously heal all diseases. I cure through an all-penetrating, omnipresent double flow of emanation, which appears to be an initial cause of all energy and informational fields of the great Universe. With my positive energy, I restore power, body, human aura, and also break the hex spell, take away the evil eye...”

I noticed that even though I didn't quite understand this peculiar lecture, my thoughts started to search in it for ways of my possible cure. "Maybe he will be able to heal me?! Although, of course, it's very hard to believe, but maybe..." Encouraged by the elusive hope, I started to listen much more diligently to the convincing speech of "the extrasensory one," already not paying any attention to his appearance.

"...My might, as I was perfecting it, became immense...Here, as you can see, this is one of its manifestations," and he pointed out the stuck spoons.

It looked quite strange. Making circles around the listening crowd, he stuck his stomach out further and further and slightly leaned back, like a penguin. I looked at Sensei. He stood, with hands crossed on his chest and a slightly lowered head, probably already tired of listening. He was smiling ironically.

"...I achieved this perfection due to mysterious knowledge that is not known to anyone on Earth except the chosen ones. On the basis of that secret information, I developed my own system of spiritual development. But it's not available to every mortal. Even one, who through the hardest work and through the atonement of sins and privations reaches the tenth level of my system of perfection, won't be able to realise the great mystery of this teaching. Because it reveals itself only to the chosen ones. Only people like me who are able to unite the perishable body with the great spirit, the spirit of Universal Reason, possess the almightiness of God!"

It seemed like those words were the last strain on Sensei's nerves. Judging by his light wave of movements, it seemed to me that he would lose his temper and punch this man with so much force that even the so-called power of this "messenger" wouldn't be able to save him. But despite my forecast, Sensei, clearly enunciating every word, said:

"Mister, isn't it too much responsibility to take on yourself? So far, you haven't demonstrated to us anything that would have proved your words."

"What do you mean, haven't demonstrated?!" Vitaliy Yakovlevich demanded angrily. "Don't you see this?!"

"All this is rubbish," continued Sensei. "Anybody can do it. And there is nothing extraordinary or special in it. You simply need to wash yourself more often."

The whole crowd rolled with laughter. Kostya, hitting himself on the forehead, said in excitement, "Of course! I remember I've read about this trick. He just has a sticky and wet body; that's why the spoons got stuck."

The self-proclaimed "Pantocrator of the Universe and the whole Earth" became even more furious and shouted across the gym towards Sensei,

“What? You are too young to make judgments about such great knowledge! What else can you do except flap your legs?”

Sensei gazed at him intently. Then he came up and easily took off one of the spoons that were slipping away. Everybody around them froze. The teacher stretched out his hand, holding the thin end of the spoon, and started to make a series of breathing exercises, working on deep breathing. Within a minute, his face relaxed and his emotions disappeared. His eyes changed, and it seemed to me that they became fathomless. He froze for a few seconds, fixing his eyes on the spoon. His figure looked like a great sculpture. And at that moment, the spoon started to bend fast like a soft fading flower stem, as if it weren't made from tough metal but from some plastic material. I couldn't believe my eyes. Impossible, but it actually happened!

Sensei regained his normal appearance a few seconds later and calmly said to the shocked Vitaliy Yakovlevich, as he returned the bent spoon, “When you can at least demonstrate this simple trick for us, then we will listen to you with great pleasure.”

And quickly turning to the crowd, Sensei added, “I would like to inform those that haven't changed yet, that the training will start in two minutes. The ones who don't make it in time will have to do the push-up penalty (that's what we called twenty push-ups for being late).”

Having heard these words, we rushed to the changing rooms, outrunning each other, and consequently missing the newly born “minor deity bum's” fall from grace.

We heard the voice of Sensei behind us: “Senior sempai! Why are there strangers inside?!”

During the whole warm-up, I pondered: “How could I have even entertained the thought that this bum would have somehow been able to help me?! Well... on the other hand, in my desperate situation, all I can do is believe in miracles and hope for the best. You grasp at any straw just to survive. That's why these silly thoughts arise, because of an internal, almost panic-level of fear. No. I should control myself. I will find a loophole, a saving grace. I'll try to survive. I shouldn't lose hope, and I will fight to the very end!” The most amazing thing was that my firm belief was based on some deep, subconscious feeling of Something I was looking for so hard. But I was unable to say what exactly, I only had vague guesses.

Meanwhile, the warm-up ended up and we started to practice the basics under senior sempai's supervision. Sensei was sitting on a bench discussing something with the gangly old man. “I wish I could hear what they are talking about,” my persona thought to myself. And evidently, these curious

thoughts were not in my head only. Throughout the training, despite the fact that he was a man with grey hair, Dumpling was always trying, as if by accident, to take a place closer to the teacher. And with each try, he created an indescribable feeling of envy and jealousy within me. And judging by the accusing gazes of our guys, I was not the only one who felt it.

During the loud commands of the monotonous basic exercises, I again got deep into my thoughts. “How did Sensei manage to bend that spoon? And why did he call that phenomenon simply a trick? If that was a trick, then, in my understanding, it should have been thoroughly prepared. But he just took the spoon and bent it with his gaze alone.”

I could say that I believed and disbelieved it at the same time. I believed it, because I’ve read about people who possess such abilities — so called people-magnets. Any object, regardless of what material it’s made of — wood, metal, plastic — would stick to them. I remember that I was amazed most of all by the weight those people could hold up: more than ten kilos!

Paradoxically, but I couldn’t believe what I had seen with my own eyes. Or perhaps the disbelief was caused by my reluctance to realise that the fact itself was real. Everything seemed so mysterious. I could have understood if our crowd had been hypnotised, if I was told beforehand what was about to happen. But Sensei just stood in silence and did it. How?!

Nevertheless, the fact that it was possible was very important to me. It was some kind of, firm platform formed by Sensei’s knowledge that was not yet known to me. And my subconscious was intensely grasping at it in every way possible, resisting those antagonistic thoughts. I don’t know why, but I started to trust that interesting man. At least, he obviously knew where there is truth and where there is fiction.

After basic exercises, the moment our group had been waiting for finally came. We called this part of the training “the freestyle program”. We were split up into pairs and able to exercise old techniques or some more unusual techniques from the previous trainings. Andrey picked up his nunchaku and followed by our curious glances, approached the Teacher.

“Is it possible to do something against nunchaku?”

“And do you know how to use them?” Sensei asked in turn with a smile.

“Of course!” bragged Andrey self-satisfied. “I haven’t put them down for four years. One could say, I eat and sleep with them.”

Andrey demonstrated a couple of, in our opinion, complex movements.

“Not bad,” Sensei said.

“So, is it possible to do something against nunchaku?” Andrey repeated his question, obviously provoking the Teacher.

“Of course... For every Vijay, there is a Rajah.”

“What?” Andrey asked again, not understanding the last phrase.

“I mean, for every power there is a counter-power. Nunchaku is not an exception.”

“Can you show me?”

“I can, but then it will not be fair, you with nunchaku against me... Take somebody else with you.”

We looked at each other with astonishment. Nevertheless, Andrey went to look for a partner, and our group went to look for a second weapon. To our regret, there were no more nunchaku. Instead, we found a lot of two-meter-long poles in the sports equipment room.

But although we found weapons fairly easily, finding a partner for Andrey was more difficult. Senior guys flatly refused the proposal to take part in this fight and laughed: “No, thanks, man. You’d better do it alone.”

Finally, Andrey managed to convince a man among the newcomers. Meanwhile, Sensei was peacefully chattering with that skinny old man in the white kimono.

“Here, I found one!” Andrey happily announced to the Teacher.

“You have found one, great. Let senior sempai second us. At his clap, start to attack with full contact. Is that clear?”

That was all Andrey was waiting for. He nodded with obvious pleasure. Sensei walked out into the middle. Andrey stood facing Sensei, and the man with the pole chose a position from the rear right of Sensei. It was a thrilling moment. All participants were battle-ready, except Sensei. He was standing relaxed, thinking about something and playing with the tips of his black belt, embroidered with gold hieroglyphs.

At the senior sempai’s clap, Andrey zealously rushed into a frontal attack, spinning his nunchaku with the speed of the blades of a working propeller. Meanwhile, the other man jumped up quickly and started striking with the pole. What happened next happened in an instant. Sensei hadn’t changed his position from the moment the attack began, but rather kept standing in a deeply thoughtful pose. As soon as his opponents achieved a critical distance of his body, without changing his stance, he quickly threw his hand forward... if “threw” was the right word because in reality his hand shot out like an attacking snake. The nunchaku folded and flew towards the second fighter. The Teacher encouraged the stick with a twist of his wrist, slightly changing the trajectory of the flight. The nunchaku made half a turn in the air, aligned, and like the butt-end of a stick, hit the middle of the forehead of the man attacking from behind. The second nunchaku stick, continuing its flight, hit the pole. And the pole, correspondingly changing its trajectory, hit Andrey right in the head. As a result, the two fail fighters clumsily fell to

the floor, without even realising what had happened. And Sensei continued to stand thoughtfully, as if all the turmoil had nothing to do with him. And then, having come to himself, he asked his “opponents” caringly:

“How are you, guys? Did you get hurt badly?”

“No,” Andrey answered confused, intensely massaging a puffed-out bump on his forehead. “It’s all right.”

The other man also nodded.

“I am sorry, I miscalculated a bit,” apologised Sensei. Approaching his previous interlocutor, he said, as if nothing had happened, “You know, I have a great idea! What if...”

Meanwhile, observing the fight, the crowd buzzed in discussion with noises of laughter and amazement about such a quick fight. And one of the senior guys whom Andrey had asked to help said with laughter, “Yeah right, Sensei miscalculated, aha! Don’t worry, guys, it’s alright. We’ve been through the same ‘miscalculations’ many times before, and all due to our own stupidity.”

When Andrey realised what had happened, he simply tormented Kostya and Slava with the same question: “How can that be? One movement... not even a strike?!” Kostya perplexedly answered, “How would we know? Sensei is over there, ask him.”

But the Teacher was always busy until the end of the training, first demonstrating new techniques, then showing complicated strikes to the senior guys, then answering endless questions, and at the end of the training talking to the old man. However, Andrey had made up his mind — he was going to clear things up right there and then, no matter what.

We got that chance only when the supplementary training was over. We quickly changed and waited at the exit, like guards, as we decided to get what we wanted. But it turned out that Igor Mikhailovich and his guys were walking towards the same tram stop. On the way, we started our interrogations.

“How did you manage to better two armed opponents with only one movement?” Andrey asked his sore question.

“Well, weapons have nothing to do with it. This is a technique that uses the opponent’s force. By the way, it’s used in many other styles, for example, Aikido, Jiu-Jitsu, Wing Chun, and others. You need only to catch a moment and use it right away.”

“In general, I understand, but in this case, what style did you use?”

“Nothing special,” cunningly answered Sensei, shrugging his shoulders, “a little bit of everything.”

“But still?” queried Andrey.

“Well, in this case, all you have to know is the physical law of acceleration, the distribution of the gravity centre in biomechanics, and a little bit of the Snake style.”

“Whoa!” whistled Andrey.

“What did you think it was? **All great things are ridiculously simple, but it takes a lot of hard work to master them.**”

While Andrey was thinking over that phrase, Slava quickly asked, “Is it possible to explain that case with the spoon?”

“Of course, it is possible,” Sensei said with a smile. “There is nothing concealed on Earth that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be revealed at some point.”

“So, what was that?”

“Ah, just trifles. There is nothing special, just an ordinary Qigong, or rather one of its modifications.”

“And what is ‘Qigong’?” Now it was my turn to ask a question.

“I’ve read somewhere that it is just a breathing technique,” Kostya added.

“Yes, many people think so,” replied Igor Mikhailovich. “But in reality, Qigong is a meditative breathing system that allows a person to master his hidden psycho-physical potential. Though in fact, it is one of the simplest types of spiritual practices.”

That phrase roused the interest of our group and something trembled inside of me after these words. But as soon as I opened my mouth to ask about how we could learn it, Kostya squeezed in with his favourite manner of verbiage:

**“If but some sign is indicated,
A man can sooner feel his way.”**

“Oh, you like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, do you?” replied Igor Mikhailovich. “Then, if you’ve read carefully, he also said the following:

**‘...the sage, has said:
“The world of spirits is not shut away;
Thy sense is closed, thy heart is dead!
Up, Student! bathe without dismay
Thy earthly breast in morning-red!”’**

At that moment, you should have seen the surprise on Kostya’s face. He was so much impressed by these words that he wasn’t able to immediately find the right answer. That was the first person in his life (except his parents, of course) who had spoken to him at his ‘high intellectual’ level. “It serves him right,” I gloated in my thoughts. “He used to think he was the only man with a good education in this world.”

"I've read quite a lot of books," our 'Philosopher' started to defend himself, more trying to uphold his pride rather carrying on the topic of the discussion. "And it was written there that the spiritual world is only a fairy tale for kids."

"Who knows," Sensei said indifferently, continuing to quote Goethe:

**"Parchment! Is that the sacred
fountain whence alone
There springs a draught
that thirst for ever quells?
Refreshment? It you never will have won
If from that soul of yours it never wells."**

"Hmm! It's easy to say 'from soul of yours it never wells,'" puffed Kostya. And after a moment of silence, he added, "As Moliere said,

**'Not all things that are talked of turn to facts;
The road is long, sometimes,
from plans to acts.'**"

"What do I hear?" Sensei joked,

**'A moral code that's too extreme inspires
Unreason — wisdom lies in moderation'**"

"It sounds familiar..."

"That is from Poquelin, his expression from 'The Misanthrope'."

"Who's that?"

"Well, Jean-Baptiste Moliere. Poquelin is his real surname."

Even in the dim light of the street lamps, we could see Kostya turning red in the face.

"But... but... Eastern wisdom says that a really wise man foresees the end before starting any doing."

"Absolutely right. In other words, it means that **a human is a thinking being, and his fundamental force lies in his thoughts**. Even in the modern world, to put it in scientific terms, you may find, for example, the confirmation of it in the saying of Tsiolkovsky, 'An action is preceded by a thought; a precise calculation is preceded by a fantasy.' As you see, in human society, nothing has changed throughout the ages. And why? Because, as Valentin Sidorov correctly noted,

**'The nature of your thought is
your own nature.
Perceive your thought — and you
will know yourself.
And you will be the ruler
of yourself.'**

The real power is the power of mind.”

“Yes,” uttered Kostya, concluding, “‘A head without mind is like a lantern without a candle.’”

“Wonderful words of Leo Tolstoy,” agreed Igor Mikhailovich to the complete surprise of the ‘Philosopher’. “If you remember, he also has this beautiful saying, “Thought is the beginning of all. And you can rule your thoughts. That is why the most important thing in self-perfection is to work with your thoughts.”

Kostya nodded uncertainly. However, this fact proved to hurt his pride even more. So, for the next twenty minutes we witnessed a grand battle with aphorisms, quotes, sayings of native and foreign writers, poets, philosophers, scientists, and I didn’t even know most of their names. Meanwhile, my persona was trying hard to cut into this dialogue with my vitally important question which I impatiently wanted to ask. But Sensei’s polemics with our ‘Philosopher’ flew uninterrupted, gradually reaching its peak. I was angry with Kostya for taking up such priceless time with Sensei just to satisfy his own ego. But he was so consumed by the discussion that it seemed nothing else in the world existed for him.

At the very end, as we approached the tram stop, after likely having recalled all his memory, he recited his favourite expression. “Well, as Villon said, **“All things except myself I know.”**

“So,

**‘... gaze TO-DAY, while You are You — how then
TO-MORROW, when You shall be You no more?’”**

“And who is that?” Kostya almost screamed, completely losing his temper.

“Oh,” drawled Sensei with pleasure, “that was Omar Khayyam, a famous Persian poet and philosopher, and a great scientist who was considerably ahead of his time. His full name is Ghiyath al-Din Abu’l-Fath Omar ibn Ibrahim Al-Nisaburi Khayyami. He lived in the eleventh century. His wisdom was highly esteemed even by the Seljuk rulers of Iran, though he was from Khorasan, a small village near Nishapur. He had very interesting philosophical thoughts. According to his views, the Soul is eternal. It came from the Not-being into the human body and will return to the Not-being after death. For the Soul, this world is a strange land.”

“I wonder,” said Tatyana, joining the conversation, “where is the soul located inside of the human body? What did this philosopher think, is it in the heart or not?”

“No, he thought that the heart was born on Earth and is only a part of mortal human flesh, although it’s the best and the most ‘spiritual’ part. It

is through the Heart that the Soul speaks. But the Heart, in his opinion, knows only this world, Being... He has the following interesting lines, when the Heart asks the Soul about the mysteries of the Not-being.”

Sensei reflected on it for a bit and said,

**“My heart requested, Teach me.
The sciences are sacramental, but what do they conceal?”
I started with the alphabet: “Aleph...”
And then heard: “‘Tis Enough!
Like understands like, just hint with a letter.”**

“And what is ‘Aleph’?”

“‘Aleph’ is the first letter in his native language; it’s also the number ‘one’. As he believes, it is a symbol of the One Existing, a symbol of the Universal Unity.” And after looking at Kostya, Sensei ironically added, “What else can one say here?!”

Kostya was completely disconcerted, indeed not knowing what more to say. I hastened to use that opportunity and blurted out in a single breath, “How can we learn this system of techniques to master the hidden psychophysical potential?”

“It’s very easy. There is no secret at all. The most important thing is, as they say, to have a great desire, and the opportunities will come soon enough.”

“So, can we learn it from you?”

“Of course.”

“And when can we start?” asked Andrey, apparently thinking the same way as me.

“Well, if you are so interested in it, you are welcome to join. I devote an hour and a half for these exercises, twice a week.”

“How much does it cost?” asked Slava.

“Do you think it’s possible to evaluate spiritual knowledge with money?” said Sensei, surprised. “You guys really are obsessed with this ‘funny paper’. We train just for ourselves, for our own spiritual development. If you want to train — do train.”

Our group fixed a date and a time for the next meeting.

“Zhenya will show you the way,” added the Teacher.

Zhenya turned out to be a tall, light-haired, athletically built guy, one of those ‘speedy’ guys, who accompanied Sensei.

“We will certainly come,” Andrey answered for all of us.

On that note, we said our goodbyes. I was beside myself with joy. Finally, my persona got close to what I had been looking for, for so long. It

seemed I needed to take just one step and maybe I would be able to cross over this abyss and climb out to the solid surface of Being. I felt it intuitively, with a sort of sixth sense. Although my mind didn't see any real chance of survival. Despite this, as they say, my Soul was singing.

All the way home, the guys passionately discussed today's training and what awaited us the day after tomorrow at the spiritual training. Enthusiasm overfilled everyone but Kostya. He was puffed out, like a turkey, with gloomily knitted eyebrows.

"Kostya, will you come?" asked Andrey, clapping him on the back.

"I'm not sure, maybe we shouldn't go," mumbled the dissatisfied 'Philosopher'. "We're not circus actors trying to learn tricks. We'll just waste our time there for nothing."

"Are you stupid, man?" Andrey retorted 'politely'. "Where have you seen even a circus actor, who can bend spoons just by looking at them?!"

"And who teaches others to do it for free," Slava added his strong argument.

"That's what I'm saying. You've been duped, really!"

"I confess, I am a fool! Yet you'll find I understand that you are very kind," our discontented 'Philosopher' sarcastically replied.

"Alright, guys, don't quarrel," said Tatyana. "You'd better give me some ideas how to convince my parents to let me go to this training."

"How?" answered Andrey. "Like in the joke... A daughter returned home late and her father asks her, 'What do you call this?' The girl replies, 'I don't know what it's called, but from now on, it will be my favourite hobby.'"

Everybody laughed. Having agreed upon a new meeting, we went home.



9

We waited impatiently for the day. Finally, on Thursday, our group arrived in a good mood at the destination point. Arriving at the stop, we noticed two men silhouetted in the dark.

“Oh, there’s Zhenya over there,” said Andrey merrily.

As it turned out, Zhenya was with his friend Stas. Having greeted each other, we moved on into the unknown, or to be more exact, into impenetrable darkness.

“They should’ve at least hung lamps here,” remarked Tatyana, once again stumbling over something.

“Aha,” agreed Kostya, “it’s not a residential area but a real obstacle course.”

“Why should they waste the government’s money for electricity?” grinned Zhenya. “Besides, we already know everything around here perfectly by touch. Moreover, it’s unlikely that strangers would like to come to this area, especially by their own will.”

“And why would that be?” asked Slava anxiously.

“This place is unusual, it’s remote. Only animals come here, not people. Can you hear those dogs howling?”

And right enough, somewhere close by in the village, a couple of dogs were howling.

Tatyana shivered slightly, grabbing my hand.

“And dogs feel danger well,” he continued.

“Come on, stop scaring people with fairy tales!” said Andrey, trying to make a joke.

“They aren’t fairy tales at all. Try living here for a while, and you’ll find out what sort of devilry goes on... if you survive, of course.”

After that statement, our good mood quickly disappeared. For some time, we walked silently, looking around. But no matter how much we tried to peer into the pitch darkness, nothing could be seen. Only dim silhouettes of old houses. And what was strange that there was no light there. Only dogs with mournful howls showed signs of life in this godforsaken place.

"Where are we going?" panicked Kostya.

"Where, where?" mimicked Zhenya. "Right where you've asked for... to the black glade."

"Where?!" horrified, we exclaimed almost at the same time.

"Gosh, don't yell like that" said Zhenya, rubbing his ear deafened by our wild outcry. "I told you, we are going to the black glade."

And stumbling over another pothole, he cursed, "Glory be! The evil forces are trying to set traps everywhere. Anyone who drops behind may never be seen again."

Tatyana, who was holding my hand for safety, grabbed Kostya's with her other hand. I felt her starting to tremble all over. Slava, who had been lagging behind until now, quickly moved ahead of us. Andrey was walking silently and looking around.

"Where have you seen evil forces and a black glade?" Kostya uttered with fear. "Why would they be here? Absolute nonsense..."

"Where? Over there!" Zhenya confidently waved his hand somewhere to the side.

"Why have we come here?" mumbled Tatyana with fear and trembling. "We could have been at home, care-free."

"But you wanted to learn black magic. And now you're asking 'Why have we come?'" Zhenya answered, shrugging his shoulders.

"To learn what?" we all asked again in amazement.

"I can't believe it!" Zhenya exclaimed with a surprised face. "Didn't you know that Sensei is the most powerful wizard, the right hand of Lucifer?"

Now it was our turn to stare wide-eyed.

"Who? What? And who is Lucifer?" An avalanche of questions rushed at Zhenya.

"Alright," our guide grandly stopped the torrent of our questions. "I will explain everything to you now. 'Lucifer' means an angel of Light, the right hand of God. For the majority of people, he is known under different names. For example, Satan or Devil, whatever you prefer. He is the ruler of the Earth. Second, I emphasise once again that Sensei is his right hand. And his power doesn't have boundaries. For him, bending spoons is nothing. He is able to do such things that you can't imagine even in your most dreadful dream! And third, you are very lucky. You can gain extraordinary abilities at

almost no cost. Just for a soul you don't know anything about and you don't even feel. But why am I telling you all this? You will see for yourselves now."

"Well, well, well! See what a fine mess we've got ourselves in!" Tatyana said, really scared.

"That's it!" cried Kostya in a low voice. "What did I tell you? We shouldn't have come, but you didn't listen. I told you there was something fishy going on here. But I was also stupid, a dummy, I dragged myself with you. What should we do now?"

Kostya's panicky terror spread to Slava, and he whispered to us, "I guess it's time to get away from here."

"Where?" hissed Kostya. "Do you remember how many times we turned, going in different directions?"

"I don't care!" declared Andrey. "So what if Sensei is a wizard; that's his personal problem. What's important is that he knows much more than I. And I won't miss an opportunity to learn that."

"Me neither," responded my persona as I thought to myself, "I shouldn't care at all because this is my chance to survive. And if not, then I have nothing to lose anyway. But maybe it will help..."

We came across a curved path along the side of a long, lonely fence. At that moment, the moonlight shone through the clouds. Suddenly, right before us a big black cat jumped on the fence, his eyes burning like yellow-green lights. Caught by surprise, Tatyana and I screamed and hid behind the guys' backs. However, our defenders also froze, rooted to the ground. Only our guides continued calmly on their way. Zhenya, having seen our stupor, mysteriously whispered, "It's just the beginning." Without paying any attention to us, the cat kept walking along the desolate fence, as if it were guiding us.

"Fie, fie, fie," Slava spat three times over his left shoulder.

"You should have made the sign of the cross," Andrey said sarcastically.

"I agree," Tatyana said, licking her dry lips. "They say if a black cat crosses the road, you should hold on to one of your buttons. Then the evil forces won't even notice you."

Just to be on the safe side, I found a button with my shaky hands. Our group hurried to catch up with the rest, all the while watching the dark shadow of the cat.

The path took us to a small glade. The full moon was ominously creeping out from the clouds. Then, what we saw completely shocked us. In the middle of the glade, with his back to us, stood a man in a black garment with a hood thrown over his head. His figure phosphoresced with the faintly-cold moonlight. Light smoke ascended over him. All

around there was a weighty, eerie silence. As we watched, we all lost our ability to speak. Suddenly, the big black cat jumped right to our feet, making us freeze on the spot. But not before instinctively grabbing our saving buttons. Scampering off cheekily, that beast made its way towards the dark figure and started to rub against his feet, to our unspeakable horror.

Gazing upon such a sinister scene, everything in my mouth dried up, and a shiver ran along my entire body. In spite of my desire to run away, my persona stood still, unable to move. I looked at the guys. Tatyana almost climbed up onto Kostya and clutched him with a death grip. Kostya himself looked like a plaster monument. Slava stood with an open mouth and rounded eyes. Even Andrey, despite his earlier optimism, was stamping out a fine, nervous quiver with his teeth. His face was covered with sweat.

Zhenya, looking back at us, obediently approached the dark figure. Raising his hands, he solemnly pronounced, "Oh Great magician, wizard and sorcerer, ruler over all the nations, whose power and might over all land, water, air, and fire stretches over the entire Universe. Your loyal disciples have fulfilled their holy duty. Take into your bosom these lost souls, in order to restore your true and fair authority and power on Earth!!!"

Zhenya made a low bow. During his speech, Sensei turned to him in surprise.

"What? What?" he asked. "Which might, which power? What are you talking about?"

Zhenya and Stas both rolled with laughter.

"What's the matter? What are you laughing about?" asked Sensei, while smoking a cigarette. "And where are the other guys? Did you meet them?"

Drowning in laughter, Zhenya waved towards us, "They are still in a stupor over there and won't come over."

"What kind of stupor?" asked Sensei, trying to understand and looking into the dark. "What kind of mischief have you been up to?"

But Zhenya couldn't stop laughing, hopelessly waving his hand.

"What a clown!"

"Sensei, don't you know Zhenya?" replied Stas, laughing heartily.

Watching the hilarity, Andrey was first to understand what was going on. Shamefully pulling his hand away from the button, he sighed with relief.

"Well, guys," said Andrey, walking out from the darkness towards them. "That was great. The joke was good, but who's going to wash my pants now?!"

This comment provoked an even bigger storm of laughter. Sensei said with a smile, "What did this clown make up this time?"

Andrey started to tell in detail how this “guide” led us through the village, which was described as the Bald mountain. We also joined him, enriching the story with our impressions. At the very end, our entire group, together with Sensei, roared with uninterrupted laughter, recalling our feelings.

“I just arrived a bit earlier today,” explained Sensei, laughing through tears. “The light in our village was cut off. The cable was probably damaged somewhere.”

“What a story,” Tatyana uttered in a clear voice. “Never mind what we suffered from Zhenya, but there was also this cat!”

Meanwhile, the small ball of fur sat peacefully, frightened by our human laughter.

“It’s Samurai,” Stas waved his hand and explained. “Sensei’s cat. He always follows him.”

“Stas, you should have told us what was going on,” Andrey said with a smile.

“How?” he shrugged his shoulders. “You were afraid of every shadow, and if I were to start making faces, we would have had to search for you all over the village.”

The guys laughed, imagining the scene.

“I say,” Zhenya justified, “it was just an ordinary joke. Like Ostap Bender said, ‘The most important thing is to bring confusion into the enemy’s camp... Because people are afraid of the unknown most of all.’”

“That’s right,” said Sensei. **“Fear begotten by imagination sees danger even where there is no danger at all...”** There is an ancient eastern parable about fear. A wise man met the Plague on his way and asked, ‘Where are you going?’ It answered, ‘To a big city. I have to kill five thousand people there.’ In a few days the same wise man again met the Plague. ‘You said that you’d kill five thousand people but you’ve killed all fifty thousand,’ he accused. ‘No,’ objected the Plague. ‘I’ve killed five thousand; the others died from fear.’”

After discussing all the funny details of the journey and having dispelled the myth of our unjustified fears by humour and laughter, we switched to more serious topics. Our group was joined by three other guys: Ruslan, Yura, and Victor (senior sempai). A little later came Nikolai Andreevich, who turned out to be a psychotherapist. Meanwhile we were talking about Qigong.

“What does the word ‘Qigong’ mean?” Slava asked Sensei.

“Well, translating this word literally from Chinese, Qigong refers to work with the energy of the air, because ‘Qi’ means ‘wind, gas, breath,’ and the syllable ‘gong’ means ‘work, action, or deed’.”

“So, this system was also invented by the Chinese?” said Andrey with a sigh.

“Not really,” answered the Teacher. “It is the Indian system of self-regulation, which migrated to China at the beginning of the new era.”

“I’ve read that different types of Qigong exist.” As always, Kostya put in his remark. “I think there are two different schools.”

“There are a lot more of them,” said Igor Mikhailovich. “In the modern world, there are plenty of different schools of Qigong. For example, Confucian, Buddhist, medical, military...”

“Medical?” I shuddered. “What does it heal?”

“Many diseases.”

“So, we need only to breathe the right way?” Andrey interrupted my next question.

“Not only. You also need to **think in the right way**. There is a saying that ‘a thought guides Qi, and Qi guides the blood.’ Blood is like the ambulance of the body; it includes all the necessary medical supplies. In the very ancient medical treatise Huangdi Neijing, it is said that ‘when a thought rests in stillness and is free, it means that you can master Qi’. **The one, who masters healthy thoughts, has good health.**”

“In other words, a sound mind is in a sound body,” Kostya concluded.

“Not really. I would say, **with healthy thoughts there is a sound spirit, and with a sound spirit there is a healthy body.**”

“Could you please tell me... you always emphasise the importance of thinking the right way, both during physical trainings and now,” remarked Andrey. “But for some reason, I used to think that all we needed was just to act the right way. Because thoughts can be different during the choice of action: both good and bad.”

“That’s where you waste priceless time on struggle with your own self. You shouldn’t have to choose between a good and a bad thought because you are to have no negative thoughts in your mind at all. The goal of the highest Art, the Art of Lotus, is to learn the proper way of thinking; in other words, ‘to kill the Dragon inside,’ or ‘to defeat the Dragon’. Have you heard of such an expression?”

“Yes.”

“That is the purpose. **The greatest victory is the victory over yourself. What does that mean? It means to defeat your own negative thoughts, to learn to control them, and to learn to control your emotions.** I repeat

once again, *there is to be nothing ne-ga-ti-ve in your mind. Only a positive factor! Then you won't need to spend time fighting with yourself, and your actions will always be positive. Peace, first of all, should be inside of you. Peace and harmony.*"

"So, it means that a person's thought is reflected in each of his actions?" asked Andrey, thinking about something known only to him.

"It is not only reflected, it guides all action. Because the thought is material."

"Material?" It was Nikolai Andreevich's turn to be surprised.

"Of course. It's a much finer substance, not studied enough yet. But it does exist, it is real, its movements have been recorded. There have been many effective experiments on thought phenomena. There were experiments with our psychics; for example, Nina Kulagina, Julia Vorobieva, and many others. I won't even mention the rich world studies. This research is conducted all over the world, although it is known by different names. For example, in England it is known as 'psychical research'. In France, it is 'metapsychics', in Eastern European countries, 'psychotronics', in the U.S. 'parapsychology', in China 'investigations into extraordinary functions of the human body', and so on.

"And if you look deeply into the history of mankind, you will find much evidence that suggests it has been known from the earliest of times. In all mythical, magical, and religious views and teachings, a firm belief exists that it is possible to influence anyone and anything through thoughts, regardless of the distance, time, and space. In other words, generally speaking, this knowledge has always existed."

Nikolai Andreevich joined in the discussion, "Well, now you have given us examples of our native psychics who became known to us just recently. Why weren't there such people earlier in the Soviet Union? I've been practicing psychotherapy for many years. But while studying the mind of different people, my colleagues and I have never come across such phenomena. It's true that recently there were people talking nonsense and considering themselves to be extrasensory. And they even tried to prove it. But in reality, it was just their sick imagination, while real psychics didn't exist in the Soviet Union."

"Why didn't they exist?" Igor Mikhailovich was surprised. "They existed, and there were a lot of them! From immemorable times in Russia there existed many such people. But how were they treated? In ancient, unenlightened times, very seldom were they considered saints, but in the majority of cases, those who refused to obey the church were burned in a fire or impaled on stakes, depending on the whim of the king.

“Only since the second half of the eighteenth century, after the opening of the Academy of Science, did the phenomena of the psychic life of human beings start to be researched in Russia more seriously, from the medical point of view. And about one hundred years later, research in that sphere was conducted by many prominent scientists; for example, by one of the founders of your own science, Vladimir Mikhailovich Bekhterev. When he was the head of St. Petersburg’s imperial military and medical academy, he himself financed the creation of an entire research institute for the study of brain and psychic activities.

“And during Soviet times? Almost from the start of its existence, supreme attention was paid to the study of psychic phenomena of the brain and of one of its main mysteries — thoughts. It can be proved by historical fact that those investigations were held by the order of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin under the personal control of Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky in the first Special Department of the United State Public Administration that was dealing with secrecy and protection of state secrets. This department even had a special neuro-energy laboratory. This elite special department used various healers, mediums, shamans, and hypnotists in its work.”

“Gosh, and why did they need all those ‘folk healers’?” Nikolai Andreevich was really surprised.

“Well, all that was for the same reason: the extraordinary abilities of those individuals. They were able to manipulate the hidden forces of a human being that significantly surpassed the abilities of any machinery. All these phenomena were very seriously examined! They even sent scientific expeditions looking for this knowledge: from the studies of the mysteries of ancient civilisations to the search for the legendary Shambala.”

“Shambala... that sounds familiar...”

“What is it?” Andrey asked impatiently.

“Shambala? Well, it’s kind of an abode located high in the mountains. But it’s famous because the group of scientists living there have long surpassed mankind in their spiritual, scientific, and technical levels.”

“Now I recall,” said Nikolai Andreevich. “Legend says that Shambala is an abode of Wise Men. But what has science got to do with it? Do these Wise Men study something in particular: astronomy or mathematics, or just philosophy?”

“In Shambala, they study only the most ancient primordial science, ‘Beiliao Jiao’, or in other words, the science of White Lotus, which includes everything, and exact sciences as well. Moreover, it is the only source of all the sciences studied by mankind.”

Nikolai Andreevich looked at Sensei distrustfully.

“What do you mean, ‘the most ancient and the only’? The majority of exact sciences appeared quite recently; well, maybe two or three hundred years ago.”

“You are mistaken. All this knowledge was given to people a long time ago for the development of their civilisation, in ancient times as well. Long before written history there were other human civilisations that achieved a level of development much higher than that of the present. Some of them were destroyed, some reached the Absolute. However, remnants of their existence are still being found today. Read about strange archaeological findings and explorations, and you will see for yourself. In the future, people will find even more interesting proof of what happened a long time ago on the globe. A lot is written in ancient literature about the existence of this knowledge. For example, semblance of ancient nuclear explosions, the results of which scientists now find in the most ancient strata, precise maps of the stellar sky, identified planets that have not yet been discovered, the ‘vimanas’, airborne vehicles, and so forth. It means that all this different knowledge was given to people before and it originates from one source: the science of Shambala.”

“And just how far ahead is this science compared to modern knowledge?” Nikolai Andreevich asked arrogantly, crossing his hands over his chest.

“Way far ahead,” Sensei simply replied. “Much farther than you can imagine. But to give you at least the slightest idea, I will give this example. During those times when people still piously believed that the Earth stood on three whales and the Sun circled it, the scientists of Shambala had already conducted scientific experiments and different tests on the Sun itself. Modern civilisation is still very far from that, and it’s not yet clear whether it will reach such a level. Why do you think people at the peak of their power searched for Shambala so zealously? For instance, in the span of time known to you, such figures as Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and so on, searched for it. Because according to all the ancient legends and myths of different cultures, all the knowledge of the Universe and the cultural heritage of extinct civilisations is concealed in Shambala.

“I wonder why only tyrants searched for it?”

“Not tyrants, but people striving for absolute power over the world. All people in power possess true information. They knew and know about the existence of this abode, about the existence of this powerful knowledge concealed in it. They perfectly understand that the real power over the world is concentrated in Shambala. That’s why many people searched and still are searching for it. However, Shambala itself never gave anyone

the opportunity to conquer the whole world. In a way, it balanced certain forces. And if a person, standing at the peak of his power, zealously tried to realise his dream of domination over the world, he simply ended his existence. Many people in power made connections with representatives of Shambala, fulfilling their requests. Everybody tried to help, because it's simply impossible to forgo the temptation to know more than mankind knows... Aside from public leaders, many ordinary people were also in search of knowledge of Shambala."

"Does that mean that nobody has ever found it?" Kostya asked.

"Not exactly. The paradox is that Shambala has never hidden its existence. It doesn't interfere actively in people's lives unless it concerns something globally important for all of mankind, and in particular for Shambala. But if it's necessary, its scientific society decides who it is appropriate to contact."

"Okay, let's assume this to be true. But if this abode of Wise Men doesn't hide its existence, why couldn't it be found by people who were at the peak of power? After all, they had everything at their disposal: equipment, finance, and human resources!" Nikolai Andreevich was puzzled.

"Yes, you've listed everything but their hard hearts and greedy thoughts. The unalterable rule for contacting Shambala is the high morality and purity of a person's intentions. Only someone who possesses these qualities in the first place can obtain access to knowledge of interest to him.

"You see, we come back again to our starting point. Why can't a human develop these phenomenal abilities consciously when it is quite possible? Because there is too much egocentrism, vanity, greed, anger, envy in him. In other words, too many qualities inherent to beastly, animalistic nature. And if he comes into contact with this inexplicable psychic phenomenon, his animal nature turns against logic because it fears losing its power over the human mind. In other words, animal nature tries to preserve its power over the human by rationalising the phenomenon or criticising it, when all that is necessary is simple childlike faith.

"In some cases, of course, people spontaneously discover their phenomenal abilities, as a result, for example, of some kind of trauma, intense stress, and so forth. But, if negative qualities prevail in the human mind, it's the same as if a Neanderthal finds a monkey wrench and, not knowing how to use it, applies it, from his negative point of view, to his friends."

The guys smiled, and Zhenya asked, "Will he hit them on their heads?"

"Even worse, on the big toes. Then his friends will completely forget about their heads."

"And if at that moment good, spiritual nature prevails in the human?" I asked with curiosity.

“And if spiritual nature prevails in a person, then he will correctly perceive new information on a subconscious level, using his phenomenal abilities for good intentions. Because in this case, **faith gives birth to knowledge, and knowledge strengthens faith. And without faith, no miracles are possible in this world.**”

“It’s an interesting thought,” said Nikolai Andreevich, and remaining silent for a while, added, “I wonder, when Stalin came to power in our country, did research into these phenomena stop?”

“On the contrary, this research became even more intensive and continued even after his death. This interest hasn’t waned, even to the present day. This subject is being examined by many scientific institutes.”

“Hmm, but I’ve studied works of many well-known authors of different institutes who specialise in my sphere; however, I haven’t come across the subject.”

“It’s not strange because this subject belongs to the sphere of hidden control over the masses. I think that you understand well enough how secret these works are. I can give you an example of the Leningrad institute named after Vladimir Mikhailovich Bekhterev. By the way, the work of Bekhterev was continued by his granddaughter, Natalya Petrovna Bekhtereva. There, they closely study the human brain. And one of the main study areas of that institute is research into people’s psychic phenomena.”

“But the Leningrad institute is one of the leading in...,” Nikolai Andreevich froze mid-sentence, evidently shocked by his own guess. Having recovered from his excitement, he continued, “But if it has been studied for so long, if the military has shown such an interest in it, and if huge amounts of money are being spent, then there probably should have been huge scientific progress in psychic studies.”

“Progress?” grinned Sensei. “What kind of a progress can there be with such motivation? Their institute still can’t explain the phenomenal effects of this biomass that weighs little more than a kilo, the cerebrum, just like other world scientists. It has remained, despite all of their efforts, the mystery of mysteries. Space is investigated much more than the human brain.”

“I agree... But you say that the sacred knowledge can be given only to people of high moral standards. Not all scientists are complete egoists with excessive megalomania. For example, that Bekhtereva...”

“Absolutely correct. And if you carefully follow the work of academic Bekhtereva as a human and a scientist, you’ll see that after studying the human brain all her life, she came to the conclusion that she knows very little about it, about its potential. Nevertheless, the deeper she delves into the study of the brain, the more she believes in the idea of its extraterrestrial

origin, that is, of its true source of origin, based on the exceptional complexity and superfluity of the brain. I'm pretty sure that soon she will announce it publicly, just as it was announced by the great scientists of the world, not just in the sphere of psychic research, but in other natural sciences, for example, by Einstein, Tesla, Vernadsky, Tsiolkovsky, and other great scientists. This list is huge and would take a long time to go through. But all those people came to the conclusion that humans are very unique and mysterious creatures and in no way, could have originated on Earth from some kind of *Paramecium caudatum*!"

We stood silent, slightly shocked by what we had heard.

"So, it means that the power of extraordinary, phenomenal people is concealed simply in their thought?" Kostya asked again.

"Absolutely right. **Thought is a real power. A lot greater than humans can imagine.** Thought is able to move planets, to create and destroy entire galaxies, which initially was proven by God Himself."

Nikolai Andreevich smiled and said ironically, "It's a very convincing answer, I can't even argue with it."

"Really?!" Andrey expressed our general amazement. "Then why don't we feel the presence of this gigantic power in ourselves?"

"Because you don't believe in it."

"Is that so? The beginning was so complicated, but the end is so simple," stated Kostya.

"What can be done? Such is the nature of cognition," answered Sensei with a smile.

"Well, how can it be," Slava was struggling to understand, "if I felt such a power, why wouldn't I believe in it?"

"The whole trick is that first you've got to believe, and then you will feel it."

"And what if I believe, but won't feel it?" Slava couldn't calm down. "What then?"

"If you really believe in it, then certainly you will feel it," answered Sensei and added, "All right, we can discuss it for a long time, but it's time to begin the meditation."

"And what is a meditation?" asked Tatyana. "I've read that it is training of the psyche during a trance. But I still don't understand what it actually is."

"In a few words, a simple meditation is the training of thought, while a deeper spiritual practice is the training of spirit."

"Does it mean that thought and spirit are the same?" Kostya broke into the conversation again.

"No."

The cat sitting close by stirred in its place, as if making itself more comfortable.

“Now we will practice the simplest meditation on the concentration of attention, so that you can learn how to control the Qi energy. But before that, I would like to repeat again for those who came late. In addition to the material body, the human also has an energy body. The energy body consists of an aura, chakras, energy channels, meridians, and special reservoirs for energy accumulation. Each of them has its own name. I will tell you about them later in detail, depending on the meditation.”

“And what is a chakra?” I asked.

“Chakra is a tiny spot on the human body through which different energies enter and exit. It works....so for you it would be easier to understand it, like a diaphragm in a camera. Do you know what that is?”

We nodded in agreement.

“It is the same way with chakras; they instantly open and instantly close.”

“And does all that energy really come out in that instant?” Slava was surprised.

“Well, it’s not like emptying a bucket of water. After all, a human being is an energy and a material creature, where energy and matter exist by their own laws and time. However, they are fully interconnected and interdependent. Any other questions?” Everyone was silent. “Then let’s begin. Right now, your objective is to learn to feel the movement of air inside of yourselves, the movement of Qi. You all think that you understand and feel yourselves perfectly. But I’m pretty sure that you can’t see right now, for example, the toes of your feet. Why? Because you don’t have internal vision. Internal vision, just like internal feeling, can be trained with time, in everyday training. That’s why we will start with the simplest and easiest meditation. We’ll try to learn to control thoughts and feelings, to evoke them and to guide them.

“All right, now make yourselves comfortable and relax. Calm your emotions. You may close your eyes, so nothing will distract you. Dissolve all your thoughts and everyday problems in the emptiness.”

As soon as that phrase was spoken, I recalled a pile of tiny household chores. “Gosh! Those impudent thoughts again,” I thought. “You were told to get dissolved.” my persona tried again not to think about anything.

“Concentrate on the tip of your nose...”

With closed eyes, I tried to “see” the tip of my nose, guided more by my internal feelings. I felt my eyes strain slightly.

“Now breathe in deeply, slowly and gradually. First, with the bottom of the belly, then with the belly, chest, raising shoulders... Slightly hold your

breath... Slowly breathe out... We concentrate our internal vision only on the tip of the nose... You should feel and imagine that the tip of your nose is like a small light bulb or a small flame, and it flares up with your every breath out... Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out... The flame flares up more and more..."

At first, I felt a slight burning and pricking in my nose. It felt as if I were filled with something material, like a jug with water. Later on, I thought I could see a dark, distant contour of a tiny purple spot around my nose tip. At first, I couldn't focus on it clearly. Finally, when I was able to fix my vision on it, it started to light up from inside. Moreover, when breathing in, the light narrowed, and when breathing out, it widened. When I got used to breathing this way, I heard Sensei's voice.

"Now switch your attention to another part of meditation. Slightly raise your hands a little forward, palms down. Breathe in as usual: through the bottom of the stomach, then through the stomach and chest. Your breath out should be directed through the shoulders, hands, to the centre of your palms, where the chakras of the hands are located, and through them into the earth. Imagine that something is flowing through your hands, Qi energy, or light, or water, and then overflows into the earth. This flow rises from the bottom of the stomach up to your chest, and there it is split up into two streamlets and overflows into the earth through your shoulders, arms, hands. Concentrate all your attention on the feeling of that movement... Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out..."

A thought flashed across my mind, "What does it mean to breathe through the hands? How can that be?" I even panicked a little. Sensei, obviously feeling my confusion, came up and placed his palms over mine, without touching the skin. After some time, my palms began to burn, like two stoves, spreading warmth from their centre to the periphery. And what astonished me most of all was that I really felt tiny warm streamlets pouring through my shoulders. In the region of my elbows they weakened, but I felt them very clearly overflowing through my palms. Deep in these new, unusual feelings, my persona asked myself, "How am I doing this?" While I was thinking it over, I lost the feeling of the streamlets. I had to concentrate again. In general, it worked with variable success. After one of my next attempts, I again heard Sensei's voice.

"Close the palms of your hands in front of you, firmly clench them so that the chakras of the hands close and the movement of energy stops. Take two deep, fast breaths in and out... Lower your hands and open your eyes."

After the meditation, when we started to share impressions, I understood that everyone experienced it differently. Tatyana, for example, didn't see the flame; instead, she felt some kind of light movement through her hands. Andrey had a shiver in his legs and light dizziness. Kostya shrugged his shoulders and answered, "I didn't feel anything special, except a pins and needles sensation. But that is quite a normal reaction resulting from the oversaturation of the body with oxygen."

"After the third, fourth breath in, yes," answered the Teacher. "But at the beginning, the brain fixes the thought, in particular before the movement of the Qi. And if you listen to yourself, relax and breathe in deeply, you will immediately feel a widening or paresthesia feeling in the head, or in other words, a certain process happening there. That is exactly what you need to understand — what is moving there, and learn to control it."

"Why didn't I feel anything?" asked a disappointed Slava.

"And what did you think about?" Sensei asked half in jest.

It turned out that Slava didn't really know what he had been expecting, maybe some kind of a miracle. Sensei replied, "Right, that's the reason you didn't feel anything, because you concentrated your thoughts not on the work but on waiting for some extraordinary miracle. But there won't be a miracle until you create it yourself... You shouldn't wait for anything extraordinary just because you breathe correctly or concentrate on something. No. **The biggest miracle is you, yourself, as a Human!** After all, what does all the great spiritual Art come down to? It helps you become Human so that you gradually wake up and recall the knowledge that was given to you primordially. These meditations are merely a means of awakening from spiritual lethargy and recalling long-hidden and forgotten information that you knew and used once upon a time."

"What do you mean knew?" Slava didn't understand.

"Well. For example, everyone knows how to read, write, count, if, of course, he is without mental disorders. Right?"

"Right."

"But first he had to be taught. While later, he automatically reads, counts and so forth. In other words, he already knows that, for example, one plus one equals two, two plus two equals four. It seems so simple and real! But at the beginning he was taught all this, although, in truth, he simply recalled it. These are hidden, subconscious abilities. Or, here is another easier example that has to do with the physiological level. If a man who doesn't know how to swim is thrown into the water, he will drown. But it has been proven and confirmed by deliveries in water that a newborn baby, when lowered into a pool, swims like any other animal. So, does this mean that

he already possesses these reflexes? Indeed. But later it's simply *forgotten*. It is the same with a human. He has a lot of knowledge that he doesn't even suspect he has.

"But... all of this works *only with a positive factor*. If some mercenary interests prevail in him, for example, to learn to cheat somebody or to be able to hit someone with energy from a distance, or maybe he wants to be able to bend everyone's spoons so they throw him money, *he will never achieve anything*. Only when a person learns to control his thoughts, when he becomes Human with a capital H, only then will he be able to achieve something."

"So, spiritual practices are a method of awakening a human?" Andrey asked again.

"Absolutely right. Spiritual practice is only an instrument for repairing your mind. And the result depends on how you use that instrument. In other words, it all depends on the desire and skill of the master. And in order to learn how to hold this instrument in your hands, it is necessary to control your thought, to concentrate it, and to see it with your internal vision. In our case, it means to learn to control our breath, to feel that you breathe out through the chakras of your hands. You need to learn to evoke certain feelings so that later you will be able to control the internal, hidden energy."

"In my opinion, this is a hallucination," remarked Kostya.

"Yes, a hallucination, if you regard it as a hallucination. But if you regard this energy as real power, then in reality it will be real power."

"It's strange, but why?"

"Because, I repeat, a thought controls action. While energy itself is an action. That is all. Everything is very simple."

We remained silent for a moment, while Nikolai Andreevich asked, "From the point of view of psychology, is it nevertheless an objective factor or a subjective feeling? For example, I clearly felt the concentration on the tip of the nose. But movements through the arms I felt partially, only in those places where I was focusing my attention."

Sensei started to explain something to the psychotherapist, using terms unknown to me, probably from his professional language. And as I understood from their speech, they touched on the problems of extrasensory, including healing and diagnostics of different diseases. The latter interested me very much.

During this discussion, while the other guys were listening, Slava was carefully examining the palms of his hands. And as soon as a lengthy pause appeared in the discussion, he hurried to ask, "I don't completely understand about chakras. You said that there should be opening points. But there is nothing in here!"

The senior guys laughed.

"Of course," said Sensei. "Visually, you won't see anything like that."

Zhenya, standing next to Slava, couldn't help himself, and turning Slava's hands like a doctor, asked seriously "Well, patient. Do you see bones and tendons there?"

"No," replied Slava, still puzzled.

Zhenya smacked his lips and mournfully said, "He is hopeless!"

The guys laughed.

"You see, chakrans are certain zones on the human body that are more sensitive to warmth," the Teacher patiently explained. "They, of course, can't be seen, but really can be registered by modern equipment. For scientists, just like for you, these zones are still a mystery: the cells are the same, the connections are the same, but their sensitivity is higher. Why? Because chakrans are located here. And chakran belongs to the astral body, that is, to another, more profound physics. A thought is a binding link between the astral and material bodies. That's why it is very important to learn to control your thoughts... It is then that you will be able to really guide Qi movement inside of your body."

The senior guys joined the conversation, discussing some of their own meditation issues. At the end of our meeting, Sensei asked Zhenya and Stas personally to accompany us to the bus stop and help us to get on the bus.

"And no tricks of yours!" Sensei warned Zhenya jokingly.

"Yes, sir," Zhenya saluted, "no tricks, sir!"

Sensei hopelessly dropped his hand. When the whole crowd moved laughing towards the path, the Teacher called the cat. But it grandly walked out in a different direction. Sensei tried to run it down and catch it, but to no avail. That prankster slipped into the nearest bushes. Squatting down, Sensei tried to pull him out. Using this opportunity, I approached the Teacher, as if helping to catch the cat.

"Can you diagnose..."

Without letting me finish, Sensei replied, "Oh, you mean that little wound in your head, my dear... Samurai! Now you want to scratch me? You naughty cat. Come out!"

"How does he know?" I thought to myself, simply shocked. Inspired by hope, I thought, "If he knows about it, then maybe he'll help fight it!" Meanwhile Igor Mikhailovich asked, "What is the diagnosis of Aesculapius?"

"My parents say it's nothing serious, something to do with vessels. But as far as I understood by eavesdropping in the conversation between my mother and the doctor, I have a malignant growth in the cerebral cortex. And it's not clear how it will behave in the near future."

“An impressive argument,” said Sensei, shaking off his hands and looking towards the bushes as he addressed the cat. “Well then, sit there as long as you wish. When you freeze, you’ll come out yourself!”

The crowd, noticing Sensei’s “trouble” with the cat, started to come back, offering to help catch it.

“Never mind him!” Sensei waved his hand. “He will come home on his own.”

To my complete disappointment, for that small amount of time that could have been used for conversation, we walked with Sensei in silence until we joined the others. I expected him to show some kind of a reaction, some sympathy, some hope for a possible cure. But in vain did I think that he was about to say something. His answer was only silence. Inside of me there was a small hope that I would hear some kind of hint or advice or moral support during general conversation. But he was simply walking and joking with everyone, followed by loud laughter of the crowd. That made me completely furious.



10

All the way home, I was terribly angry. And at home, I simply couldn't sit still. "Everything is over, everything is over!" I lamented in my mind. "Just when some kind of hope appeared, it all collapsed. I'm fed up with it, I'm tired of everything. Everything in this world is so senseless! I can't stand it anymore, it's too much for me. Blast it all, this struggle for life with this stupid school, meaningless training, and indifferent Sensei. The end is always the same!"

My imagination was already drawing a horrible, terrifying picture of my own funeral, the bitter tears of my mother, relatives, and friends. I clearly visualised the nails hammered into my coffin and its lowering into a damp pit, thrown over with dirt. There was an absolute scary darkness around, emptiness and hopelessness. And that was all!

What happens afterwards, above me, where life runs like a full-flowing river? Another picture appeared in my mind. Everything was just like before, nothing had changed. My parents continued going to work as usual. My friends went to training, looking cheerful as usual, laughing happily at their endless jokes. While Sensei, just as before, continued his interesting training, demonstrating and telling amazed guys about their own abilities.

Nothing has changed in this world! Except, I was not here anymore. That was the point, the reason for my resentment and sorrow. This was only my personal tragedy. And in general nobody else but myself needed my thoughts, my worries, my knowledge, and my life. I was born alone, and I will die alone. Then what is the purpose of this senseless existence? Why are people even born? What is life for?

This mixture of the philosophy of life and the fear of death was going on in my head. A horrible melancholy seized me, and it was quickly changing

into depression. I was fading under the pressure of my depressive thoughts. My health rapidly became worse, and horrible headaches appeared again. I missed school and all my extracurricular activities, including my favourite dances. I really didn't need anything in this world. But...

The time of the next training was drawing near. Despite the external squall of negative emotions, I had somewhere deep inside me a permanent, unchanging feeling of confidence in my own strength and full tranquillity. That's why I argued with myself, to go or not to go. It was exactly this internal feeling that for some reason irritated me most of all.

My friends showed up at my home and settled my doubts. Before that, I didn't even think of getting ready. Their inspiring laughter, discussion of simple problems, and exchange of impressions about how they had worked on the meditation at home distracted me from my heavy thoughts, raising my mood a bit. My friends were finally able to drag me out from my "graveyard" to the training, declaring that I was being an incorrigible malingerer. Andrey also lectured me for a while using his eloquent examples, and made a conclusion at the end:

"I understand why we miss school classes. That's clear, it's boring. But the training? It's a real adventure that you won't read about in any book or see in any kind of movie! It is so interesting and informative! While you, sleepyhead, say 'Don't want to; I'm not going to...' Then you'll sleep away the best years of your life and will have nothing to remember later."

"Aha," my persona thought gloomily. "If that 'later' will ever come."



11

As usual, we arrived early. After greeting Sensei, the guys ran into the changing rooms, while I unwillingly dragged myself behind everyone with my head hung low. Suddenly I heard Sensei's voice very close to me:

"You overcame yourself, well done!"

It was so unexpected that I was really taken aback. I looked into his eyes, surprised. He was looking at me intently, his eyes shining with endless kindness and sympathy. And as usual, without giving me time to collect myself, he added, "Well, go ahead and get changed."

Meanwhile, another group of people came up and greeted him. They started to tell him about their problems.

"Dear me!" A thought flashed across my mind. "Is it possible that he knew about all my thoughts, doubts, and torments?! Then if he knew, maybe that's normal, maybe that's the way it should be? And if he said well done, it means that not all is lost yet." Nevertheless, Sensei's words affected me like an elixir of youth given to an old woman. I rushed to the changing room, having forgotten that only a few minutes earlier, I was hobbling all broken and tired of this life.

"Where are you rushing to?" Tatyana asked puzzled, watching me put on my kimono with great speed. "I can't believe my eyes, two minutes ago you were dying, and now you are rushing headlong into the gym."

"Ah, Tatyana," I smiled. "Andrey was right when he said that we shouldn't worry too much."

Looking at the surprised expression on her face, I added, "I'm in a hurry to live, so that 'I won't regret the senseless years of my life later...'"

Tatyana laughed, and I ran into the gym overflowing with energy. I joined the other guys who were warming up. To tell the truth, I myself didn't expect such activity from my almost dying body. Where did it come from?

Five minutes before the beginning, Zhenya, who was warming up next to Stas, looked towards the door and shone in the rays of his blinding Hollywood smile.

"Ba!¹ What a surprise to see you in this neck of the woods!" Zhenya lifted his hands in dismay.

A sturdily built guy, not too tall, with a strong-willed face and military bearing, entered the gym. Zhenya's amazed exclamation made others look around. Sensei and the senior guys came up to the newcomer:

"Hi, Volodya!"

"Welcome back!"

"We're glad to see you!"

When the delighted participants calmed down a little, Sensei asked, "So, how was your trip to the south? Did you warm your bones thoroughly at the resort?"

"Uh-huh, I even got sunburnt. I wouldn't wish such a trip on anyone. As they say, if you have nothing to worry about, your commander will help you with it."

"What's going on down there?" Zhenya asked.

"What, don't you watch television, country boy?" Stas said with a smile.

"What? What? What is a 'television'? You should know that news in our village is spread through only one channel — rumours. And if somebody doesn't understand it, one fist punch in the ear, and the brothers' heads clear up. That's the way!"

The guys laughed. Zhenya transformed into the role of priest and addressed Volodya, "Confess, my son, confess in detail, about your overseas sufferings and about the sorrowful deeds of hell. Relieve thy soul!"

"Well, Zhenya! Even the grave probably won't change you," remarked Volodya, laughing with everybody. He added more seriously, "What can I say, people are getting mad there, they can't even share a piece of earth... They ruined such a great resort!"

"They know how to create a storm in a teacup," Victor agreed. "It's in their blood."

"Yes," Zhenya drawled, "they couldn't avoid the bloody front, unfortunately. I suppose you also chattered your teeth with fear?"

1. Ba! — exclamation of surprise in the Russian language, esp. when meeting a good friend. *Translator's remark.*

“We are used to it, holy father. It’s not my first time,” Volodya comically mimicked him.

“Alright, guys, we’ll have enough time to talk.” Sensei stopped the humorous exchange. “Go change. It’s already time to start the training.”

The warm-up began at an active tempo with moderate exercise stress. I noticed that Volodya, despite being a stocky guy, moved softly and easily, like a snow leopard. When the main crowd finished repeating the basics, Volodya and the “speedy” guys started emotionally discussing something with Sensei. Having finished our exercises, we also hurried to join them, trying to grasp the subject of the conversation.

“What could we really have done over there?” Volodya argued hotly. “We had to work mostly at night, in complete darkness, and often in cellars. There you can’t use a flashlight or even light a cigarette or you would instantly get a lead bullet. So many of our guys died because of that! The only thing you can do under such circumstances is to fire back at every sound in the darkness.”

“But you are supposed to have special equipment for night vision,” said Stas.

“Ha, they only show that in movies. But in reality, maybe they have it in anti-terrorist units... but where can we get it from?”

“Why do you need special equipment?” Sensei asked, shrugging his shoulders. “The human is a lot more perfect than any piece of iron.”

Volodya reflected and remained silent for a little while before adding, “Well, I think I tried it all. I tried to narrow my eyes, so my vision would adapt faster. We tried to train in the darkness in order to improve the perception of sounds. But all in vain. Still, in most cases we were caught by surprise despite the fact that we seemed to be ready.”

“Vision and hearing here are absolutely irrelevant,” declared Sensei. “Humans have a completely different level of perception, thanks to which you can control your surrounding space at a desirable distance around you.”

Volodya glanced at Sensei merrily and said, “Sensei, show me.” He placed his palm against his heart and added with a smile, “My soul missed your examples so much.”

Sensei smiled ironically, waving his hand as a sign of agreement, “All right, kamikaze, come on...”

Volodya and the guys developed a whole plan for how to disorient Sensei. Meanwhile, the crowd got excited about the unusual demonstration. Someone brought a thick scarf to blindfold Sensei’s eyes, making sure no light could get through. The others discussed how to create more noise and vibration in the air. Our group observed the process with interest, standing next to Stas.

“Who is this Volodya?” Andrey asked.

“Volodya? He is a friend of Sensei’s. One of his old disciples,” Stas replied.

“And how long has he been training with Sensei?”

“Well, I’ve already been training for five years. When I met Sensei, Volodya had just come back from the army. Actually, he had trained with him even before the army.”

“He is a serious man, athletic,” remarked Andrey.

“Well, I would think so. Volodya is a Master of Sports in sambo², served in the marines and in the intelligence service. And after that, in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.”

“Where does he work now?” I asked.

“Right now, he trains a newly created special force,” Stas explained. He added, “A fine fellow indeed!”

Our entire group, under Volodya’s supervision, sat on the sides of the gym, forming a circle. Sensei walked into the centre. Volodya blindfolded his eyes with a scarf, thoroughly covering every possible gap. After this preparation, he disappeared into the crowd. Meanwhile, Sensei took an odd stance. He looked like a tired pilgrim who was taking a rest for a while, leaning on an imaginary staff.

“Wow!” Zhenya exclaimed with admiration, rubbing his hands in anticipation of something special. “Shortly we’ll see something very interesting.”

“That’s for sure,” confirmed Stas, carefully looking at Sensei.

“What kind of a stance is that?” Andrey inquired.

“If I understand correctly, this is from the style of the ‘Old Lama’,” Stas answered quietly.

“I have never heard of such a style before.”

“Hmm, and you’ll probably never hear of it again. It’s an ancient, dead style. As Sensei says, it was forgotten even before the birth of Christ. Today only a pale imitation of this school remains. In China, it’s known as the style of the ‘Dragon’.”

“Not bad for a pale imitation,” Andrey was astonished. “As far as I know, the style of the ‘Dragon’ is the most powerful style, as it incorporated the wisdom and power of all of the martial arts schools...”

Looking once again at Sensei, he added, “How do you know about this ancient style?”

2. Sambo — a type of wrestling based on judo that originated in Russia and now features in international competitions. *Translator’s remark.*

"I had an opportunity to learn about it two years ago. Some tourists told us about it. So, Sensei, being the polite host, regaled them with the style of the 'Old Lama'. That was quite a show, I tell you, we couldn't tear ourselves away from it!"

After such an advertisement, we stared at Sensei to make sure we didn't miss anything exciting. Meanwhile, Volodya gave the signal, and our entire group started to make an unimaginable noise, chaotically clapping our hands and stamping our feet.

Making use of this cover, Volodya started to approach Sensei, going around him clockwise. His movements were soft and light. He stepped like a panther before the jump, getting closer and closer to the enemy. When Volodya neared Sensei's right side, with a quick, light under-step, he started to execute a strike of mawashi-geri to the head. Practically simultaneously, Sensei put his right leg behind and, immediately while rotating, his right hand drew an elegant arch and slightly touched Volodya's face with the edge of his palm. The hand touched him like a light feather, and didn't hit like I expected. Judging by what was to come, it hadn't been an accident, or a miss. All movements were executed by Sensei with ease, smoothly and with complete accuracy. Volodya reacted to this light touch as if he had been hit by a cannon-ball. His legs flew up, and he was catapulted backward, crashing down with force against the floor. Everybody in the gym lapsed into complete silence. Volodya began to stir, sitting up on the floor. People heaved a sigh of relief and buzzed, like a beehive, discussing what had just happened.

"How did he manage to fall down?" Kostya asked Andrey with curiosity, but he shrugged his shoulders.

"Maybe he just lost his balance. He was standing on one foot. Probably so, because it seemed like the strike was very light. And you can't even call it a strike."

Sensei, shedding the scarf, asked Volodya, "Are you alive, suicider?"

"Alive," Volodya drawled, holding his right eye. "I don't understand, where did I make a mistake?"

"Your mistake is that you tried to get me from what you thought was my most unprotected side, in other words, from the most vulnerable point."

"Of course!"

"That's why you got into trouble! If you had attacked me from the front right away, you would've had more of a chance than attacking from behind or the right side. Had you attacked from behind left, you would've been hurt even more."

"But why?"

“Because you think like a human, who possesses vision and hearing. How many times did I tell you, you must take into consideration your opponent’s way of thinking. Since I see and hear nothing, you could logically assume that my consciousness is controlling the least protected places a lot better and stronger.”

“And how about the front?”

“In front of me, there is weaker control because the body is already prepared for attack. A human, without natural perception, is more physically ready for the fight in front of him and spiritually from behind, and that’s a lot more dangerous. It means that the more vulnerable the side of the opponent seems to be, the more it is protected and correspondingly, the counterattack can be more unpredictable.”

“And what if I’d had a gun?”

“If you had a gun, we would have had greater use for you tomorrow.”

“What do you mean?”

“Exactly what I’ve just said. We would have had a hearty meat pie out of you.”

Volodya smiled in reply to Sensei’s black humour.

“Well, no need to, I will bring you pies myself...”

When Volodya took his hand away from his face, we were taken aback a little. A big bruise had swollen under his eye. The skin around his eye became dark blue and was covered with blisters, as if after a burn. Girls from our group began to bustle about and brought Volodya a towel, which they had wet in cold water. But even this compress didn’t help him. Nevertheless, it seemed that Volodya worried about his eye least of all. He stood up, shook his clothes off, and merrily joked with Sensei, while we were commanded to exercise our techniques.

After the training, almost at the very end of the additional training, we again heard something interesting.

“Sensei, is there such a technique to control the surrounding space that can be taught in a simpler form, so that it could be understood and practiced by the guys of my unit?” asked Volodya.

The Teacher thought for a little while and replied, “Yes, there is such a technique, although you will need a partner for it. It’s best to practice it sitting in the “lotus” pose... You should do the following: above your head, suspend a soft tennis ball on a rope, so that when your partner pushes or swings it, its trajectory of flight would coincide with the location of your head. Your objective is simply to learn to dodge it without using your usual organs of control in the surrounding space, and to rely more on intuition. You should perceive the ball in its spiritual interpretation. Try to feel the object

approaching the back of your head and, guided by your internal intuition, move your head before it hits you. The most important thing is to train your mind, and once again, we come back to our muttons,” smiled Sensei. “... But seriously, you should bring your mind to a complete calmness so that it reminds you of the mirror-like surface of a lake. And in that full silence of your consciousness, the approaching object, in our case the ball, will be like a pebble thrown onto that glassy surface, causing ripples, or like a boat... call it as you wish. But it will affect your space. Everything else is located further away. It could be people standing in a circle, or trees on the shore, whatever you prefer. And you are the centre of that lake. You should learn to feel any vibration on your surface, any penetration in your space. Finally, you will learn to feel the approaching foreign object and everything that’s happening around you.”

Andrey, who stood with us next to Sensei, asked, “Can we also train in this way?”

“If you have such a desire, certainly, train to your heart’s content,” answered Sensei.

“And in this case, what kind of a perception will be activated?” Volodya asked.

“Almost the same as the one during this demonstration. The most important thing is to come out with your consciousness over the boundaries of your body.”

“And how is that done?” Andrey didn’t understand.

“Well, I’ll give you this simple example. Any human, when he sits down, relaxes, and tries to calm his thoughts as much as possible, then starts to feel that his consciousness is widening and coming far over the boundaries of his body. Consciousness becomes three-dimensional. It covers enormous spaces. In this case, you simply limit it to a certain place. In the example that I showed you, it was the gym. Although, if you train hard enough, you will be able to feel what is going on at the other end of your district. Actually, it’s not that difficult.”

“In other words, the most important thing in the exercise with the ball is to achieve complete calmness of the mind, like in the example with the lake?” Andrey asked again.

“Absolutely correct, and make sure that not a single thought could enter that space.”

“That’s hard.”

“Hard, but possible.”

“Stas said that the style of the ‘Old Lama’ is very ancient. Is that true?”

“Yes.”

“Has history preserved the names of those who mastered it?” asked Kostya.

Sensei smiled, thinking about something and answered, “From those known to you, perhaps, only Buddha. And, of course, his first followers.”

“Buddha?” said Kostya, surprised. “But I thought that he had a different kind of philosophy, the philosophy of good. What do fists have to do with this?”

“Even good can be with fists,” Sensei answered calmly. “But to master that art doesn’t mean to attack someone. For them, it was sort of a stage in spiritual development.”

Thus, our additional training ended, and again we became witnesses to such valuable knowledge and the abilities of Sensei. Our delight was endless. Having changed, we waited for the others near the gym. When the crowd came out to the street, Zhenya glanced at Volodya and exclaimed with horror, “My god! Oho... What a shiner you have, beautiful.”

At these words, everybody turned their attention to Volodya. His eye was completely swollen, turning into a big, black spot.

“Don’t worry,” Zhenya tried to cheer him up, puffing up his chest, and declaring, “Bruises make men more attractive!”

Volodya replied with a smile, “And how about you, don’t you want to become more attractive?”

Everybody burst out in laughter.

“Of course he wants to. And I’ll be like a witness in that joke,” Stas expanded on the situation. “When he was asked, ‘Did you see how one man hit another on the head?’ he replied, ‘I don’t know if I saw, but I heard a sound, as if somebody hit something empty’.”

Victor added, “And I will be a second witness. If I am asked why I didn’t come to help the victim during the fight, I will answer with a clean conscience, ‘How could I know which of them was the victim when they were thrashing each other so hard?!’”

Another wave of laughter rolled through our crowd.

“Come on, guys,” Zhenya teased everyone. “Your jokes are good only for soldiers in barracks. Sensei, did you see that? The man hardly said a word, and they have already fabricated a case!”



12

Joking and poking fun at each other, the guys moved on. The weather was calm, and the sky was covered with scattered stars. Enjoying the cool of the evening after the intensive training, we didn't notice how our group became a little spread out. Kostya and Tatyana had gone far ahead. Volodya, Zhenya, and Stas dragged somewhere behind. And Victor, Andrey, Slava, Yura, and I were walking in the middle with Sensei, chatting about trifles.

Just around the corner, we came face-to-face with a group of miners, about eight of them, all considerably drunk. They seemed to have seriously angered Kostya in passing, as when we approached them, his face was red with rage. Kostya kept recklessly snapping at them, making the drunk men very angry. Andrey added fuel to the fire in an attempt to defend his friend. The most impatient of the miners rushed towards the two to fight. Andrey and Kostya dashed at him. But Sensei arrived just in time, blocking their way and addressing the miners, "Calm down, men! Why must you curse here, in the presence of women? It ill befits noblemen to swear."

"What the ... is he talking about?" A furious miner croaked, having seized Sensei. "Move along or else I'll break all your bones!"

At this point we could not stand it anymore and moved in a crowd towards the instigator. Even I flew into a rage towards these drunkards and was ready at that moment to tear them to pieces. The senior guys ran up to us, but unexpectedly Sensei stopped all our attempts and gave a sign to Victor for everyone to leave. We grumbled with indignation. But Victor, Stas, Zhenya, and Volodya took us away like diligent shepherds leading a flock of sheep, not letting us stop.

I kept turning around, waiting for the Teacher to show off one of his supertricks against eight enemies. But Sensei only stood there smiling and explained something with gestures as if he were making excuses. When I glanced back the next time, I saw that the smiling miners were fraternising with him, saying goodbye to him as good friends. "Well, really!" I thought. "What is the point of practicing Kung Fu for so many years?" Judging by the puzzled comments of my friends, I was not the only one who thought that.

When Sensei came up to us, Andrey said with indignation, "Why did you make excuses to them? They were the first to bother us and to stir up trouble. We should have beaten them to teach them, so they don't do it again. If you hadn't stopped me, I would..."

"Surely," Sensei interrupted him, "if I hadn't stopped you, they would have been at least seriously injured, not only in their soft tissues but also in their organs, and they might have even gotten a concussion of the brain. Do you realise that these are men who have families at home, who are probably the only bread-winners of these families? Do you realise that they are miners? Have you ever been in a mine?"

"No," Andrey replied.

"Well, I have... These guys, whom you wanted to break to pieces, they go down a mine as if into hell, to a depth of up to one kilometre and more. Just imagine the pressure on their bodies. Not to mention," Sensei started to list on his fingers, "heat, lack of oxygen, very harmful methane... And furthermore, they realise that they risk their lives every second. Because any moment they can be crushed, injured, or even killed. Injuries happen regularly in the mine. And people are afflicted by all this. Their mind is always on the brink, so to say, at the breaking point. This state of mind is comparable with the state of mind of soldiers on the front line during the war. That's why Stalin used to say, 'The mine is the second front.'

"Do you know why they drink? In order to relieve their stress, this internal feeling of permanent fear. That is why highly qualified specialists in psychology and medicine should work with miners for them to overcome this psychological block. But of course, they don't get this help. That's why many of them drink."

"Yes," Kostya sighed,

"Thus it aperieth what great unhappiness
And blyndnes cometh to many a creature
By wyne or ale taken without measure."

"Exactly... Besides, every miner who has been working for a long time in the mine has a clear understanding that he has no future. You have choices like finishing college, finding a career. But they have no choices;

only to croak in the mine or to die of diseases they contracted there. They understand it quite clearly. But they have their own pride and megalomania, the same as yours."

"Megalomania? No," Andrey negated. "I don't have any."

"Really?! But you just wanted to beat them up only because they bothered you... This is evidence of your megalomania, that you, such a king, have been offended... They have the same pride. But unlike you, they don't have any future. And you want to deprive them of their last? Just imagine what would have happened with them, with all their stress, unrealised ideas, dreams, and lost chances, if they had come to themselves in the emergency room after your beating... It would have brought them additional suffering, much stronger even than physical pain. What for?!"

We hung our heads, feeling ashamed. Although Sensei directed this explanation mainly to the men, all of this was quite applicable to me as well. His words had completely shaken me. I felt some internal discomfort caused by my recent aggressive thoughts, and I felt very ashamed of myself... Suddenly I perceived the whole depth of Sensei's thoughts and realised how well he understands and feels each person.

"What for?!" the Teacher repeated. "Would you suffer if you just apologised and walked away? No. Nothing would have happened to you. It's quite clear that you are able to smash all of them with just your legs."

"Of course, I would..." Andrey started to flare up again.

"You see, it's your megalomania again. But I teach you to train your body, not to beat up people on the streets. The main point of the martial arts is completely different, and all these tricks may never be used by you in your whole life. I hope to God they will never be used. Your task is to learn to understand the cause and effect, the depth and the essence of the situation, and to resolve it peacefully."

"What did you say to them?" Kostya asked.

"It's very simple. I explained to them that they had children like you and that another group of drunken men like them might bother their children and beat them. I described this case simply from the human point of view. Notice that their megalomania has not suffered. And what is more important, they left satisfied, with the intention to defend others like you. Therefore, everything may be solved much easier with peace."

After a small pause, he added, "Every fool can snarl and punch... But do not give in to your animal instincts. It's much more important to be human in any situation, to understand why and by what this aggression is caused. And how to solve the dispute in the right way so as to gain a friend instead of making an enemy."

As we came to the tram stop, Sensei concluded, “Remember that **any blow caused by you in rage will come back to you in the end.**”

We stood in silence and looked ashamedly at Sensei. Finally, after arranging the next meeting, we went home.



13

We were silent for almost the whole journey home. As we neared our stop, Andrey, who had sat all this time with a thoughtful air, burst out, “I feel so guilty after Sensei’s speech!”

“Sure,” Kostya agreed. “I’m wondering why I got involved with those guys? As they say, there’s no wisdom like silence!”

“Don’t worry,” Andrey reassured him. “You see how it turned out. Every cloud has a silver lining... Yeah, Sensei has done a tough brain reboot.”

“It will take a long time to digest it”, I thought. All the way back I was tormenting myself, not as much with thoughts about the incident but about myself. Something in my ordinary internal state was unusual. But what exactly? I turned the conversation with the Teacher over and over again and felt this discomfort and... Stop! It dawned suddenly on me. Of course, it was a new feeling! When this powerful blow shook the huge underwater rock of ignorance and egoism, suddenly a long-forgotten, deep feeling emerged in me. But my persona could not completely realise it. When it arose to the surface of my mind, I understood what Sensei wanted to say. It happened to me for the first time. *I understood his simple truth clearly.* It was the real discovery for my internal world. I was so happy to feel it as if I had managed to reconcile with myself.

I came home in an elated mood. It turned out that a surprise awaited me there as well.

“We have good news,” my mother said with her shining, charming smile. “Uncle Victor has called us today from Moscow. He managed to arrange treatment with the best professor from that clinic. So, we just have to set up an appointment.”

If I had heard this news before, I would have been extremely happy. But now it struck me that I didn't really care what was happening to my head on the physical level. The main thing was the feeling I realised in myself. It was some new level of perception that concerned the soul more than the body. But in order not to ruin my parents' good mood, I spoke out, "That's great! I had no doubt. It is easy for uncle Victor with his high standing and connections! He is a nice guy and a real go-getter."

The whole next day, my persona pondered this new feeling. I returned to a normal life, so to say, with my body and especially with my soul. And when it was time to go to meditation practice, I couldn't wait to get there as soon as possible. This time it was my persona who hurried sluggish Tatyana to pack up her things more quickly.

We came to the tram stop and met the boys there.

"Girls, just imagine," Kostya said laughing. "Sensei has almost ruined our Andrey."

"What happened?" we asked.

Andrey stood, silent but smiling, and Kostya continued with excitement.

"After we saw you to the door, we headed for home. But on the way, some guys started to bother us. They seemed to have this urge for a cigarette but didn't have a lighter. Andrey was a real gentleman and did his best to explain to them that we don't smoke and would not recommend it for their own health. Besides, he added, haven't you heard that the Department of Health warns that smoking is bad for your health. He concluded that instead of poisoning their lungs with this disgusting thing and hanging around the back alleys and doing nothing, they should take up sports, for example, Kung Fu. It would be more beneficial for both their souls and their bodies."

"And?" Tatyana asked impatiently.

"They started to look for trouble."

"And Andrey?"

"Just picture it, our Andrey began to deliver a speech about their miserable life, said that their words would boomerang back to them. I thought that he was lost. But then I saw it was all right."

"What happened next?"

"What happened next? Tensions were growing. Andrey kept his patience for a while, enduring their insults, but then in order to be more convincing, he smashed their faces in and made a moralising conclusion, saying, 'You see, all your bad words boomerang against you with the same force'."

"My world!" I was amazed.

"And then what happened?" Tatyana asked with a smile. "Any victims?"

“Everything was all right,” Kostya waved his hand. “Ah! I forgot to tell you the funniest thing. Afterwards, they asked him if they could be his disciples.”

Everybody laughed, but for some reason I was uncomfortable. First, I didn’t expect such a stupid thing from Andrey. And second, I felt sorry for Sensei.

“Yeah, Andrey, you are depraved,” Tatyana said laughing.

“Right, exactly,” Kostya kidded. “He is a dangerous man...an old offender. He usually steals my great sayings and puts them into the most inappropriate context.”

“Don’t exaggerate by telling us about your great sayings,” Andrey teased him. “Our new Socrates, so to say.”

“Why Socrates? There were more famous people in this world...”

This funny dialogue would have continued endlessly, but just then our tram came.



14

We left early for the training, and as it turned out, it was not in vain. Andrey tried to bring us to the secret glade, reassuring us that he knew the way. For about half an hour, we strolled about the streets of the village, exciting all the dogs around. Finally, desperately arguing with each other where the turn was, our group came to a small lake.

“You lousy pathfinder!” Kostya said. “Where is your glade?”

“Theoretically it should be here,” Andrey shrugged his shoulders.

“Aha, but in reality, it was driven by a flood to the other side? Let’s go back.”

On the way back, we bumped into Zhenya.

“Finally we find another living soul,” Kostya sighed with relief.

“Have you been lost in our Shanghai?” Zhenya poked fun at us.

“Yeah, we relied on the memory of this pathfinder.”

“Where is the glade?” Andrey asked.

“Over there,” Zhenya waved his hand in a completely different direction.

“I told you we took the wrong turn! There was no hillside,” Andrey reproached Kostya.

“And how come you are here?” Tatyana asked Zhenya.

“Don’t you know? I can spiritually locate any man, I need only think about it.”

“Don’t joke with us,” Kostya said with a smile. “But really what are you doing here?”

“What, what... I live here, l-i-v-e!” Zhenya said jokingly. “I had just come outside the gate and saw your flock rushing to the lake. I didn’t even have time to open my mouth. Well, I thought, they will figure it out soon

and go back. Just so! I saw you coming back five minutes later. I went to the road so you wouldn't mistake me for a post again."

We beamed with smiles, thrilled with such an opportune meeting and together went on to the glade. In that secluded nook, created with love by nature, almost everyone had already gathered, including Sensei and Volodya. We loudly joined the others, greeting them. Having noticed that it was Zhenya who brought us there, Sensei asked jokingly, "Has this muddlehead organised an excursion for you again?"

"No, we have a new one now," Kostya nodded to Andrey. "This one surpassed even Zhenya."

And then Kostya started to eloquently recall our adventures. He was so carried away by the overall laughter of the crowd, he became so expressive that he blurted out more than necessary, something that we had decided to hide from Sensei: "Well, really! Now imagine entrusting him with disciples after that. He will lead them into such a dead end that he will not know how to get out of it."

"Which disciples?" Sensei caught on to the word, although it seemed to me he had not been listening too attentively before.

"Yeah," Kostya became confused after he realised he had said too much. "There was a story..."

"Which story?" Sensei showed interest.

Kostya could do nothing but reluctantly tell all the facts. Andrey also joined the conversation, making an attempt to justify his behaviour with good intentions. Sensei, after listening to all the babble, shook his head.

"You see... There is an old, very ancient legend: Once upon a time, there lived a king, who had an only son. One day he heard that there was a great martial arts Master who was famous even among kings for his Wisdom. He was said to work wonders because he made an excellent Master from an ordinary village boy in just one year. The king made up his mind to send his son to him.

"One year passed and the king asked, 'Well, has he grasped the way of the warrior?'

"'Not yet,' the Master replied. 'He is too self-confident and he wastes his time on pride. Come back in five years.'

"In five years, the king asked the Master the same thing.

"'Not yet. His eyes are still full of hatred, and his energy boils over excessively.'

"Another five years passed. The Master said to the king, 'Now he is ready. Look at him! He is as if carved from a stone. His spirit is flawless.

The completeness of his internal virtues is perfect. His challenge will not be accepted by any warrior, as they would run away in fear just from his glance.'

And the king asked the Master, 'Why did my son have to wait so long? He is much smarter than that village boy.'

"And the Master replied, 'The reason is not so much in the mind as in the Heart of a man. **If your Heart is open and your thoughts are pure, your spirit is flawless. And this is the very essence of the Way of the warrior...** The village boy came to me with a flawless spirit, and I just had to teach him the technique. Your son has spent years learning this Wisdom. Without this source of power, he would not be able to make a single step on the Way of the warrior.'

"Rejoicing at his son's success, the king said, 'Now I see that he deserves to take a throne.'

"No, father,' the young Warrior replied. **'I have found something greater. Before my mind was limited only to material wishes, but now it is endless in spiritual cognition. The greatest power, all the gold of the world, fades compared to it like grey dust under the foot of the wanderer. And the wanderer is not interested in the dust, he is fully devoted with each step to the new discoveries over the horizon.'**"

Andrey hung his head, ashamed. There was a long pause. But then Nikolai Andreevich joined our company and the discussion switched to other problems, including the meditations practiced by us at home.

"I again felt this paresthesia," Kostya said. "Is that normal?"

"Of course. What is the point of it? You have to feel this paresthesia that appears with the first breaths in your head. You have to feel how it 'runs' inside of your arms and, most importantly, how it "jumps out" of the centre of your palms into the earth. That is, you have to feel your inward and outward breath. And you should not have any outside thoughts at all."

"This is the most difficult thing to do. When I concentrate on the tip of my nose, the thoughts start coming to my head, catching on each other. And the most amazing thing is that I do not even notice when they appear."

"That's right. It shows that we are not used to controlling our thoughts in our daily life. That is why they guide us in any direction they want, confusing us in their 'logical' chains. And the uncontrolled thought leads mainly to negative things since it is controlled by the animal nature of a man. That's why there are different spiritual practices and meditations, to learn, first of all, to **control the thought.**"

We talked a little more about the concerns of our home practices. And then we began the next meditation.

“Today we will unite two parts of the meditation into one,” Sensei said, “so that you understand how it should work and aim to reach it in your individual training. Now find a comfortable standing position...”

Following his words, we relaxed as usual and concentrated on the meditation practice. First, we concentrated on the tip of the nose like before. Then the Teacher said, “Do not distract your attention and vision from the tip of the nose. Take an inward breath with the bottom of your stomach, with your stomach, chest... Outward breath through shoulders, hands, chakras of the palms into the earth. With the outward breath, a small light flares up more and more. Breathe in... Breathe out... Breathe in... Breathe out... Concentrate on the nose tip... Breathe in...”

That’s when I found myself completely confused. As soon as I began to concentrate on the ‘streamlet’, which I could feel clearly as a partial movement through the arms, I immediately lost control over my nose tip. And as soon as I began concentrating on the ‘flashing’ nose tip, my ‘streamlet’ disappeared. It all happened when I had ‘unnecessary’ thoughts. Somehow, I was unable to combine it all. During one of my next attempts, I heard Sensei’s voice, which informed us of the end of the meditation. As it turned out, this happened not only with me but with my friends as well.

“It is natural,” Sensei said. “You should not be thinking, just observing. Then you will succeed.”

It seemed completely unachievable to me. But I was encouraged by the fact that Nikolai Andreevich and the senior guys didn’t have any problems with this meditation. “It means that there’s still hope,” I reassured myself. “If they can do it, why can’t I do the same? I just have to practice hard. That’s the point.” It was then I realised that even in my thoughts, I had started to speak using Sensei’s words. While I was reflecting on this, one of the guys asked a question.

“So, you want to say that the way to self-cognition starts with observing yourself and your thoughts?”

“Of course. Mastering of self-observation and control over your thoughts can be achieved little by little during everyday training. And for this you need an elementary knowledge base. It’s a natural approach to any training, either physical or spiritual. Just a simple example. A man lifts a weight of 20 kg. If he trains for a month, he will easily lift 25 kg, and so on. The same happens at the spiritual level. If you are prepared, it will be much easier for you to master more difficult techniques.”

“But there are a lot of different meditations and modifications. It’s difficult to understand which one leads to the pinnacle,” Kostya, as usual, made his education known.

“It’s too far to reach the pinnacle. All these meditations that exist in the world are just an alphabet that has always been there. And the real knowledge leading to the pinnacle starts with the ability to put together words from this alphabet and to understand their meaning. Reading the books is, like they say, a privilege of the chosen ones.”

“Oh my! Everything is so complicated,” Andrey said.

“There is nothing complicated about it. You just need the desire.”

“And if one has the desire but hesitates?” Slava asked.

“If a person has doubts, if someone should beat his head with a heavy sledgehammer so that he understands that — yes, it is truly a sledgehammer, then that means that such a person is very much stuck in the material world, in the logic and egoism of his thoughts, his mind... if he possesses one at all, that is.”

The guys smiled at these words, and Sensei went on.

“If a man sincerely strives towards self-cognition, with pure faith in his soul, he will surely succeed. It’s a law of nature... And it is even more so for a spiritually developed individual.”

Andrey said thoughtfully.

“Well, the alphabet is clear, but I don’t quite understand about the composition of words. Is that also a meditation?”

“Let’s say, it’s something higher — a spiritual practice, an ancient primordial technique that allows one to work not only with the consciousness but, what is more important, with subconsciousness. There is a set of certain meditations that lead to a corresponding spiritual level... It’s simple. The main point is that an individual should, at first, overcome his Guard, his material thinking, with its invariable desires to stuff the gut, put on a rag, and conquer the whole world at... The same eternal truth as usual, and the same eternal stumbling-block. Should an individual step over it, he will become a Human.”

“I wonder if these achievements of perfecting his body through training mean something?” Yura asked.

“It’s one of the ways of learning the ‘alphabet’.”

“Recently, Yura and I watched a video about martial arts,” Ruslan inserted into the conversation. “And before it, they showed a documentary on people’s achievements in self-perfection of their body. Just imagine this trick, one guy put a spear edge to his throat, attached its handle to a minivan and pushed it without hands, without injuring himself. Another one lay on his back under heavy things. And nothing happened to him! The third one smashed bricks with a blow of his hand. But the most interesting one was at the end. They took an ordinary bull bone and poured highly

concentrated acid over it. Of course, it was destroyed. Then they poured the same acid over a man. It immediately destroyed his clothes but brought no harm to his body.”

“Incredible!” Andrey exclaimed. “I can’t believe it!”

“It’s not unusual,” Sensei said, evenly as always. **“The potential of a human is limited by his imagination.”**

“And what was that, Tsigun?”

“Well, let’s say, aside from Tsigun, there are a lot of similar techniques. But the source of the knowledge, including Tsigun, is the same. That is, this is a work with energy ‘Tsi’ — the constructive energy of the air.”

“I have read somewhere that ‘Tsi’ is life energy, and you call it constructive. Why?” Kostya asked.

“Because energies, chakras, channels, and even energy centres in different teachings are known by different names. For example, under the energy ‘Chi (Ki or Qi)’ in yoga, they mean noble restoring energy. But in the science of ‘Lotus,’ the ‘Chi (Ki or Qi)’ initially meant a powerful destructive energy. The same is true with ‘Tsi’.”

After staying silent for a while, the Teacher added, “People just suppose but they don’t possess precise information about the real nature of this knowledge. That is why, they mix up the names. As they say, it’s better to stand on the head than to hang in the air.”

“Hmm, that’s true,” Volodya agreed. “To paraphrase my favourite poster, which an eyesore to everyone in our house, ‘There is no such obstacle that we can’t create for ourselves!’”

The guys smiled.

“What is Tsigun in relation to the Art of Lotus?” Andrey returned again to the serious issues.

“To explain in terms you can understand, Tsigun is like a kindergarten and the Art of Lotus is like, let’s say, an academy. One of the first stages in learning the highest art is full control over the thoughts. If you can control your thoughts, you will have power over everything.

“Oh, so I may ...” Slava started to talk with excitement.

“No, you may not, because you will control your thought. That is, you will not be able to do something negative and wrong. That is the whole point. We learn and practice Tsigun, but in the Art of Lotus we don’t train, we recall all things hidden in our soul.”

“And those body phenomena we have seen in the film, is it possible for us to learn them?” Ruslan asked, thinking about something.

“Of course. It’s easy if you can use this energy in the right way.”

“And what do we need for this?”

“Elementary skills, concentration of breathing, a certain understanding of the essence of this phenomenon...”

“I just can’t grasp it,” Yura said in a thoughtful way. “How did that guy manage to break bricks with his hand?”

“Did you want him to break them with another part of the body?” Zhenya poked fun at him.

“It’s possible as well,” Sensei smiled, “if you want strongly enough to do so. The point is that with a certain amount of concentration and breathing exercises you can accumulate the Tsi energy in any part of the body, in this case in the hand. And at the moment of the blow, the chakran opens up in the palm, and all this power is released to break something. A very important point here, I say it again, is the very process of thought concentration, that is, the process of focused concentration.”

“Does it have any effect on the change in brain activity?” Nikolai Andreevich asked.

“Sure. It creates a very interesting process in the brain. To put it in medical terms, a beta rhythm may be registered in the moments leading up to the blow as well as during full mental concentration. A few seconds before the blow itself, individual stops thinking about what he is doing. At this moment, his mind activity changes from beta rhythm to alpha rhythm, and that is similar to the state of shock. It is exactly in this state that a blow is being struck. It is like... a stoppage of time, perhaps. There is nothing difficult in it. Just different physics. That’s all.”

“We have one soldier in our platoon who breaks bricks,” Volodya joined the discussion. “The others tried to imitate him but didn’t succeed except with board punching.”

“It’s natural,” the Teacher uttered. “The mistake of many people is that they try to think too much, to analyse the situation. That’s why they cannot succeed.”

“Can you break bricks?” Andrey asked, unable to resist a temptation to see everything with his own eyes.

“It’s easy, just take a hammer and go ahead,” Sensei joked.

“No, I meant with a palm,” Andrey specified.

“Why soil the hands? It’s better to use a piece of paper.”

“A piece of paper?”

“Yes. I do not guarantee as to the bricks, but if it’s something wooden, easily. Does anybody have a sheet of paper?”

We started hastily looking in our pockets. Volodya tore a piece of paper out of his notebook, about five centimetres wide. Yura found a dry branch not far from us, around 3-4 centimetres in diameter.

“Does anybody want to try?” the Teacher suggested.

The guys in turn waved a piece of paper over the stick like true card-players, until they ripped the paper but nothing changed. Volodya had to tear off another piece of paper. Sensei offered a piece of paper to me and Tatyana.

“No, no, no,” we waved our hands. “If these guys were unable to do it, what we can say about our muscles.”

“Muscles don’t play any role. It can be done by anybody who doesn’t doubt his abilities.”

With these words, the Teacher gripped a piece of paper between his forefinger and thumb in his outstretched hand. He concentrated and started to do a set of breathing exercises. After that, the paper started to vibrate a bit, its movement was gradually slowed down, and soon it stopped moving at all, becoming straight. In less than a minute, Sensei raised his hand slowly and cut the stick with one smooth movement. The cut looked as if it were made by something iron and sharp.”

“Wow! That’s super!” our amazed group exclaimed.

We kept looking at the branch, at the paper, and at Sensei with one silent question, “How did he do it?”

Nikolai Andreevich ventured a guess doubtfully, “Was it a trick? You must have broken the branch with your finger in the very last moment.”

“Really?” It was Sensei’s turn to get surprised. “Have you ever seen a trick like this?”

He threw a piece of paper that went into the nearest tree just like a knife blade, complete with a metal sound. We had hardly put our lower jaws back in place as we rushed to the tree, as if there were an answer to the eternal question from Shakespeare, “To be or not to be?”. Nikolai Andreevich himself took out a paper-blade, even tasting it. It was handed round. This piece of paper seemed to be an ordinary metal plate, with all typical features. We stood completely at a loss, unable to believe our own eyes. Suddenly the plate in Slava’s hands started to lose its shape, gradually turning into an ordinary piece of paper. Slava noticed it, threw it into the air, and jumped quickly away with a piglet scream, causing the same reaction not only in us but in the senior guys as well. Volodya was the first who collected himself. He carefully picked up the former page of his notebook and said in a bass voice, “Why are you making noise? It’s just a piece of paper.”

We looked at the Teacher.

“It’s alright. It has simply spent its power.”

When we calmed our stormy emotions, Sensei explained, “You have seen one more feature of the ‘Tsi’ energy — its ability to accumulate ions

of metal. Since Tsi is constructive energy, so to say, a concomitant one, I concentrated and mentally inserted ions of iron into this piece of paper. My thought was implemented by Tsi which, through my breath, brought these ions from the air into the paper. That's why the paper turned into a metal plate for a time. Tsi is a free energy — that's why it dissolved in a few minutes, thus returning this item to its original form."

"Great!" Ruslan said with admiration. "And is it possible to Tsi something like two kilos of gold?"

The guys burst out laughing.

"Theoretically it's possible." Sensei smiled. "But in reality, it's like the saying in the Winnie the Pooh cartoon, 'If there is honey, there is no honey.' Remember physics: in order to retain ions of metal, you need strong molecular compounds. And these ions are connected by the Tsi energy mixed up with psychic energy. Tsi is the connecting link between ions of metal, while psychic energy creates a shape of an object for a short period of time. But there will be no density as such."

"Wow!" A hum buzzed through the crowd.

"So, that is the practical use!" Kostya discovered for himself. "And here I was thinking what's the use of all this? That's great!"

"We can do so many things with it," Ruslan said with a smile.

Everyone's eyes shone with excitement, and the guys started to discuss how to make use of this knowledge. Sensei observed our banter, keeping silent. And the more we expanded on the situation in jokes, the gloomier and more serious his face became. Finally, he said, "I see that you guys have too much animal nature inside yourselves."

"We're just joking," Ruslan uttered, trying to make an excuse for all of us.

"Many a true word is spoken in jest."

"Right," agreed Volodya, who was also silently observing our jokes. "Otherwise it will be the same story as with the ninjas."

We didn't understand whether he was joking or telling the truth.

"What do you mean?" Andrey asked.

"What I said," Volodya said in a bass voice.

We looked at Sensei questioningly.

"Yes, there was such a story," Sensei said. "Once a whole clan of ninjas were liquidated because they used spiritual knowledge with selfish motives."

"We haven't heard about it," Ruslan said. "Tell us."

"Yes, tell us," we backed him up.

"There is nothing to tell... So long as ninjas trained their body and mastered their skills, they flourished. Nobody paid attention to them, actually. They were just hired assassins. But when ninjas started to master

spiritual practices and learnt something, they began using this knowledge for their material enrichment. It was a real hour of triumph for ninjas, so to say, their prime and twilight at the same time. They won fame immediately as invincible super-killers. Due to spiritual practices, ninjas developed their extraordinary abilities. They were able to turn everything into a weapon: any piece of paper or cloth, that is anything that comes to hand. They learnt perfectly how to camouflage, to jump very high and from a very great height, without any harm to their health and so on."

"That's great! "Slava burst out.

"Do not admire them," the Teacher said after Slava's exclamation. "And moreover, do not create idols from them. They were just a gang of hired ignoble assassins who killed from behind, on the sly, from an ambush. They were foul scum and cannot be called otherwise. They were directed by their animal nature... They didn't have any *honour*. **And honour is, in fact, one of the attributes of the general spirituality of a human, not just of a warrior**, meaning when he lives by high moral values. A man without honour is nobody and nothing."

"And what happened to the ninjas?" Yura asked.

"Well, as is usual in such cases. When they started to use spiritual practices for gaining their own material enrichment, they were liquidated."

The guys bombarded Sensei with questions. But Ruslan was the most insistent of all, "How did they get this spiritual knowledge if they used it for their own devious purposes?"

"They didn't get it. Ninjas stole it. More precisely, they wormed out the technique of meditations through deceit. And then they cultivated this seed of knowledge themselves. But they used it for bad things. That's why they were punished."

"Who punished them? You said yourself that they reached such a height that they became invulnerable to people," Andrey put his question to Sensei.

Sensei grinned and cited his favourite saying, "You see, for every Vijay there is a Rajah... If there is military science, there is somebody who governs it. It's the same with spiritual practices. If there are spiritual practices, there is someone who controls the use of these practices... This is the reason this knowledge is called spirituality as it's meant for spiritual enrichment of the individual, not material enrichment, especially not through killing of their own kind."

"I have read that ninja schools still exist," Kostya remarked.

"Yes, but the truth is, modern ninja schools are just a miserable parody of those that existed in ancient times. They still have ninja's techniques and instruments. But all this training came to a stop on the crude, physical level.

And the door to further perfection is closed. **As the law says: spiritual is for spiritual...** And if you guys strive to learn the Art for financial gain or satisfaction of your megalomania," Sensei shook his head, gazing upon us, "no good will come of it..."

"Why?" Slava asked.

"First, you will never learn anything. Second, if, of course, you are lucky enough, at the very least you will get schizophrenia."

"Yes, that's a nice prospect," Ruslan said smiling.

"Well, you are safe from that," Zhenya said, chuckling.

"But we are not going to kill anybody," Andrey was looking for excuses.

"Physically, maybe not. But your thoughts contain too much of a beast. And this is the first step towards aggression and violence."

"And, what are we to do now?"

"Control your thoughts — every second."

After a short silence, Sensei added, looking at Andrey.

"Have you ever thought about who you actually are? Who you are in essence? Have you thought about how you perceive the surrounding world? Not from the point of view of physiology, but from the point of view of life... Who are you? How do you see, how do you hear, why do you feel, who in you understands and, who exactly perceives? Look inside of yourself."

Sensei continued addressing the guys, "Have you ever thought at all about the infinity of your consciousness? About what thought is? How it's born, and where it goes? Have you thought about your thoughts?"

"Well," Andrey became confused, "I think all the time, reflect on things."

"It only seems to you that it's you who thinks and it's you who reflects. But are you sure that these are your own thoughts?"

"Whose else? This body is mine, therefore the thoughts are mine as well."

"Try to analyse them, if they are yours, at least for one day. Where they come from, where they disappear to. Dig through your thoughts thoroughly, and what will you see there except shit? Nothing. Just violence, just ugly things, just the desire to gorge yourself, to put on fashionable rags, to steal, to make money, to buy, to raise your megalomania. And that's all! You will see for yourself that all thoughts generated by your body end with one thing: the material procurement around you. But is it really you inside yourself? Look into your soul and you will encounter the beautiful and eternal, your true 'I'. All this external vanity that exists is just seconds... Do you realise this?"

We stood silent. Suddenly, this scene seemed very familiar to me. It already happened to me once, in exactly the same way down to the smallest

details: this word-for-word discussion, and this glade, and these bright stars, and most importantly, this voice familiar to the innermost of my heart, this kind face... *I knew that it had already happened.* But when, where? I tried to exert my memory, but I was unable to recollect it. I shook my head a little to get my mind out of this deadlock and back on track.

Sensei went on, "You have lived 16, 22, 30 years, and you, about 40 years. But each of you, do you remember how you lived? No, there are just some miserable scraps, connected with emotional splashes at that."

"Yes," Nikolai Andreevich said in a thoughtful way, "life passed so quickly that I didn't even notice it. All the time I spent studying, working, dealing with insignificant, endless family problems... There was no time to think about myself, about my soul, since there were always urgent matters."

"Exactly," Sensei agreed. "You think about the future and about the past. **But you live in this very moment called 'now'. And what is now? It's a precious instant of life, it's a gift from God that should be used rationally. Because tomorrow is a step into uncertainty. And it's not improbable that it may be your last step in this life, a step to the abyss, to infinity. And what will happen there?**

"Each of you believes that he has plenty of time on Earth, that's why you don't think about death. But is that so? Each of you may die any second, for any reason, seemingly independent of yourself as a biological being, on the one hand; but on the other hand, **you are not just a biological being, you are a Human who is endowed with a particle of eternity. Once you realise this, you will understand that your Fate is in your hands and a lot of it depends on you. And not only here, but also there. Just think it over: who are you, a perfect biorobot or a human, an animal or a spiritual creature? Who?**"

"Well, a human... maybe," Ruslan said.

"Exactly, 'maybe'. And what is a human, in fact, have you thought? Go deep inside of this question. Who feels in you, how do you move in space, who moves your extremities? How do your emotions arise in you, why do they arise? And do not shift the blame onto someone who bothered you, offended you, or vice versa, that you envied, gloated, gossiped about. Is it your spiritual nature speaking in you?"

"Find a crystal spring of your soul within you, and you will understand that all this material glare — cars, flats, villas, social status — all this material wealth, you spend your conscious life to achieve, will turn into dust. Dust which, in this springwell, will immediately be transformed into nothing. And life passes by. Life, which might be used by you to be transformed into the endless ocean of wisdom.

“What is the purpose of life, have you ever thought about it? The highest purpose of life of each individual is the cognition of his soul. Other things are all temporary, passing, just dust and illusion. The only way to understand your soul is through your inner Love, through moral purification of your thoughts, and through an absolutely firm confidence in reaching this goal, that is, through internal faith... As long as you have a glimmer of life in you, it’s still not too late to cognise yourself, to find your origin, the holy life-giving spring of your soul... Sort yourself out, and you will understand who you are in reality.”



15

After all we had seen and heard during that meditation, there was something to seriously think about, especially for me, being on the verge of death. “God, these are the answers to my questions, which I have been looking for so long. **Is it possible that this formula of achieving immortality is so simple? Control your thoughts, Believe, and Love.** Is it possible that I will reach a saving shore, an edge of eternity from which the immortals already observe life, all those who have recognised themselves and their divine nature?! Is it possible that my ‘I’ will be able to break loose from death’s grip? Even if I don’t have time to ‘win over’ my body, I will still be able to become free, or at least I will be prepared to meet with the Unknown.” Such thoughts created an unusual inspiration in me and a burst of internal power. I decided not to lay aside things for tomorrow but to start working immediately, right now. Because who knows what tomorrow will bring for me.

First, I tried to examine my thoughts. But I felt so enthusiastic and inspired that I was unable to stop at anything specific, as all my material thoughts suddenly disappeared under such a force. Then I started to investigate my feelings. Only now did I notice that I was so absorbed with my internal feelings that I started to view even the outside world completely differently. This was some kind of a new vision, an unknown point of view to me previously on the old and, as they say, worn out problems.

A new vision surrounded me from all sides, like a cocoon, detaching my consciousness away from grey, everyday commonness with its trivial worries. I had the impression that I existed by myself and the rest of the world existed by itself. Moreover, I observed for the first time the workings of my body from the outside. It was making its usual movements, as if it

were on autopilot: it came home mechanically, took a shower mechanically, ate mechanically, and went mechanically into its allocated corner, that is to say, into my room. The real “I” at that time was observing and thinking about its salvation. This small discovery shocked me. It turns out that there is a true “I” in me and a kind of bodily autopilot.

But then there was more. Once again running the conversation with Sensei in my mind, I recalled his words: “Have you ever thought how you move in space and who moves your extremities?” Examining myself from a new point of view, I reflected, “And really, who moves my extremities: the ‘I’ or the autopilot?”

My persona looked at my open palm and decided to conduct a simple experiment. I thought, “I need to clench and unclench my fist,” and my hand obediently executed it. “And now I am not going to move my fingers.” But this time, a wild thought flashed across my mind, “And I will clench my fist anyway.” My fingers, under the influence of this “order,” clenched and unclenched again. “Oh!” I was surprised. “And who was that thinking in me? Who is there playing boss in my thoughts?!” Gathering myself up again this time, I was more persistent and concentrated my thoughts: “I won’t move my fingers. That’s what I want, and it shall be so.” Strangely enough, my hand didn’t even move, and this wild, mad thought seemed to have never existed in my mind.

“Wow!” I was even more surprised. “This means that when I was relaxed in my thoughts, this someone started to invisibly manage my consciousness and my body at his discretion. And when I closely control a thought, he disappears somewhere without a trace. Gosh!” Nevertheless, I was so happy to discover this fact, it was as if I had tracked a spy, who had been thoroughly camouflaged for many years in my most secret department. “Yes, this ‘wiseguy’ is much more dangerous than that stupid ‘autopilot’. I should be more vigilant!”

It’s easy to say but hard to do. When I started to practice meditations, I understood that this dodger visited my thoughts all the time in the moment of relaxation, and especially during concentration on meditation, constantly diverting my attention to outside matters. He carried it all out in such a clever and logical way that I didn’t notice when I went off track in concentration. But when I concentrated my thoughts on meditation deeply and clearly, the dodger disappeared. But I needed only to weaken control and he would appear again. “What a skunk! Impudent and bothersome,” my persona thought, trying once again to concentrate on meditation. When I finished a meditation, I understood that it was not easy to fight with my number one enemy. “I will need to ask Sensei how to find justice for this

dodger,” my persona thought, falling asleep. “Otherwise he is going to spoil everything for me.”

The next morning, when my burst of emotions had faded away a little after the day before, I began to observe myself again from the outside. Once again, my body somehow came off the warm bed and started to mechanically perform its morning ritual, getting ready for school. My mind, as it seemed to me, was sweetly sleeping, and that’s why I didn’t feel like thinking about anything. While walking my usual route to school through the city square, I was enjoying the surrounding stillness, the morning freshness, the rustling of fallen leaves. I really liked this state of peace. My mind slept, my body walked in a given direction, while I just felt well and cosy inside of myself. I felt that this was my true “I”.

But in school, the situation changed immediately. My persona flew into a tornado of events, information, emotions. As a result, I was completely confused about the nature of my thoughts because they came in a continuous torrent, and it was hard to sort them out, what was mine and what was foreign? And the whole day passed in this wild rhythm.



16

In the evening, when I met the guys at the tram stop, I hastened to share my “achievements” with them and asked with interest, “How about your results? Did you think after yesterday’s training?”

“There is nothing to think about,” Kostya said arrogantly. “My ‘I’ is me, the whole, one and indivisible... I am not a maniac to divide myself in two parts.”

“Oh, yeah, you’re not a maniac, you’re a genius.... from ward six. Does Napoleon bother you much?” Andrey teased him with a smile.

“Stop it. I don’t have excessive megalomania.” He added, “Great people don’t suffer from it.”

“Of course,” Andrey laughed, “I didn’t expect any other answer.”

“Calm down or you’ll start with the same old song and dance. Tell me more about your experiences,” my persona said impatiently.

“There’s not much to tell,” Andrey answered. “Sensei told us a lot of useful information yesterday. There’s enough work for the brain for many years to come. That’s what I was doing yesterday, I was reflecting on whether I had correctly formulated my goals for the future or if I should adjust them partially, taking into account the new information.”

“Wow! You have really started to mind your language,” Slava said sarcastically. “Are you going to join the Academy of Science?”

“Oh no, Sensei is quite enough for me.”

“That’s true,” I said. “Did you succeed with the meditation?”

“A lot better than yesterday. Thoughts didn’t crawl too much into my head. My concentration improved right away, and all the feelings became clearer.”

“Tatyana, how did you get on?”

“Well, to tell the truth, I didn’t do meditation and I didn’t even think about trying it. I was so tired yesterday that I barely reached my bed. In the morning, I had to take my younger brother to kindergarten, then I went to buy milk, after that, straight to school. There’s no time for reflection when you have so much to do!”

“Right,” Kostya backed up her excuses. “You should not think but act. Youth is given for action and old age for reflection.”

“Ha,” Andrey teased him, “and when you’re old, you will be creaking with your decrepit voice, thinking with the last remnants of your brain, ‘Ah, if only youth knew, if only old age was able to.’”

The guys laughed again, teasing Kostya.

“And what about you?” I asked Slava.

“Fine.”

“Fine in which sense?”

“Just the same as all of you.”

“It’s all clear,” Andrey smiled, hopelessly waving a hand towards him.



17

At the next training, we were warming up before the beginning of the exercises as usual. A crowd of men with imposing appearance, entered the hall, led by Volodya.

“Wow, what a crowd!” Andrey was surprised.

Victor smiled and said to Stas, “This is what’s known as ‘a couple of guys.’”

“What do you mean?”

“Volodya called me yesterday and said that he would come to the training with a couple of his guys.”

“My goodness, there’s probably half a regiment here,” Stas said with a smile.

“Exactly, that’s what I’m telling you.”

Volodya came up to greet Sensei, who was standing not too far from us. The senior guys hurried to join them.

“Sensei, do you mind?” Volodya pointed towards his guys.

“No problem,” as always, Sensei answered easily.

“Did you watch TV last night?”

“When? I barely have enough time.”

“Would you believe they showed our San Sanych yesterday?!”

“Our San Sanych?!” Zhenya was surprised. “It’s been ages since we last heard of him!”

“Oh! But now he is really famous! He says that he lived in a cave somewhere and learnt a Russian martial art. And now he calls himself a Russian ninja. What’s most interesting is that he demonstrated your techniques, Sensei. With the only difference being that he tells everybody that it is a long-forgotten Slavic style revived by him.”

“Not bad!” Stas grinned. “You see, Volodya, if you hadn’t kicked Sanych so hard last time, you would’ve been his partner.”

“No, he wouldn’t,” Zhenya said archly.

“Why not?”

“What do you mean why not? If Volodya hadn’t beaten him down so well back then, the man would never have seen the light.”

The guys roared with laughter.

“You shouldn’t have treated him like that last time,” Sensei said. “He is an old man, and we should respect our elders.”

“It was his own fault; why was he asking for trouble?” Volodya began to make excuses, then added in a softer voice, “I barely touched him, just struck him by accident.”

“Exactly, exactly, Sensei, that’s the way it was,” Zhenya joined in. “I remember it as if it happened yesterday. Volodya put out his fist, and San Sanych was knocking it with his head for almost five minutes. And now look how useful it was! The man saw the light and became a Russian ninja.”

The guys burst out laughing again.

“Ah, let him amuse himself,” Sensei waved his hand with a good-natured smile. “The man found his gold mine, let him work.”

“Yesterday we were on duty in the barracks,” Volodya continued the story, “and saw on TV how Sanych flapped his legs and dragged lads along the floor. We had a good laugh, recalling our youth. Even my newcomers are far better... That’s why we decided to come today, in order to gain some knowledge of the real art, to replenish our knowledge reserves, so to say.”

“It’s a noble deed,” Sensei agreed.

The guys continued to tell stories of bygone trainings and a whole heap of funny incidents during them. At the very end, Volodya’s guys joined the conversation, and it turned from martial arts issues to a philosophical dispute about relationships between people.

“Well, I dealt with them this way on principle,” one of Volodya’s guys fervently defended his point of view.

“Principle is a stupid resistance to reality, akin to idiocy. Principle...”

Sensei had hardly finished this sentence when one of the senior guys continued his thought, “...is good only in exact sciences as a synonym to an axiom.”

“Exactly,” the Teacher confirmed.

Volodya got a bit embarrassed, “Well, I’ve done my best to explain it to them.”

“Well, then you haven’t tried very hard. And what can’t be understood through the mind...”

“...will be hammered in through the body!”

“Good, since you all know this so well, you shouldn’t laugh...”

I realised the meaning of Sensei’s last words when the training began. Sensei warned that today we were going to train at full force, and those that couldn’t endure the tempo should step aside to the left corner of the gym and polish up their strikes there, without disturbing the others. We ruffled up our feathers, like sparrows, and whispered with pride among ourselves.

“Us, not endure?!” Andrey said quietly.

“Don’t even say it,” Kostya added. “We will show right now what we are capable of!”

“It wouldn’t be the first time,” I uttered carelessly, remembering the warm-up of the senior sempai.

But our arrogance flew away immediately after the first few minutes of the warm-up. I have never before seen such a tough training. It was a real school of survival. The crowd was running through the gym in a mad tempo, overcoming constantly changing barriers. In less than forty minutes, many of us were already crawling over these barriers almost on all fours, including my persona.

Groaning nearby, Tatyana uttered, “It’s so awful! Almost like a joke, ‘Dear ladies and gentlemen! Dear Comrades! Koryakian girls and boys...’ The last one is for sure about us. I feel like I’m a native of that region.”

The first ‘victims’ appeared in the left corner of the gym. But our group carried on stubbornly. However, later it became even worse. After that marathon race with a series of different exercises, we started doing push-ups. I don’t know how many times, I just remember that it was over one hundred. My hands were shaking as if I had been using a jackhammer, and my body curved like a caterpillar when trying to get up, not so much due to these vibrations, as due to the thrusts of my saving buttocks. Because it seemed to me that only this part of my body had any strength left. I started to look more and more often towards the left corner, where a growing number of people crawled to this saving ‘oasis’. Tatyana traitorously joined them and was waving at me alluringly.

Meanwhile, the senior sempai counted push-ups. In order to raise people’s mood, he jokingly kept saying, like a toastmaster, “Sensei has a sheep-dog that lets everybody into the house, but no one out. So, let’s do ten push-ups for the quick wit of this smart dog that doesn’t eat its bread for nothing.”

While everybody was getting more exhausted with each counting, Sensei walked around the big human circle of sweating people, searching for someone to whom to add weight with his palm. And when he pressed

you with his palm, as Andrey said, it felt like a truck had driven over you. During the second round, when he came up to me jerking through the push-ups as if in convulsions, I thought, "This is the end! If he puts his hand on me, I will surely be flattened like a fly against the glass." Despite my expectations, the Teacher seized me by my kimono from above like a kitten by the scruff on the neck and started to help me come up from the ground, evoking laughter from the surrounding guys.

Meanwhile, Victor went on, "Sensei also has a cat Samurai, which became so self-confident that it started to fight with dogs. Let us then do ten push-ups for his wants to always correspond with his abilities."

My bones were aching from the strain. While Victor continued telling his funny puns, I was cursing Samurai's flea Mashka that jumps so far, and that mouse that lives in the shed and runs so fast, and those 'Siamese battle' fishes that have lightning reactions and a piranha's manners, in other words, all those living creatures that dwell in Sensei's house. Finally, the last round of push-ups was for the manhood of parrot Keshka, which made an effort to breed five nestlings, and we fell to the floor completely exhausted. However, in less than one minute, we were laid out again in stacks, and the crowd started to jump over its long-suffering brethren, accidentally crushing our extremities on the way. In the hall, every now and then under staring eyes, one could hear a restrained howl, "Ouch!". My persona couldn't take it anymore and joined the left flank of 'weak-nerved ones'.

"It's high time," Tatyana said.

But our rest didn't last for long. When the warm-up was finished, we started intensive work on basic techniques, strikes, and moves. I noticed that Sensei devoted more time to Volodya's guys, explaining and showing them a series of new techniques. They were throwing each other so easily while practicing strikes that I was simply shocked by their endurance and inexhaustible force. It was as if there had not been a gruelling warm-up with all its consequences.

After two and a half hours of intensive training, we only had enough strength to think about how to survive the additional training. Of course, nobody forced us; if we wanted to leave, we could have. But our curiosity was bigger than physical tortures. Since Volodya had brought his guys, the most interesting stuff would be ahead. And we weren't mistaken.



18

When the main crowd left, Sensei started to demonstrate some special techniques on how to use counterforce. Divided into pairs, the guys started to practice them. Tatyana and I also tried, but our feeble bodies ended up hanging on each other, like tired boxers in the last round. Upon seeing our parody of sparring, Sensei separated us, placing us into pairs with the guys. I immediately felt a surge of energy. As they say, “Where did it come from?”

Exercising one of the kicks, Ruslan, who looked like a skinny ant against his partner Zhenya, complained to Sensei, “Is it even possible to knock out such a giant? He is so impenetrable, like solid armour. If he initiated an attack on me, I could at least use his own force against him, as you said. But what if I need to attack him? Then what can I do against this stubborn rhino? He’s a heap of muscles!”

“A heap of muscles is nothing. In martial arts, strength is not the most important thing. In the East there is a saying, ‘Hands and legs are nothing more than a continuation of the body, and the body, in turn, is a continuation of the mind.’ In other words, the most important things are knowledge and skills. Then even the weakest woman, with just a touch of one finger, can knock out the strongest athlete in the world or even kill him.

“Well, theoretically it’s possible,” Zhenya smiled. “Especially if she is beautiful, then one glance is enough... But seriously, in my opinion, it is practically impossible.”

“It is possible,” replied Sensei.

“An athlete?”

“An athlete.”

“With one finger?”

“With one finger.”

“Without force?”

“Without force.”

“I don’t beli...”

Zhenya didn’t finish his sentence when Sensei touched one of his throat muscles, a little below the right ear, with a light movement of the middle finger of his left hand. Unexpectedly for all, Zhenya’s face distorted as if he had chewed a dozen lemons, and with the right side of his mouth at that. His right leg quickly gave way, and he fell to the ground before he knew what was happening. His right hand was unresponsive and looked like a rag. Zhenya glanced at Sensei with frightened eyes, twitching with the left side of his body.

“Ohsh, notsh shou bash,” Zhenya could only hiss, trying to say something coherent. We stood and watched in shock as a young, healthy man was turned into a helpless, half-paralysed old man.

“Whash shush i shu?”

Sensei bent over the living corpse of Zhenya and touched some points on his back and stomach. He did it so quickly and skillfully that I didn’t even see where he pressed. Zhenya started slowly recovering, massaging his suffering extremities.

“Nosh sho bash!”

“So, how are you doing, doubting Thomas?” Sensei asked.

“Shenshei! You should have letsh me know beforehand. My atchic wij tshe lasht gyrush gotsh almosht bur’ned dshown,” Zhenya enunciated with difficulty in his broken, hissing language.

“What a pity it didn’t,” the Teacher said with disappointment, jokingly. “At least the bugs there would have died off. Sometimes it is actually useful in terms of preventive measures.”

“Sensei, tell us the recipe for this poison,” Stas jokingly joined the conversation, evidently being the first to recover after that shock.

“Well, the recipe is simple. You need to know where, when, and how.”

“It sounds logical, but could you give us more details?” Volodya made an attempt to clarify.

“More details? There is a great number of BAPs in the human body.”

“Whatsh?” Zhenya didn’t understand.

“BAPs — biologically active points.”

“Thshey are not pointshs, damn itsh! Thshey are balishtic misshiles!” Zhenya said it with ironic indignation. “Moreover, witsh auotshopilotsh.”

The guys smiled at his painstaking speech.

“Absolutely correct. It proves once again that any knowledge can be turned into a weapon. So, this effect of ‘ballistic auto-piloted missiles’ is

caused by no other reason than an accurate point impact on biologically active points of a human body.”

“And what are these points?” one of the guys asked with interest. “How do they work?”

“Well, it’s a certain area of the skin with common innervation. Located in this zone, receptors send signals through nerves which in turn, transfer these signals not only into the spinal cord but also through centripetal and extraspinal tracts up to the cerebrum. There, a certain interlocking of the occurring unconditioned reflexes happens. Moreover, this process is reflected in cortical analysers as well, with the formation of conditioned-reflex connections. In other words, to put it simply, a certain order for the body is being formed there.”

“So, will it lead to this particular effect?”

“Not only. A man can be immobilised for some time or knocked out, or ultimately, programmed to cease existence on the physical level at a certain time.”

“And do you only need to hit this point hard?”

“Not at all. All processes inside of the body take place at very small energy levels. If you affect these points with a threshold stimulus, that is to say, with a weak stimulus, it brings a much bigger influence on the body’s function than a strong stimulus.”

At that time, Zhenya stood up and tried to stretch his legs by walking around, all the while limping to the right and shaking his right hand. “My dshear mothsher, thshish gripesh, ash if I were laying on thshe rigsht sidshe.”

“This lazy lay-about,” joked Sensei. “He just wants to sleep and to eat well... You should train more!”

“Well, I kindsh of sweatedsh ash muchsh ash everybodshy.”

“I mean, you should train your mind more so as not to make a fool of yourself.”

“Where did you ‘kick’ him so gently?” Volodya wondered.

“This is a so-called Botkin-Erb point. If I had pressed another way, the effect would’ve been completely different. If I had affected the plexus of nearby splanchnic nerves with the same impulsive force, then I could’ve caused a spasm of the thyroid artery, which in turn would cause a disorder in the thyroid gland. This would’ve led to overall weakening of the immune system or its complete cessation. In that case, he would’ve died on his own from any infection.”

Zhenya even stopped moving, hearing such a speech, “Shanks, you shealy calm me witsh shuch a chsheerful pershperspective.”

“You also said, ‘Where, when, and how,’” one of Volodya’s guys uttered. “What do you mean, when?”

“Well, apart from the fact that you need to know the exact location of the point and how much force to apply to it, you also need to know the time of day when this point is most active.”

“Hmm! And that’s all,” Volodya smiled.

Even now Zhenya didn’t miss an opportunity to joke, still in his hissing language, “Tshell me, and doeshn’t it come witsh the latesht map of tshe universh?”

Sensei smiled, “It depends for whom. For a dummy, even this won’t be enough.”

“And how can one know all these points and understand them?” Stas asked.

“The simplest way to understand something is, of course, to examine and to feel it in yourself, especially the impulse of pressing, this is very important.”

“Aha, and if we screw up something in ourselves,” Victor suggested half in jest.

“You won’t screw up. There are points-antagonists on the human body for this purpose, which neutralise the given stimulus or spasm. Everything in nature is maintained in equilibrium.”

“It’s better to try it on others,” Kostya proposed, smiling.

“It won’t work,” Sensei said. “No matter how many times you try on the others, you’ll never achieve the right effect until you feel for yourself the power of this impact.”

“May we try it right now, only, so to say, in a combat situation?” some of Volodya’s guys asked.

“You may.”

“And may we?” someone else in the same group added.

“Go ahead.”

Three volunteers from Volodya’s team and Ruslan walked out to Sensei. Stas, who also joined them, offered the same to Volodya who refused, saying, “Do you think I am a makiwara or something?”

“Well, well.”

Zhenya hobbled over and sat next to Volodya on the sport bench and addressed Stas, “Come on, guysh. One shecondh and zhthere is no thongue nor head anymore. Andth itsh will be your own faultsh.”

“So, anybody else?” Sensei asked, looking at Volodya’s guys.

Suddenly, my persona screwed up courage and stepped forward, evoking a smile on the faces of the surrounding guys.

“And what are you going to do?” Sensei was surprised.

A cowardly thought flashed in my head, "And really, why did I come out?" But it was too late to retreat.

"May I try?"

"Aren't you afraid?"

"Only of tickling," Flustered, I blurted out my dad's favourite joke.

"Alright, if you want to join the ranks of kamikaze, you are welcome."

And already addressing the other volunteers, he added, "Let's work at full capacity. Your task is to win this fight by any means."

"May we work in a group?" one of Volodya's guys asked.

"You may. Fight as you like, you have absolute freedom of action."

While Sensei turned away, Volodya's guys came together into a circle, negotiating something in their own military language of gestures. Ruslan and Stas also whispered to one another. I stood among these giant athletic bodies like a mouse, without any idea what I could do with my power of a small fly against a hurricane wind. Unfortunately, nothing special came to my mind. "Alright, whatever will be, will be," I thought.

The guys took up their fighting positions around Sensei. Only I stood in the same place. When the senior sempai gave the order to attack, Volodya's guys ringed Sensei and started to attack him at the same time on different levels. Surprisingly, Sensei easily avoided their strikes. He launched a counterattack so quickly that all I saw were chaotically falling bodies. My knees were trembling with fear. Then Ruslan and Stas tried to attack the Teacher. In fighting with them, Sensei turned his back to me, only the distance of an outstretched arm. I made up my mind to do something immediately. Nothing else came into my mind but to catch hold of Sensei's back, like a flea, so that he wouldn't touch me. But when I tried to do my best to bring this idea to life, I found that my hands went through the emptiness, and instead of Sensei, I caught air. I didn't believe my eyes, just now he stood in front of me! "It's easier to catch a ghost than Sensei," I thought.

But then all my thoughts together with my soul sank to my heels when I realised Sensei had already led the next fail fighters into a complete stupor. I turned around and ran like a deer in the opposite direction. Hardly had I made two steps as I got a light painful push somewhere in the vicinity of my first and second cervical vertebrae. A bright, blinding light momentarily flashed before my eyes, as if I were illuminated by a bright powerful projector of some yellowy-pink colour. My whole body became motionless in a rather unusual position with arms frozen in the middle of a swing, torso bent forward, and right leg half lifted. I had no idea how I maintained equilibrium. Only, at that time, this worried me least of all.

Terrified, I observed what was happening to my muscles. As a single mechanism, they started to spasm despite my will and desire. And this spasm crept over all of my body. It seemed that the strain intensified with every second, and nothing was able to stop it. My body was being squeezed with such a strength that I thought I heard my spine crack. The most extraordinary thing was to feel the tension in my internal organs. It had never happened to me before. Even my strongest former headaches were trifles in comparison with this unbearable pain. The muscles of my face got so strained that it distorted into a dreadful grimace.

Amazingly, despite all these transformations in my strained body, I kept a clear mind. My persona continued to see and hear everything clearly. I saw how guys from our group, observing everything, changed their expressions, looking with fright at our frozen figures. I could clearly hear the words of Kostya addressed to me, "Wow! What a beauty you've become, I can't take my eyes off you."

I wanted to reply to him sarcastically, but I couldn't say a word, couldn't even move my tongue. It seemed to me that an eternity passed while Sensei was bringing us back to life. But in reality, I hadn't stood in this position even one minute. My whole body felt like pins and needles in all directions, as if all my extremities had gone numb simultaneously. My accomplices were actively rubbing their bodies. I hastily followed their example, though not as restrained emotionally. My body was aching and hurting.

"Don't worry," Sensei reassured us. "In a couple of days, three days maximum, this pain will be over."

From then until end of the additional training, all six of us were doing nothing but rubbing our extremities while suffering tireless jokes of the other guys. When our group of cripples came outside, Volodya, who stood close to Sensei, said with admiration, "Splendid! It was a great training day today. I warmed up my muscles well."

"What, he warmed up his muscles!" I thought, hardly moving my legs. "If it continues like this, next time I will arrive in a wheelchair." Our group of unfortunate fighters slowly limped down the road, accompanied by the jokes of the other guys.

"You don't look altogether bad, guys, just like in that joke," Victor commented ironically.

"Which joke?"

"Well... two guys meet each other in the emergency clinic, bandaged from head to toe. One asks the other, 'Where did you manage to get hurt like that?' 'I crashed into the garage.' 'Your car is probably smashed,' the first one sympathised. 'No, I was walking!'"

"But it's not a joke, my body hurts," I complained to the Teacher.

"Just don't think about the pain. Because what is pain? Any pain is but an illusion."

"How can it be an illusion if I really feel it?"

"It just seems to you that you feel it. It's possible to stop feeling any pain at all, if you wish strongly enough."

"Really," Slava asked with distrust, "even if they cut you up?"

"Even if they fry you," Sensei answered with a smile and added more seriously, "Because pain is a reaction of certain nerve endings to irritation, delivering a signal to the brain. If a man controls his body and mind perfectly, he can regulate his pain barrier. By the way, there is a 'katedo' school in martial arts, where masters specially teach their followers not to feel pain."

"Lucky guys who study in this school," Ruslan said dreamily.

"They are not so lucky," Sensei uttered jokingly. "Before they learn something, they get hit in the head with a stick at least one hundred times."

At that moment, Yura, apparently, wanted to say something approving to his friend. But as soon as he opened his mouth and clapped Ruslan on the shoulder, his friend yelled out at the top of his voice, "A-a-a! Don't exuch my torturemities!"

The whole crowd burst out laughing at such a precisely noted absurdity.

"Well said," Stas said laughing.

Zhenya continued, "Just wait and see, such trainings will inspire people to invent a new language."

"Aha," Victor added. "And they will speak with words made up of unknown letters."

We walked on, more cheerfully now with a host of new jokes, partially having forgotten about our unfortunate extremities. Just my stomach was jerking from laughter in evident pain convulsions. Andrey spent this time thinking about something and didn't participate in our common conversation. Not paying any attention to our laughter, he asked Sensei, "And this style, the points style that you showed us, is that a style of the Old Lama?"

"Ah, don't mix up a stone on the road with the Himalayas. In the style of the Old Lama, the Art is improved upon to perfection. One handshake or simply an intermediary is enough to do anything you wish to a person.

"Not bad!" Andrey said surprised.

"Oh, this is just child's play. There are more serious things, and maybe someday I will tell you about them."

Saying his goodbyes at the tram stop and shaking everybody's hands, Sensei suddenly took Kostya aside and started to whisper something to him. We tried our best but were unable to hear anything. When Sensei

and his group started to move away down the street, we literally tortured Kostya with questions. However, he laughed off all the attacks, ascribing everything to personal secrets.

We were silent on the way home. Only Kostya tried to joke and cheer us up. I was deep in thought about my pain. The strange thing was that as soon as I started to think about it purposefully, my body began to ache and to hurt with renewed power. My persona thought about only one thing — how to get back home faster. Fortunately my house was in the centre, five minutes away from the tram stop.

After walking me home, the guys were in no hurry to leave. Or to put it more precisely, it was Kostya who was not in a hurry and who was as if bursting with jokes and other funny stories from daily life. I was already shifting from one foot to the other, mechanically smiling and showing with all my appearance that it was time to say goodbye. But Kostya in no way reacted to that and went on with his jokes, merely looking nervously at his watch from time to time.

Less than ten minutes into our conversation about nothing, Andrey unexpectedly hunched over in half with a wild cry of pain and almost fell on the ground, but he was caught in time by Kostya, who stood close to him. But Kostya himself couldn't keep balance and fell down on the ground, holding his friend up on his body. Frightened, we bent over them trying to help Andrey somehow. Out of fear, I forgot about all my aching muscles. Only Kostya seemed to stay calm.

"It's alright, it's alright, just let him sit down and rub his temples, it will be over in no time," he said, lifting Andrey.

While we fiddled about and settled down the helpless guy, Kostya glanced at his watch and pronounced thoughtfully, "Exactly as Sensei said... What power!"

We looked at him puzzled.

"What did you say?"

"I will explain it later," Kostya said quickly and started to help rub Andrey's temples.

Gradually, the colour of Andrey's face began to return to normal. The yellow-blue spots disappeared and his cheeks became slightly red. His breath became natural. In about a minute, which for us lasted for an eternity, Andrey recovered more or less. Grabbing his head, he mumbled in confusion, "I don't understand what the matter is... That has never happened to me before... Maybe I overtrained, or perhaps something is wrong with my body... but I'm still young."

Kostya grinned, shaking his head, "Wow! Sensei foretold even these words ...So, have you come back to life, fellow?"

"Which words?" We didn't understand.

But Kostya was entirely absorbed in the conversation with Andrey. "Sensei told me to ask whether you liked what happened to you?"

"What?!" Andrey looked at Kostya, surprised.

"I say, did you like this fall?"

When Andrey grasped these words, he became furious and was covered with red spots out of rage, "Did I like it?! Go to hell! If you were dashed against the asphalt like me, would you like it?!"

"Oh!" Kostya uttered with smile. "If he's cursing like mad, then for sure he came back to life." And then he added, "Why are you boiling and puffing like a teakettle? Cool down. This wasn't a simple fall, but a punishment from Sensei for your thoughts."

"What?!" Andrey got even more astonished.

This time I got boiled up, "What does it mean, punishment?! How could he treat the guy this way? He just decided to make a helpless creature out of him. Boy oh boy! What kind of a nice guy does such things? He drills into our heads to love thy neighbour, while he acts like that!" I thought. Suddenly a number of cases surfaced in my head with demonstrations of strikes during trainings — they were harsh, ruthless, and rude towards a sparring-partner. Immediately a wave of despair and anger swept over me.

Meanwhile, Andrey continued, "What?! Punishment by Sensei for my thoughts?! For which thoughts? Are you crazy? And it means you knew all this time and said nothing to me? What a friend, damn it. And I was wondering why he was cracking jokes and looking at his watch. Just so he could relay Sensei's words on time. So, have you relayed them?! Enjoyed the spectacle enough, you freak?!"

Now it was Kostya's turn to blush, "You are the dummy! Sensei asked me to stay close to you so that you wouldn't break your empty blockhead against the asphalt. And then, if you were able to listen, I was to relay these words to you."

Andrey was taken aback as if doused with a bucket of cold water. We stared at each other. The conversation came to a strained pause. We also stood bewildered by such a turn of events.

"And what did Sensei ask you to relay to me?" Andrey asked, still irritated, but already more composed.

"Sensei asked me to tell you that even a thought is material and that the Art must not be used against people."

“What does this have to do with the Art? Which thought? What do you mean?!” Andrey was dumbfounded.

“You must know which thought. You were stewing something over in your mind the whole way, not me.”

“When?!” He was even more surprised. “Well I, I, I... in the tram, I was replaying in my mind the whole training from beginning to end,” Andrey said, full of indignation.

“I am not speaking about the tram. When we walked with Sensei, what were you thinking the whole way?”

Andrey frowned, intensively trying to recall that stretch of time.

“Well, we were laughing and telling jokes...”

“That was us, and you?”

“And I...And I... What was I thinking about? Hmm...”

After a time of concentrated thinking, Andrey uttered, amazed, “Shoot! Is it possible that it was for...”?

He stopped in the middle of the sentence and his indignation quickly changed to reflection on some shocking discovery. This event intrigued us even more and our curiosity brimmed over.

“So, what for? What for?” We threw questions at Andrey.

At first, he tried to get rid of our intrusive questions, but finally he confessed, “Well, it’s an old story... I found some freaks who beat me up badly five years ago. Do you remember, Kostya, those big fellas?”

“Ah, those whom you swore to avenge all your life.”

“Well, that’s an exaggeration.”

“Your words,” Kostya said, shrugging his shoulders.

“Well, yes, mine. But let’s say it this way, those guys were the reason I started my intensive karate trainings... So... When I was walking earlier... I was thinking it over...”

Andrey got somewhat embarrassed, hanging his head. Evidently, it was not easy for him to confess it. But plucking up his courage, he continued, “In general, I thought... that with the help of this Art... they can’t hide anywhere... from my... revenge.”

After his words, silence fell. Kostya said with a sigh, “Yes, well... You see, it’s your own fault, you dream about God knows what, and I turn out to be the guilty one.”

“Are these also Sensei’s words?” Slava chuckled, trying to joke.

Kostya looked at him in such a way that Slava at once got embarrassed.

“And now imagine,” Kostya continued addressing Andrey, “how shocked those big fellows would be. Because they are ordinary people, with their own merits and demerits, just like us. But you are at least somehow prepared mentally, or rather you know about this power. And they? ... Even if one of them survived after such a fright, just imagine what would happen to them later. Each of them would have thought that he was sick with epilepsy... You felt unpleasant, and how would they have felt? Sensei asked me to remind you that **any blow caused by you in anger will come back to you in the end... And something else, ‘You should not wish bad to other people, even in your thoughts. Because with the power of your thought, you are setting a trap for yourself, for your body and mind. And the more you think about it, the stronger its net becomes, the tighter its loop. The only way out is to become a friend to your enemy and to forgive his deeds for you are also imperfect.’**”

Pondering a little more, Kostya added, “Well, I don’t think I forgot anything ... That’s all, now you can be free.”

“Free in what sense?” Andrey didn’t understand. “Is Sensei booting me out?”

“Well, he told me nothing about that... It’s me who is letting you go.”

“Ah,” Andrey drawled with a smile and started to get up from the ground with Kostya. “And why have you fallen?”

“Why? You shouldn’t be so fat and heavy. I’m not a Rambo to catch a bull like you!”

We laughed and said good-bye to each other, in a cheerful mood. I was very happy that everything ended so happily. In my soul there was another revolution of feelings. “And really, whose fault is it that there is so much evil around us? We are guilty ourselves. Because we don’t control our desires. And then we just get what we deserve. And then we yell and rebel, but what for? We should think more often about good things and be good to people, and maybe the world around us will change. At least in our understanding. And our understanding is our real world... If I had realised that earlier, I wouldn’t have been paying now for my egocentrism and megalomania with my own health and life... Oh! If only I had known it before, I would have been more confident about tomorrow. But since fate would decree in such a way, at least I will try to live whatever time left with dignity, like a human being... Sensei was right when he said once, **‘It is not the quantity of years lived that is important, but their quality. How, and not how many.’**”

Yes, we are responsible for all that we think and do. Why was I angry with Sensei? We are guilty ourselves, and he is just an observer of our reality, our irresponsibility and complacency. He judges from the point of view of his internal world, his knowledge, and his high moral values. In order to initially understand him, we need to at least become Human.



19

At home, I pondered over the events that had occurred recently. And then I remembered my body. All this time while I was distracted by my thoughts, the pain was hidden and existed on some distant level of thought. But as soon as I thought about my over-trained muscles, they immediately responded with a sharp pain, just as a loyal dog responds to the call of its owner by barking. My entire body started to cry out and break apart, and my mind began to feel intensely sorry for my poor body, blame my real “I” for the trial I subjected it to, sympathising with and being compassionate towards my extremities.

I forced myself to sit in the lotus pose to meditate. It was very hard to relax and even harder to concentrate. But still, my persistence brought me a small result. In one of my attempts at purposeful concentration, the pain was forgotten. Meditation went smoothly. Only when a foul thought flashed across my mind did the pain commence again. I was very aware of feeling a streamlet running down my hand. Then came a thought, “This hand muscle hurts the most. Stop! Aha, I got you, leader of distemper. It’s you who spoils all my attempts. Alright, alright. This time I didn’t manage to start a conversation with Sensei, but next time at the meditation training I will certainly find out how to deal with you.”

When I came out of the meditation, I started to reflect logically, “I wonder if I have schizophrenia. I start talking to myself and try to catch someone inside of me. Maybe I am already going crazy?” And at the same time, another thought appeared in my mind, “It’s a good indicator. If you were to think like that more often, you would reach your goal faster.” At some internal, inaccessible level, I understood what it meant. But my mind yelled, “What goal? Who’s speaking again?” Completely confused by my

thoughts, about who is who and what I really wanted, I fell asleep, following the example of my flesh, which was ruthlessly exhausted during the training.

The next day, my body became completely alien. Not only that, it was hurting and moving like a rusty robot. I got even more interested, as I had never seen myself in such a state. The “autopilot” evidently got turned off. I had to invent new ways to operate my body, even just to put clothes on. It was good that my parents went to work and didn’t see all of my comic horrors. Since I was busy with this disobedient machine, I was almost late for school.

I felt pretty much fine during the lessons, although it was strange to feel like a robot. The very last lesson was gym class. This was the end of everything. I tried to obtain leave from the teacher, but he was a rather conservative man and an awful bureaucrat. Our pains didn’t worry him. My only chance of leaving was by bringing him an official permission slip. I had an official note at home, hidden far away from my parents, because I liked gym classes and didn’t want to sit them out, despite the doctors’ opinions. Moreover, the exercises we did were never very difficult, in my opinion. During the trainings with Sensei, we tortured our bodies much more. But today for the first time I regretted that I didn’t bring this note with me.

Though my body had slightly stretched during the day, I had a hard time with the warm-up. And today, as if on purpose, there was a push-up test. “I certainly won’t survive. I won’t be able to do even one, especially after yesterday,” my persona thought. “He is such a bureaucrat and will not even listen to me without a note...” And I began chastising this man in my evil thoughts.

During the next pause, while thinking of a word worse than the previous one, suddenly Sensei’s words softly arose in my mind, ‘You should not wish bad to other people, even in your thoughts.’ “Oh! What am I doing,” my persona woke up, “I am creating a trap for myself.” Cooling my temper down a little, I started to think soberly, “What’s the point of swearing at him in my thoughts and looking at him gloomily? I will just be more upset and will be rude to him during the test. He will return the favour, give me a bad mark, and call my parents. My parents will find out that I didn’t bring my note to school and they’ll be upset. Why do I need all of this? And what if, as Sensei says, I try to put myself in his shoes? After all, it’s not his fault that I came to the lesson down and out. He doesn’t know that all yesterday evening, I was in fact preparing for his test. Then why should I be angry with him? He simply does his best to perform his job. And as far as my doctor’s note is concerned, well, he must give an account for his lessons, too. What if the principal or some committee comes to check on him? I can understand his position in this case.” Thus having put

my thoughts in order, I noticed that my anger vanished and now I was able to think about how to solve this problem peacefully.

After the warm-up, I again went to the teacher and calmly explained the situation to him. I said that the day before I had trained intensively and had suffered terribly, but for the next lesson I would certainly do push-ups, even twice as many. I also added that I completely understood that he's fed up with our constant excuses.

"I hope you understand, you were young once."

That last sentence burst from me by accident, but obviously stirred up some good memories from the teacher's past, because for the next fifteen minutes we listened to stories about his active youth. And when the test finally began, I asked him, "So, should I do push-ups?"

"That's alright," he genially waved his hand, "you will do it next time. We'll say that you didn't have enough time today."

To the great joy of the others, half of the class also "didn't have enough time." When the bell rang, my classmates said with smiles, "Great! Listen, maybe for the other lessons you'll evoke the teachers' memories of their far-away youth, and maybe they won't have time to ask us about homework. That would be great!"

"I'm not a wizard," my persona answered jokingly. "I'm just learning."

After class, I had a rather pleasant feeling inside. Nobody suffered moral damage and, more than that, everything was good. This pleased my vanity, and my megalomania started to grow by leaps and bounds. I only noticed it, though, when my friends joked about it while listening to me that evening.

"You really inflated this story like a soap bubble," Andrey remarked with a smile. "What's so special about that? I get up to tricks like that almost every lesson. You simply need to act with ingenuity and humour."

"Yes, but do you tame your anger every lesson?"

Andrey thought about it and said, "That's true... but humour so far has always helped me to understand teachers."

"Listen!" Kostya tapped him on the shoulder. "This is a brilliant method to fight anger... Do you remember Sensei's guys - Zhenya, Stas, and the others? They never stop joking."

"Exactly!" confirmed Andrey.

"You see, everything is simple, as Sensei said. You were wondering the whole night how to fight your anger. Here is an answer for you... Well, now you'll have to joke with your mind all your life."

And then Kostya added "soothingly", "Don't worry. We will bring you delicious cakes to the mental hospital..."

"Stop it! You always turn everything upside down."

The guys laughed and we attacked the overcrowded tram. On board the tram, Kostya said to Andrey, "By the way, I also haven't spent this night in vain."

"With whom?" Andrey inquired with a smile.

"Dirty mind! Not with whom, but on what, think deeper. I made a brilliant discovery!"

"In the sphere of self-love?"

"I'm serious. Listen, I've discovered a chain of events. If you weren't beaten up by those big fellas five years ago, you wouldn't have started to practice karate. And if you hadn't started to practice martial arts, you wouldn't have pulled me into this business. And if you hadn't dragged me, we would have never met Sensei and wouldn't have learned what we have learned and what we are now learning. If we had read about these experiences somewhere, we would've considered it complete nonsense. But this way, we saw, as they say, with our own eyes and were convinced. In short, if you hadn't been beaten up, we wouldn't have found this gold-bearing spiritual vein! That's it!"

"I agree. But what makes you think that it's because of you we met Sensei? The address of his school was given to us by a complete stranger from that previous Wushu school. Neither you nor I knew anything for sure. We simply started a conversation about psychic phenomena by chance, and later found out about Sensei."

"Yes. But I dragged you to this training," Kostya defended his theory. "You were so resistant, remember, and didn't want to go. And that guy appeared exactly that day by chance. He was waiting for his friend in the changing room."

"Yes, he was waiting, but he would've kept silent if he hadn't seen our magazine with an article about psychics."

"Which magazine?"

"Well, remember, Tatyana brought it from home that day. You and I were outraged that we would have to drag this burden with us all day instead of just giving it back in the evening."

"Ah! Exactly!" Kostya recalled.

"Well, I put it on the windowsill. And that guy was probably just bored sitting around, so he asked if he could read it. As you know, one word led to another, and he gave us Sensei's address."

"Right, that's exactly how it was." Kostya sighed and added, "It's always like that: such small facts kill the most beautiful hypothesis... Alright, then my theory is this. If you hadn't pulled me into martial arts, I wouldn't have brought you to this training. And what's more, had Tatyana not brought the magazine, our group wouldn't have met Sensei, and so forth."

“Still, everything started with the magazine,” persisted Andrey, further developing his thought, “and with the article. We became interested in these articles because... why?”

“What do you mean why? Because... Ah! It was she who launched all of that, she infected all of us with stories of phenomenal people,” said Kostya nodding towards me.

“Exactly!”

The guys looked at me. “And why did you become interested in them?”

“Me?” My persona was a little confused and right away wiggled out. “Me... I was inspired by movies.”

“Oh! And movies were shot by...”

The guys were carried away, untwisting the whole chain of imaginary events.

Tatyana smiled and said, “If you keep on this way, you will soon unwittingly arrive back at primitive man,” and she mimicked them in a funny way. “If that man had been caught by a sabre-toothed tiger, then you wouldn’t have existed and therefore wouldn’t have met Sensei.”

“Hey, that’s a thought,” smiled Kostya.

“Men,” complained Tatyana. “They always find logic in everything. We have met Sensei, that’s great. That’s the way it should be, it’s destiny. And that’s all. There is nothing to argue about.”



20

Our group reached the glade, this time accurately determining its location.

“Listen, there is nobody here,” Slava said doubtfully. “Maybe this is not the right glade?”

“It’s the right one. I remember it well from the last time,” Andrey nodded affirmatively.

“Of course!” grinned Kostya.

We laughed recalling our last adventures. In about ten minutes, the senior guys started to arrive, joining our good mood.

“Oh, the Teacher is on his way,” Victor livened up.

“How do you know?” I asked looking at the stars.

“Because of Samurai,” the senior sempai replied, smiling.

I shifted my gaze to the ground and only then noticed the cat pacing grandly on a lonely fence in the light of a distant lamp, all the time almost falling down and trying to maintain his balance with his claws.

“He always comes to the meditation,” continued the sempai. “He sits quietly on the side in full trance, and then without wasting his time with our conversations and impressions, leaves right away.”

“The first time we came, he stayed until the end. Sensei was trying to catch him in the bushes,” I remarked.

“Well, that was probably a small exception to his rules.”

“Strange how that happened,” I thought, “Even the cat played a direct part in it.”

The guys joined our conversation.

“Why did Sensei get a black cat?” asked Tatyana.

“He didn’t get him on purpose. When Samurai was still a kitten, the village kids would throw stones at him. So, Sensei picked him up from the street and healed him. Since then, the cat has lived with him and doesn’t leave his side.”

“Who tore his ears up so much?” Andrey asked with a smile.

“Ah, he was sparring with dogs.”

“With dogs?”

“Yes. Samurai not only trains spiritually, but also practices martial arts,” said Victor, making everybody look at the cat. “Sensei has been teaching him, one could say, from childhood, the Wing Chun style, which is opposite to the Cat style. So now he picks fights with both cats and dogs.”

“Are you joking?” Andrey was sincerely surprised. “How is it possible to teach a cat Kung Fu? Even some humans don’t understand it, and this is just a stupid animal.”

“It depends how you look at it,” the Teacher broke into the conversation, coming out from the dark. “Sometimes a stupid animal proves itself to be cleverer than some *Homo sapiens*.”

“Still, though,” Nikolai Andreevich was interested in the unusual fact, “How did you teach him?”

“Oh, it’s easy,” Sensei said simply as if we were talking about something ordinary. “In the form of a game. First I would capture his claws with my fingers and then in the same way would show him how to get out of this lock. That’s how he learned... Now, he not only fights with cats but also picks fights with dogs. You see, he is not interested in mice anymore, they are not the right level. It turns out I shot myself in the foot. Now I have to run around with the mouse traps myself!”

Everyone laughed. I still didn’t understand whether that was a joke or not. If that was a joke, then why was it so serious? And if true, then one really needs to have remarkable talent to teach a cat.

During his story, Sensei was shaking everybody’s hand in turn, and when it was Andrey’s turn, he didn’t give his hand, but instead bowed politely.

“What’s wrong with you?” Sensei asked, surprised.

“Well, I’m afraid to touch you after the other day’s events,” Andrey replied half-jokingly.

“What do I have to do with that?” said Sensei, smiling and shrugging his shoulders. “It’s not me that you should be afraid of but him. He was next to you and not me.”

While Sensei was speaking with the other guys, Andrey pushed Kostya slightly to the side, “So it was through you!”

“What!? I’m smart of course, but not to that extent.”

“I’m serious.”

“And I’m serious.”

“Honestly?”

“Honestly.”

Andrey waited until Sensei answered another question and asked, “Is it true that you did it through a handshake?”

“Of course not. Someday I will tell you about it.”

The conversation then moved on to our meditations at home. At first I wanted to call Sensei off to the side and speak to him alone about my thoughts because I was afraid of the reaction of the senior guys. Who knows, maybe they’d ridicule me with their picky jokes, like my friends. But Sensei patiently examined and explained every situation that happened to the guys. I heard a story similar to mine from Yura, but not quite so acute. Seeing the serious mood of the others, I finally decided to tell Sensei everything in the presence of everybody. And when another pause appeared in the conversation, my persona timidly started to share my “achievements”. Everyone listened calmly and carefully. Then my persona grew utterly bold and told them about the “dodger”.

After my story, there was a short silence. “That’s it,” I thought, “Now Nikolai Andreevich will diagnose me with schizophrenia. Why did I blab it out in front of everyone?” But, to my surprise, Sensei said the following:

“It’s a good result. To catch a thought of your animal nature is hard and to defeat it, even more so. In fact, it is impossible to fight with this category of thoughts in principle because violence generates violence. And the more you try to kill them, the stronger they manifest themselves in you. The best way to defend against them is to switch over to positive thoughts. In other words, the principle of Aikido of smooth withdrawal should be used here.”

“What if they are chasing me the entire day? Can’t I just chop them off with some swear word?” asked Ruslan.

“No matter how you ‘chop them off’, negative thoughts will keep appearing according to the law of action and reaction. That’s why you needn’t fight with them. You should withdraw from them, artificially developing positive thoughts inside yourself. In other words, concentrate on something good or recall something good. Only in this smooth withdrawal will you be able to defeat your negative thought.”

“And why can thoughts sometimes be the absolute opposite of each other? Sometimes I too get confused by my thoughts.”

“Let’s put it this way: **in the human body, there is a spiritual nature, or soul, and a material nature, or animal, beastly, call it as you wish.**

The human mind is a battlefield of these two natures. That's why different thoughts arise in you," Sensei replied.

"And who am 'I' then, if thoughts are alien?"

"Not alien, but yours. You are the one who's listening to them. And which nature you give preference to, that you will become. If you prefer the material, animal nature, then you'll be evil and nasty, and if you listen to the advice of your soul, you'll be a good person, and it will be pleasant for other people to be around you. The choice is always yours, you are either a tyrant or a saint."

"And why did my admiration for taming my anger lead to... pride, to the growth of megalomania? Because it seemed like I did a good deed, but the thought got carried away in a different direction?" I asked.

"You turned to the soul, your wish was fulfilled. When you weakened your control over yourself, you were pulled over by the animal nature, imperceptibly for you at that, by your own favourite egoistic thoughts. You liked that you were praised from all around, that you were so smart, so sensible, and so forth... There is a constant war of two natures inside of you for you. And your future depends on which side you choose."

I pondered a little and then clarified.

"In other words, this 'dodger' who reminded me about the pain and prevented me from concentrating, who inflated my megalomania..."

"Absolutely correct."

"But there is a whole pile of these thoughts there!"

"Yes," confirmed Sensei. "An entire legion. That's why it's impossible to fight with them. It's not Kung Fu, it's much more serious. It is possible to fight with the one who offers resistance. But fighting with a vacuum is senseless. Against a vacuum of negative thoughts, it is only possible to create the same vacuum of positive thoughts. In other words, as I've said before, to switch to a positive and to think about good things. But always stay vigilant, listen to what your brain is thinking about. Observe yourself. Be aware of the fact that you don't make any effort, but the thoughts in you are constantly swarming. And not one thought. There can be two and three or even more at once."

"It's like in Christianity, they say, on man's left shoulder sits the devil, and on the right, an angel. And they are always whispering something," remarked Volodya.

"Absolutely correct," confirmed Sensei. "But for some reason, the devil whispers louder, he probably has a rougher voice. What's called the devil in Christianity is the manifestation of our animal nature."

“When I discovered this division of thoughts in myself, I thought that maybe I caught schizophrenia, because it also has to do with the splitting of consciousness,” my persona said more bravely.

Sensei smiled and jokingly answered, “There is no genius without a sign of madness.”

Nikolai Andreevich laughed, “Yes, yes, indeed. I observe something similar in myself as well.”

Stas joined the conversation, reflecting aloud about his experience.

“Well, if the mind is a battlefield of two natures, and as far as I understand it, their weapons are thoughts, then how can you distinguish who is who? How do the spiritual and the animal nature manifest in thoughts? In which way?”

“The spiritual nature are thoughts generated by the power of Love, in the broad sense of the word. While the animal nature are thoughts about the body, our instincts, our reflexes, megalomania, desires, which are entirely consumed by material interests, and so forth.”

“Well, then we should live in a cave,” Ruslan expressed his opinion, “So that we have nothing and want nothing.”

“With a head like yours, even a cave won’t help,” Zhenya teased him.

“Nobody forbids you to have all of this,” continued Sensei. “If you want, go ahead, follow the modern world, use all those blessings of civilisation. But to live just for that, to place the accumulation of material goods as the main purpose of your existence on Earth, it’s stupid, it’s unnatural to the spiritual nature. Such a goal is an indicator of the predominance of the animal nature in people. At the same time, it doesn’t mean that you should live, as a bum, in a cave. No. I have already told you that all these high technologies are given to mankind so that humans could free up more time for their spiritual perfection. But certainly, not for a man to collect a pile of this metalware at home and blow up his megalomania because he possesses all that dust.”

After staying silent for a while, Sensei thoughtfully pronounced.

“A human is a complex synthesis of the spiritual and the animal nature. It’s a pity that in your mind, more of the animal nature exists rather than the one from God... I was thinking the other day, and I decided to give you one ancient practice to help you balance these two natures, so that the animal won’t burden you so much. It has existed just as long as humans have. This spiritual practice is not just for working on yourself, on your thoughts, but also, what’s very important, for the awakening of your soul. In relation to life, it can be compared to a dynamic meditation because it is an ongoing practice, regardless of wherever the person is or whatever

he does. A part of this person is always in this state, controlling all that happens around and inside.

“This spiritual practice is called ‘Lotus Flower’. It consists of the following. You imagine that you plant the seed of a lotus inside yourself, in the region of the solar plexus. And this small seed grows inside of you thanks to the power of Love generated by your positive thoughts. Thus, controlling the growth of this flower, you artificially get rid of negative thoughts that are constantly turning over in your head.”

“Do we really think about negative things all the time?” Ruslan asked.

“Of course,” Sensei answered. “Just follow your thoughts carefully. People spend a lot of time visualising different combat situations, recalling negative memories of the past, they imagine themselves quarrelling with somebody, proving something to someone, how they deceive someone or hit back. They think of their illnesses, material deprivations, and so on. It means they always keep a complex of negative thoughts in their mind.

“And here, you intentionally get rid of all these negative thoughts by internal control. The more often you keep a positive image in your mind, the quicker the seed of Love grows. In the beginning, you imagine that a seed starts growing, and a small stalk appears. Then it begins to grow, leaves appear on the stalk, then comes a small flower bud. And finally, by gradually nourishing it more and more with the power of Love, the bud blossoms out into a lotus. The lotus is at first golden coloured, but as it grows, it becomes dazzling white.”

“How much time does it take for it to grow?” I asked.

“Actually, it depends on you. Some people need years for it to grow, others just months, yet others need days or even instants. It all depends on one’s desire and the effort one makes. One should not only grow this flower, but also support it constantly with the power of his Love so that it does not wither or die. A person keeps this constant feeling of cultivation at the level of subconscious or, to say it more precisely, at the level of a controllable, remote consciousness. The more Love you give to this little flower, that is, the more you cherish it and take care of it in your thoughts, protect it from surrounding negative influences, the more it grows. This flower is nourished by the energy of Love, I emphasise, by the internal energy of Love. And the more you are in a state of Love towards the whole world, to all people and to your surroundings, the bigger the flower becomes. But if you start to get angry, the flower weakens. If you lash out in intense anger, the flower withers and becomes ill. Then a lot of effort will have to be made for its recovery. It is a kind of control.

“And thus, when this flower blossoms and starts to increase in size, it starts to emit vibrations instead of a scent, the so-called leptons or gravitons, call them as you like, that is, the energy of Love. You feel the petals of this flower stir, making your body and the surrounding space vibrate, emanating Love and Harmony into the world.”

“And is it somehow felt at the physical level?” Zhenya asked.

“Yes. The lotus feels as burning in the solar plexus region, as heat spreading. That is, these feelings arise in the solar plexus region where, as legends say, our soul is. This region starts getting warmer and warmer. The whole point of all of this is that wherever you are, whoever you are with, or whatever you do or think, you should always feel this heat, the heat that, figuratively speaking, warms not only your body but also your soul. This internal concentration of Love is located in the flower itself. Finally, the more you take care of it and glorify this Love, the more you feel that this flower, while growing, expands and tightly surrounds your body with its petals, and you are inside of a huge lotus.

“And this is when something very important happens. When you reach the stage when lotus petals surround you from all sides, you feel two flowers. One is inside, under your heart, and warms you continuously with the feeling of internal Love. And the other one, the bigger one, is like the astral shell of this flower that surrounds you. On the one hand, it emanates the vibration of Love to the world and on the other hand, it protects you from the negative influence of other people. Here, the law of cause and effect is at work. To put it in the language of physics, a wave effect takes place. Simply said, you emanate waves of good feelings, intensifying them many times over through the soul and thus creating a wave field, full of grace. This force field, which is constantly felt and supported by the fibres of your Love, at the same time has a certain beneficial effect not only on yourself but also on the surrounding world.

“What happens with everyday practice? Firstly, you always control your thoughts, learning to concentrate on the positive. Therefore, automatically you are not able to bear ill will toward anybody or be bad. Because this practice is done every day and every second. And it’s for life. It is a special method of distraction, as nobody can fight negative thoughts by force. Love cannot be compelled. Therefore you need to distract your attention. If a negative or undesirable thought comes, you concentrate on your flower, you start giving your Love to it, that is, you artificially forget all the negative things. Or you switch your attention to something else, to something positive. But you feel the flower all the time: going to bed, waking up, at night, during the day, whatever you are doing – studying, working, participating in sports,

and so on. You feel Love burn inside, feel the currents of Love moving in your chest and filling your body. You feel this flower start warming you up from inside with a special warmth, the divine warmth of Love. And the more you give, the more it arises in you. Constantly emanating this Love, you perceive people from the perspective of Love. That is, secondly, what is very important, — **you attune yourself to the frequency of the good.**

“And the good means success, luck, health. It means everything! You start feeling happier, and that has a positive impact on the state of your mind. The central nervous system is the main regulator of all vital activity. Therefore, first of all, this practice improves your health. Besides, your life becomes smoother as you start finding reconciliation with everybody. Nobody wants to quarrel with you, you are welcome everywhere. You won’t have any major problems. Why? Because even if you have some troubles in life, as life is life, you start perceiving them in a completely different way than most ordinary people. You already have a new perspective on life that helps you to find the most optimal decision for the situation. For the Wisdom of life awakens in you.

“And thirdly, most importantly, **your soul awakens within you and you start feeling yourself becoming a Human, you come to understand who God is, that God is an omnipresent substance**, and not just a fantasy of a few idiots. **You start feeling the divine presence in yourself and strengthen this power by your positive thoughts and feelings. You no longer feel alone in this world as God is in you and with you, you feel His actual presence. There is an expression, ‘He who is in Love is in God, and God is in him, for God is Love itself.’** It is also very important that you start feeling the aura of the flower that is inside and around you.”

“How is the aura felt around the body?” Stas asked.

“In time, you see this vibration around yourself as a slight glow. The air seems to become lighter and more transparent, and the colours of the surrounding world seem more vibrant to you. The most fascinating thing is that people start noticing these transformations in you. There is a common expression, ‘a person is glowing’, ‘he shines.’ So, that is actually the glow of this wave field, generated by Love of the individual himself. People around this person also start to feel this field. They feel good when this Person is somewhere near, as they also start feeling joy, internal excitement. Many people recuperate from their illnesses. They feel better even just from his presence, no matter how sick they have been. Everybody is drawn to this person, opening their souls to him. That is, **people perceive Love.** This is the Heart’s open gate on the path towards God. This is what all the

Great ones talked about and what Jesus meant when he said, ‘Let God into your heart.’

“This ‘Lotus’ spiritual practice has been used since the beginning of time. Since olden times, the ‘Lotus’ was said to create Gods, that God awakens in the Lotus. In the understanding that a divine substance — a soul — awakens in the ‘Lotus flower’, in Harmony and Love inside of you. For you are continuously taking care of your flower, controlling your thoughts and feelings at all times so that the ‘Lotus flower’ does not wither.”

“So then, does a real flower grow there?” Slava asked with surprise.

“No. Of course, there is no material flower there. It is imaginary. This process may be called in different ways: the awakening of divine Love, the attainment of enlightenment, full unity with God — ‘moksha’, ‘Dao’, ‘Shinto’. Call it what you like. But all of this is just words and religion. **And this is simply creating a certain force field by your positive thought and feeling of Love, which in turn affects the real world around you on one hand and, on the other hand, it changes the internal frequency of the perception of your mind.**”

“And the soul?” I asked.

“And the soul is the real you, it is a kind of eternal generator of divine power, if you like, but which needs to be activated by your constant thoughts of Love... I will tell you about the soul and its purpose in detail some time later.”

But then Kostya joined the discussion.

“You said that this practice is very ancient. How ancient is it?”

“I have already told you that it has existed as long as humans have existed as conscious subjects.”

“Well, so how long then, seven, ten thousand years?”

“That’s too short a period of time. Mankind in its civilised form has existed more than once before, and in fact, with much better technologies than now. It is another question why these civilisations disappeared. Someday, I will tell you about that too.”

“If this practice is so ancient, there should be some legends of it left in our civilisation too.”

“Certainly. The fact that the spiritual practice of the ‘Lotus Flower’ has existed before can be confirmed by numerous ancient sources. The ‘Lotus’ was given, for example, to some chosen Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt. And if you look at the literature on this issue, you will find evidence that Egyptian myths and legends say that even their sun god, Ra, was born out of the lotus flower. This flower served as a throne for Isis, Horus, and Osiris.

“In the ancient ‘Vedas’ — the oldest Hindu books written in Sanskrit — the lotus is one of the key topics also. In particular, regarding the three main male incarnations of God — Brahma-Creator, Vishnu-Protector, and Shiva-Destroyer — it says the following, ‘The body of the God Vishnu bore a giant golden lotus with ‘lotus-born’ Brahma-Creator on it. The golden thousand-petalled lotus was growing and the Universe grew along with it.’

“Up to the present day, in China as well as in India, this flower has depicted purity and chastity. The best human qualities and intentions have been associated with the lotus. In China, they think that there is a special ‘Western heaven’ with a lotus lake and that every flower growing there is bound to the soul of a dead person. If an individual was virtuous, his or her flower blossoms, if not — it withers.

“In Greece, the lotus is considered to be a plant devoted to the goddess Hera. Hercules made one of his voyages in a lotus-shaped golden sun boat.

“However, all these are legends and myths, which are not so made up. These stories were based on real facts of people’s self-development thanks to this ancient spiritual practice. It’s just that in earlier times, when the animal nature prevailed in the majority of people, the ‘Lotus Flower’ was given only to the chosen, more or less spiritually mature individuals. And it is natural that other people later regarded these individuals as gods. For an individual, who grew ‘Lotus’ in him and awakened soul, in fact becomes God-like as he can create in Love by mere thought.

“When the time came to spiritually educate the majority of people, the Bodhisattvas of Shambala gave this spiritual practice to Buddha. It is owing to practicing this technique of the ‘Lotus’ that Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment sitting under the Bodhi tree. On approval of Rigden, Buddha gave it to his disciples for further dissemination within people. Unfortunately, over time, people distorted the teachings of Buddha and created a whole religion based on this practice. As a result, even Buddhists, exercising their religion now, imagine their paradise as an unusual place where people are born like Gods on the lotus flower. They are looking for this place, although it is always inside of them. They made Buddha into a God, even though he was just a Human who had learned the truth by means of this spiritual practice. That’s the reason why, by the way, the lotus became a symbol of Buddhism as well as why there is an expression, ‘Buddha sits in a lotus’ or ‘Buddha stands in a lotus.’ He has shown people by example what an individual can achieve by defeating his animal nature. He has really done a lot of good for spiritual development of mankind by disseminating this spiritual practice among people in its original form.

“The same prayer was given by Jesus Christ for awakening the divine Love.”

“Do you mean to say that prayer and meditation are the same thing?” Tatyana asked.

“Actually, yes. It is the same with the prayer ‘Our Father’, given by Jesus. It is just that everything is so commonplace there, people ask for bread and such, but the essence is the same: an individual develops himself, cultivates his soul by controlling his thoughts, his desire, and by steadfast Faith and Love.

“In general, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, and all the great ones knew this spiritual practice, as they sipped at the same source. It helped them not only to become their true selves but also to help other people learn their own divine nature. Why was it so pleasant for everyone to be near Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed? Why, as the saying goes, do ‘saintly people’ shine? Why is it that sometimes we don’t want to leave the company of strangers upon meeting them? Because they emanate this Love. Because they are continuously growing this power, the power of good, the power of Love, the power of this divine manifestation in people. They say about them that God is in this person. And it is actually true.”

“So, I should just think with Love about this flower?” Andrey asked.

“No. Not only should you concentrate and think, but most importantly, you should provoke these feelings of warmth in the solar plexus region and fortify them at all times with your good thoughts. Many may not be able to accomplish this right away. Because you need to get to the root of the matter, visualise it more realistically, and, I repeat again, evoke all these feelings. Why do I draw your attention to it? Because when an individual evokes these feelings, he starts maintaining them not just with his mind, but also at the level of his submind, more specifically, at the level of his subconsciousness. This leads to the awakening of the soul. It just can’t help but awaken. And the more you nourish it with your Love, the more it will awaken, and the faster you will become your true self, the one you have eternally been inside, and not in your external mortal body shell.”

And after a brief silence, Sensei added.

“Life is too short, and you’d better succeed in glorifying your spiritual nature in your heart.”

Our entire uneven-aged group stood silent, deep in thought about Sensei’s words. I even felt some kind of tingling sensation in my body from the sudden delight and inspiration. I was so amazed by all I had heard, so shocked by this unexpected information, that it was hard for me to believe that these words were spoken by an ordinary man. His deep knowledge,

from my point of view, was evidently not of this world. I wanted to ask about this, but something was holding me back. I suspected that this ‘something’ already knew about everything, because it was reaching out for this Being with every fibre of my soul. As soon as I thought about this, my mind started to argue with me again, assuring me that this is an ordinary, simple man, just one who competently and thoroughly understands philosophy, religion, psychology, history, physiology, medicine, physics... “Stop! Where am I going with this?” I thought. “Is it possible that a man can accumulate so much fundamental knowledge all at once? But on the other hand, why not? There happen to be talented people, like Lomonosov... or Leonardo da Vinci, who were far ahead of their time in their knowledge... However, I don’t seem to remember them speaking clearly about the soul... And besides, why am I racking my brain wondering who he really is? The main thing is that I got answers to the questions that agitated me and found what I had been looking for so long. It’s true, as they say, the one who searches will always find.”

I was sincerely happy, like a child. “That’s exactly it! This is the way to reach that edge of eternity from which the great ones contemplate! This is my only chance, my only straw. It’s not just a straw, it’s an entire saving ark, in which even physical death is not to be feared, in which it’s not scary to sail into eternity.”

“So, any more questions?” Sensei asked.

We kept silent, looking at him with admiring eyes. Only Nikolai Andreevich, who was more or less the ‘sober-minded’ person in our group, replied, “Well, say I don’t believe in God of course. From the point of view of psychology, though, this is quite an interesting possibility. Everything needs to be pondered over... There is a lot of information, and I need to sort it all out. Questions will arise later.”

“Well, all righty then,” the Teacher answered genially. “Then, I suppose, this will do it for today, let’s go home.”



21

I was in an excellent mood. All the way home, I analysed what I had heard, reviewing it in my thoughts from different points of view. And then I started examining my good mood. Something was strange because I felt as if I were completely healthy. Analysing my impressions a little, I suddenly realised what the matter was. Before, I thought that my soul, that is, my “I” which would go on for eternity, was located in my material brain. And it seemed to me that I was using it to think and that all my thoughts were born from it. But I was having serious problems with my brain lately, as the doctors were saying. It didn’t so much depress me physically as spiritually. I assumed that if my brain was damaged, then my soul might also malfunction.

I couldn’t wait to get home and plant my small seed. Sensei, of course, said that one can do this spiritual practice in any place. But I decided to start this noble deed at home in peace and quiet.

At home, I quickly finished all my petty tasks. When my parents settled down to watch TV, I sat comfortably in the lotus pose. The time had finally come. Concentrating, my persona thought: “Let’s begin the planting...” but I panicked a bit. First, I didn’t know what the lotus seed looked like. I had seen the flower in a book, but not its seeds. Plus, I didn’t know what this planting would look like and what I would plant it in. I had seen how seeds sprouted in the soil. But for some reason it didn’t satisfy me, as the soil in the soul, even an imaginary one, somehow didn’t coincide with my notion of eternity. Reflecting on it a little, I found an acceptable way out. One time I had seen my mother germinating kidney beans by placing them in wet cotton wool. I liked this method. “Then let it be a bean,” thought my persona. “After all,

it's my imagination. And the most important thing is what I do, the essence, as Sensei said."

Having concentrated once again, I started to imagine placing a small white bean inside of myself in the area of the solar plexus, immersing it into something soft and warm. Then I started to repeat affectionate words inside myself, nursing my small seed. But no feelings followed. So, I started to recall all the good words that I knew. And here my persona was astonished to discover that I knew far fewer good, beautiful words than bad, swearing ones. This was because I heard the latter everywhere on the street and in school and they replenished my vocabulary more often than the good ones. My thoughts, again imperceptibly, switched to mulling over some conclusions, logically clinging to each other. Realising this, I tried again to concentrate on the flower, but nothing happened. After about twenty minutes of fruitless efforts, my persona figured that I was doing something wrong. Finally, I went to sleep, having decided to ask Sensei later in detail about my mistakes.

But I couldn't fall asleep. Darkness covered everything around me. Objects and furniture in the room lost their natural colour. A thought came to my mind, "Our world is really so illusory after all. It just seems to us that we really live while in fact we are like children, inventing a game and playing it. But unlike children, adults don't grow up, because they get so used to the created image that they begin to think that everything else is the same kind of reality. And in this way, our entire life passes in falsehood and bustle. But, as Sensei said, 'The real you are the soul, that eternal reality that exists in actuality. You need only to wake up, to awaken from illusion, and then the whole world will change...'"

As I went deeper into contemplation of the eternal, I began to feel somehow nice and light. And that's when I felt something warming up in my chest and tickling pleasantly. Small ants started running through my whole body from my tailbone to the back of my head. Such a pleasant, peaceful state came over me that I wanted to embrace the entire world with my soul. In such a sweet slumber, I fell asleep. I slept as if in a fairytale because when I woke up in the morning, I felt such inspiration, such lightness as I had never experienced in my life.

At school, I tried again to mentally evoke my previous day's state, but I couldn't really concentrate because of constant flow of school information and contradictory emotions. I succeeded only during literature class when the teacher was monotonously explaining a new topic. Half of the class "carefully" listened to her with drowsy eyes, and the other half tried to fight off sleep. Meanwhile, I concentrated again on the area of the solar plexus,

focusing all of my attention on evoking warmth and a state of happiness. My good thoughts wandered somewhere in the background of my mind. The important thing for me was what was going on inside. I felt very comfortable, my body somehow felt relaxed, and in my chest, I started feeling light pressure turning into warmth. I simply sat enjoying this state and continued listening to the new topic. Incidentally, a few days later, I discovered that from that moment on, I clearly and easily remembered everything the teacher was telling us. This was a very pleasant discovery for my consciousness.

After my classes, I ran into the library to fill the gap in my knowledge about the lotus flower. But what I read about it in different sources really staggered me. I found out the following: “The lotus is a water-resistant perennial herbaceous plant with a long stalk and large flowers reaching 30 centimetres in diameter and resting upon big leaves. The leaves of the lotus have an interesting peculiarity: they are covered with a special waxy covering and, therefore, don’t get wet in the water.” I interpreted this as a fact that the soul can’t be spoiled by bad thoughts, or in other words, by the impact of animal nature. It will just keep “sleeping”.

“The lotus flower has twenty-two to thirty petals, faintly pink at the foundation and bright at the top, located **spirally** around the seminal box.” I glanced at the photo of the flower. This seminal box, located in the centre of the flower, looked similar to a golden cork, with multiple fibres around of the same colour. “It is interesting that **lotus flowers always face the sun**: a little lower than the point of the pedicle attachment, the lotus has a so-called reaction zone that ‘catches the light’.”

I read even more stunning information about its seeds: “**Lotus seeds possess an extraordinary ability to retain their germinating power for a few hundred (and sometimes even a few thousand) years.** This peculiarity of the lotus is possibly the reason it’s used since the earliest times as a symbol of immortality and resurrection.”

Also, I managed to ascertain one interesting detail. “The lotus possesses **homeothermal ability.** Meaning that **the flower is able to maintain its internal temperature just like birds, mammals, and people do.**” “The lotus flower has a significant place in the beliefs of different peoples.”

And that was all that I succeeded in finding out. But this was enough to partially grasp the meaning of why the Art of Lotus constantly mentioned by Sensei is named in honour of this flower. However, I felt a complete understanding of its meaning somewhere inside of myself, in the very depth of my true “I”.



22

A few days later, on our way to training, the guys started to share their impressions and results. It turned out that everybody understood Sensei in their own way. And everyone's internal Love grew differently. Kostya imagined that he planted a lotus seed, as he said, "into some kind of a life-giving substance of the Universe." Moreover, he only did it yesterday, while all the time before he was diligently searching through the literature looking for proof of Sensei's words. He didn't have any kind of feelings; he simply imagined the process and is now waiting for the result.

Tatyana imagined this Love as the birth of Jesus in her heart, since she was brought up by her grandma as a faithful Christian. She had feelings of happiness, internal delight, and light pressure in the area of her heart. But her heart began to ache a little.

Andrey tried to concentrate purposefully every day on the area of the solar plexus in order to achieve at least some kind of feeling by thinking about the lotus. Only on the third day did he feel a barely noticeable slight warmth, not even warmth really, but as if "something was tickling in that place as if touched by a feather." And Slava wasn't even able to imagine how all of this happens "inside of his organs."

Before the beginning of the training, our group waited for a moment when Sensei wasn't busy and we approached him with questions. We started to tell him about our experiences. Tatyana interrupted the conversation out of turn and complained to Sensei about her heart. The Teacher took her hand and felt her pulse like a professional doctor.

"Right, tachycardia. What happened?"

"Don't know. It started to ache after I concentrated on the birth of Lord in my heart..."

And then she spoke in more detail about the awakening of her divine Love.

"I see. You concentrated on the organ, on the heart. But you mustn't concentrate on an organ. The heart is the heart, it's only a muscle, it's the pump of the body. By concentrating on it, you put it off its rhythm and interfere in its work. When you learn to control yourself, only then will you be able to concentrate on the work of the body and its organs. By doing that now, you'll only harm yourself. You need to concentrate particularly on the solar plexus. Everything is born from it. That is the main chakran in 'Lotus', called Kundalini."

"Well, I read that when Kundalini awakens, some kind of snake crawls there along the spine," Kostya bragged a little with his education.

"This definition is from yoga," answered the Teacher. "It's typical for people to mix up everything with time. Originally, in the 'Lotus', Kundalini was a chakran located in the area of the solar plexus... What I told you about the lotus flower, I repeat, are just images, nothing more, so that it would be easier for you to understand, perceive, and feel it deeply."

"And in general, what does it look like in reality? Please tell us one more time, just for dummies," Andrey asked with humour.

"You simply feel the fibres, growing the internal power of Love. This feeling, let's say, is as if you were anticipating something very, very good. For example, you are waiting for some huge, long-awaited present you've dreamt about. And now you receive it, you're happy, you're overfilled with gratitude. You feel tingling all over your body, in other words, you perceive this feeling in the area of the solar plexus, as if something beautiful, good emanates from you, or you are expecting that. That's the feeling you should have, which you evoke artificially and constantly maintain in the area of the solar plexus. Finally, it becomes natural for you. And people begin to feel it. In other words, you radiate this happiness... And that's all. It doesn't necessarily have to be a flower or something there. These are merely images for easier perception."

"And the flower that should surround the body. How does that work?"

"Well, are you familiar with such notions as the astral, mental, and other energy bodies, simply put, the multi-layer aura around a human?"

"Yes."

"So then, when this power field of goodness expands in you, then you start to feel a kind of multi-layer of petals. You feel that you are cocooned, protected, that you are blossoming in lotus. And at the same time, you feel that you are like the sun over the world, you warm everything with the glow of your vast Love."

“This is a continuous meditation, wherever you are and whatever you do, you evoke these fibres, these feelings, these flows of energies. The main point is that the more you practice, the stronger they become. Finally, this process gains material characteristics and you’ll really be able to have a positive effect on people. In other words, you’ll be able to do it **when you yourself completely change: both internally in thought and externally in action.**”

Andrey wanted to ask another question, but a lanky old man appeared in the doorway of the gym.

“Alright, guys,” Sensei said before Andrey could say anything, “We will discuss it later.”

We moved aside. The old man, upon greeting Sensei, started to speak with excitement, taking him aside, “You know, the academic from Leningrad called today,” he said, out of breath, “George Ivanovich. He asked me to tell you that he will definitely be here in three days...”

I did not quite catch the words that followed because “Lanky” adjusted his excitement and switched to a whisper. My persona was extremely surprised by this message. What does an academic need here? One from Leningrad at that? What does he need Sensei for? I was full of curiosity. But just then the training started which Sensei entrusted the senior sempai to lead. There was no time to satisfy my curiosity.

During the training, having thought about Sensei’s analogy about “waiting for a big present” and putting it into practice, I felt that these feelings worked a lot better in me because I remembered them well from childhood. Just when I had revived these long-forgotten feelings in my memory, I felt a pleasant tickling in the centre of the solar plexus, spreading in different directions with light wavy streams. It was a really nice and very pleasant feeling at that moment. But I couldn’t keep such a state even for a minute, and it disappeared by itself. My attempts to revive and to evoke these feelings took up a lot more time than I wanted them to. Thus, absorbed in my internal state, I didn’t notice how training flew by. By the way, my body was no longer aching after that memorable training, and the pain had gone away, just like Sensei said, in exactly three days.



23

In the days that followed, I tried to evoke these feelings while doing different things. But it worked well only when I specifically concentrated on the “lotus flower” while doing some kind of physical work. Furthermore, I began to keep track of my thoughts at least a little bit. One day, while sitting at home and doing homework, I tried to recall all I had thought about that day. But I was unable to remember not just my thoughts, but even all of my actions. I was able to recall some general things while details surfaced with difficulty. Most importantly, good deeds went under the category of “that’s the way it should be,” and I hardly remembered them. However, negative moments, negative emotional bursts were engraved in my memory in detail. That was when I, as they say, consciously felt the power of the animal nature. Sensei’s words came to mind by themselves, **“A thought is material because it’s born in the material brain. That’s why a bad thought oppresses. This is the first Guard, which always tries to defeat the human.”** One day I will tell you about it in greater detail, about how your thoughts are born and why their power over you is so strong.” I thought, “Why doesn’t Sensei say everything at once? Why does he keep postponing until an indefinite ‘later’? This ‘later’ may never happen for some of us... But on the other hand, the way I perceived his words at the first training and now are completely different. Before, I simply listened, and only now have I begun to understand things because I started to practice and to work on myself. I already have some results, some experience and, therefore, I now have concrete questions. Sensei always gives detailed answers to concrete questions.” Suddenly I had an insight: “He is just waiting for us to understand his words, so to say, for when we let them work through ourselves, when our minds conceive everything on their own and take the

side of the soul. Otherwise, all this knowledge, as Sensei says, will remain for us as an empty ringing in an empty head. Sensei said that we have to constantly work on ourselves, that every minute of life is valuable, and we should use it as a gift of God for the perfection of our souls." These words strengthened my confidence and optimism. Later on, I recalled them often, when my body was overcome with apathy.



24

Despite bad weather and traffic problems caused by the year's first snow, which piled up like never before, everybody arrived at the meditation training on time. Without wasting time, Sensei started discussing our attempts to grow the "Flower of Lotus". Nikolai Andreevich was delighted with his results, in particular from the psychotherapeutic point of view, as one of the best ways to control thoughts. At the end of his story, he said thoughtfully:

"I was trying to analyse everything you said in more detail, and this question came up. You said that these vibrations of Love protect a human from the negative influence of other people. From which kind exactly, and how does it manifest?"

"Negative influence can be varied. It can be an evil eye and, as people say, jinx..."

"An evil eye? Jinx?" Nikolai Andreevich was sincerely surprised. "I thought that the evil eye and jinx were just folklore, a way for some enterprising people to make money."

"This 'folklore' exists only for the reason that this phenomenon of thought really exists, but doesn't yet have sufficient, steadfast, scientific acknowledgement. But in fact, manifestation of a negative thought exists. I've already said many times that a thought is material. They're trying to prove it today. And as time goes on, they will find more and more scientific proof. A thought is an information wave. Its information is coded on a certain frequency, which is perceived by our material brain, or rather, by its deeper structures. And when someone thinks something bad towards you, it's natural that it is received by your brain on a subconscious level. During the deciphering of this code, the brain starts to model this negative situation, which is later translated into reality as an unconscious order of the subconscious. That is in

fact a jinx, which manifests itself in a form of illness or something else. That's on the one hand. But on the other hand, when an individual creates a wave field around himself with certain frequency characteristics — well, an aura of Love, simply saying — then, by all the laws of physics, negative information won't be able to penetrate into this power field, much less to reach your brain and to manifest there in the form of a command. Why? Because this power field is much stronger... The human as a social medium is a pretty complex structure. And he exchanges information with others not just by means of mimicry, gestures, voice. Do you know what the voice itself is? It's the same vibration heard by us in the audible range of the same waves, just at different frequencies than thoughts."

"So it means that our ability to perceive sounds is limited only by the peculiar illusion of the mind?" Nikolai Andreevich said out loud, thinking about something else.

"Of course. For example, science officially proved that a human is limited in frequency range and only hears in the range from 20 hertz to 18 kilohertz. But for some reason, when people discovered the world of ultrasounds, then they learned to 'communicate' with dolphins. It simply proves once again that a human consciously perceives only a small part of that diverse world that surrounds him. But his subconscious... it records much more from the surrounding world."

"And does a human somehow feel it?" Stas asked.

"Yes. It's just that an ordinary human feels it at the intuitive level. In other words, as people say, with a sixth sense, while a more spiritually developed individual perceives more consciously. By forming in themselves the power field made of the vibrations of Love, they become invulnerable to negative informational flows. In other words, to put it more simply, he or she is impervious to bad thoughts. Consequently, they are not distracted by the struggle inside of themselves and don't waste their precious time and power on it.

"How does it manifest in life? It doesn't always work so smoothly, sometimes you have good or bad luck," Victor inquired.

"Good or bad luck exists only in your mind; it is you who created it yourself in your imagination. When everything is wonderful in your life, you subconsciously expect something bad and negative to happen. And since you predispose yourself to it, finally you get it. It's we who invented such a game for ourselves, to our own misfortune. It doesn't exist in nature. If you feel good, it means good. If you feel crappy — thank yourself for being a fool. No exceptions."

The guys smiled upon hearing this indisputable answer to all objections.

“Can this spiritual practice help us cleanse ourselves from...well...” Zhenya faltered a bit looking for the right words, “from a sin, or something? I mean, from all the bad things that you already managed to commit in life?”

“Of course. A human, as you say, ‘cleanses himself of sins, because not only does he repent what he has committed in his life, but what’s more important, because he no longer commits and doesn’t want to commit, for him these actions have become alien. He simply casts aside everything negative, forgetting it at the conscious and subconscious levels. If he is oppressed by some past actions that constantly pursue him, he automatically cleanses himself with help of the growing power of Love, working on the awakening of his soul.”

“Why do they say ‘sin will destroy you’?” Andrey asked.

“Yes, it will destroy. If a human commits a sin, this action doesn’t let him rest at the conscious and subconscious levels, and like a worm, it nibbles at his brain. Finally, it bursts through in the form of an ulcer, or it could be a heart attack, or insult, and so forth. In other words, whatever one may say, if nothing is done to stop it, this bad thing kills the human from inside.”

“And if the human doesn’t understand whether he committed a good or a bad thing?”

“Everybody understands pretty well what bad things he has done and what good. No matter how he acts all high and mighty, no matter how he shows off in front of others, how tough he is, how good, what a superman he is, in reality, when he is left alone, he is afraid for himself. He is afraid when he goes to bed at night, especially if he is alone, or when he walks along a dark path. He clearly feels that someone is looking at him. He feels this gaze at himself and it oppresses him. He is afraid of death because there will be.... Well, to put it mildly, he will have a bad time.”

“What happens after death?” asked Stas.

“For the one who’s good, let’s say, who’s cleansed, who’s with God inside, for that one there is nothing to be afraid of, it will be good for him there. Even though he didn’t achieve high level in spiritual development, even though he didn’t manage to attain his final freedom of the soul, to unite with eternal Love, with God, Nirvana, call it as you wish, or to get to heaven or to the kingdom of God in the interpretation of religions, but he was developing his soul, he was striving for this... Heaven is not a place where you physically hang out with your friends, the ones who, like you, prayed in church because it was fashionable, and consider themselves enlightened. All that is rubbish, even if you pray like that all your life. The most important thing is not what you show off to the outside world, but what you think and do. The most important thing is who you really

are and how you carry yourself, how you devote yourself to your spiritual growth. But if you attain a certain level of Freedom, when you come to God as a mature child, then, indeed, that's more like it. This is the primary goal that draws you. You have left, you are free, the stars are in front of you, and endless perfection awaits you. But it's difficult for you to even understand this state.

"If you are a bad, negative fellow, let's say, if material nature predominates in you, if you try to obtain material goods for yourself at the expense of oppressing others, that is, by harming them, and at the same time you don't try to change yourself, then you will be in trouble there."

"Ah, just bribe priests in the name of God, they will forgive all sins at once," Zhenya tried to joke.

"Priests, maybe, will forgive, but God unlikely. In general, if you try to give a miserable ransom, even by building a church, but don't repent for what you have perpetrated and won't make peace with your conscience, then all your recompenses will be senseless and foolish, because God is more interested in the cultivation of your soul, that is, of his own particle, than in recompenses in the form of material goods that were created by His own will for the development and trial of human souls."

"What does it mean 'to be in trouble there'?" Andrey asked.

"Well, it is hard to explain so that you understand. But approximately something like this. Imagine the most heinous thing that can happen to you, the most horrible... Imagined?"

"Imagined."

"So, this is the best that will be there, and for a pretty long time... I'm not scaring you; I'm telling you how things are. Every human bears responsibility for his doings. He may not even think of it, although at the subconscious level he is perfectly aware of what he is doing. In secret from everyone, he is greedy, and material essence predominates in him, he steals, lies, and satisfies his megalomania, he begrudges a penny, or he thinks: 'I have a lot of money, I am a king!' What kind of a king are you? Tomorrow, you'll croak, and there they will look at you, and who and what you are... And the most interesting thing is that everybody feels and understands this. That's why many people thrash about all their life, like pendulums, from one extreme to another, from one religion to another. In reality, nobody except you will ever pray off your sins. What's needed is your real actions in respect to your internal world. What's needed is real maturity of the soul and not some elusive self-delusions and foolish hope that no one will find out what you have done and you will get away with it. The Guard, who records all of your thoughts, not to mention your actions,

is inside of you. And the destiny of your soul will be determined exactly according to his ‘memory scripture’.”

“Then, it means that it’s bad to be rich,” Slava made a conclusion of his own.

“No, being a rich man — it’s good, it’s wonderful. However, the fact that we still have poor people — that’s bad, that’s sad. When people are rich, it’s wonderful; they have time for themselves, for their development, if they, of course, use it in the right way.”

“Tell me please,” Nikolai Andreevich again joined the conversation, “regarding the Lotus flower, I would like to ask if all people perceive these fibres of Love positively?”

“A majority of them, yes. But there are certain individuals who perceive these vibrations extremely negatively. It makes them suspicious and causes antagonism. It means that their consciousness is handicapped. In other words, they are afraid that their soul might awaken from contact with the emanations of the positive person, and therefore their mind begins to activate and bring negativity to the forefront. It means that this individual is very bad, rotten, although he might think that he is wonderful, good. He might be extolled by a whole crowd, while in reality he is a scumbag. Why? Because he reacts to all this extremely negatively. In his mind, the animal nature predominates over the soul.”

We kept silent for a while.

“You know, recently I came across in some literature by chance that Helena Blavatsky had mentioned in her manuscripts about some kind of special spiritual practice that she called the ‘Rose of the World’, which very distantly reminds me of the ‘Flower of Lotus’,” Kostya bragged about his discovery.

“Yes. It’s an echo of the spiritual practice the ‘Flower of Lotus’. However, Blavatsky brought a lot of confusion to it. And that’s not strange because she wrote about it after hearing from different lamas and not from the genuine source.”

“I also read that the awakening of the ‘lotus’ is the highest achievement in Buddhism. But before it, one needs to go through numerous initiations, levels, and trials...”

“Ah, all that is rubbish. People made up all that stuff in order to create a gratuitous feeder — religion. In the beginning, Buddha gave this simple practice in a pure form to the majority of people so that everyone would have access to the spiritual practice of the ‘Flower of Lotus’ for awakening the soul. Everything was very simple.”

“And for his disciples too?”

“At first, he also gave this spiritual practice to his disciples. Then, according to their level of awakening, he gave them more delicate knowledge.”

“Last time, you said that Buddha’s knowledge was partially lost,” Kostya just couldn’t let it go, “and partially distorted. And I read that the Dalai Lama, who in Lamaism — one of the major branches of Buddhism — is the highest being among ‘the reincarnated’, an earthly incarnation of a highly respected Bodhisattva... Avalokiteshvara... No, not like that, Avalokite vara,” Kostya uttered with difficulty. “In other words, he is a living God, as they say. It is also written that the death of this living god becomes the beginning of his new earthly incarnation. And a special commission of the highest lamas ‘searches’ for him among infants who were born in the year following the death of the Dalai Lama. So, I am thinking, if this Bodhisattva constantly reincarnates, can this knowledge really be lost?”

“Who?! The Dalai Lama — a Bodhisattva?! It’s not even a parody of a Bodhisattva. Who is the Dalai Lama in his essence?.. Well, for you to really understand it, I’ll tell you the backstory. The Teaching of Buddha was initially verbal. However, it had great resonance among people because its spiritual practices were simple and easy to understand, especially the ‘Flower of Lotus’. His philosophical teaching was written down for the first time from the words of his followers — just think about it — almost 600 years after his death, on palm leaves (Tripiṭaka) in 29 B.C. This is the most ancient early-Buddhist collection of manuscripts that had already been written in a distorted version in relation to the real Teachings of Buddha. Since it was written by people pursuing their personal goals of getting rich from this knowledge, and in particular, by creating a religion on its basis. Moreover, after the death of Buddha, a schism happened between his disciples. A part of them adhered to traditional views, the so-called doctrine of Hīnayāna, which in Sanskrit means the ‘smaller vehicle,’ or the ‘narrow way’ of salvation. In its initial form, this course was more or less closer to the truth because it emphasised the significance of the personal efforts of the practitioner to liberate himself from the bonds of Samsara (the transition of the soul from one body to another) on the way to final salvation (Nirvana). And still, it was heavily distorted with time by people who turned it into a complicated, puffy cult.

“Another doctrine, Mahāyāna, which in Sanskrit means ‘Great vehicle’ and ‘wide way of salvation’, is actually the beginning of our story about the Dalai Lama. The doctrine of Mahāyāna reformed all sides of Buddhist teaching, turning Buddha from the wise man and Teacher into a typical deity, and the ‘Bodhisattvas’ into his emanations. In their understanding, anyone could become a Bodhisattva by making it to the ruling clique of that

religion, even though the very word Bodhisattva has a completely different meaning. This word originates from Shambala.

“An exact translation of the word ‘Bodhisattva’ from Sanskrit means: ‘The one whose essence is knowledge.’ Buddha introduced this concept among people, taking into account the level of spiritual development at that time. But even in his decoding of that word, its meaning sounded like this: ‘Bodhisattva is the being of *Shambala* who reached the highest level of Perfection and who *came out* of Nirvana, who has the *will* to immerse in it again, but refuses it because of his Love and compassion for living creatures and a desire to help them *attain perfection*.’ So what did those fake ‘bodhisattvas’ do? They took out only a few words from Buddha’s definition: ‘of Shambala,’ ‘came out of Nirvana,’ ‘having will’ and also ‘help them attain perfection’ and changed that to their own interpretation. They changed the entire meaning of the word in a way that was beneficial to them. They hoped that the world would never find out about this anyway. But this fact points out their immeasurable stupidity in regard to true knowledge. True spiritual knowledge, no matter how much it is distorted, no matter how much it is hidden, no matter how much it is destroyed, will still be brought at the right time down to people by Shambala in its pure form, for this is the only crystal source of spiritual knowledge on Earth which all the Teachings of the world draw from.

“It is impossible for a person to become a Bodhisattva. Although, in the history of mankind, there were a few unique individuals who were able to grow with their soul to the level of Bodhisattva. But these unique individuals can be counted on the fingers of one hand in the entire history of the existence of mankind, not just for that tiny length of time known to you, which you think of as history. So, the highest level that people can achieve in spiritual practice by working on themselves, I emphasise again, by working on themselves, is to develop their soul by means of Love to such a degree that death won’t be able to rule over them. In other words, they can liberate themselves from the chain of reincarnations and unite with divine Love, with Nirvana, call it as you like. For you it’s hard to understand even the meaning of this word ‘Nirvana’ now. But no earthly pleasures can be compared even with a thousandth of this highest state.”

“So, Bodhisattvas are really beings from Shambala?” asked Andrey.

“Yes. They created their small world, known to people as the Abode. Specifically from there the world is given knowledge, both scientific and spiritual, so that people can grow spiritually and develop their souls.”

“Are messiahs also Bodhisattvas?” inquired Stas.

“Sometimes, Bodhisattvas, when giving their basic teaching, had to become Messiahs. But this is very rare. More often, as a rule, Messiahs are their disciples brought up from ordinary people.”

“In what sense?”

“Well, one day I will tell you about it. We have deviated from the subject too much... So, Bodhisattva will not prove to anyone who He is, and moreover, He won’t create a religion. Bodhisattva may give a Teaching about the spiritual essence of human and how to develop it. But in no way a religion... In fact, any religion is just show business begotten by the megalomania of its ruling class and created to fleece money from a crowd of stupid asses.”

“Well, why stupid?” Ruslan said resentfully.

“Because these people become very limited in their knowledge. It is constantly being drummed into their heads that they should listen only to the speeches of their religious leaders, they should read only their literature and stick only to their herd, because all other religions are wrong. For example, let’s not look far, but return to the subject of our conversation, what did these ‘showmen’ do with Buddha’s Teaching? First, for their convenience and in order to have fewer questions from the crowd, they made Buddha a god. Second, they introduced complicated religious ceremonies, worship services, prayers, pointing out to the masses the ‘wide and easy way to salvation’, due to their show cult of ‘bodhisattvas-masters’. The ordinary layman not only has to perform the rituals, spells, vows, and all the multi-layered nonsense invented by them, but he also has to endow them for their malarkey, to put it simply, and obey them implicitly at that. In fact, these false ‘bodhisattvas’, who are actually just sly and clever people, simply created another feeder — religion.

“And now we’ll return to the question about the Dalai Lama. So, the one who started all this mess about reforming Buddhism was Nāgārjuna, who lived in the second century CE. He was a pretty smart but cunning man with mercenary-minded interests. He was a Hindu philosopher, theologian, poet, and he founded the school of Śūnyavāda (Mādhyamaka). And now the most important part. For making simple things complicated, for greatly distorting and partially pocketing for himself the knowledge given by Buddha for the masses, for turning the essence of the very Teaching upside down, Nāgārjuna was severely punished by Rigden Djappo and sentenced to eternal conscious reincarnation.”

“Who is Rigden Djappo?” asked Kostya.

“Rigden Djappo heads a commune of Bodhisattvas in Shambala... So, later in history, Nagarjuna’s personality was known under different

names. In 1391, it was his essence that was reborn in a man named Gendün Druppa, who became the first Dalai Lama. Once, he wanted to be worshipped, to be admired for being a great teacher, allegedly... He was drawn by wealth, luxury, and worship. Now Dalai Lama has plenty of wealth, now he has plenty of luxury, he is worshipped by a quarter of the world. But on the other hand, he is not happy and never will be. He is doomed to eternal conscious reincarnation and eternal inner suffering. He cannot leave for Nirvana, cannot liberate himself from the continuous closed circle (for him) of conscious rebirths. Nobody will let him free from this earthly life. Every lifetime, when he is 13 years old, that is during puberty, when the life force begins to awaken and there's a connection of a human with the Universe, to put it simply, when he begins to awaken as a personality and realises who he is, for him it's a big pain for the rest of his life."

"Pain? No way!" Kostya blurted out. "He is the Dalai Lama, he has everything! It's a joy to have everything and to be reborn time and again. How can such a life become boring?!"

The Teacher wearily looked at Kostya and said, "Well, how to explain it to you... Have you seen, for example, the movie 'White Sun of the Desert'?" "Yes."

"Do you remember how the customs official, Vereschagin, sat down to dinner and when his wife served him a whole plate of black caviar, he glanced at it and said, 'Caviar again! I just can't eat it any more, darn it. Can you go and exchange it for bread or something?' In other words, everything becomes boring with time, and very quickly. And life becomes boring three times as much. If you'd remembered at least a part of what you experienced in other bodies, you would just throw up from the monotony of bodily forms. To be reborn consciously and to know that this is your eternal destiny — this is scary, and you can't even imagine how scary it is. It was for good reason that Jesus punished the Wandering Jew with immortality. Do you remember this story?"

Kostya shook his head perplexedly, "No."

"When Jesus was persecuted on the way to Golgotha, He felt very bad; He was very thirsty. And when He stopped on the threshold of the house of one of the Jews, whose name was Ahasuerus, and asked for water, the latter rudely chased Him off, becoming afraid for his life, that he would be punished for this. And Jesus said to him: 'You are afraid for your life; so you will live forever!' Since then, Ahasuerus cannot die and roams the world, no matter how sick he is of it."

"So, will he never-ever be forgiven?" Tatyana asked compassionately.

“Not until overall forgiveness, until the entire world repents. But that’s already another story.”

Sensei glanced at his watch.

“Alright guys, it’s time to do a meditation, otherwise our conversation might go on for a long time. Today, we will repeat for some and for others we’ll work the chakrans of feet and the ‘Hara’ chakran.”

“Where are they located?” asked Stas.

“The chakrans of the legs are located in the centre of the feet, and the ‘Hara’ chakran is three fingers below the navel, at a point of ‘Dan Tian’... Translated from Japanese, ‘Hara’ means belly. This is the centre of a human and it practically coincides with the centre of gravity, both in the physical and the geometrical sense. This meditation, just as the previous one, is for focusing and concentration of attention... And now stand up, relax, place your feet shoulder-width apart...”

We stood in a comfortable way, relaxed, and concentrated on performing the meditation.

“Now we’ll breathe in as usual, in other words, at will, and breathe out into the bowl-like ‘Hara’, as if filling it with ‘Tsi’ energy until you feel light heaviness. When the ‘Hara’ fills up, you should let this ‘Tsi’ energy pass through from ‘Hara’ into the legs and through the centre of the feet into the earth...”

For some time, I ‘drove’ this energy only with my thought. But then my imagination switched to an undeniably real feeling of my belly bursting as if water had actually been poured into me. Meanwhile, Sensei reminded us, “When ‘Hara’ fills up, you should pour this energy out through the legs, through the centre of your feet into the ground.”

I tried again to do it in my imagination, mentally working on my body. Gradually, I started to feel some kind of warmth, flowing in a slight streamlet. However, it was fragmented, not continuous. And it could be well felt in the area of my shin and, especially, my foot. Even though it was pretty cold outside, my feet in my boots started gradually to warm up. When I noticed that, I switched to thinking about how I was doing it. The feelings disappeared somehow imperceptibly in proportion to the deepening of my mind into logic. But just as I tried again to concentrate, Sensei announced that the meditation was over.

“Take two deep breaths in and out. Sharply clench your fists, open up your eyes.”

I looked at my watch; only about ten minutes had passed. It seemed like a lot longer to me. Someone noticed that the snow had melted under us. We looked around with amazement. Under some of the senior guys,

the thawed patches were about 40 centimetres in diameter, and under us just normal ones.

Zhenya glanced at Stas and declared, "You see, and you complained, 'It's so cold, it would be good to be in Africa now.' There's no need for you to go to Africa. There are palm trees growing under your feet already."

Addressing Sensei, he added, "I suspected a long time ago that something was not right with his origin; he is always drawn to Papuans."

After another series of jokes, when everybody calmed down a bit, Sensei said that we could work on this meditation on our own at home.

"And on the 'Flower of Lotus' as well?" asked Kostya.

"Of course. Pay special attention to it and do it every chance you get."

"When will we see results?"

"Don't worry, if you aren't lazy, the results won't make you wait."

"I'm sorry. I wanted to return a bit to our conversation before the meditation. You said that all scientific knowledge is given to the world by Shambala. I didn't quite understand how is it given?" Nikolai Andreevich pronounced it with a faint note of arrogance in his voice. "I always thought that a human is a pretty intelligent being to figure out everything on his own, including scientific discoveries."

"Well, how should I put this — in general, a human, undoubtedly, will one day become a perfect creature... But as long as the animal nature prevails in his mind, he won't even be able to invent an ordinary chair if he is not told how it should be done."

"How can that be?"

"Well, as usual. It's only now that people are so smart because they use the knowledge of the ancestors. But how did their ancestors find out about it, have you ever thought? Even in the most ancient legends of the Sumerian civilisation, written on clay tablets, it is mentioned that people from the sky told them how to organise the household, how to build houses, how to fish, how to cultivate vegetative food for themselves, and so forth. Before that, people lived like a herd of animals... Let's take for example, the modern world. How do scientists make discoveries?"

"By intensive work on a given subject of research."

"Certainly, from the outside, it looks exactly this way. But the very instant of discovery, the instant of insight?"

Nikolai Andreevich shrugged his shoulders.

"Recall the history of great discoveries," continued Sensei. "Take, for instance, the well-known periodic system of Dmitry Ivanovich Mendeleev that came to him in a dream in its final form. At that, he was given it only in a partial form that could be perceived by mankind at that stage. It's the

same story with the structure of the atom discovered by Niels Bohr, with the formula of Friedrich August Kekule, with discoveries of Nikola Tesla, and many, many others. Practically all the scientific ideas and theories of mankind appeared as a result of insights, intuition, and more often as 'revelations from above'. In other words, these discoveries were extracted by scientists from the depths of their subconsciousness.

"The depths of the subconsciousness is the chakran called the 'doors' or the 'gates', call it as you wish, which can open from one side as well as from the other side. It is just a transition to a completely different sphere, a different dimension, a different information field. So, when necessary, a ready answer can be inserted into the brain of a scientist from that side."

"Who inserts it?" Kostya inquired.

"The One who's located on that side. Every human perceives Him differently: some take Him for the Absolute, some believe it's the Collective Intellect, or Shambala, or God..."

"I wonder whether Shambala and God are one and the same?" Ruslan asked, pondering something.

"No. God is God, while Shambala is just one of His creations."

"And what is Shambala to mankind?" asked Nikolai Andreevich.

"It's simply a source of knowledge. Speaking in modern language, it is a certain bank of information, the entrance to which exists in the depths of the subconscious of every human."

"So, it means that one can get into Shambala without leaving the room?" Stas was surprised by his guess.

"Absolutely correct..."

We spoke a little more about the questions worrying us until Sensei once again glanced at his watch.

"Alright, guys, it's getting late; time to go."

Honestly speaking, I, as well as the others, didn't want to leave. As Zhenya precisely expressed our mutual opinion later, "The soul demands continuation of the banquet." But, alas, we needed to go home so that our relatives would not worry about the long absence of our bodies.



25

The following days flew by uneventfully. At the next training, everything was as usual: the warm-up, the basics, the new techniques. This time we were given new techniques from the Monkey style. In order to execute a feigned stroke or to make a simple attack, we tried to copy the habits of this animal, which looked pretty funny. Zhenya, as always, made a point of remarking that for the majority of our group, there was no need to copy the monkey because our habits in life evidently surpassed the original. In short, the training passed quite emotionally and merrily.

At the additional training, when almost the entire crowd had left, we continued polishing the complex exercises Sensei showed us for individual work. Already at the very end of the training, a solid, imposing man, about sixty years old, entered the gym. Upon seeing him, Sensei smiled and said, “Well, look who decided to show up in our neck of the woods! Any trouble getting here, George Ivanovich?”

“Don’t even ask,” the man said, slightly indignant. “I have been looking for you for two hours, circling half the city.”

Sensei grinned, “I beg your pardon, Sir Academic. I was busy and couldn’t meet you near the gangway.”

Having greeted each other in a familiar way, they went deeper into the gym, sat down on the sport benches, and began to talk about something.

Hearing the word academic was too much for my curiosity. The others around didn’t react in any way to the appearance of the guest. The senior guys continued polishing their strikes as if nothing had happened and concentrated on the work. Our guys kept up with them. Tatyana and I also tried to put on a good show. But with the arrival of this man, all my attention

switched to him and Sensei. I saw that Sensei, turning to the guest, started to gesticulate, saying something in quite an animated form, and I couldn't bear it. Dodging Tatyana's blows, my persona began gradually edging closer to them with this improvised sparring. I heard the following words of Sensei, addressed to his guest.

"About twenty years ago, you dreamt only of worldwide fame and recognition as a remarkable scientist, and you offered us your services in exchange for concrete knowledge that would make you a leader in science..."

"Well, I'll be!" I thought, dumbfounded. "Sensei speaks to him in such a familiar way! But who is this 'us'? What services?"

Meanwhile Sensei continued, "...From our side, we fulfilled the conditions of our agreement. You received detailed information from us, starting with the semiconductor heterolaser and ending with the solar energy converters. Isn't that enough for you?! All your life, you did nothing and just used our knowledge, and next year you'll get the Nobel prize. Not so bad, right?! I don't understand what the problem is?"

All this time, the man sat there, with his head down. When Sensei finished, he raised his eyes towards him. His face was all red, probably because of strong agitation.

"What's the problem, you say? You take me for a fool!" In a softer tone, he added, "I remember everything perfectly and have never renounced my words... But explain to me, please, where I can find an energy source with the necessary power? In order to launch the plant according to the blueprints which you handed me, I would have to switch off the power to at least the entire region of Leningrad. You want this plant to work from the beginning of August until December. This means that for these months Leningrad and others will be without light!?"

"Dear George Ivanovich, don't worry about the source of energy, we'll supply you with it," Sensei replied.

"Are you going to bring a nuclear generator to my institute or what?! How do you think that will look? Why does it have to be exactly in the territory of our institute? Can't you do it in some other place, in Moscow, for example?" the academic was indignant.

"We can, of course. But we decided that your institute is located in a more convenient place... And we'll supply you with the source of power. You need not worry, it is very small in size, no bigger than a briefcase, so it won't take up a lot of room. Its energy is sufficient for the plant to work for the time needed."

"I apologise, but you mentioned millions of kilowatts. Will it all be in just a briefcase?" the academic was surprised.

Sensei smiled. "Don't stuff your head with trifles. I can partially satisfy your curiosity and say right now that this is a vacuum source of energy. Moreover, we will give you, as promised, a frequency converter for this equipment. But I warn you in advance, I wouldn't advise you to get in there and disassemble these devices; otherwise, it will be a million times worse than Hiroshima even though in outward appearance, they look completely harmless. But remember, the plant should begin to work continuously no later than the 15th of August."

"Alright. And when will you deliver them to me?"

"I think right after Christmas they will be delivered to you."

"Well... The only thing is..." The academic halted a bit.

"What?"

"I'm curious to know one thing. You talk about non-interference in our life, while this plant is evidence of the opposite."

"We do not interfere. If we interfered, we would stop the events that are coming. But we don't have the right; it's your will, do what you wish. It's just not in our interest that, at a minimum, a third world war breaks out with the use of nuclear weapons. That's why we only want to smooth out the consequences of these events."

"And is there a guarantee that these waves won't harm anyone?"

"We assure you that it is absolutely harmless. People will become calmer and more reasonable. That's why their reaction will be softer and won't develop into some global conflict. But I repeat, we don't have the right to prevent these events. If you want, prevent it yourselves. It lies with you."

The academic got up heavily from the bench and began to say his goodbyes. Sensei accompanied him to the door, one more time reminding him about the date. Shaking each other's hands, they parted company. I heard Sensei, returning from the door, mumbling to himself with a smile, "Hmm, every fool considers himself to be smart, but only a smart one can call himself a fool."

I was very impressed by this peculiar conversation. "Who is Sensei? Is he a physicist?" I thought. "He probably works in some scientific research institute. Sensei also once told us about some advanced physics. In that case, it explains a lot about the extensive range of his knowledge." This was the only explanation that came to my mind and was more or less acceptable because the thousand other questions completely confused me, and I couldn't find a clear explanation for them. Nevertheless, Sensei rose in my estimation as a scientific authority because even the academic valued his opinion. Although Sensei himself did not want to stand out from the crowd in any way. As usual, he joked with everybody on the way home,

keeping up our happy mood after our ‘monkey’ training. However, at home, I didn’t forget to write down this unusual conversation in my diary with a big remark at the end, “It turns out that He is a physicist!”



26

A few days later, when I was shopping with my mother as usual, I was making plans for the evening, thinking over questions that I intended to ask Sensei at the training.

After yesterday's rain and night frost, there was a heavy fall of fluffy snow on the streets. Winter here was quite warm in comparison to those regions of the Soviet Union where we had lived before. "Miners" snow looked like snow only the first day because on the second day it became grey from coal dust, and on the third day, it completely melted, turning into wet, slushy mud. Every New Year we celebrated with the same weather forecast: "Rain turning to wet snow." So I was glad to see this fluffy snow and feel the long-awaited freeze. It was giving me hope that next New Year, which was only three weeks away, we may celebrate properly, with real winter and a lot of fun.

While dreaming of a good future, we were walking to the next store. Suddenly, my mother unexpectedly slipped and fell backwards so hard that even her legs flew up. It happened in a split second. I didn't even have time to understand, let alone catch her. Men passing by rushed to lift her up. I also tried to help somehow, scared in earnest. Thanking the men, my mother stood up, leaning on me.

"Mum, are you ok, can you walk?"

"Hold on, my back hurts so much, as if something cracked."

"Maybe we should go to the hospital?"

"Just wait; it will pass."

We stood a bit and then slowly walked home. My mother limped slightly. At home, she felt even worse. We didn't want to bother father at work and hoped that it would pass. The pain kept getting stronger, and no pills

helped. We tried all we could: we rubbed it with different ointments, made a compress, and simply warmed it. But she felt even worse after the last procedure. Of course, I didn't go to the meditation training. And when my dad came home late in the evening, we had already tried everything possible in order to relieve the pain. The decision was unequivocal — we had to go to the hospital. My father made a few calls and arranged for my mother to be seen by a doctor at the regional department of neurosurgery.

In the morning, her condition declined sharply. An aching, sharp pain passed into her leg. Even the slightest movement caused the strongest attack of pain. She was even taken to the hospital in a semi recumbent position. In the neurology department, after a series of X-rays and a CT scan, the doctor diagnosed that she had had osteochondritis of the spinal column for a long time, and the fall had caused the fibrous ring to burst and a 7mm herniation of the intervertebral disk. As a result, the sciatic nerve was pinched, which resulted in strong pain extending to her leg. After careful examination, the doctor sent her to consult with the neurosurgeon. My father again found a good neurosurgeon, who, having studied the results of the examination, concluded that an operation was inevitable.

It was a catastrophe for our family. We saw more than enough bedridden patients on the way to the consulting room of the neurosurgeon. My mother also heard plenty of horror stories from her future neighbour in the neurology ward, who needed to undergo a second operation. My mother was so scared by the forthcoming operation that, after consultation we abducted her from the neurosurgery department, if our strenuous hobbling could be called an escape. Thus, unexpectedly for all of us, the future looked bleak. We decided to try drug treatment, injections, and, as they say, to fight to the end.

From the day that my mother was admitted to the hospital's neurology department, my life changed drastically. In the morning, I went to school and later went by bus to the regional neurology department. All the time I was near my mother and tried to support her spiritually. This, it seemed to me, was very important for her. The doctors were indignant about outsiders visiting her, but my father quickly settled that question. The hospital became the main place where I spent my free time.

My mother was more than sad that misfortunes, one after another, were befalling our family. Moreover, a message came from Moscow that the date was set and I was to have surgery after the New Year's holidays. My mum greatly worried that I had given up my favourite hobby groups and trainings and even tried to insist that I should return to my usual life. But my persona didn't listen to her. It seemed to me that nobody would take care of her like me and that without me she would simply fade away from

her bad thoughts and the oppressing atmosphere of the ward where all her neighbours did was talk about their diseases.

At first, I, as well as my family, were a little bit shocked. "How could such a thing happen?" I thought. "So unexpectedly, and to my mother. Our life is so unpredictable! It only seems to us that we have foreseen, planned, and foretold almost everything, and that it will all turn out that way. But in reality, every day is a trial, as if somebody wants to test us to see how reliable we are, how steady we are internally in various situations, whether in joy or grief. Perhaps these stresses, of which we are unwilling witnesses and participants, are reminders to us from above that life is too fragile and that we might not even have time to do the most important thing in it. We are so accustomed to putting off the things which are important for our soul for an 'indefinite later' that we don't realise how quickly life passes and that we do not have time to really do anything in it properly.

Why do we start to really value something only when it is irretrievably lost: youth — in old age, health — on the hospital bed, life — on our deathbed? Why? Maybe these sudden situations make us ponder our perishable existence, make us wake up from our unrealisable fantasies borne by our laziness and bring us back to reality. Reality shows that nobody actually knows what can happen to them at any minute. So, maybe it's not worth tempting fate and we should start to value each moment right now, value it as if we were people doomed. Maybe then we'll be able to understand more deeply the meaning of life itself and do a thousand more useful things for our soul and for surrounding people. "It's foolish to think that tomorrow is waiting for us, it may simply never come." Only now did I understand the real meaning of Sensei's phrase, which I once believed to be a joke: **"If you want to make God laugh, tell Him about your plans."**

In life stories of her ward neighbours, which my mum and I had heard in the first few days, I found proof that nobody is insured against Miss Fortune. The woman whose bed was next to the window was named Valentina Fedorovna. Just one instant had turned her entire life upside down, and it happened unexpectedly as well. She and her husband were living from hand to mouth, with hardly any money. They decided to join a wave of the cooperative movement, so her husband quit the factory and registered his own furniture cooperative. He was enterprising and hard-working, and the business was successful. In just one year, they made so much money that they bought a new cooperative apartment, a car, and even a country lot. Everything was as good as can be and nothing foretold of troubles.

But two months ago, when Valentina Fedorovna was coming back with her husband from a relative's birthday party, they were involved in

a big car accident. It happened in a split second. Three cars crashed into each other at full speed because of a drunken driver in the oncoming lane. Her husband died immediately. Thanks to fastening her seatbelt, she miraculously stayed alive. However, she was yanked so hard, that doctors later diagnosed a subluxation in the cervical area of her spinal cord with a hematoma. After that, her hands hardly moved, and she couldn't feel her legs at all. The subluxation was cured in the neurosurgery department. However, the hematoma remained as a consequence of the spinal cord injury. Valentina Fedorovna was transferred from the neurosurgical to the neurological department about one month ago.

It seemed to me that it was her moral state that suffered rather than her physical state. At that moment, her life was destroyed. It was bad enough that she had to mortgage a part of her property because all the money she had was being quickly spent on treatment and on paying off her husband's debts which had appeared out of nowhere. But most of all, she was shocked by the strange attitude of her friends.

She told us that her family had had many friends, relatives, and close acquaintances but as soon as they found out that her husband had died and that she was left disabled alone, everybody for some reason immediately forgot about her existence. She had been in the hospital for two months and had been visited only by her old grandmother and her sister, who, despite the fact that she lived in poverty, always tried to bring her something tasty. Valentina Fedorovna now understood who was who, but it was already too late. That evening, I wrote down in my diary her elderly grandmother's interesting expression regarding feckless friends, **“When the pot is boiling, the house is full of friends. But once the pot is gone, nobody comes.”**

Valentina Fedorovna was in despair and didn't find any other way out for her grief except slandering her former friends and relatives. I felt uncomfortable when hearing such speeches. These bad words did not only spoil her own mood and put her in a state, but she inflamed hatred in herself and people around her suffered. We didn't even want to mention the word 'friend' because this woman would literally explode and would start her “old song and dance” all over again.

Another woman, Anna Ivanovna, was kind. She didn't curse her destiny, though her health wasn't any better. She almost had the same kind of disease as my mum. One day, her back simply began to ache. The doctors found a herniated disk. They performed an operation and removed the vertebral herniation. After that, she felt a lot better. But sometime later, she again fell ill and felt even worse. The doctors recommended a second

operation, but she was afraid that she wouldn't be able to walk after it. Anna Ivanovna was quite reserved in telling her story, but the details, especially the consequences of her operation, scared not just my mother but also me because my persona, most likely, would be operated on by neurosurgeons as well.

Anna Ivanovna hardly moved. Her husband, a happy plump man, visited her often. Their children had grown up a long time ago and lived with their families in different cities. But Anna Ivanovna had her own distress, as she was most of all afraid to be bedridden; after all, she was only fifty. She was afraid to become a burden to her husband and even more so to the children with her illness. That's why this woman tried very hard to recover, swallowing all the prescribed pills and performing all the indicated procedures. But sometimes, when the pain became unbearable, optimism left her and she would weep bitter tears, repeating the same question, "Why?!"

The third neighbour, a young woman about five years older than me, had post-birth trauma. Lena had already felt pain in her back during the pregnancy. Her right leg completely stopped moving; she couldn't even move her toes. As it turned out, she had a protrusion of two disks. At home, she left the baby in the care of her retired mother-in-law. She was also visited by her husband. He was a good guy: calm, probably timid by nature. Her mother-in-law, on the other hand, would rush in like a hurricane, always grumbling and dissatisfied.

This complication after the delivery, which nobody could foresee, put the young family on the verge of collapse. Apart from the fact that Lena had serious health problems and couldn't physically take care of the child, her mother-in-law regularly provoked conflicts, telling her son that he didn't need a crippled wife, that it would be a burden for the rest of his life, and that he should ask his wife for a divorce. Lena couldn't rely on anyone else to be with her child but her mother, but the mother lived far away in a different city and seldom visited her because she worked all the time in the factory, barely making ends meet. All in all, Lena's life had become a continuous tragedy.

Having heard plenty of all these stories, I realised that not one of these patients had expected such an outcome; everyone lived with dreams of something, but the events came like thunder amidst a clear sky. Everybody complained about why it happened specifically to them. In the evening, affected by all I had heard, I randomly opened my diary and came across Sensei's words, **"There are no accidents. An accident is only a natural consequence of our uncontrolled thoughts."** "That's it!" I thought.

“Strange that I simply didn’t pay attention to these words before.” And for “visual acuity”, I marked them in the diary with bold italics.

I really wanted to visit Sensei’s trainings and lessons, but I just couldn’t get out of this vortex of events without feeling guilty. I regularly called my friends, who effusively bragged about their successes. At home, I continued doing meditations, and I tried to do the ‘Lotus Flower’ every chance I had. Evoking feelings worked well for me when I thought about a desired present. At that thought, a wave of tiny ants would arise in my solar plexus and spread through my whole body in different directions. This feeling was quite pleasant. Even though I wasn’t near Sensei, his words in my diary constantly circled in my mind.

In the hospital, my persona decided that, at any cost, I would change the unhealthy atmosphere in the ward because even a healthy man would quickly grow sickly from listening to the talk about diseases and oppressive existence. Visiting my mother, I tried to tell all the funniest stories I knew, starting with school life and finishing with various amusing incidents from literature. But this method was ineffective, since the women remained deep in thought about their own problems. One time, talking to Lena, I told her what I heard from Sensei about good and bad thoughts, about the essence of our soul and our life. Amazingly, the women started listening to these words with such attention, as if they weren’t Sensei’s words I was telling but rather a confession that concerned each of them. My mother said that after my departure they continued to discuss these words and reflected on their meaning in relation to their life experiences. Strikingly, after just a week of my storytelling, there were some unexpected results.

Valentina Fedorovna, who had been groaning and grieving more than everybody, transformed herself into a completely different person, an intelligent organiser of her destiny. My mother said that after these conversations she pondered over something intensely. The result of her decision surpassed all expectations. She offered Lena’s husband the official position of the furniture cooperative director with a correspondingly good salary. This was a complete shock not just for the young family, but especially for the mother-in-law. They simply didn’t know how to thank Valentina Fedorovna for this gift of Destiny.

Although Lena’s husband was a meek person, when he was entrusted with such an important business, he had discovered inside himself the talent of a good manager. As the mother-in-law told us, he worked with great enthusiasm and efficiency twenty-four hours a day, and due to his efforts, the production of furniture was restarted in less than two weeks, and they even got their first large income. The mother-in-law blossomed

from happiness, and her attitude towards Lena immediately changed for the better.

Moreover, Valentina Fedorovna hired her sister to work in this cooperative, turning her from a simple bookkeeper with a tiny salary in a state office into the chief bookkeeper of a privately-owned enterprise, with a good salary. And since the woman was honest, punctual, and accurate, order was guaranteed. Overall, such smart and simple decisions made by Valentina Fedorovna pleased everybody, and especially herself. Her health and her life in general began to improve. Even her old friends began to visit her, offering various services. But Valentina Fedorovna, completely without rancour, let them know that she no longer needed their services or help.

After that, atmosphere in the ward got significantly better. Now, the women smiled more often, joked, supported each other. The atmosphere in this ward became pleasant for everyone. Even the hospital staff lingered for longer than usual just to chat with our jolly women. What's most striking, not only did the women's mood improve, but also their health; they quickly started recovering. I understood that this terrible pain was begotten, first of all, by their imagination, by bad thoughts and fear of the unknown. It was like a worm eating them up from inside, intensifying their physical pain over and over again. As soon as these women took their minds off these thoughts, they became pleasant not only to those around them, but also to themselves. It became possible for them not only to reason soundly, but also to try to adapt to the new conditions of their lives and their relationships with people.

I was simply shocked by this discovery, since I didn't suspect that Sensei's words would cause such a revolution in the thoughts and feelings of these women doomed to suffering. Positive thoughts of one of them begot an entire chain of events in the destinies of several people, bringing happiness and wealth into their lives. This served for me as one more piece of evidence that Sensei was absolutely right about the power of our thoughts and how much they affect us and our Destiny.

Also, I noticed that it became significantly easier to practice the 'Lotus Flower' in the ward. I tried to do all I could to support this spirit of optimism, which grew every day. I brought library books of the great classics, with good endings of course, as well as humorous stories. The women read them with pleasure, retelling each other the exciting moments. It turned out that many of Sensei's words also found confirmation in works of the classics of different epochs. Finally, I realised that Sensei actually spoke about the eternal truths that have always been known to humankind. He just explained them simply and clearly.

I also noticed another curious moment. Anna Ivanovna, who had been working for twenty years in a university as a teacher of literature, knew many of these books almost by heart. But now she said that she reread these books with pleasure, as she now perceived them completely differently. She later confessed that namely for herself, for her soul, she made interesting discoveries, noticing in the books those things that she hadn't paid attention to before.

Sometimes our readings would turn into real literary soirees. Amazingly, when I spoke to the women about Sensei's theory of control over thoughts, they listened to these words with unusual attention. At first, it embarrassed me because I simply couldn't answer many of their questions about life. But at home, looking through my diary again, I found Sensei's words, which, in my opinion, more or less corresponded to the answers. Strangely enough, the women perceived these words in their own way, depending on their life experiences, and these answers quite satisfied them. So, although Sensei wasn't with us, his presence was felt clearly in those deep thoughts of his which we constantly came back to.

New Year drew near. The women decided to organise a holiday party right in the ward. My father settled all the formalities with the chief doctor. We even set up a small, real Christmas tree, decorating it with various toys and, just for fun, with syringes and drips. Our family celebrated New Year in mother's ward with the other women and their close friends and relatives. It was so merry, and everyone was so kind to each other that I had the impression we were all one big happy family. I remembered one interesting toast, delivered by Lena's mother-in-law.

"They say that the way you celebrate New Year, so will be the entire year. And despite the fact that we are celebrating it in the hospital, the most important thing is that we are celebrating it in the company of such wonderful people. I am thankful to God that all the misfortunes of my son are finally over. Thank you so much, dear Valentina Fedorovna, for your kind and considerate heart. If it weren't for you, we would never have gotten out of that nightmare. So let's drink to all of you, to unpredictable Destiny, which has gathered all of us in such an unusual place. To your health!"

Many more kind and beautiful words were said that night. Close to two o'clock in the morning, we were even joined by the chief doctor and his wife, who were coming back after visiting their friends. But as I later understood, he was more interested in talking to my dad than with us. Having drunk a few glasses of wine, the women began pouring out their souls to each other. I was really shocked when Valentina Fedorovna was telling us how she had made her vitally important decision.

“You know, girls, I thought long and hard about what had happened to me and how to get out of this mess now. And one time, after one such dismal pondering, I had a strange dream. A beautiful young man with blond hair down to his shoulders came up to my bed and started speaking in a melodic voice, ‘Why are you suffering? Look at the people surrounding you. When you see their best features, your problems will disappear.’ After that, I woke up in a completely different mood. I began thinking. And really, as it turned out later, I couldn’t have found better candidates for my business. Although, honestly speaking, in the beginning I had doubts, there was still a great risk. But recalling this dream, something pushed me to a final decision. Honest to God, girls,” she made a sign of the cross, “it’s the real truth!”

“Would you believe, I had also dreamt of a blond man?” confessed Anna Ivanovna. “I was just too shy to tell you. He was telling me something in such a pleasant voice. But in the morning, I could remember nothing of his words. I just remember that afterwards I had such a nice feeling. I still feel this sense of tranquillity. What could it mean?”

“They were angels from heaven who came to help you,” exclaimed the pious mother-in-law. “They show you the right way, my dears...”

She then started a whole sermon of church teaching. But this case clearly intrigued me. And upon returning home, I hurried to write it down in my diary.



27

Soon after the New Year holidays, my mother felt a lot better, and she was discharged from the hospital. Taking leave of the women, who were also getting ready to be discharged, was very warm. These days I had more free time, and I decided to go to the training. But my friends said that Sensei had left to go on a business trip for a couple of weeks. So, our meeting was postponed for an indefinite period of time because in three days my mother and I were to fly to Moscow.

I took my diary with me on the plane. And while my mother slept on the plane, I thumbed through its pages again. Of course, I worried a lot about the forthcoming operation, but Sensei's words warmed my heart and acted as a calming potion to my soul.

Uncle Victor met us at the airport and informed us that my grandfather had come from Siberia to give us his support. My grandpa was the most respected, most esteemed, wisest man among all our kinfolk. Everybody listened to his opinion. It was considered a great honour if he visited one of the relatives. It pleased me to see such a touching demonstration of care from grandpa; it was not so easy at his age to travel more than five thousand kilometres, even by plane.

When we had happily greeted grandpa, we began the traditional feast, where mother told him about all the misfortunes that had befallen our family. They continued to discuss the problems for a long time but I, fairly tired after the trip, went to take a rest because the next day was going to be quite hard.

In the evening, when I was reading my diary, somebody knocked on the door. It was grandpa. He sat next to me and began inquiring about some trivialities. Gradually, our conversation moved on to more serious subjects.

Grandfather was trying to console me before the forthcoming operation. He said that regardless of the results of the second examination, there was no need to be upset. Many people who got into worse situations came out of them as winners precisely because they didn't lose their self-control and willpower and fought to the end. Grandfather started to cite eloquent examples from his front-line life during the war. To be more convincing, he affirmed his speech with his favourite proverb, **"As long as there is a glimmer of life in you, hope still shines."** All that time I carefully and calmly listened to grandpa. When he finished his speech, I sincerely told him what I actually thought and felt in my soul. I expressed all my opinions about life which, thanks to Sensei's teaching, had formed inside of me and had become an essential part of myself. Grandfather was so startled, so amazed by this simple truth that he again asked me if I really wasn't afraid of death.

"Of course," I calmly replied. "For me, death is just a change of environment, a transition from one state to another. I know that I will always be with you, with my relatives, because my Love for you lives in me, in my soul. And wherever I am, whichever form I take, this Love always will be with me because I and my Love are eternal... And it was this feeling that I began to appreciate most of all. **Since in life, the quality of instants lived is much more important than the senseless years of existence.**

These words apparently affected grandpa's feelings because he was touched to the depths of his soul. I realised that everybody is afraid of death, even those who are as courageous as my grandfather. Apparently, he was also afraid of the unknown, of what will happen after death, but had never told anyone. Grandpa pondered for some time and then said, "Yes, probably, **wisdom is a virtue of the soul and not of age** after all."

The next day, I noticed that grandpa had changed. He became happier, more cheerful, and looked as if he had found answers to questions that had been tormenting him for years. We headed to the clinic together... I was examined for almost an entire week, and had various analyses and X-rays. And finally, on an appointed day, my mother and I came to the professor, an old, pleasant man. Though I thought he greeted us kind of strangely, slightly confused. Looking at him, I thought that my body had very little time left to live. A tense pause ensued.

"You know," he began, looking through my films. "I don't understand it. There is a clear pathology in these September films that you brought, and the tumour had already begun to progress slowly. But if you look at the ones we just took, everything is clean. I even ordered a second set of films... Either there was a mistake in the first films, which is unlikely based

on the fact that the girl has been examined a number of times, or... I don't know what to think."

Addressing me, the professor asked, "When was the last time you had headaches?"

"Me? Well...", my persona did the best to recall, "Probably, some time in October, I remember for sure. And after..." I shrugged my shoulders.

And really, I had completely forgotten the last time that my head had ached. The previous eventful months, especially my mother's case, had made me completely forget about myself and my disease. The only things that were significant for me were my spiritual practices and taking care of my mother.

"Strange... Very strange," said the doctor. "According to our films, the girl is completely healthy, though the old films show that, at a minimum, right now you should be bringing her to us bedridden. Did you get any other treatment beside the doctor's recommendations?" the professor asked with evident interest.

"Well, no," my mother replied in confusion. "We followed orders as prescribed."

"What my colleagues prescribed would only slow down the growth of the cancer cells but not completely destroy them. Paradoxical! This is the first such unique case in my entire long-term practice. Evidently, it didn't happen without providence," the doctor kept saying, once again going through the films and the results of the analysis.

"So, does it mean," my mother asked shyly, clearly not believing all she heard, "you can't confirm the diagnosis?"

The professor drew his attention away from the films and glanced at my mother with amazement.

"Of course. Your daughter is absolutely healthy!"

My mother sat gripping the chair for another minute. When the professor's answer finally sank in, she rushed to thank him and to shake his hand as if he were an angel with wings. I was also happy. But unlike my mother, I knew exactly in my soul who my angel and saviour was. Even my mind didn't resist that definition. The only question that worried my mind in that moment was: how did Sensei do THIS?

After such news, we didn't just walk out of the clinic, we 'flew out' of it. Our relatives waited downstairs, including grandpa. There was no limit to their joy. My mother made the sign of the cross and silently thanked God, which unspeakably surprised me because I could hardly believe that my mother, an officer, a major, who had been brought up in the ideology of communism and atheism, would do something like that. But I realised

that everybody, whoever or whatever he is, remains, first of all, an ordinary person with his fears, grief, and faith in the higher power.

For the whole next week, we celebrated my “second birth.” All those days, my diary was full of pages of joy, excitement, and one and the same question: “How did Sensei do this? Why did my life change so sharply? Is it thanks to His presence in it? Who is He actually? And where do I know Him from?” One question begat a series of other questions. But I left Moscow with a firm intention to find out everything, even if it took years.



28

At home, the first thing I did was ask my friends about the next training. It turned out to be that evening. We agreed to meet at the same time at the tram stop. I barely had the patience to wait until the appointed hour and took all my medical discharges and films with me.

The gang greeted me with elation and a flow of news. When the long-awaited tram came, they could barely hold me back.

“We have to take a different tram now,” Tatyana said smiling.

“How come?”

“Surprise!” they yelled almost in unison.

“We have now moved to a different gym,” Andrey explained with pride. “It’s a lot better, a lot more comfortable, with mirrors. Besides, it is located almost twice closer.”

“What great news!” I was surprised.

During the whole ride, my friends were telling me about the many interesting things I missed when I was, as they thought, healing my stomach in a health centre. Andrey, vying with Kostya, shared news about the trainings, about unique cases of Sensei’s latest demonstrations, and about his unusual philosophy, which he was imparting to them during spiritual trainings. And Tatyana and Slava chorused and supplemented the especially thrilling moments with their impressions. I was listening to them with attention and great regret that I hadn’t been a witness to such interesting events. But, on the other hand, an entire life was now ahead of me.

Reaching the final stop, I saw a huge, modern building, a recreation centre, though the locals simply called it the club. There was a movie theatre and many rooms for various hobby groups, and a good gym with mirrors the length of the entire wall.

“Great! Now we can “monkey around” in front of them as much as we want,” I joked, examining my multiple reflections.

Sensei entered the gym together with the senior guys. He warmly greeted us, including my persona. Shaking his hand, I was looking into his eyes with admiration and one silent question, “How?” I didn’t just believe, I simply knew that my cure happened due to Sensei, due to interference of higher powers, as the professor said, “divine providence.” But how could He do it so quickly? Why did the disease disappear so quickly?

My being was overflowing with feelings of gratitude. But I could express them only with my eyes because there were too many curious people around. When the guys went to the changing rooms, I gathered all my courage and asked Sensei to speak with me alone. He agreed willingly.

We walked into the vestibule, and I started showing him my medical records, telling him about the events in Moscow. My persona tried to express to him the feelings flowing over me, but my strong emotions caused me to speak only in disconnected fragments of grateful phrases.

Igor Mikhailovich quickly flipped through all the films with the professional movement of a doctor, and having read the documents, genially asked, “Are you satisfied?”

“Very much! Even more than satisfied.”

“Well, that’s good. That is the most important thing.”

“Still, I don’t understand, it seems as if this disease never even existed. But all these films, the confirmation of the doctors, the medical records,” I uttered in confusion.

Sensei smiled and said, “You know, there is a Latin proverb, ‘What doesn’t exist on paper, doesn’t exist in the world.’”

“No, I’m serious. I know for sure that you did this, but how? Why so quickly?”

“Oh boy,” grinned Sensei. “Did you think that one needs to open a skull, cut out a piece of brain, or get stuffed with pills just for you to really believe that you were cured by some kind of action? **Any action is begotten, first of all, by our formed thought...** Have you ever heard about stigmata?”

“Sounds familiar...”

“Stigmata is when in short minutes, bleeding wounds appear on the hands and feet of people of deep faith. These wounds appear in exactly the same places where they appeared on Jesus Christ when he was crucified on the cross. And literally in three days, these wounds disappear without leaving a trace. In some of the faithful, stigmata appear not only as wounds, but also as nails. These nails have been taken for analysis and proven to be not simply an outgrowth of bone and meat, but real nails, made of the

material typical for those times, in other words, made around two thousand years ago... Faith really creates miracles. And there is nothing impossible for believers, regardless in whom or in what they believe... And you say, why so quickly?"

"But I wouldn't say that I am a believer, especially a deeply faithful person, because I really believed in..." Here I almost said, "in you," but I continued, "a higher power only when I heard the words of the professor in Moscow who confirmed that I'm absolutely healthy. In other words, when everything had already happened."

"Everything is a lot simpler. When a human can't deeply believe in his recovery, then there should be someone else to believe in him, someone who is more spiritually developed than he is. And then the result will surpass all expectations."

"Is it possible to overcome any disease?"

"Absolutely."

"What needs to be done for that?"

"Just believe sincerely and think in the right way. But believe deeply, with Love, with positive thought. Not something like, 'I want to be healed,' but from the position of an already healthy person. Then a person, by asserting this positive thought, without fail creates a peculiar, well, let's call it, 'a matrix of one hundred percent health.' This matrix is saved in our subconscious thanks to the power of our faith... And it is precisely due to this 'matrix', according to its healthy scheme, that a body regenerates its functions on a physical level because it simply fulfils the order of the subconscious. Everything is simple."

"How can one cure another person by faith?"

"In the same way. It's just that this 'matrix', or rather it would be more right to call it a hologram, is transmitted by thought as a healthy image from one person to another..."

"And this can be done by any person who strongly believes?"

"Of course... I can tell you about a case that happened to our Volodya, but I will tell you just because you have already gone through this yourself. But don't tell it to anyone. If you want, you can quietly ask Volodya so that no one will hear... His father was a fire fighter at the Chernobyl atomic power plant meltdown disaster. Before that, his stomach ached, and they thought that it was gastritis. When he came back, he felt very bad. The doctors' diagnosis was unanimous — stomach cancer. Of course, he needed urgent surgery. Volodya came to me that evening and asked if it were possible to help somehow. I told him about this technique. He relaxed, removed all unnecessary thoughts, thanked God that a mistake had happened and that

his father was completely healthy, and everything was fine with him. Volodya asked God to forgive his sins, the sins of his father, everything that he had done wrong. He repented and at the same time thanked God.”

“Forgive me, but is a human really sinful before God?”

“Well, let’s say it this way, in fact, a human is sinful only before himself, before his soul... The problem is that the factor of sin is placed in our subconscious from childhood. We are told that, regardless of the religion we belong to, all of us are guilty before God. But none of us is guilty before God! We are guilty just before ourselves. God, He does only good. We push ourselves into the dirt. That’s why when we admit that we are animals stuck in the dirt and when we pray for forgiveness from God, we admit the fact of His existence, we admit His power, and, what’s more important, we attune to Love, to the positive... So, Volodya practiced this technique for several days, going to bed, waking up, whenever he happened to have a free minute. He made this prayer in the deepest faith, in great Love for his father. As he confessed, he had never before experienced such an internal state, although Volodya had been practicing meditation in his spiritual direction for a long time. What’s most amazing is that, seven days following our conversation, I emphasise, on the seventh day, when his father was ‘opened up’ during the surgery, there was no tumour, and they sewed him up and sent him home. The diagnosis wasn’t confirmed, and it was considered to be a medical mistake. To this day, his father is alive and feels wonderful; he works just as hard as he did when he was young... This old man, for his entire life, believed in no one and relied only on himself, on his powers... This is an example from real life that deep faith can work wonders.”

And after a short silence, Sensei added, “Faith - it’s not just a word, it’s a huge internal power generated by the person himself. When conjoined with the divine power of Love, about which we spoke in the ‘Lotus Flower’, it gives birth to such a power that really creates the ‘impossible’. Although all these words — ‘miracle’, ‘impossible’ - are just the words of people. Because the science of Shambala explains everything by the laws of nature, which at the present are not known to mankind. The power of Faith and Love, begotten by thought, are powers initially inherent in a human being. This is what distinguishes him from a common two-legged animal.

“That’s why, throughout history, all great teachers of mankind called people to Faith and Love, giving them this knowledge on their level of perception. At the very least, recall the words of Jesus who said, ‘If you have faith the size of a mustard seed and say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.’

These are not empty words; this is true knowledge for those who can listen: 'He who has ears, let him hear.'"

"Interesting. But if this huge power can be explained by natural laws, then it means, as far as I understand, there should be some kind of a formula." Sensei smiled and replied, "Undoubtedly, formulas do exist, but people are still not ready for this knowledge to be given to them in formulas because thoughts of the animal nature dominate in the majority of people... In reality, to prove that this power really exists means to discover the laws of the universe, to discover the reality of the existence of God... Even simple 'blind' human faith with limited potential is capable of doing a lot, while true faith opens up unlimited possibilities. Not only can it move planets, but it can also create, destroy, and rule many worlds with only a thought."

"Hmm... With such power, one can probably restore health just by thinking about it!" I said in admiration, discovering for myself a completely new world of thought.

"Absolutely correct."

I recalled the miraculous healings performed by Jesus, and suddenly it dawned on me, "So it means that Jesus healed people with His positive thought alone! And before I thought all that was just fairy tales."

Sensei laughed, "Yes, yes, yes. That's why He said, 'As you believe, so it shall be done unto you.'... Jesus had created just a hologram of health with His power, and the person would hold onto it with the power of his 'blind' faith. And the stronger the person's faith was, the firmer it held this hologram in the person's subconscious."

I reflected a little and then asked, "And why shouldn't I tell anyone about this?"

"You see, when telling other people, human sows in himself a grain of doubt in his subconscious after hearing their answers and opinions, but doesn't even notice this. This negative power, gradually cultivated, begets in consciousness the logic of 'parasitic thoughts' which occur when a human, based on his little knowledge about the surrounding world, tries to formulate at least some kind of common sense, searching for an explanation in his scanty bundle of knowledge. In this respect, the so-called 'common sense' is enemy number one for a human, his faith, and his spiritual development, because it is a fertile ground for cultivation of doubts, negative thoughts, and negative emotions. In this meaning, God and 'common sense' are two completely different concepts... So, finally, these doubts, with their negative power of logic, win on the battlefield of the mind and destroy the blind faith together with its matrix of health. And then the disease comes back. That is why, if you are not strong in your spiritual knowledge, you need simply to

believe, to thank God with Love for this gift of health and not to speak to anyone about this cure. Then you will have a chance to save this hologram of health, created by the power of Love, to a very old age.”

At that moment, Victor came out from the gym and, seeing Sensei, asked whether we could begin the training.

“Yes, of course,” answered Sensei.

We hurried to join the group. During the whole lesson, I thought only about our conversation. I was amazed by these simple truths. It seemed like I had read about it before, but I just read and had not deeply understood it. Sensei showed me a new perspective of these ideas that had existed for thousands of years.

At home, carried away by this subject, I dug through our entire family library and finally found a magazine with excerpts from the Bible about healings by Jesus. I reread it now with completely different eyes, with completely different thoughts, from the point of view of those extraordinary events that had happened to me in such a short period of time. Gradually, a new world was opening to me, a world begotten by the mighty power of Thought.



29

On the way to the spiritual training, I noticed that my friends' vocabulary began to change. It now consisted of more good words, positive moments, and wise thoughts. They even decided to get rid of the parasitic words that they had often used in their sentences. They decided that if someone 'blabs', he or she would buy a chebureki³ or pirozhki⁴ for everybody. I, having 'slipped' a couple of times myself, began to watch my speech more carefully and, first of all, my thoughts.

A small but quite packed-down snowy pathway to our secret glade had been made. Volodya, Stas, Zhenya, Sensei, and Nikolai Andreevich already stood in the glade. After joining them, we heard continuation of a conversation, which had been interrupted by our arrival.

"...but using hypnosis in our practice, we found out that it turns off consciousness and works directly with the subconsciousness," the psychotherapist recounted with enthusiasm. "And we made the conclusion that there is no concrete knowledge in the subconsciousness at all. It perceives everything as a fact: if we suggest to someone that he is a singer, and he has never sung in his life, he will sing. If we give him an onion and say that it is a sweet apple, he eats it with pleasure, without even grimacing, and so forth. We even repeated a series of experiments performed by our colleagues from the capital regarding the inhibition of reactions in cells of the cerebral brain cortex with respect to stimulus in the state of hypnosis.

3. chebureki — a mutton pie eaten in Crimea and Caucasus. *Translator's remark.*

4. pirozhki — individual-sized baked or fried buns stuffed with a variety of fillings. *Translator's remark.*

We applied a vial with hot water (+65° C) to the hand of a man under hypnosis; rang a loud bell. There was no reaction in the vessels of the hand. The level of the plethysmograph didn't change. The man, hypnotised not to respond to these stimuli, answered that he felt nothing, and his facial expression confirmed this. Or we would implant in him such somatic effects that are impossible to induce intentionally. For example, we said that a piece of ordinary paper was a mustard poultice. A corresponding redness appeared on the surface of his skin where we had applied the paper. In other words, a man in a state of hypnosis literally executed all our commands, starting with a psychological image and ending with the reactions of the body."

"Absolutely correct," answered Sensei, "because hypnosis is a clear manifestation of the animal nature in the human, it is a 'liberation' from intellect and a disconnection from the soul. Hypnosis is only a function of the subconscious. In hypnosis, a human becomes who he really is if he is completely overwhelmed by the animal nature, he becomes a zombie, an obedient piece of meat, or, as Omar Khayyam correctly remarked, 'a bag with bones, tendons, and bloody mucus.'"

"Who are 'zombies'?" asked Tatyana.

"'Zombies' were what African tribes called people whose mind was oppressed by certain narcotic substances and who were programmed by special psychic influences. These people unquestioningly executed any order of the chief and could kill not only themselves, but their own mothers, their children... In other words, a 'zombie' is a body of a human whose soul has been 'taken out' or 'disconnected' and who has been deprived of intellect," answered Sensei. Addressing Nikolai Andreevich, he continued, "Hypnosis is 'cracking' of an individual, it is aggression, it is slavery. And you will find no knowledge there except that of a dumb, obedient animal."

"I don't completely agree with you in regard to dumb animal obedience," protested Nikolai Andreevich. "Because as far as I know, the 'I' of the hypnotised person keeps control of reality all the time and can be restored at any moment. The hypnotiser can affect only something with which the patient subconsciously agrees. As it's written in medical research, the mechanism of resistance and protection is not completely turned off."

"If all this were as you say in reality, then hypnosis wouldn't have been used so actively in the secret services of all of the developed countries of the world. Do you know that all the newest discoveries, technologies, and the best ways of fishing out the information and methods of control over the human mind are used, first of all, in the military interests of states and only a small, insignificant part, for peaceful goals?"

"Well, alright. But hypnosis can be used in medicine to cure some diseases. Will you deny this fact?"

“I will. What is disease? It is, first of all, a signal from the body about a possible serious disorder in its functions and tissues. Posthypnotic suggestion, left by the hypnotiser and later executed by the human mind as its own idea, simply eliminates this signal of pain but doesn’t remove the cause of the disease. And a human, indeed, for some time won’t feel the pain, deceiving himself with elusive hopes. While in reality, he will make himself even worse because the disease will keep progressing and in the end, will appear again in an even worse, neglected state. To be ‘cured’ by hypnosis doesn’t mean to be healthy. Because, with such ‘healing’, even a light form of one disease can beget another disease, a more serious one.”

“What about those habits that patients acquire when the medical effect shows itself? It has been proven many times that bad habits disappear and, on the contrary, good ones are formed, implemented, and the mind itself begins to work differently. Why? How do you explain that?”

“Everything is very simple. The mind under hypnosis is, as a rule, in a state of the ‘trusting listener’. In other words, it looks at everything as an outsider, absolutely without any analysis. And if it’s ordered in this state not to listen, or to forget, or to change habits, it will execute all this precisely. And afterwards, it will perceive this order as its own idea... Our mind is imperfect, very imperfect. The soul is perfect and its possibilities are limitless. But the soul gets disconnected when a human is hypnotised because there occurs an evident awakening of the animal nature in the human. The soul, of course, loses and cannot then have an impact on the mind. That’s why hypnosis is, in general, awful for people.”

“What if a human is suggested to do good?”

“It doesn’t matter,” Sensei said simply.

“But susceptibility to hypnosis is peculiar to all people, just to a different degree and in different forms.”

“Of course, just like the presence of the spiritual and the animal nature is peculiar to all people, to different degrees,” Sensei replied.

“But hypnosis has common features with other altered states of consciousness, such as sleep or meditation. Hypnosis is also achieved by a reduction of the influx of signals into the brain; the subject also concentrates on one sensor stimulus...” Nikolai Andreevich was cut off by Sensei.

“Yes, but you listed features that are peculiar to the beginning of any method of altering the state of consciousness. The main distinction of hypnosis is in the flow of this state itself which is reflected on a physical level as well. I would call hypnosis a state of ‘doubling of command’. Take a look at how it manifests itself on a physiological level. If it is

compared with a dream or meditation, then the content of oxygen and carbon dioxide doesn't change as happens in those other states. Unlike the other altered states of consciousness, hypnosis isn't accompanied by a physical deviation from the state of wakefulness. Waves of the electroencephalogram ('brain waves') most often remain the same as in an alert person, and so forth. That is, these are the only facts that our science can actually detect at this stage.

"Meditation, on the other hand, is a completely different altered state of consciousness. Even the term 'meditation', which comes from Latin, means 'reflection'. Meditation is a state in which the highest degree of concentration of attention on a certain subject is achieved, or, conversely, a complete deconcentration of attention. In this state, the processes of perception and thinking are halted. It is a peculiar form of sensory isolation of the human from the external world and a full concentration on the internal, spiritual world, the spiritual essence. It's natural that psychic immobilisation, associated on a physical level with temporary disconnection of major integrative mechanisms of the brain, facilitates recovery of the nervous and psychic functions of a human, bringing a feeling of freshness, internal rejuvenation, and joy of life... Hypnosis, on the other hand, leaves behind depression on the subconscious level, forming in this way slavish psychology in the consciousness of a human.

"One more curious aspect of meditation: normal functioning of the sensory organs during wakefulness creates a high level of 'internal noise' in the central nervous system that impedes the flow of processes of integration and association. During meditation, this level of 'internal noise' of the brain becomes extremely low. Consequently, a human gets an opportunity to use the associative and integrative processes for completion of certain tasks that he has formulated for himself... So, hypnosis and meditation are two completely different states of consciousness. Meditation is one of the ways of awakening the spiritual nature, while hypnosis, I emphasise, is just a function of the animal nature."

"But are we allowed to implant self-confidence and self-reliance in a person, at least for psychotherapeutic goals?" Nikolai Andreevich just couldn't let it go.

"Hypnosis is a poor instrument for that, as it increases suggestibility, submission to other people's will. This is something unnatural to the essence of a human, to his true predestination in life. Because internally, on the subconscious level, he strives for true Freedom, Freedom of his Soul. That is why people always strive for independence, for self-assertion, and any form of external freedom.

“If you really want to help someone change, to believe in his own powers and potential, then convince him with your words, your thoughts, and your argumentation. Because **the power of word revives the power of thought, and the power of thought generates action...** But hypnosis is not the answer, not with its open command into the human’s consciousness. For you don’t know what you are doing, because you are not aware of the true nature of hypnosis and the negative forces it awakens in a human...”

Nikolai Andreevich stood deep in thought. Meanwhile, the last of the guys arrived at the glade. Greeting them, Sensei said, “Alright, everyone is here. I guess, we’ll start... Today, we will do the same meditation as last time, to purify thoughts. For those who were absent, I will repeat. So, stand comfortably, legs at shoulders’ width. Hands should touch each other with the tips of the fingers at the level of the belly, tip to tip. In other words, thumb to thumb, forefinger to forefinger, and so forth. Like this.”

Sensei showed me this connection.

“It is necessary to relax by removing all thoughts and to concentrate only on normal breathing. Then, when you have reached a state of full relaxation of all extremities and a feeling of inner peace, begin to imagine that you are a jug. In other words, the top part of your head is as if cut off like in a jug... The source of water is the soul. This water fills your whole body and, in the end, overfills it, spilling over the edge of the jug, streaming down the body and into the earth. During this process, as it fills the body and flows out into the earth, it takes with it all of the bad thoughts, all the problems; in other words, all that dirt and unrest present in your mind. It is as if you are cleansing yourselves inside. And when you purify yourselves this way, you begin to feel a clear division of soul and thought: the soul located inside of you and the soul located above the jug which is observing the process. And finally, by practicing this meditation every day, you cleanse your thoughts of all the negative ones and further learn to control them, all the while keeping your mind in a ‘clean’ state... Any questions?”

“Why should the hands touch exactly this way?” I asked.

“Because during this meditation, certain energies circulate inside of the body. I will tell you more about them later. The tips of the fingers need to close the circuit. Furthermore, there is a stimulation of the skin nerve receptors located on the tips of fingers, which affects the brain in a positive and calming way... Are there any other questions?”

Everybody remained silent.

“Then let’s begin.”

Under Sensei’s guidance, we began to perform this meditation. I tried to imagine myself as a jug, but my imagination formed this image somehow

only half-way, because my mind just couldn't agree with this definition. I stopped trying to prove anything to myself and simply thought, "I am a jug," and concentrated on the 'internal source of water'. An interesting feeling appeared, as if my consciousness went inside of me, went into my soul, and concentrated in the form of a point in the area of the solar plexus. That point began to widen gradually while crystal clear water spiralled in it. Finally, there was so much water that it poured over, filling my entire body with its pleasant moisture. Filling the 'vessel' this way, this pleasant feeling 'flowed over the edge'. A wave of gentle goosebumps started to run over my body from top to bottom, as though going into the earth. I imagined that my body was being cleansed of all bad thoughts. And in one moment, I felt so nice inside, so cosy, and so joyful that I couldn't resist and slightly deviated from the meditation, thanking God for all that He gave me in life, for all His Love for His children. In the next moment, I suddenly discovered that my consciousness, in other words, my real "I", was seemingly above my body. But my body didn't look like a body at all. From its 'jug-like' head emanated thousands of thin, multi-coloured threads which went into the ground in a continuous movement. In the depth of the jug, something bright was shining, transforming these threads into more vivid colours. The beauty was simply spellbinding. But then I heard Sensei's melodious voice, reaching me from somewhere far away.

"And now take two deep, quick breaths in and out. Quickly clench and unclench your fists. Open your eyes."

I quickly came to my senses, though the state of this internal euphoria stayed somewhere in the depth of my "I". As it later turned out, each of the guys experienced this state differently. The senior guys did it better than I did, while for my friends it all transpired only at the level of bare imagination. Sensei told them that for many people, it often happens this way at first. However, if they practice persistently at home every day and have a desire to improve their moral qualities, then in time they would experience new feelings and learn to constantly control their thoughts. The most important thing is to believe in themselves, in their powers, and not to be lazy.

When we were leaving the glade, I snatched a moment and quietly asked the Teacher, "The guys told me that when I was absent, you gave them new meditations. I probably missed out on a lot. What should I do now?"

Sensei, glancing at me very kindly, replied, "**Believe me, the one who does good deeds with good intentions has no need to be sad about something missed, for he gets much more power for cognition of his soul than when being idle.**"

At that time, of course, I did not understand what Sensei meant by that, because everything that I did, I simply considered common everyday concerns. Nevertheless, these words sank into my soul, and the very same evening a corresponding record appeared in my diary.

The days flew by in a blink of an eye. I liked this new meditation so much that I performed it with pleasure before going to bed though, just like all the previous ones, in turn. One day, I asked Sensei whether it's harmful to do them one after another in one evening. He replied that, quite on the contrary, it was very useful because then a human works more on himself spiritually, while the 'Lotus Flower' awakens the soul as well. "It's better to perform them in the evening before going to bed and in the morning when you wake up. These are the simplest meditations to work on the concentration of attention, the awakening of internal sight, and control over thoughts. They are absolutely harmless; that's why everybody can learn them, even those who have never come across any spiritual practices. And at the same time, these meditations, being simple and clear, bring the most results."



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At the training, I tried to catch up with the guys, doing my best to study both the new and the old techniques. These days, everything interesting and educational was happening at the spiritual trainings. At one such training, Nikolai Andreevich began to argue with Sensei about reincarnation. It seemed to me that he wasn't really arguing but rather provoking the Teacher in order to start a conversation about it. I noticed that despite the fact that Nikolai Andreevich was a psychotherapist, zealous atheist, and the 'Common Sense of our group (as we jokingly nicknamed him), he didn't miss a single training and treated Sensei with delicate respect.

"Reincarnation is a fable invented by people, because most of them, I would say, have pathological thanatophobia. That's why they make up various tales about reincarnation, about life after death."

"Not at all," objected Sensei. "Concerning fear of death, it's begotten solely by the animal nature in a human being, by the instinct of self-preservation and the power of imagination, cultivated by egoistic negativism. Fear is just an emotion, triggered only where information is absent or where there is too little of it. The phenomenon of reincarnation really exists in nature. And you can't even imagine how long it has existed."

Recently, Sensei had begun to speak with Nikolai Andreevich in a familiar way, like a friend.

"No, if it were really so, we would remember something, some fragments or something else."

"And do you remember what happened this very day a year ago?" Sensei asked.

Nikolai Andreevich reflected and uncertainly said, "I was probably at work, if it wasn't Sunday."

“So then you can’t exactly remember this day?”

“No.”

“Right. So why do you speak about another time, whether you had a previous life? We already examined, in regard to your hypnosis, that there is mind, and there is an animal nature, and there is a soul. You are located in the soul, the true you, the real you. The mind is that part of you that perceives. And a particle of your “I” is there as well. It means that you are divided: in your soul, you feel yourself as one person, while you think completely differently. Take a moment and reflect on yourself, who you really are, how you think, how you speak, how you see. Not in the meaning of brain activity, verbal, nonverbal, excitation of acoustic fields: all that is rubbish. But the true you! Look inside of your consciousness. It is endless. Think about how boundless the cosmos is. And try to explain the fact that the Universe is reflected in every atom of your body...”

“Is the Universe really reflected in an atom?” Nikolai Andreevich was surprised.

“Of course. If you doubt this, check the appropriate literature on atomic structure and compare it with the organisation of the Universe. Even today, there is enough evidence to support realisation of this fact. Or take vacuum, for example. It’s empty, it looks like there is nothing in it, at first glance. But life is born in it. Out of what? Out of emptiness? Think about these global questions, think seriously... But most importantly find out: Who are you are? Then you’ll understand that the body is only a carriage which carries you from birth to death, first in one reincarnation, then in another. Where you arrive will depend on how you use this carriage. Either it will run by itself, or you will drive it.

“A human - that is, his soul - is just the coachman of this carriage. If your soul is asleep, the carriage will rumble in the same direction as others. The coachman will be riding in circles. But if the soul wakes up, he will ride in the right direction, the direction of spiritual development, in the one he himself chooses. But what’s most important is for a human to understand that he is the driver of this carriage. Having realised that, he will be able to simply stop riding in circles and go to Nirvana. In other words, He will become similar to gods.”

All the guys listened to Sensei carefully, while I, gathering enough courage, asked the Teacher my troubling question,

“Tell me, what is the purpose of the existence of the soul, in other words, of myself?”

“The purpose is simple: in the end, to come to God as a mature creation... A human is the synthesis of the spiritual and the animal nature.

This synthesis is necessary so that the soul can obtain a certain form; it has to go through matter, in other words, to mature. A human, like a butterfly, goes through the stages of development of his soul. Metaphorically speaking, at first, hatching from the 'egg', a human goes through the material stage of 'larva' or 'animal human' when he 'crawls' on Earth with mostly material interests, like a caterpillar. He doesn't see a soul in himself and considers himself to be one and the same with his matter, in other words, with his body.

"Then a certain time of realisation passes, either in the course of several reincarnations, from one to another, or during one life — it is different for everyone — when his soul matures in virtuous thoughts of spiritual Love. Gradually, human transforms into a 'cocoon', into the stage of 'human human,' when he clearly realises his true 'I' (soul) and 'cocoon' (body). Now the body is regarded just as matter for the ripening of his soul. Externally it may not be shown in any way, but internally, turbulent, global changes take place in him.

"And at last, when the soul finally ripens, the 'cocoon' bursts open and a glaringly beautiful, divine creature flies out of it — the 'butterfly' or soul, which is free in its flight. Joining other beautiful creatures, it takes part in the birth of new souls, the creation of new 'larvae' that will follow the same course. This actually is the stage of 'human — God.'

"That's why the whole purpose lies in the evolution from animal to divine, in order to become a fully-fledged particle of God. This is embedded in us primordially, deep inside. That's why we search for God; that's why we know about God..."

Smiling, Nikolai Andreevich said, "And if I am an atheist and deny God?"

"Nobody denies God really, whoever he is. Because everyone feels it in his soul. Everyone is scared in the darkness no matter how courageous he is. Everyone thinks about eternity, about death, about the meaning of his life and his existence. Many people just don't have enough information, turn on the protective functions of their mind and try to muffle these thoughts."

"Well, that's the way I am, I need real proof. If only I really could come across a case, at least a memory, of past reincarnation, I would believe in it, by personally verifying it for myself."

Sensei thought for a moment and answered, "Alright, I will grant you such an opportunity. After training, I will tell you about one interesting technique of altering the state of consciousness, which will let you awaken a human soul and evoke a conversation with it. But I'm warning you, nobody else should know about this technique, because society is still in the stage

of ‘animal human’. People will receive this knowledge in due time, when the majority of them transgress to the stage ‘human human’... With any of your patients, you can do everything exactly as I tell you. But, jumping ahead, I’m warning you right now that in reincarnations, the notion of time as such is absent. In other words, one man, for example, lived two hundred years ago, and was reborn only now. Another died a year ago and was born in a minute, and a third one maybe lived in the distant, distant future, and was born in our time, and so forth... In other words, there are certain laws there, so don’t be surprised too much. Agreed?”

“Of course!” Nikolai Andreevich uttered with admiration.

Stas, who had kept silent before, asked thoughtfully, “Concerning reincarnation, do people in Shambala also undergo it, or do they exist eternally?”

“If you mean the life of the Bodhisattvas inside of Shambala, they exist under completely different laws. And they don’t have such bodily, rough matter like people. It is a completely different side of reality in Shambala. Well, for you to understand it better, their bodies are subtle matter, which exists under its own laws in time and space. And if in the human world, the mind serves the body, at home... I mean, in Shambala,” the Teacher quickly corrected himself, “the body serves the mind. Why can’t Shambala be found? Because it exists at a completely different frequency level of perception.”

“So, a human cannot get there in his body?” Andrey asked with surprise.

“Why? He can, if he knows and is able to transform his body to that frequency of the perception of reality.”

“It sounds like a fantasy,” Kostya sniffed under his breath.

“For today’s human perception, maybe. But it’s a fact... If people believe that this is science fiction, let them... But a human cannot make up anything on his own because all this knowledge was, is, and will exist regardless of his desires. His capabilities of cognition are limited only by his egocentrism. Generally speaking, **science fiction in its essence is just an unrealised reality.**”

“So then how do these higher beings come into this world? You said that they, if needed, can get into contact with people on their own.”

“As usual, through reincarnation. **Their soul enters the body of an infant on the eighth day, in other words, just like all people are born.**”

“I wonder,” remarked Nikolai Andreevich, “What made you think that the soul enters a human on the eighth day of life? In the Christian religion, for example, it is believed that the soul enters him while still in his mother’s womb.”

“That’s a mistaken belief. Evidently, someone understood something incorrectly and another one incorrectly translated it. A third one added his own thoughts coming from his logic; in this way, the real knowledge was lost. Everything is as usual... **In reality, the soul enters the human body on the eighth day. It can even be documented in real life. A soul, even though it is an energy substance, but still, when entering a body, acquires a quality of subtle matter. That’s why the weight of a newborn baby increases sharply on the eighth day from three to twenty grams, and sometimes, in exceptional cases, up to fifty grams. This can be documented if one measures the weight of a newborn starting on the seventh day, taking into account what he ingests and expels. In other words, on the eighth day, there is a sharp increase in the weight of a newborn baby. Moreover, exactly on the eighth day, the gaze of a child becomes ‘alive’, luminous. It is impossible not to notice that.**”

“How do Bodhisattvas differ then from ordinary people?” Kostya asked with interest.

“They don’t. They are consciously reborn into ‘matter’ of the human in order to experience all the severities, hardships, and also the temptations of the world. And in the course of their human lives they make the necessary contribution. Sometimes they ‘come’ to Earth with a certain goal, to implement a decision made in Shambala, but most often as observers. Bodhisattvas live as common people, quietly and modestly performing their work, though inside, this Human is quite aware that he is a Bodhisattva. But he will never shout about it or drum his chest. As a rule, no one around knows about it. This could be anybody: your close friend, your acquaintance, relative, and so forth.”

“Why do they come as observers?” asked Victor.

“Yes, why?” I thought. “Our world will probably seem like a dirty and egoistic place to these higher beings.”

“Well, they have this rule or, to be more precise, a responsibility. Each of the Bodhisattvas of Shambala, at least once in a thousand years, must come into this world by means of incarnation. What for? In order to live a human life, to see how and what mankind thinks about, at what level people should be given knowledge. In other words, to know the human nature because in Shambala the animal nature is absent in individuals. In Shambala, there is a completely different reality. So, for a Bodhisattva who lives there, to understand what is going on here, he is thrown out into this world so that he doesn’t forget, so to speak, doesn’t relax too much. Even Rigden Djappo cannot avoid this rule, this fate. However, he comes, as a rule, to this world before the beginning of

global changes in the course of human civilisation, approximately once every ten or twelve thousand years, not as a Messiah, but as a Judge. He checks the work of his staff of predecessors, assessing the level of human perception, the degree of their spirituality or absorption by matter. Depending on that, Shambala then returns a verdict, to be or not to be for this mankind."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, if mankind in its majority is evaluated as a spiritually progressing society, then it is preserved. While if more of the beast, in other words, the material nature, predominates in it, then the same story of 'global cataclysms' that affected some of the previous civilisations is repeated. Less than one-tenth of the total population are left for the 'breeding' of matter for the souls of the next civilisation... **Mankind chooses the path for itself, while the actions of Shambala are just the consequences of that choice.**"

"As I understood it," Victor joined the conversation, "their main mission is the spiritual development of humankind."

"You are almost right," answered Sensei. "Their main mission from up above, in other words, from the Cosmic Hierarchy or God, call it as you wish, is cultivation of the human soul during all cycles of its reincarnation. They actively help develop it only when the spiritual nature awakens in a human."

"I bet this egoistic world seems horrible from the point of view of their spirituality," I spoke my thoughts aloud.

Sensei grinned and continued, "Well, it's not quite a gift. This reincarnation is similar to if a butterfly were stuffed into a caterpillar — both uncomfortable for the butterfly and inconvenient for the caterpillar. But these are the rules. Each Bodhisattva should serve his time here, live an entire life. Any Bodhisattva is free to go to Nirvana any minute, though; it is a big temptation for them."

"You once said that a Bodhisattva is a human who left Nirvana for the sake of humankind."

"Certainly. That's why this is a double temptation for him, because he has felt this state of peak of unearthly happiness... You simply can't imagine, what kind of a... feat it is to leave Nirvana and to come here. Metaphorically speaking, Bodhisattvas can be compared with those who are the best of the best volunteers that have been sent to do the most crucial work. **Bodhisattvas stay here for the sake of people, for the sake of the cultivation of human souls so that these souls can develop and become Free, truly Free. Because our inner essence, our soul, strives for this every single moment of life.**"

Sensei glanced at his watch and said, “Alright guys, it’s time to start a meditation. Otherwise, we could continue debating till morning.”

I looked at my watch too. Time flew by in this conversation as if it were just one second. There was a strange feeling too, as if time were completely absent, as if it were a moment of eternity, slightly opening the curtain of its mysteries.

We performed the same meditation as last time, aimed at ‘cleansing our intentions’. I already started to feel the ‘water’ more clearly, streaming over the edge of the jug with some kind of wavy movement. After the training, the Teacher reminded us to continuously learn to control our thoughts and ‘fish out’ negative ‘parasites’ of consciousness. He also emphasised that we shouldn’t give in to our aggression, if it appears. And the most important thing, we should constantly cultivate divine Love in ourselves by performing the ‘Lotus Flower’. Nikolai Andreevich remained in the glade while we said good-bye and went home.



31

I was so amazed by the knowledge that Sensei was relaying to us so simply and clearly that I wrote down the whole conversation in my diary, highlighting the most important moments: **“It appears that the purpose of human existence is the perfection of the soul!!!”** I felt this but wasn’t sure. Now, once again I had the feeling that everything I knew up until now and considered valuable and important in life was changing. I looked around and thought: “We really live life entirely for the body. Even in my room, in our apartment, whatever you look at, everything exists for the service and satisfaction of the needs of the body. Books are probably the only exception. Of course, Sensei had once said that all these attributes of civilisation are necessary for us to have more time for the perfection of our souls. But how much of all this unnecessary stuff is completely redundant! And it still isn’t enough for us. We still want more. What for? Why? After all, tomorrow we could die, and There they will value what we have cultivated inside of ourselves and not how much dust we’ve gathered by the tireless work of our shell, half rotten in the earth.”

All those days, I was re-evaluating everything, even at school. The girls, as usual, showed off whatever fashionable rags were bought for them and, with obvious envy, spoke about what they saw on others. Listening to them, I was surprised with myself, because before I had been exactly the same. I had been chasing some kind of short-lived fashion that didn’t completely suit me. But my megalomania would blow up when at that time I would get an opportunity to “stand out from the crowd”. In reality, though, only the things that suit a person are always in fashion... Once “fashionable” clothes, after a ‘one-time show’, are now hanging like dead weight in my closet. Why does one human need so much stuff? What do I need it for? Maybe

somewhere, people don't have anything to wear. And why somewhere? In my own class, for example, there are three girls from poor families. Two of them didn't have fathers because they died in the mines. And the third one's father was a drunkard, which is even worse. Why can't I share all this stuff with them? They need it more than me.

I asked for my mother's advice, although I lied to her a bit, telling her that our school had organised a charitable action. And my mother wasn't against it. We even found shoes for the girls. I gathered all this and then had to solve another problem: how do I give it to them? Putting myself in their place, I considered that the best option would be to ask my class teacher to pass the clothes to them as if from some charitable organisation. I suppose that she liked this idea, because a week later the whole school, under the initiative of our teacher, announced a charitable action to benefit children from the city orphanage. Hearing this news, I once again recalled Sensei's words that one **kind thought and one kind deed give birth to a chain reaction of kind thoughts and kind deeds**. I thought that if everyone could understand this and did whatever good deeds he could, then perhaps poverty and hunger would disappear in the world. Otherwise, it's somehow shameful to be called civilised when somebody nearby is starving or extremely needy.

At such thoughts of universal Love, brotherhood, and mutual aid, my body was seized by some kind of an excited tingle. A feeling of light, pleasant pressure began spreading in the area of my solar plexus. Reaching a certain size, it started to emanate waves, which brought consciousness to an even bigger excitement, increasing the feeling of boundless Love towards the whole world.



32

At the next additional training, we were learning the new kata with interest and diligence. The “speedy guys” never ceased to impress us with their mastery. With captivating beauty and thunder-like speed, they sparred with each other. Andrey, observing their movements, complained to the Teacher, “How do they move so quickly? It seems like we do the same kata, but no matter how hard I try, I still fall behind. They move practically twice as fast as I. Why?”

“It has to do with balance. That is the trick,” answered Sensei.

“But I keep balance as I was taught earlier during my first steps in karate. In my opinion, I follow all the rules; the centre of gravity is distributed as it should be. But I can’t do it like them.”

“Because you move the centre of gravity while they follow the centre of gravity.”

“How is that?” Andrey was surprised.

“Well. In ‘Hara,’ or as it’s also known, the point of ‘Dan Tien’, which is located three fingers below the navel, is the centre of gravity. Remember, one time I told you about this. Everybody teaches to hold it correctly, to step, to move, and so forth. You were told that, for example, a standing man doesn’t fall down until his plumb line from the centre of gravity is located inside a platform confined by the edges of his feet; that walking is a series of falls forward, prevented by timely moving of the supporting leg; that running is a series of jumps from one leg to another with a corresponding shift of weight of the body and the centre of gravity. Right? Right... In other words, everyone is teaching the general rules of moving the centre of gravity. **But that is why they lose in speed. Because in order to increase speed and to teach the**

body to move, one needs to learn, first of all, to move the centre of gravity.”

“Can I learn it or am I hopeless?” Andrey asked with a smile.

“Only fools and lazy people are hopeless,” Sensei replied as ironically. “Otherwise, everybody can learn it. There is an elementary technique to shifting your centre of gravity. In other words, it’s almost the same as dynamic meditation. At first, you learn the breathing technique. In any arbitrary movements, when you move your hands away, you inhale. When your hands come towards you, exhale; step forward, inhale; step back, exhale. You exhale into the bottom of the belly, into the ‘Hara’, which is similar to how we exhaled through our hands in meditation. In other words, during the exhale, concentrate your attention and completely focus on this point of the belly, as if slightly straining it exactly in the area of ‘Hara.’ In the end, you begin to control your derived breathing in this way. And the most important thing is to feel this place, to feel your centre of gravity in particular.”

“What kind of movements does one need to perform? Is there any sequence?”

“Any, whatever you want, it doesn’t matter. If you want, warm up or practice kata, or simply walk in circles, or make bows, it doesn’t matter. The important work is done by your thought and concentration. This is the first phase: to find your exact centre of gravity and to feel it during movement.

“The second phase is aimed at increasing the point of gravity concentrated in the ‘Hara’. In other words, you mentally send Tsi to it. And this point, due to the concentration of energy of air, grows and becomes round and dense. And now it turns into a small ball, in the shape of whatever you like to imagine. The important thing is that you almost feel it physically, as if something is there, for example, a big, round ball from a bearing or something similar.

“And the third phase is the most important. With the power of your will, you move this centre of gravity, and everything follows it. Wherever you are and whatever you do, you constantly perform this dynamic meditation.”

“Just like the Lotus Flower?” Andrey asked.

“Absolutely right. Just like that. By the way, one doesn’t interfere with the other. No matter how you move, wherever you go, first, you should move not the body, but your centre of gravity with your mind. Later, the body should learn to keep up with it. That is all. Everything is simple.”

Andrey reflected and started to try moving while working on his breathing.

“Look here,” Sensei drew his attention, “how you usually move. You first bring forward the shoulder, the leg, the head, and so forth. In other words, to start with, you bring forward a body part and then the centre of gravity. And now look at the guys. See, they start all movements exactly from the point of ‘Hara’, the bottom of the belly goes forward first, while later, the body follows it, no matter how they move around, quickly or slowly.”

“Aha, now it’s clear,” Kostya caught on, also carefully listening to the Teacher with us. “We couldn’t understand why you and the guys look different all the time when you’re walking. Turns out, it’s your unusual walk.”

Sensei shrugged his shoulders and said with a smile, “It’s a habit.”

Our first attempts ended with loud laughter because everyone tried to learn everything at once. But all that we were able to do was to walk like penguins. That’s why Sensei remarked, “Guys, I told you, you first need to learn to breathe, to feel your centre of gravity, and only then to move it.”

“But how do they accelerate their movements?” asked Andrey, nodding towards the speedy guys. “Do we need to do something special?”

“Actually, no. You can accelerate just with the exhale, in other words, with the power of your thought pushing forward the centre of gravity. You move your hand just by thinking about it. It is the same: you should freely move your centre of gravity by mentally sending it an order. And when you learn to move your centre of gravity at the speed of thought, you will be able to move as quickly as your physical condition will permit. You’ll only need to have time for your body to catch up with your centre of gravity.”

“Great!” pronounced Andrey. “Any sprinting competition can be won in this way.”

“That’s for sure. If this technique were known to athletes, they would win all the ‘gold’ at world championships,” Sensei answered half in jest.

“Don’t any of them know about this?”

“Unfortunately not.”

“I have never heard about this and never even read about this also,” Kostya confessed honestly, to our surprise. “But why?”

“Well, this very ancient technique for the development of human abilities is the secret knowledge of superiors of ancient monasteries. They don’t even tell their disciples about it and save it for their own use as a personal, secret technique. Though, in reality, there is nothing special about it. It’s not even an Art. It’s an ordinary technique easily learned by anybody, though possibly more effective than the rest.”

The entire way home, our group walked with our chests out with pride. And no wonder, for us to learn the secrets known only to masters of ancient monasteries was beyond even our wildest dreams. I was amazed

once again by Sensei's knowledge of ancient techniques. When guessing who "He" is, I wrote down in my diary that Sensei was probably a talented orientalist scholar, or he knew those regions very well, or he grew up there. Otherwise, how did he get this knowledge? One mystery gave rise to yet another mystery. Sensei undoubtedly knew a lot, starting with philosophy and ending with exact sciences. And all that was based on a foundation of some kind of unknown science of fundamental knowledge about human beings, starting with the micro-universe in the endlessly dividing atom and ending with the invisible, but very much perceptible by me, soul, or rather with the mystery of its creation. "Who is He?!" I asked myself once again.



33

The next day, I received quite unpleasant news. My mother fell ill again with a sharp, horrible pain in her back. She had been really nervous of late because she, as a specialist, had been simply overloaded with work. Moreover, she had to finish the work that had piled up during her absence and they had regular inspections at her workplace. In general, due to sitting for a long time, her back and nerves couldn't endure such an overload. That day she got up from bed with great difficulty, with horrible, unbearable pain in the small of her back.

This was, of course, a shock for my dad and me. We were terribly worried. Each of us tried to help her in our own way. My father started to call all our acquaintances to consult about other methods of treatment because my mother emphatically didn't want to undergo surgery. Most likely, she was scared not by the surgery itself, but by the consequences that she had seen and heard from many people while in the neurology ward. My mother didn't at all like the prospect of becoming disabled for her entire life. But at one point the pain became so strong that she agreed to do anything.

Meanwhile, my father was already calling his immediate superior, the general, to obtain leave for the following day. My father had said that this general was a good man. With fatherly concern, he took care of and worried about all his subordinates and always helped them and their families as much as he could. This time, he didn't betray his principles and didn't ditch his second in command. The general, after listening to my father, advised him to visit a good chiropractor, giving him the corresponding address. He also asked my father to calm my mother down because he had a similar story from when he pulled a muscle in his leg. After receiving treatment

from this chiropractor two years ago, he was running around and, so far, everything was fine.

After the call, my mum and dad unanimously decided to drive there the next day. Honestly speaking, I was doubtful. In my mind, I simply couldn't grasp how my mother could be treated with bare hands alone if injections and pills didn't help her. I decided to "treat" my mother in my own way, as Sensei had described. He told us that any man can make a "matrix of health" with the power of his deep, internal Love, if he believes in it very much.

Before going to bed, after all my meditations, I concentrated on an image of health for my mother. I imagined her completely healthy, happy, cheerful, with her beautiful, sweet smile and kind eyes. I silently asked forgiveness from God for all my sins, if I had such in His opinion. I sincerely asked Him to help her, because I love my mother very much. I was begging so strongly that I teared up. I wanted so much for mother to recover quickly that after this peculiar meditation, I ran to my parents' room to see if maybe something had already changed.

My father was working on some papers at his writing table while my mother was already sleeping. Her face was frowning slightly. Her back was probably hurting her even in her dreams. I returned to my room and thought, "Maybe my power alone is not enough. Of course, I will continue doing this technique to create a 'matrix of health', but it would be great if Sensei would join in. Then success would be guaranteed for sure. He has such spiritual power, such solid internal faith, and such knowledge that he can probably do anything, if he was able to save me from death just with his power of thought. I will need to speak with him at the next training. He is kind; he will help." With these good thoughts, I fell asleep.

The next day I went to the chiropractor with my mother. The general caringly provided us with his black Volga⁵ car and personal driver, who knew the area and the roads well. On the way, I imagined how this decrepit (in my imagination) old man, the chiropractor, having examined my mother, would tell her that everything is well with her, that this is a mistake, and she is healthy. Meanwhile I noticed that the driver turned towards the district where we went for spiritual meditations. "Familiar places," I grinned to myself. "It's strange that such a remote district is so famous for its people." And again, I concentrated on a desirable result.

We arrived at a private residence. I noticed the house where the chiropractor evidently lived from afar. Or rather, I did not notice the house

5. Volga — is an automobile brand that originated in the Soviet Union to replace the venerated GAZ Pobeda in 1956. *Translator's remark.*

itself, but rather a huge crowd of people who stood near a small but tidy dwelling. There were a lot of people there. The driver could barely park his car among the many cars there, his professional attention drawn to the fact that there were license plates not only from different regions, but even from different republics. I was somewhat surprised that this god-forsaken place was so famous.

People stood in line as if forming a solid wall. It didn't even help that we arrived in a black Volga. No matter how we tried to break through the crowd, we weren't able to. We had to stand in line like everybody else. My mother, meanwhile, was reclined in the car. Our number was four hundred and seventy-three. But when people found out that my mother had a sharp pain, we were told that the chiropractor takes those in pain immediately, and that we had to stand in a different line, which was ahead. We hurried to join the others in the new queue of around fifty people. My mother was even given a place on the bench by those who could at least stand on their legs. And we waited.

I was very surprised by the number of people and even got a little flustered. The people in line were of different ages, from seniors to young people with children. Ahead, there stood a woman with a tiny baby. They said he was only five days old and already had plexitis. He couldn't raise his hand due to some kind of labour pathology. In general, the public that gathered here had various diseases of the spinal cord that I'd never even heard of before.

The elderly woman sitting next to my mother said that the chiropractor takes twenty women, twenty men, and then, ten out of turn people. She said that the queue wasn't actually that long. According to her estimate, we would be seen in only two hours. I thought that means I had time to concentrate on healing meditation for my mother. For around ten minutes, I tried to do it. It was not easy to concentrate because the crowd was quietly buzzing in constant conversation, creating unobtrusive 'noise interference'. Unwittingly, I began listening to the conversations.

"We had such misfortune, and so much grief," lamented an old woman standing next to a girl who was about fifteen years old. "It is horrible even to recall. There is nothing worse in the world than to have a sick child. My grandchild had a horrible kyphoscoliosis, a real hump. The doctors prophesied that she would be disabled for her entire life. The girl came back from school in tears every day. Though she had a beautiful face, her classmates teased her, calling her a freak. And we went everywhere, took her to every doctor, we even took her to psychics, but it was all in vain. We were in despair. One time we just barely managed, God helped us, to pull

the girl out of a noose, one might say. She was in tears, what does she need such life for, if nobody would ever fall in love with her. She was crying, we were crying, such grief, impossible to describe in words...

The woman's voice trembled and she furtively wiped away a tear.

"Don't cry, grandma," pleaded her granddaughter. "It is all behind us now."

"Yes... So, I went that day to church, prayed to God. And the next morning, we received a fresh newspaper and there was an article about our chiropractor. Of course, at first, we doubted whether we should go and entrust our child to just another doctor, because she had already been examined by many specialists. But... given these last events... At the end, we decided that if God is giving us another chance, we shouldn't refuse, because it can't get any worse..."

"We were concerned when we arrived at the reception. But people in line spoke well of him. And when we entered and I saw his eyes, all doubts dissolved for some reason. He has such luminous, blue eyes, such a kind and peaceful gaze that a light shone in my heart..."

"Yes," said another woman. "His eyes are really unusual, so unfathomable. As if they know everything, as if he feels your pain."

"I have never seen such peaceful, smart eyes in my life either," pronounced a young woman standing next to her.

The women nodded their heads, agreeing.

"And what a pleasant, melodic voice he has, a calming manner of speaking. He speaks so politely with everybody..."

"After speaking with him, my mood always gets better. It makes me want to live even after all the pain I've endured."

"I have such a feeling too."

"That's what it means to be a good man."

Listening to these words, my heart missed a beat. I halted all my fruitless attempts to concentrate and began listening to the conversation more attentively.

"That's what I'm saying," pronounced the old woman. "Something in him was quite unusual, encouraging. He examined the girl and said that he will fix her back, but we will have to come here regularly and follow all his recommendations at home. You can't imagine how his inspiring words affected the girl. We attended the treatment for a long time, almost a year, even though we live in another region. Sometimes there was bad weather and it was hard to come, but Anna always insisted on the trip. She became so purposeful that we just rejoiced and crossed ourselves. Every day at home she diligently performed the entire routine of therapeutic gymnastics

recommended by the chiropractor. And in a year, there wasn't a trace left of her hump! You can't imagine how happy we were. Anna blossomed; so many potential fiancés appeared right away; they are chasing after her in droves... Now we have come for a check-up. Oh! We pray to God to give him great health. His golden hands simply performed a miracle!"

"Yes, his hands are definitely golden," confirmed another woman around forty years old. "He is a professional in the full sense of the word. Rarely can you find such a specialist who possesses a talent from God and such fine knowledge of medicine... I, for example, suffered from headaches for ten years. I passed through a lot of hospitals with no result: sleepless nights and even loss of consciousness because of the headaches. And two years ago, I'm even afraid to recall those days, I stopped walking. You wouldn't wish this experience on your enemy, this state of confusion and helplessness, and such a strong pain in the small of the back and legs. Again sleepless nights, injections, with no result. There were even horrible minutes of despair from pain and suffering, even though by nature I am a courageous woman and I was always a leader. Unexpectedly, my entire life stopped, everything froze, I felt only pain and suffering.

"The doctors of course, insisted on surgery and were trying to convince me that nothing but surgical intervention would help. But they couldn't guarantee full recovery. In a word: disability for life. Then my mother came over and was telling me about our chiropractor, persuading me to go and visit him. I consulted with my doctors, but they just laughed in my face and said that nobody in the world, even among prominent doctors, has ever cured a herniated disk, especially on the neck, in a nonsurgical way. They said, go if you want, but you are going to come back to us. However, my mother insisted.

"When I was brought here, I didn't have hope after such a doctors' verdict. However, surprisingly, after the first seven visits, one toe started to move and the pain was relieved a little. That's when I really began to believe in recovery, though even on the very first day the chiropractor said, 'It will be hard and long, but we will fix it.' With each day I started to notice small but steady changes for the better. Slowly, I began moving without assistance and dressing myself. And, in half a year I returned to normal life, and now I'm finishing up treatment. I can't believe that my horror is over and everything turned out so well. To cure such a serious and terrible disease without surgery is really a miracle!

"When I returned to normal life, I came back to my town and went to show the result to my doctors, who hadn't believed it was possible. They

only shrugged their shoulders. Can you imagine, none of them even asked how I achieved such results even though all of them yelled as a chorus that it would be impossible. The knowledge is there, just instil it. It could help so many people! But no, their pride won't allow it... I will be grateful to Igor Mikhailovich to the end of my days for everything that he did with his golden hands! And all the people he put back on their feet. I saw a lot while I've been here. People really come here with their last hope for recovery. Even those doctors and professors bring their children and grandchildren here."

I flinched at the mention of the chiropractor's name. "Is it really... No way, it can't be!" I thought, puzzled. Everything inside of me strained and turned into a listening ear. Then the line buzzed in a new wave.

"Yes, he is a man with a big soul!" said another woman. "People say that his great-grandfather was also a famous chiropractor in Orlovschina. They say that he was a man with a gift from God and diagnosed disease unerringly."

"Our doctor is also very keen, it's as if he has X-ray vision. I had a dislocation of the disk and he said right away, 'six millimetres'. And later I had films taken, and sure enough, everything checked out."

"It is because his hands are especially sensitive. I read in the newspaper that he can find a child's hair, akin to a human nerve, hidden under forty pages of paper. Journalists conducted this experiment. 'This is the same' he said, 'as finding the exact place of the strangulated nerve and releasing it by hand manipulations.'"

"Thank God there is such a man. I'm thankful that He led us to him," the old woman, who was talking about her granddaughter Anna, crossed herself.

"You know, last year I had degenerative disc disease that he treated," an old woman with white-grey hair said. "This year, I lifted a heavy weight and again loused up my back. It was so painful that I could not sleep for two nights... I had a gnawing pain and either fainted because of it or completely ran out of strength, but I passed out that evening. And our chiropractor came to me in a dream, patted me on the head, and said, 'Don't be afraid; now you'll feel better and tomorrow come to me. Everything will be all right.' So, can you imagine, I got up in the morning completely different, even the pain let go a bit. Now, this is my third session, and I feel completely revived. Before, I couldn't keep still... But what's strange is that in the dream he had hair down to his shoulders like an angel, and his eyes were so kind..."

"Yes, he has unusual hair, such a blond colour is very rare."

"What would we do without him? Really, God has sent us an angel."

After these words, the very decrepit old woman who, up to this moment, had been dozing on the edge of a bench, unexpectedly squeaked, "Not an angel, but an archangel."

She again submerged into her slumber. This surprised the whole crowd.

Finally a miner, judging by the black rim around his eyes, said, "I don't know what kind of angel or archangel he is, but he is a great man! He put me back on my feet, though I don't believe in God."

"I also didn't believe," remarked a tough old man. "Thirty years I had the Communist Party membership card, and now look..." He pulled out a cross on a string and showed it to the crowd. "I have this cross. All this happened after one incident. I will never forget it... That memorable day I had to go to work. And the night before I had seen our Igor Mikhailovich in my dream who said, 'Tomorrow come to visit me, don't go to work. If you go, you won't come back.' Well, before that, I was receiving treatment from him, but just then I had a break in my treatment. I woke up in the morning and my back was hurting. Well, I thought, it probably ached at night; that's why I dreamt of him. I got ready to go to work, and then I thought, why should I go? I will need to do heavy lifting. How can I do it? My back will collapse. Well, I decided to go to the chiropractor and obtained a leave from work. Can you imagine, that day there was an explosion in the chamber and almost my entire brigade perished. If I had been there, because I stand right next to the blast furnace hearth, I wouldn't be here now. So, how can all this be understood by a common mortal? I wanted to talk about this with Igor Mikhailovich, but he put his finger to his lips, hinting for me to keep silent. And that's all... How can one not start believing in God after that?"

"Oh, you know, a similar incident happened to our neighbour," said a woman, around thirty years old, who had joined the conversation. "By the way, he is the one who gave me the chiropractor's address. He was receiving treatment from him at one time. And last year, our neighbour got into trouble. Remember that explosion at the mine? He was buried under the support. As he told me, 'I was lying alone in the darkness, buried by rock. I was terribly afraid of being buried alive. I had already bid farewell to life, to all my relatives. Suddenly I saw before my eyes, as if from the fog, the figure of our chiropractor, who said so calmly with his melodious voice, "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid. It's too early for you to die. I will stay with you until you are saved..." And when he regained consciousness, he said he was already being pulled up by rescuers. He alone survived out of the entire crew. After that incident, the man completely changed. He stopped drinking, started to believe in God. His wife and kids can't stop rejoicing. He became a really great guy!"

Meanwhile, the line ahead began to move. And out of it, in front of a parted crowd, in a white smock, came out... I was so surprised that my bag almost slipped out of my hands.

“Sensei,” I whispered quietly, but in the next instant yelled at top of my voice, “Sens...oops, Igor Mikhailovich!!!”

Sensei turned around and, upon seeing me, gave a sign to come over. I barely squeezed through the crowd. My heart was beating fast in my chest. After greeting me, he asked,

“Why are you here? Did something happen?”

“Well, my mother has problems with her back...”

We moved off to a corner, where Igor Mikhailovich lit a cigarette.

“My father’s general gave us this address,” I gave away all the ‘state secrets’ in a single breath. “He even gave us his Volga.”

Sensei glanced in the direction of the cars.

“Ah, Alexander Vasilievich. How’s he doing?”

“Well, as he told my dad, he has had no problems with motion for two years.”

“Good. And what happened to your mother?”

I began telling everything in detail, actively gesticulating with my hands from excitement. Having listened to me, Sensei pronounced, “Alright, get your mum and follow me.”

Overjoyed, I ran to my mum and said that Igor Mikhailovich will take us out of turn. My mother was happy, of course, but she was very surprised. She got up with difficulty, and we followed the returning chiropractor.

“This is my Sensei, Igor Mikhailovich,” I introduced him to my mother with indescribable pride.

We walked into the depth of the house, filled with waiting people. In the waiting room stood a trestle-bed, and in the corner, there was a small icon with a lit lamp. I helped mother undress to the waist and lie down on the trestle-bed. Walking out of the room, I saw Igor Mikhailovich bend over mother’s back, palpating her vertebrae with his hands. Already behind the curtain in the neighbouring room, I heard Sensei’s voice, “Yes, you know, you have a serious problem here, a dorsolateral prolapse up to seven millimetres in segment L4-L5 that’s causing stenosis of the intervertebral foramen. As a consequence, it leads to a compression of the cerebro-spinal root.”

“Can you explain it more simply?”

“To put it simply, it’s a disk herniation. As a result of the destruction of the disk, sequestrum, in other words, small pieces of this disk, dropped into the spinal canal towards the spinal foramen and are pushing on the cerebro-spinal root. That’s what caused these pains... This, of course, is a serious problem, but curable.”

Behind the thick curtain, I heard a light crackling of vertebrae and a few unusually sounding claps. In a few minutes, Sensei called me so that

I could help my mother get dressed. Having agreed on the next visit, we bid farewell and slowly walked towards the car.

“How are you doing?” I asked my mother.

“It’s bearable,” she replied.

When we were driving home, the entire way I couldn’t calm down, thinking about Sensei. I guessed him to be everything: physicist, chemist, philosopher, historian, orientalist scholar, physiologist. But an ordinary chiropractor — that was too much! Well, even if not ordinary, but quite famous... And still, with his inconceivable potential of knowledge, with his phenomenal abilities and, in the end, with such unusually pure human morals, he could become a prominent scientist, politician, or whoever, moving up the ranks of society with his level of knowledge. But what is he spending his potential on?! If it weren’t for how he helped my mother, my mind would have kept rebelling longer.

Driving out of this god-forsaken place by back roads, we drove past a shabby, tumbledown church, evidently built before the revolution. My thoughts switched to thinking about the eternal, about God, about faith, about the Great ones. And suddenly a thought flashed across my mind, “Sensei really helps people! With his hands he cures thousands of bodies tormented by pain, thousands of souls seized by sorrow, restoring people’s health, faith, and joy of life... God, that’s how all the Greatest people acted! Each of them went to people with an open soul and performed good deeds. Sensei mentioned once about... Can it be that he...? Wow!”

I feverishly began remembering all the moments, supporting my guesses. After returning home, I re-read everything in my diary concerning Sensei’s personality. Yes, the fact that he is a chiropractor supplemented the main missing link in my logical chain in proving it to my own mind. “It is most important that he cures the bodies and souls of different people. Consequently, speaking with such a huge number of people, each of them with his concrete destiny, problem, and pain, he knows the intentions of the common people much better than any politician, their attitude towards life, as well as their spiritual level of development. It’s not possible to imagine any better profession for the earthly life of a Bodhisattva.” These discoveries caused a wave of goose bumps while my solar plexus began tickling with its spiral waves.

As soon as my agitated thoughts began to calm down, my “common sense” hurried to take up the vacant space. On the other hand, I thought, “Why did I exalt him so much? Maybe all this is just my imagination. I got tired, worried too much, had heard the different conversations in line, and have made hasty, fantastic conclusions. Alright, he helps people, he has a talent and abilities for this, so what? He is simply a good professional

as that woman from the queue said. That is all. By appearance, he is a common man with a common face that looks like all other human faces. His appearance does not differ from others. He is like everybody else...”

And here I noticed that the deeper I developed my “common sense” theory, the more something bad appeared in me, some kind of anger or something, some kind of dark envy that Sensei possessed such talent and abilities and I didn’t. And here, my thoughts became so dark that I even got scared of myself, “Stop, stop, stop! Who is that creating a storm in a teacup? Comrades, it isn’t me! Can the soul really think so badly? No. It is kindness itself. Where did all this filth come from? It is not my opinion. Some kind of fixed ideas, thoughts which impudently keep coming back again and again, and they awaken anger and hate in me... These are the instincts of the animal nature!” And here I got completely angry with myself and thought, “I am fed up with them! How long can I keep being a dumb, stubborn beast?! I’ve had enough, simply had enough. If I continue like this, my whole life will pass in evil intentions and vanity...”

Then I was visited by another thought, “Maybe it is because of our blown-up egocentrism that we don’t notice what wonderful chances Destiny grants us. And for the soul, wandering through the centuries in darkness, maybe, such a Chance occurs only once in a thousand years. Who knows what we don’t see because of our envy and anger. God, why are we so blind? Why do we start really valuing something only when we lose it? Why do we praise the Great ones only after their death?”

Christ was crucified because of somebody’s blown-up megalomania and our herd-like egocentrism. And what a Great Man He was, how many more good deeds He could’ve done for human souls. If He were alive and people opened up their hearts at least a little, maybe human civilisation would’ve made such a jump in its evolution that we, their descendants, would already live in a real, united, free society, without borders and government, without violence and terror, in a world of harmony. But no, even during the life of Jesus, few people really valued Him. And the majority were, probably, envious of Him, gloated and upbraided Him with their animal vanity, with rottenness, with hate and indifference. But after His death everybody started to believe in him right away!

Just take our contemporaries, the prominent individuals. When are they all being acknowledged? As a general rule, after death. It is only after their deaths that people speak well about them, even those who, during their life, did many mean things. However, these people are probably glad in their private thoughts that their rival has died. That’s the despicable animal nature.

When will we finally wake up, when will we be thinking with our souls and not our bodies? Because then the whole world will change and will become completely different! I just want to yell this to the entire world. But what for?! I shouldn't yell but instead should do something and change myself and not permit these parasites of the consciousness to even get close to my mind. Yes, if only this could be understood by the majority of people then, maybe, we could all learn together to value and respect those geniuses who are so rarely sent by nature to the world! As one great classical scholar had said, "Mother Nature, if you didn't send such people to the world, the field of life would've died."



34

The next day, during our ride to the spiritual training, I told the guys my great news the entire way... that our Sensei is a famous chiropractor. I told them what I had heard and seen while visiting him. For them it was also a big surprise. In our secret glade, almost everybody had already gathered. Sensei, greeting us, politely asked me how my mother was doing.

"Thank you, a little better. She has strong pains still, of course. But at least she slept peacefully last night."

"This is good. That's all right, gradually we will restore her health."

I didn't have a slight doubt about this. For the most part, I was very happy that everything turned out exactly this way. I could not wish a better doctor for my beloved mother. Now my soul was easy.

"And you know," I continued, "I was so surprised to see you. I thought that bone-setting was only practiced by dilapidated old men and women."

"Many people think this way."

"Why is that?"

"Because in bone-setting, real knowledge and experience comes with years, and that's why most of us are older."

I noticed that none of the senior guys, including Nikolai Andreevich, were at all surprised by the word "bonesetter". They had probably known about this for a long time.

"Tell me," I continued, looking with admiration into his eyes, "Can spinal diseases be healed with the help of faith?"

"Faith is capable of moving mountains, not just curing spinal problems. But few people have true faith."

"Why?"

“Doubts gnaw, our animal nature suppresses. That’s why it is very hard for a human to acquire true faith. Although when soul is dominating in the mind, it is very simple.”

“If a human simply blindly believes in his recovery or in the recovery of those close to him, will treatment work faster?”

“Of course. And not just faster, but a lot easier and more efficient.”

“I apologise,” Nikolai Andreevich joined the conversation. “I have long wanted to ask you, why exactly did you choose this profession?”

“Well, what can I say?” answered Sensei. “Just like any man, when I needed to choose a profession, I began to think. I’m sure you’ll agree with me, what can be better in the world than to restore people’s health, and what can be more complex in a body than the spinal cord, perhaps only the brain... What is the spinal cord? Take a look at a picture of its nerve plexuses - it is a real ‘tree of life’ that stretches from its top to the brain and is connected with roots to every organ of the human body. Figuratively speaking, this ‘tree of life’ ‘nourishes’ the entire body with health. And if, God forbid, it has some kind of disorder, this immediately affects the work of organs and the entire body as a whole. Because practically, more than ninety percent of all diseases appear as a result of the malfunctioning of the spinal cord, from the most insignificant to those that are fatal. Almost everybody has problems with his spine during his life... The spinal cord, for today, remains the mystery of mysteries in science. And just like the brain, it is insufficiently explored.”

“In general, yes,” pronounced Nikolai Andreevich. “Honestly, I never thought about this... But since it’s such an important and complex organ in the body, one needs to possess considerable knowledge to treat it.”

“That is indeed so. The spine is a very interesting, perfect biomechanical structure. Its treatment is a great responsibility because a doctor has to precisely diagnose the patient, read information, age, weight, and a whole range of various factors, and then make the right decision and calculate the corresponding force and dose of impact because this is a sort of microsurgery, only without dissection. We especially need to consider that revitalisation in the process of exploitation is happening. Bone-setting is a very serious profession. One needs to thoroughly know everything: biomechanics, anatomy, pathology, genesis, morphogenesis, physics, and chemistry of the cell. In a nutshell, one should know vertebrology perfectly.”

“What?” Ruslan asked. “What is this ... ‘brology’?”

“Not ‘brology,’ but ‘vertebrology,’” Sensei answered with a smile. “It is the science of the spinal column which includes all those sciences plus specific knowledge about the spinal cord.”

“What kind of specific knowledge?” Nikolai Andreevich asked.

“You also need to know the details and techniques of different manual ways of treating vertebral pathologies, osteopathy, chiropractic, and so forth. In other words, it’s necessary to know the experience of previous generations in the area of bone-setting because it is a pretty ancient and interesting profession.” Sensei added, “And, of course, it means communication with a large number of different people.”

I don’t know about the others, but I understood perfectly that Sensei’s last words were his main reason for choosing his profession. I was absolutely sure about it.

Meanwhile, Sensei changed the subject of our conversation to meditations. We started discussing our home results and then tried to work intensively on ourselves, approaching with tiny steps our cherished goal: to become Human.



35

I noticed that days started to fly by, as if in one instant. I even got the feeling that I noticeably did not have enough time for everything. I even stopped going to a few hobby groups so that at least, somehow, I could manage to do everything. Our exercises and trainings continued to bring joy to me with their novelty and uniqueness. At one of the trainings, Sensei began to explain a new subject.

“Today we’ll introduce and, as usual, will partially learn the style of Tai Chi Chuan, considered to be the soft style of ‘Wushu’. This style originated in one of the most famous monasteries of China, located in the Wudangshan mountains. It is noteworthy that the local mountains used to be called the Mountains of Great Stillness. But then a man, whose name was Zhen Wu, ascended to heaven in broad daylight, having reached Dao (which in Daoism is considered to be the internal divine power and primordial substance that created everything in the Universe). The mountains were renamed in his honour.

“According to one of the legends, a monk named Zhang Sanfeng lived in that monastery in the twelfth century. One day, hearing an odd sound in the yard, he looked out of the window. The monk saw a crow sitting on the tree and a snake on the ground, both looking at each other. Each time, as soon as the crow flew out of the tree to attack the snake, the snake would quickly turn its head and would curve in such a way that the crow wouldn’t be able to peck it. While observing them, Zhan had an insight: an opponent can be defeated by dodging attacks.

“According to another legend, Zhan Wu himself gave him this wise hint in a dream. As the proverb says, ‘Saint said, wise man understood.’ Having grasped the main principle of martial art, Zhang Sanfeng, after

many years of training, developed the soft style, which received the name Supreme Ultimate Boxing (Tai Chi Chuan). To translate it literally, 'tai' means supreme, 'chi' means ultimate, and 'chuan' means fist.

"According to another version, the development of this style is ascribed to another Zhang Sanfeng from Wudang, who lived in the fourteenth century, a disciple of the famous master Huo Long (Fire Dragon). Of course, there are other fabled versions of the origin of this style. But the main principle of Tai Chi Chuan didn't change and is stated in the following principles: static begets dynamics; pliable overcomes rigid; slow defeats fast; short defeats long. In other words, for example, you should respond to the sharp attacking movement of your opponent with soft pliancy, in this way absorbing the strike by letting it pass into emptiness. As a result, the opponent loses balance. And then a few grams are enough to overcome the force of a ton. The ancient writings of the masters of Tai Chi Chuan say about this style, 'Little movements lead to big changes. The pliable overcomes the rigid; borrowing power from your opponent, use it; attack suddenly, affecting points.'

"Tai Chi Chuan is similar to a smooth dance. At the highest level of mastery of this style, there are no fixed movements or complexes, only the major principles are preserved. The body moves as if on its own, performing in dynamic meditation an improvised peculiar dance.

"But to attain something big, one needs to start with something small. That's why we'll start with the simplest exercise, 'pushing hands'. It is done in pairs. Here, it is necessary to slightly touch with hands, softly, taking turns to push each other, for the beginners under the known trajectory of movement, and for the more experienced, arbitrarily. This exercise develops reaction to the actions of the opponent by foreseeing his intentions. In other words, by 'listening' to where he wants to move, you should attempt to trick him by breaking free from his 'stuck' hands. At the inaccurate movement of your opponent, for example, if he moves roughly or loses balance, with a light push, you can cast him to the ground. Movements should be relaxed, but consciousness stays vigilant. Also I'll show you the corresponding regimen of breathing.

"These and the subsequent exercises can be used as health-improving gymnastics. Especially for medical goals, Tai Chi Chuan is helpful to people who are in a state of constant nervous stress because these smooth movements with steady speed align potentials in the cerebral cortex, protecting it from overload. Moreover, the concentration of thought on movements distracts the person from everyday problems, restoring his nervous system. And, of course, these particular gymnastics trains all joints and ligaments. It is

beneficial for everybody. So, when you come back home, you can teach it to your mums and dads, grandmas and grandpas, so that they will never be sick.

“I want to draw your particular attention to the fact that the ancient masters of the Tai Chi Chuan gymnastics insistently demanded from their disciples ‘purification, calmness, absence of wrong actions, preservation of purity of heart, restraint in their desires’. In this way, a human will not only defeat his diseases but will also destroy his ego, thus clearing a path to the perfection of spirit. They were absolutely convinced that Heaven sees the ‘de’ (spirituality, love) of man and based on his ‘de’, rewards him. The wisdom of the masters that has reached us from the depths of centuries is relevant today. Each one of us can use this knowledge to the maximum, and not just for self-defence, but also for discovery of his own internal world, for the perception of the mysteries of nature and the universe. You must always remember that a human can achieve anything if the goal is clearly defined... Now let’s proceed to the practical part.”

We lined up, and the Teacher showed us the breathing exercises for ‘stuck hands.’ After individual demonstrations of the techniques by Sensei, almost everybody in a few seconds landed on his back to the laughter of his friends, who found themselves in the same position a few minutes later. More serious fighters, using the wrong techniques, were flying away as far as three to four meters. Most interesting is that during the first ten minutes we laughed, after twenty minutes we were getting up silently, groaning, and after another half an hour, we set about really serious work, completely concentrating on the movement and accuracy of our performance. Nobody wanted to be seen as a clown, falling excessively.

The ‘speedy guys’, including Stas and Zhenya, worked especially beautifully. Evidently, they had practiced this art for a long time. Their completely non-repeating, improvised movements were similar to a grandiose dance, full of unpredictable, and at the same time, rational movements. And if one of them made a mistake, then immediately he flew far away, knocking down a lot of people on the way. In order not to harm other people, these guys were moved to the end of the gym, almost by the exit. But even here, Zhenya and Stas surpassed themselves. Working at sparring, Zhenya for one second got distracted by the opening door and right away received a powerful blow from Stas, which not only threw him to that unfortunate door, but also placed him before the exit on his knees. At that time, an imposing man of indefinable age with a stately face similar to that of Ramses, entered the gym. Some kind of fine eastern aroma wafted from him. He was dressed in a stylish coat under which an expensive suit could be seen. “Ramses” looked at Zhenya with surprise. But Zhenya kept his wits and, touching the floor with his forehead, uttered

ritualistically, “We greet you, O’ great Zhan Wu, the most welcome guest of our tribe!”

He then quickly jumped back on his feet and, bowing to the gentleman one more time like a fighter, turned around and went toward Stas, who could hardly control his laughter.

Sensei, with a smile, came up and greeted the man.

“For how long did he practice this form of greeting?” asked “Ramses” with a strong accent, in broken Russian.

“Don’t get mad at him. He is young and always mixing things up.”

“Ramses” got even more surprised and asked with a slight resentment in his voice, “Do I really look Chinese?”

“No, of course not, but...,” and then Sensei continued in some unusual language.

“Ramses” laughed and added something in reply. Speaking in this melodious and very pleasant language, they went into the private office for coaches. I noticed that the guest walked the same way as Sensei.

As soon as the doors shut behind them, Stas couldn’t keep it in and laughed out loud, immediately receiving a punch from Zhenya in return. Falling with a racket on the benches, he couldn’t stand up for five whole minutes, rolling from his laughter attack. They might have kept laughing like that until the end of training, but the senior sempai, who was responsible for discipline in Sensei’s absence, showed them a fist, and the guys quickly hushed up and got back to work.

I was bursting with curiosity to find out who that mysterious guest was. But my attempts to ask the senior guys weren’t successful. They told me that they don’t interfere in Sensei’s business.

In thirty minutes, closer to the end of training, “Ramses” and Sensei came out of the room, agreeing on something on the way with a smile. They bid farewell as good old friends, warmly shaking each other’s hands. After the departure of the mysterious guest, Sensei, with the same ease, switched back to Russian and, as if nothing had happened, started explaining the guys’ mistakes he’d seen. His mood was clearly boosted.

At home I wrote down, as always, the most interesting things in my diary. The visit of this unusual foreigner raised many unanswered questions. I decided to leave this mystery to an undetermined later. As Sensei would say, “There is nothing mysterious on Earth that one day won’t be revealed.” With such an optimistic forecast of the future, I continued my activities of an observer.



36

At spiritual lessons, we polished old meditations. Everything was as usual, except that Nikolai Andreevich was absent for almost a week, which was unusual for him. At last our psychologist showed up in full health and high spirits. He arrived before the beginning of training when our merry party was standing in the glade with Sensei, Zhenya, and Stas. Nikolai Andreevich's eyes shone with extreme joy and delight.

He quickly greeted everybody, then addressed Sensei and began telling him excitedly,

“We finally finished the experiment, everything proved to be true. The results are simply astonishing... This technique of the altered state of consciousness that you taught us, in fact, radically changes the picture of our world, the whole conception of our existence... Let me tell you everything step by step...”

Our guys looked in wide-eyed surprise at the unusually excited behaviour of Nikolai Andreevich. Sensei listened to him attentively while smoking a cigarette.

“...In my opinion, I picked a more or less suitable candidate. One guy, a fully-fledged alcoholic, who was treated at our clinic. Two years of children's home was his entire education. He grew up in an orphanage, one of those post-war orphans. Army, then a coal mine, and hopeless alcoholism, that was his life. But when I put him into altered state of consciousness, he told me such things, and in some kind of old Russian language at that, that all my colleagues who were present at the experiment, were just shocked by his answers. We recorded everything and brought it to a professor, who is a historian, a great expert in this field. The result surpassed all our expectations. Even the professor was surprised. It appeared that this

alcoholic spoke the language of the Drevlian people, who, the professor told us, were an ancient east Slavic tribe. Our guy regaled us with amazing details and household trifles of the seventh century, many of which not only coincided with data from archaeological excavations, but were not even known to science. He also mentioned some geographic district and the river Sluch, where he said he used to live. And at the end he told us about some big conflict with someone from the Dregovich tribe. All this coincides with amazing accuracy with the available data... You can't even imagine what a great scientific achievement it is! However it is necessary to confirm the data a few more times for the validity of the experiment. We need to prove it scientifically. Look, I have chosen one more candidate..."

"Wait, wait, we agreed that I would give you an opportunity, you would try it. And that's all," Sensei said firmly.

"Just try to understand me. This is so valuable for the world of science..."

"I understand everything," Sensei said calmly. "However, we did not talk about the world of science but about you. You wanted to be sure, and now you are sure. It's not the right time for the world of science yet."

Nikolai Andreevich became silent and mellowing a bit, uttered, "Sorry... But the experiment was really tremendous. I was such a zealous atheist, but now... It really proves... What I mean is it changes everything completely."

"That's good. The main thing is that you understood it."

"Understood?! You are putting it too mildly... It is a complete revolution in my consciousness, it's a colossal revolution of the mind. Indeed, I'm not only convinced of the veracity of your words, but I also began to believe so much in you that I'm ready to give my soul for you!"

Sensei smiled and said thoughtfully, "I have heard this before... Ah, yes... exactly. Peter said the same thing to Jesus before he renounced Him three times."

Nikolai Andreevich insistently tried to prove the opposite, convincing Sensei with help of 'solid' arguments. Sensei only smiled silently, then changed the topic of conversation to meditation.



37

Spiritual lessons gradually became more and more important to me. So simple and accessible at the same time, they gradually changed my vision of the world. Some new feelings grew inside of me. I started to perceive everything in a different way as if I had discovered the other side of reality for myself.

Even nature, the air that I never noticed before, turned into a special material substance that I felt as light pressure from all sides whatever I did. This feeling was somewhat similar to the sensation of water elasticity when you dive into it. But in the case of the air, everything was much easier. Nature around me became brighter, colours became richer as if an invisible dust veil had been removed from my eyes.

Outside, spring was in full swing, animating the grey space of cities with its fresh, salad greenery. The world of nature existed according to its own cycle as if wishing to demonstrate greatness and independence from the tiny creatures occupying it. This living creature had its own secret of life and death, which was carefully guarded during its long existence.

The time spent with Sensei flew by so quickly that without my noticing, it was time to start preparing for final exams. To tell the truth, I didn't want to spend any precious time on them even though I had realised that exams and continued studies were not trifles, they were necessary. As Sensei used to say, a human should constantly develop his intellect and broaden his mind, meaning he should expand his knowledge everywhere and in everything wherever possible, to strive for knowledge of science. Because it is through knowledge, namely the knowledge of himself and the world around him, that the human comes maturely to God.

At spiritual practices and general training, Sensei continued to surprise us with his personal examples, with the breadth and depth of his knowledge. During general training, he mostly taught skills that our brain perceived easily, without any shock, as they say. There were strikes, techniques from different styles, health-improving gymnastics, which were demonstrated by his narrations from the various points of view: medical, strategic, and philosophical. At the additional training, we were lucky to contemplate his mysterious demonstrations to a greater extent when most people would leave. But once there was an incident.

During one of the training sessions when most people were practicing strikes in pairs, Sensei was standing right next to us, showing Andrey a difficult strike with a hook. It must be noted that on that day the Teacher was a bit pensive, absorbed in his thoughts. Unexpectedly he stopped his actions and turned abruptly, peering worriedly into the opposite side of the hall. Volodya and Victor were sparring there, but their sparring became a little strange. Volodya conducted an aggressive and rigid offense, attacking his sparring-partner dexterously and quickly with his hands and legs. While Victor was somehow confused and hardly had time to fend off strikes. Sensei immediately clapped his hands sharply, shouting “Yame!” which means “Stop!” But Volodya was obviously carried away by the excitement of sparring and did not hear him, though the rest of the crowd turned to Sensei at this exclamation. And then something happened.

Swinging his hand sharply, Sensei made a movement in the air simulating a blow. At the same instant, Volodya flew aside with such a force and along such a trajectory as if Sensei stood near him and not near us. We were all astonished by what we had seen. Silence fell in the gym. The Teacher intervened just in time. If Volodya had hit him one more time, Victor would have been in trouble. Writhing in pain, poor Victor tried to restore his breath by a special technique used after dangerous strikes, which Sensei had once taught us at additional lessons. Meanwhile Volodya, having flown about five meters head over heels, also tried to recover after his unexpected flight. He was strenuously rubbing the place that Sensei's blow would have struck if he had been standing next to Volodya.

Everything happened in a split second in the presence of everyone in the group. Though I saw it with my own eyes, I could not believe it even though my mind was used to such surprises from Sensei. In a minute, the crowd burst out with emotions. Andrey pulled Zhenya by the sleeve, without taking his eyes from Volodya,

“Hey, what was that?”

Zhenya seemed to be in shock too,

“Wait, child, for my spirit also trembles in me from this curious vision.”

Meantime the Teacher's face changed, as though he was annoyed with himself for this blunder. Coming up to Volodya, he made a number of hand movements above his body, at the same time scolding him, obviously indignant at the attack. Volodya answered something, shrugging his shoulders and hiding his eyes shamefully. While the crowd triumphed based on what they had seen. Sensei was bombarded with questions which he seemed reluctant to answer.

“What kind of a blow was that?” The guys asked eagerly.

“Well, how can I put it,” the Teacher said with a sigh. “It is connected with the mental energy of a person. It isn't anything worth your attention. It is only one of the steps of spiritual development in the martial arts.”

“So we can learn it, can't we?”

“Certainly you can... if you are patient enough.”

Sensei quickly continued the interrupted lesson, so as to hush up this incident as fast as possible, it seemed to me. At the end of the training, the majority of people present had elevated level of adrenaline in their blood and corresponding optimistic forecasts concerning their future.

Unlike the others, our group silently observed the commotion because we were sure that Sensei wouldn't be able to avoid our direct questions at additional training.

Before the additional training, the Teacher's mood improved a little, and his good mood was a good sign. The senior guys hastened to take advantage of it. During the additional training, they tortured Sensei with questions in their desire to “behold with their own eyes” something else like that. At first, Sensei laughed the matter off but then he agreed under their pressure to show us the so-called “protective screen”. He told us first to find some objects for ourselves.

We ran to the stock room used for sports equipment and armed ourselves with what we could find there. The guys grabbed poles and basketballs. Andrey even took his nunchaku. I thought for a long time about what to choose. Finally I decided to take a tennis ball, as I thought that if Sensei failed and the object hit him, it would not hurt him. But Sensei had never made any mistake in his actions before, which inspired special respect for his abilities.

When we had ‘armed’ ourselves, Sensei stood 7 or 8 meters away from us. Concentrating, he raised his hands forward and slightly spread them. We took turns in throwing various objects at him as hard as we could. It was fantastic but no matter how hard we tried, all objects simply missed Sensei, changing their flight trajectory literally at distance of half a meter

from his palms. Victor, Stas, and Volodya decided to challenge Sensei by throwing the objects at him from behind. But Sensei didn't even change his position, he only opened his hands wider. In short, we experimented a lot, but all the objects missed Sensei.

I didn't understand whether all of us became cross-eyed or there really was some invisible powerful wall around him. My mind resisted the last reason and was indignant in trying to prove that it could not be. And it was this conclusion that forced me to try throwing the tennis ball again and again, now without any pity, into this invisible wall so as to satisfy myself for a second that some kind of an obstacle really existed there. I think all other guys also had similar feelings because their thrill gradually changed to confusion.

In my eyes, Sensei again began to transform from a regular person into a supernatural being. My mind really started to go crazy from all this improbable plausibility. Meanwhile, Sensei had 'removed the screen' and began to explain the principle of its action, in this way bringing the logical work of our consciousness to a normal, natural rhythm. Then I noticed that while listening to Sensei, some signs of envy (the animal essence) began to slip into my head again. First it happened as if accidentally, and then they got stronger and stronger. Then some doubts rose in my mind, although Sensei explained everything in a simple and understandable way based on what we had just seen with our own eyes.

Finally, I caught myself in a thought that while listening to Sensei talk about spiritual opportunities, I was thinking dirty thoughts with the inflated mania of my own egocentrism. "Wow!" I thought. "With such an underlying basis of egoism, all valuable knowledge will pass me by. My mind will choose out of Sensei's words only those ones that are necessary for the animal nature instead of the spiritual one. That means I will never succeed... So I need to concentrate on good... This knowledge is necessary for me only for good purposes, for learning my essence. I do not want to cause any harm. Let all people live in peace and Love. I do not wish anyone evil and do not envy them. All of them are good and worthy in their lives. The main thing for me is perfection of my soul." Regulating myself in this way, I began to listen to Sensei more attentively. The conversation had already moved on to blows at a distance.

"...this blow is very powerful," Sensei said. "Mental forces of the person are involved in it."

"How does the blow itself happen at such a distance?" Stas asked.

"Basically, distance is an illusion. Therefore, in your understanding it acts like the projection of a blow. But in fact, there is a somewhat different

type of physics in which space and time are compressed. Therefore, a person who delivers such a blow, as well as a person who actually receives it, feels direct physical contact.”

“Does this knowledge come from ‘Beiliao Jiao’?” asked Victor.

“Yes. This is a special technique of ‘Lotus’ from the Art of the ‘Punishing Sword of Shambala’. People of Shambala knew and still know this Art... Once a very long time ago, Masters of ‘Lotus’ came out into the world rather frequently. They perfectly knew not only the ‘Old Lama’ style, but also the ‘Art of the ‘Punishing Sword’. Such a Master could gain victory over an entire army. To this day, in the East, there are legends about warriors who appeared from nowhere and returned to nowhere. But in the places where they stopped, they enjoyed great honour and respect among the local population because better protection for the peaceful inhabitants could not be found. These Masters possessed an energy power much more serious than any modern weapon. For people who don’t have knowledge of this Art to receive such a destroying blow from nowhere is more than awful.

With time, the necessity of such Masters coming to light disappeared. This certainly does not mean that the Art of the ‘Punishing Sword’ vanished. On the threshold of Shambala, there is a specially trained person who carries out decisions made by the council of Bodhisattvas. If you remember, I once told you that Shambala will never allow somebody to capture the whole world or to use spiritual knowledge to harm mankind. So this Master implements such decisions without leaving his keel. For this purpose, it is enough for him to be in a special state of consciousness and to swing the ‘Petal of Lotus’, a special ritual sword somewhat similar to a short Turkish saber. By the way, it is because of the sword the Art was named ‘The Punishing Sword of Shambala’.

Evidence of this Master’s activity can occasionally be found in the modern world. Mysterious deaths still remain a secret not only to pathologists. For example, in the process of an autopsy, it was discovered that the heart was cut precisely into halves as if a sharp object had been used, but the skin and nearby organs were not injured. Or there were ‘inexplicable’ cases where in the presence of numerous guards a body was cut into pieces as though from a sword and the clothes were undamaged. It doesn’t matter how thoroughly a guilty person had been protected by the newest technology or the whole army, he isn’t able to evade this penalty. This is the prime cause of fear of Shambala for all tyrants. That is why people have been searching and continue to look for contact with it, because they know, no matter how powerful and authoritative they are, they are powerless before Shambala.”

Sensei broke off, and it seemed to me that his words still echoed in my ears. All the guys stood in thoughtfulness perhaps because, like me, they were also shocked by everything they heard. Nobody dared to break the silence, hoping that the Teacher would add something else to this extraordinary information. At last, Volodya lost his patience and spoke in a bass tone,

“This Master of the ‘Punishing Sword’ probably has a force similar to atomic energy if distance does not matter for his blows.”

“Atomic energy in comparison with this force is only a child's toy. Mankind is far from knowing its real abilities and real forces because of the prevalence of animal nature...”



38

After such a training, our emotions stormed for more than just one day. Thoughts of our abilities did not give us a moment's peace. We wanted to achieve everything at once. So, for the next few days, this optimistic mood showed itself in assiduous training of the body and mind. And when the time came for the next spiritual lesson, we simply showered Sensei with different questions. Observing all our excitement, the Teacher said:

“Guys, this distant blow, all the effects of Tsi energy, and all those ‘miracles’ that I show you, all of them are trifles not worthy of real attention. True force lies in the soul. This is what needs to be developed and studied, that’s what should be admired. Divine Love of the soul combined with the mind of the person is a true miracle. And everything else that you saw is only a side-effect of various levels of spiritual development. It is nothing, you should not pay any attention to it.”

“But why is it nonsense?” Nikolai Andreevich said. “In fact, miracles beget faith.”

“Yes, they do. Miracles beget faith. Let's look at what kind of faith. What happens to a person when he sees miracles, that is, those phenomena that are inexplicable for his brain? First of all, it shakes up his psyche mightily. The psyche simply begins to go beyond the limits as it does not have proper information to explain the given phenomenon. And since our brain has amazing mechanisms of self-preservation and self-defence, its compensatory functions, the protective factor of our brain, are immediately activated. Using the language of physiology, zones of the brain and groups of nerve cells are not able to join in mental activity to their fullest extent. And here is an important point. If the animal nature prevails in person, he either starts to ignore the existence of such a phenomenon internally,

blaming the unreality of an event for everything, some kind of trickery, or a desire arises in him to learn all these unknown things for the sake of his own mercenary interests of megalomania satisfaction.

“And, the person who has balanced these two natures begins to go from one extreme to another. It means that today he blindly trusts all this, but tomorrow he starts to doubt it, and the day after tomorrow he starts to doubt his doubts again, and so on. To put it briefly, there is an active struggle between the two natures in the field of his mind.

“As for a person whose spiritual nature prevails, there grows the spirit of exploration into the given phenomenon based on faith, as well as knowledge of his own abilities and the secrets of nature for the sake of this process of knowledge, for the sake of perfection of the soul. His initial fear of the mystery of the given phenomenon is muffled and, in the process of learning, it completely disappears and transforms blind faith into knowledge, that is, into true faith.

“In fact, guys, why do you think I show you all this? I do it to observe your thoughts, the level of your animal nature in relation to the spiritual one. And most importantly, why do I spend so much time explaining each phenomenon? It is to stir up your mind at least a little from your hang-ups of material life, to make it think about the eternal secrets of nature, about your unstudied soul, about God. In fact, the more you learn yourselves, the closer you are to God, to the eternal and the unshakeable, that truly exists always.

“What is your physical life compared to the Universe? It's nothing. In comparison with the Universes and the planets, a human practically does not exist. His life is an unreal reality, just an instant in one of God's thoughts...”

“How is that?” Zhenya did not understand.

“Well, someday I shall explain it to you in detail... **Your bodies exist in a closed time cycle where you, that means your soul, have all the conditions for full maturation. But you must realise it with the help of your mind and merge it with your soul in common aspirations. And then, your life will acquire true purpose.** Because it is your mature soul, and not those ashes of material bodies which it changes during development, that is valuable for God, for the Universe as a whole...”

“So, true, genuine faith arises from knowledge. And knowledge comes through a word, through persuasion of your mind in the validity of an occurring phenomenon. And miracles, in fact, are only a kind of a test of the internal level of individual development. This method of testing was used in their earthly practice by those who possessed factual knowledge of the science of ‘Beiliao Jiao’... Although we have quite a unique individual

in Sathya Sai Baba, who decided to turn people toward God with help of constant demonstration of real miracles.”

Nikolai Andreevich thought a little, “It’s a familiar name... Was it he who was shown on TV rubbing Gorbachev’s head with his foot, blessing him?”

“Right!” Sensei grinned.

“They called him an incarnation of God on Earth... an Avatar.”

“Avatara” Sensei corrected. “But generally ‘avatara’ is translated from Sanskrit as ‘lowering’ or ‘descent’.”

“Yes, Avatara. They said Avatar adopts a human body to lift the development of the humanity a step higher, to bring it into a new era.”

“Absolutely right. ‘If you want to rescue a drowning man, you need to jump into water, that is to be incarnated.’ as he likes to say,”.

“What kind of man is he?” our group asked with curiosity.

“Well, Sai Baba is a great soul. And as human civilisation is now at the point of global changes in reassessing its spiritual level of development and the events following these changes, Sathya Sai Baba decided to make his contribution. He was going to surprise the world with miracles. Sathya Sai Baba was preparing for this mission for a long time, he was developing the theory of the influence of miracles on the spiritual development of people. First, he predicted in the Upanishads his threefold incarnation in the epoch of technology. And then when time came, he began to check this theory in practice. So he reincarnated to Sai Baba in the village of Shirdi in 1872 in India. All his life he performed miracles, read thoughts, could overcome distances, take any material form, and so forth. He died in 1918, having informed everyone before his death that he would come back to Earth again in eight years in the south of India.

“And so it happened. Sathya Sai Baba was born in 1926 in Puttaparthi, a small remote village in the south of India. In 1940, he was proclaimed Avatar. And he performs miracles to this day. When the time comes for him to leave, he will reincarnate again as Prema Sai. He has already predicted not only the exact date and the place of the following incarnation, between the cities of Bangalore and Mysore, but also the names of his future parents.”

“Is it true what they said on TV, that he can levitate, simultaneously appear in different places, and, what is most interesting, he can materialise an enormous quantity of anything you like from a diamond to cookies? They say he just pulls them out of thin air. Or is this just another rumour?” Nikolai Andreevich asked.

“No. It is definitely true.”

“But this is unreal!”

“It is absolutely real. But his main mistake lies in demonstrating miracles, things that are still mysterious for mankind. Those who saw his miracles are surprised and start to think them over, and those who did not see just laugh at him and consider all this to be a trick. The latter unfortunately belong to the majority. But he certainly carries out his mission honestly, and I wish he could help as many people as possible at least to wake up. Nevertheless, true enlightenment of the soul comes through a word.”

“So what, is he really God?” Ruslan asked.

“You know, people ask him this question quite often. The answer is simple enough and true. As Sathya Sai Baba says, And you too are God. The only difference between you and me is that I know that I am God while you don’t.”



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At the next training, the gym was so overcrowded that there was not an inch of room. Judging from the places the beginners came from, the news about the energy blow had probably spread through more than just our town. We had never trained in such tight space. Andrey and Kostya began to express their indignation about this crowd of people that suddenly overran ‘their’ gym. But the senior sempai quickly put the guys in their place, reminding them that recently they were exactly the same beginners and no one objected to their practicing here. He also reproached them with words of the Teacher, that **it is necessary to respect another person’s aspiration for knowledge instead of immediately attacking him with bayonets of your egocentrism**. After that, the guys got ashamedly silent, and did not utter any bad words during the entire training. As for Andrey, he decided to rehabilitate himself somehow in the eyes of the senior sempai and even diligently began to help the beginners master movements that were new for them.

While people were practicing the techniques during the optional program, Sensei was called outside. At this time, Tatyana and I were next to the open door, as it was very stuffy in the gym even with the open windows. Three subdued men, one of them around fifty years old and the other two around thirty, had politely knocked on the open door, drawing our attention. As we appeared to be standing nearer than the others, they also politely inquired about the name of our Teacher and the possibility of talking to him. Of course, we complied with their request. And when Sensei came, they started to talk to him about something.

At first, I did not pay attention to the conversation, minding my own work. But the words I could hear raised my curiosity more and more. These

men appeared to be representatives of one of the religious sects that lately had been growing in our city like mushrooms after rain. Apparently, seeing the number of young people training in the gym, they decided to invite Sensei and his pupils to visit their meeting that day in a cinema hall where a free presentation of a film about Jesus Christ was to take place. Sensei politely thanked them for the invitation without promising anything concrete. But their leader, the elder one, who turned out to be their minister, began to ask Sensei pointed questions about his knowledge of Jesus and his attitude towards His teachings.

At first, Sensei was answering politely and laconically, making it clear that training wasn't finished. But the minister was not in a hurry to part with Sensei. Every short answer of Sensei met an extremely verbose explanation of the advantages of their church and their 'true' view of the teachings of Christ. Within ten minutes, Sensei probably got fed up with the conversation because he started to break all their enticing reasons to pieces with precise arguments, quoting dates, figures, and events which, apparently, were unknown even to the minister. By this time, our curious company had come out of the gym to listen to what was going on. Zhenya and Stas followed us. Then came Ruslan and Yura, who were working out not far from the door.

"...Wouldn't you like to live eternally in paradise on Earth, in the kingdom of God?" the minister uttered in a pacifying voice.

"Eternally, on Earth, in paradise?!" grinned Sensei.

"Do not hasten to reject eternal life as an unrealisable dream," the minister interrupted him. "Pay attention to how your body is created. In fact, you practically know nothing about it. Everything in it has been thought out with the utmost detail. We have hearing, sight, taste, the sense of smell and touch. There are so many things in the world that bring pleasure due to our sensory organs: tasty food, pleasant friendly relations, picturesque landscapes, and so on. We can enjoy all this due to our amazing brain. Do you know that our brain is perfect and it surpasses any computer, any supercomputer?! And do you really think that our Creator wants you to die and to lose all this? It is logical to conclude that He wishes eternal life for His righteous men, doesn't He?"

"Happy and eternal life on Earth in a body?! Do you think at all about what you are telling people?" the Teacher said. "What kind of eternal paradise can there be in a body? Any body, same as any biological structure, demands your constant attention. It wants to eat, it is sick, it is tired, it wants pleasure. And you call this matter a paradise and dream of living with its biological needs eternally?! This is eternal hell instead of paradise!"

“Then if you think so, why did God create the human body?”

“God created the human body as the most convenient form and protection for the maturation of a still weak soul. Even the Bible you hold in your hands says, ‘And the Lord God created man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.’”

“Right, but the true meaning of these words is different,” the minister spoke instructively. “The authors of the Bible, when using the word ‘spirit’ in this context, did not mean an intangible soul that continues to live after death.”

“Really?!” Sensei was surprised. “And how do you know what the true meaning of these words is? Do you know it from the literature and instructions that the leaders of your sect hand to you on a plate and hammer into your heads in ready-made form? Did you reflect on it yourself? Do you know your real leaders personally, their inner world? Did you reflect on why they need all of this, in fact, this unlimited power over you? They and their special agents...”

As Sensei spoke, the minister’s nostrils dilated more and more.

“We are not speaking of that now,” he sharply interrupted Sensei. Then apparently recollecting himself, he softly added, “We say that, according to interpretation of the Bible, the spirit is a vital force. When a person dies, this vital force ceases to support the life in cells of his body, just as a light becomes dim when you switch off the electricity. When the vital force ceases to support the human body, the person - the soul - dies. This is written in Ecclesiastes 12:1,7; in Psalm...”

“In Ecclesiastes 12:1, it says, ‘Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, I have no delight in them.’ These words have nothing to do with the topic of our conversation. And Ecclesiastes 12:7 only proves what I have already told you, ‘Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it,’” Sensei quoted by heart. “If you read ancient scriptures of different religions, you will see that the same eternal truth about the development of the soul in a body, about its numerous reincarnations in achievement of perfection, can be traced everywhere. Read something besides the Bible; for example, the most ancient sacred book of Hinduism, ‘Veda’, from the end of the second to beginning of the first millennium B.C.; or one of its commentaries, the ‘Upanishads’, which are the basis of all the orthodox religious and philosophical systems of India; or the Buddhist canon ‘Tripitaka’; the sacred book of Islam, the ‘Qur’an’, written around 650 A.D.; the sacred book of Shintoism, ‘Nihon Shoki’, from 720 A.D.; or the book of wisdom Zhuangzi, the treatise of Laozi

Dao De Jing, the works of Confucius from the 6th to 5th centuries B.C. You will see in all these works a single grain of wisdom that was given in different times by different people for different levels of human formations.”

“All religions of the world come from Satan, therefore they are not even worthy of our attention,” the minister said with a hint of rage in his voice. “Satan influences political forces and promotes religions in which people, without knowing it, worship him instead of God. Only our faith is the true faith. It is the only path to the salvation of mankind.”

“Well, every religion and sect considers their faith to be true, otherwise they would not create a separate organisation for themselves. But don’t you think that it looks slightly egocentric on the part of religious leaders? In fact, they get their knowledge from the same books and simply transform this information according to their level of moral perception and their vision of the world.

“Your idea that all religions of the world are from Satan is absolutely wrong. Yes, religions were created on the basis of Teachings of the great ones by others from their point of view and, if you want, their own benefit. Yes, since the beginning of time, religion has been a powerful political lever in the world, and consequently it has rendered a huge influence on the consciousness of a crowd. Yes, each religion has its own exaggerations, complications, and even wrong views. But for many centuries, the relations between God and mankind, to a large extent, were conducted mainly through religion. Though world religions have greatly complicated the knowledge given to people for the salvation of their souls, nevertheless all of them were based on it. In the past, it was only through religion that people could revive a faith in themselves, a ‘blind’ but sincere faith, and thus they slightly improved their souls. During those dark times when the consciousness of our society stood at an absolute low level, religion indeed was the only engine in the progress of mankind.”

“Isn’t it the same now?” one of minister’s young novices asked with interest.

“Now the time of ‘blind’ faith has passed. The time of global changes has come. And the basis for future progress in knowledge of God is science.”

“But how can it be science if it officially rejects God?” the novice asked in surprise.

“Such erroneous impression exists because too little is known by mankind yet. If science still cannot explain the initial cause of the electromagnetic field impulsive force, what can be said? The current level of science can be compared to the stage of development of a one-year-old child who crawls in the space limited by his parents so as not to injure himself and learns

the world through toys that are given to him. But it does not mean at all that he does not have any prospect of growth and true comprehension of the present values of the world.”

“An interesting definition. Who are these parents in your opinion?” the young interlocutor asked.

“The parent is one for everyone, God. But beside the parent, there are also tutors who look after children and give them these toys.”

“This is even more interesting... Who are these tutors?”

“These creatures are known by different names. In Christianity, they are called angels, archangels who are next to God and take care of people. In the East, they are perceived more realistically and are called Bodhisattvas from Shambala...”

“My brother, you are falling into heresy!!!” the minister cried angrily at his ‘novice’. And addressing Sensei, he menacingly added, “You are a deeply lost person. You are absolutely wrong. People cannot transform the world and all the more, cannot aspire to learn about God through science. Science is the devil’s plotting, he convinces people by his discoveries that God does not exist. Satan covered the world with a net of technologies to catch people, to dull minds with TV and devilish literature and to make a person worship only him as today he is the Prince of this world. Only the word of God written down in the only sacred book, the Bible, is true and right. And only through it, you can learn God...”

“Yes, in your instructed interpretation,” Sensei chuckled. “How can science come from the devil?! Why are you filling people’s heads with this nonsense? The devil can’t give anything to people at all. Who is God, and who is the devil? The devil is nothing more than the animal nature that is a part of each person, generating negative ideas. Even the translation of the word ‘satan’ comes from ancient Hebrew, where originally this word meant ‘in opposition’. The manifestation of the devil is exactly what we notice in ourselves, in our bad thoughts. It simply seems to us that we are good. But in fact, look at how many times a day we awaken the animal nature in ourselves through our actions and thoughts, that is, we appeal to the devil, not to God. How many times a day we pamper our ego and flesh in our thoughts...”

“The devil is not a thought, it is an awful creature, a beast...”

“A creature? It is people who distorted him and presented him as a beast, having made a scapegoat out of him. People are afraid of his attack from outside. But he is inside of us, he is an integral part of us. And he strikes a blow from there, where we do not expect, that is from our thoughts. To defeat the devil does not mean to renounce everything in the world. To

defeat the devil means to defeat your negative thoughts, to put things in your mind in order. As the ancient people said, the biggest achievement that any person can accomplish by working on himself is to kill the dragon inside. Have you heard this expression, 'Know yourself and you will know the whole world'? All outstanding people came to comprehend God through cognition of themselves... God is an omnipresent substance, inherent in everything. God is the universal, intelligent, almighty force. Everything that is given by God is given for the good of mankind. Why, for example, are science and technologies given? They are given to people for collecting information, for communicating with each other, for exchanging experiences without difficulties; for the constant development of a person and saving time for every possible manifold cognition of the secrets of nature, which inevitably will lead to the comprehension of God Himself and the real fact of His existence.

"And what do you do? You limit the consciousness of people: do not read this, do not do this, do not go there, do not do that. People, do not create trouble! Do not be led astray by your mercenary ambitions. You impede the development of human souls, you are throwing them into the hell of reincarnation again..."

"Reincarnation does not exist in nature!!!" the minister exclaimed in a rage.

"Brother, brother, calm down," the novice hastened to interfere in the conversation. "You said yourself that anger is evil."

The minister hissed at him but nevertheless pulled himself together and continued the conversation, "You need to read the Bible more and to clear your mind of sinful thoughts because you are a terrible person. Come to us and repent because Satan has seized your mind. We shall teach you the true understanding of God, we shall teach you how to save your soul."

With those last words, Sensei's face changed, and he said calmly, articulating each word,

"Explain to me how a man drowning in a swamp can save a man standing on the bank of the river?"

But the minister grasped only the first word, 'explain', and for the next several minutes he tried to make Sensei 'listen to reason' with his admonitions, quoting different chapters from the Bible.

"... and if you will take it as a rule to attend our meetings, it will be the most powerful protection against demon attacks. You will apply pieces of advice that are given at meetings, and it will help you to be saved from the fires of Gehenna. And rest assured that God will compensate everything you sacrifice for the sake of worshipping Him with usury. This is written

in Malachi 3:10. For near is the time of Armageddon which will destroy the sinful mankind... Only the righteous people will remain alive in the world. We should wait with obedience and humility for the day when the Lord Jesus Christ will take measures against Satan and his adherents. It is written in Revelation 20:1-3. And when the last fight of God with the Devil begins...”

“Not only did you not listen to everything I told you, you do not even think about what you are saying. Just ponder a little, how can the devil fight with God? How can you say that? God is almighty, the devil is nothing in comparison with him. Everything, every person, including Lucifer, serves God. People have just elevated the power of Lucifer to have someone to blame for their stupidity. While Lucifer himself, like any other angel, just serves God, executing only His will...”

These words got the minister so mad that he did not even give Sensei an opportunity to finish his speech and screamed in fury,

“When Satan comes, you will be his left hand!!!”

Turning his back sharply, he was off. The second novice quickly followed the tutor, but the first novice who asked questions tarried a little, obviously wishing to hear the end of Sensei's story. But the second novice called him, and he followed them.

Meanwhile, Zhenya who could hardly contain his laughter, said with obvious pleasure, addressing our crowd,

“Yes, yes, did you hear what the clever person said? And what did I tell you!”

Now we also could not help laughing together with the senior guys, recollecting cheerfully Zhenya's joke during our first visit to the glade. Laughing, our group walked into the gym.

Sensei thought a bit and suddenly said half in jest, half seriously,

“Why exactly the left hand? Is the devil really left-handed? I haven't noticed that.”

Our young group looked at Sensei in surprise. And the senior guys burst out laughing again, supplementing this juicy detail with different jokes. We quickly returned to our interrupted exercises. After that we trained without incident.



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After the additional training, when we all left together as usual, we saw that the novice who had taken part in the conversation between Sensei and the minister was standing near the club. Noticing Sensei among us, he livened up noticeably, came up to him and inquired politely,

“Excuse me, have you got a minute?”

“Yes, I am listening,” Sensei said calmly.

“The thing is that our conversation was interrupted... And I did not have time to ask you some questions that are of great importance to me. You have rather an unusual world outlook, at least I have not heard anything like that. And I feel that your words are not unwarranted, as they coincide to some degree with my concept of the essence of things. If it wouldn’t be too much trouble, could you answer some questions for me?”

“Yes, of course,” Sensei responded just as politely.

These words encouraged the novice. He grew bolder and said, “What is true faith, the way to God in your understanding?”

“The true faith is knowledge. Certainly, there are a lot of ways to God, but you can take the roundabout way while repeatedly zigzagging or you can go straight. A direct way to God is a way through knowledge and Love.”

“And how is this knowledge expressed?”

“It is expressed through manifold cognition of the world in its various aspects: from micro life to the macro existence of space systems; through cognition of yourself both as a biological and spiritual structure, and accordingly, the essence of things around you. Certainly, **to learn everything is impossible, but you should aspire to it. A human should constantly grow in his knowledge, he should develop his intellect. For the most valuable way is understanding God through your mind when**

true knowledge overcomes the animal nature and opens the gate of the subconsciousness with help of the key of Love. This is the eternal unshakable truth that has always been around in the days of all highly developed human civilisations which have ever existed on Earth.”

“Sorry, I didn’t quite understand. Could you explain it in a little bit more detail?”

“Generally speaking, it means complete maturation of the human soul, a full victory over the material essence, that is, over the devil. In Christianity and in Islam, it is called enlightenment, holiness which leads to paradise after death. In Buddhism, it is called awakening and getting out of reincarnations’ loop into nirvana, and so on. But in reality, everything is much simpler.

“I shall try to explain it to you in general terms. Figuratively speaking, it looks like this. We think that we are that very mind which sees, hears, thinks, and analyses. But actually, it is only a small part our consciousness. Let us name it Something. This little Something floats on the surface of an ocean. The ocean is our subconsciousness where all our genetic memory, conditioned and unconditioned reflexes, that is, all our ‘accumulated’ experience, are stored in various depths. But all this concerns our material essence. This is our animal nature. Underneath the subconsciousness at the bottom of the ocean, there are ‘gates’. And finally, behind these ‘gates’ there is a soul, a particle of God. This is our spiritual nature. This is what we actually are and what we very rarely feel in ourselves. It is the soul that is reborn during reincarnation, gradually ripening through knowledge and Love of our mortal Something since Something is connected to the soul. But the whole problem is that this Something is also connected with the ocean. Moreover, externally it is more subject to the influence of the ocean. It is constantly thrown to and fro by waves that are various thoughts, emotions, desires, and so on. At times it so overflows that Something loses touch with the soul and then, after a storm, tries again to find it. But when this Something becomes stronger in its aspiration for the soul, stops paying any attention to the storms of the ocean, and pushes through the thickness of the waters into the bottom, having given up fear, then it finally reaches these ‘gates’. And through the key of Love, it opens them, merging with the soul. Only then does a human understand who he really is. He is fully aware of Freedom, Eternity, and God. It is then that the soul frees itself and leaves for nirvana, paradise, that is, into the world where only Love reigns.

“So this means that this Something, that is, our consciousness, determines the destiny of our soul?”

“Absolutely right. Everything depends on our choice and on our aspirations.”

The novice thought a little and then said quietly to himself, “So real paradise is not in the body.”

“The body will never give you paradise, as the body is an eternal worry, an eternal problem. Paradise can be reached only through the union of the soul with God.”

“You said that we very rarely feel ourselves being real, who we actually are, our soul. How is this divine presence felt? And is it possible to understand by means of these sensations what paradise is?”

“Only a human who looks at the world completely through a prism of Love can understand divine presence. And to understand what paradise is... Well, for you to have at least a slight notion of it... If you choose the happiest moment in your life when your true Love comes, when life effervesces under rays of happiness and all-embracing joy, all these sensations will be equivalent to a small divine droplet of Love sprinkled upon you. But when a human enters nirvana, paradise, that moment when the soul joins God, figuratively speaking, is the same as if a human is swimming like a dolphin in the ocean of this infinite divine Love. It is impossible to describe with words the fullness of these sensations, just as it is impossible to imagine it in full scope. Unfortunately, the human mind is limited, but in this limitation, lies its beauty. It is precisely here, in a limited mind, that boundless Love is to be developed.”

“Yes, everything is so simple and clear... You said that the ‘gates’ can be reached through Love and knowledge. But in fact, people have become saints in different times. I understand when it is through Love. But what about knowledge? Because in those times, people did not have complete information as we have now.”

“People even now have too little information. But the point is that when a human reaches these ‘gates’, any knowledge becomes accessible to him with the help of it. There are no restrictions there.”

“I thought that if I limited my consciousness the way they told us in the sect, then I will come to God.”

“Well, first of all, when you are limiting your consciousness with ‘blind’ faith, incredible effort must be made to resist the attacks of your animal nature. Why? Because ‘blind’ faith gives the animal nature freedom of action. At any moment, it can sweep over your mind with unexpected doubts, and your faith will fall like a house of cards. But if your faith is based on the strong foundation of knowledge, which allows you to prove to your mind in a well-reasoned and thorough way, the real fact of God’s

existence, and by that to force your animal nature into a corner and to put it on the leash there, then you will receive real freedom and will be able to come to God.

“Secondly, Jesus never limited His pupils as your religious sect does. Your leaders try to build a small empire of authority based on the teachings. They force you to kiss their hands, to bow down in front of them. Who are they? Even Jesus, in spite of the fact that He was a Great Soul, was always a friend to His apostles, and if you remember this story, He even washed their feet. He did not bring people enslavement of a crowd but, in the first place, freedom of personal choice. He gave people a commandment of Love, this very key to the ‘gates’. Recall His words, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ In this way, he showed that high morality, soul, and mind are the three components for maturation of a soul and its union with God. By the way, all the Prophets of all Teachings spoke about this, for there is a sole source of knowledge. Take, for example, Mohammed...”

“Mohammed?! Do you think his religion brings one closer to God?”

“Religion is created by people, but Mohammed preached the Teaching. And his true Teaching is based on the same knowledge that was given by Christ.”

“That can’t be true!”

“Why not? Do you know anything about Mohammed?”

“I don’t know about him, but I have encountered his violent followers who are full of fanaticism in person when I worked as a journalist in Afghanistan... And believe me, it left bad memories in my soul. I saw what Islam is.”

“You did not see Islam, you saw what the Teaching of Mohammed was transformed into by mercenary politicians... As for fanatic believers, you can find them in every religion. Should we really judge the Teaching by looking only at those people? Blind and furious fanaticism is the worst criteria of any religion, the worst distortion of any Teaching inasmuch as it completely awakens a person’s animal nature, under the cover of a shield of good intentions. It is a manifestation of politics, desire for world domination that is inherent in the ruling clique of each religion... Study the Teachings of prophets yourself, did they call for it? All of them called for spiritual development of the human. They called for the whole world to be united in single Love for God, suppressing the animal nature inside us, a devil, call it as you wish. For a man, being in God, cannot do evil things.

“Mohammad was a very unique person. I advise you to read about his life simply from a human position, without bias and conventionalities. Since childhood, he aspired to self-cognition, and at first, he was guided

by natural human desires. He was a poor boy, an orphan, an ordinary shepherd. When Mohammed was young, he thought that if he became rich he, would fully know himself. At the age of twelve, he began to work as a caravan escort. Along one of his routes, he met a wise man who gave him a grain of knowledge and taught him to meditate; as a result, it radically changed his destiny. Mohammed began learning spiritual practices in order to understand the essence of God.

“Some time later, his early dream came true. A successful marriage to a notable woman made him rich. Mohammed understood, though, that richness was not the thing to which his soul aspired. He started to search for this something in authority, but couldn’t find it there either. This fact drove him to search inside himself, inside his human essence. Mohammed often spent long hours at night in meditations, and finally they brought him to enlightenment. He understood the meaning of inner essence, the purpose of existence of all mankind as a whole, he found God - ‘Al-ilah’ — which means ‘worship-worthy’, and because of this, his soul woke up, having discovered the source of true knowledge. Then, as the legend says, he received revelations from above, from archangel Gabriel or, as he is still called in the East, archangel Jibrail. Mohammed not only received revelations from him but also became his favourite disciple. It is Gabriel, who told him the sacrament of the Teaching and the secret knowledge. In order to show the truth and the depth of knowledge of this Teaching, he moved Mohammed in space and time, as well as to the city of Jerusalem, where he arranged a meeting with Bodhisattva Issa and his enlightened pupils Abraham and Moses. Through these travels in time, Gabriel showed him the elusiveness and frailty of the material world in comparison with true knowledge and showed that only God has real force and is worthy of worshipping... All this knowledge sown in his strong soul bore rich fruits. The worthy disciple lived up to Gabriel’s expectations with honour. At that stage, Mohammed had done for mankind more good than anybody else had done.”

“But what about Jesus??”

“Make no mistake, Jesus was a Bodhisattva, which means he was already born as God. But Mohammed was a person who managed to awaken the divine essence in himself. So when archangel Gabriel felt that Mohammed was prepared enough, he said to him, ‘Now you should go to the world and bring this knowledge to other people.’. Mohammed answered, ‘How can I explain to people in words that which I learnt from you by spirit?’ ‘Go and tell them that there is one God and He lights everything up like the Sun with His Divine Love. I am like the Moon in the night of human life, I am

reflecting the light of God and light the way in the darkness of consciousness. And you are a guiding star showing the way to the divine light.’

“Inspired by this conversation with Gabriel, Mohammed left the cave in which he meditated, and the first thing he saw was a breathtaking view of nature. In the huge evening sky, a young crescent moon shone dazzlingly, and a bright star glowed next to it. In that same instant, he had an insight and understood how to express this Teaching to people. He understood that God is Love, that God is a constant action. God does not speak with words. That’s why He communicates with people through intermediaries — archangels, who bring His will to the consciousness of people. But a human himself is free to know God through his soul.”

“What did Mohammed do? Did he give people faith?”

“Mohammed gave people not only faith, but also knowledge. Unfortunately, over a period of 600 years, people had falsified the teaching of Christ and had transformed it into religion. But Mohammed tried to bring people the lost knowledge in his renewed Teaching. He told people everything he knew himself without concealing anything. Moreover, read history books, what kind of state Arabia was in before the year 610 when Mohammed began to preach. The country was in a state of total chaos of various idolatries and because of it, there often rose enmity between Arabian tribes. Mohammed did a great deed. He united militant people, Arabs, into a general brotherhood and in faith in the One worthy of worshipping. He spoke about the verity of God, about things that Jesus taught: that God is eternal, omniscient, and almighty; that all people are equal before Him. He spoke about the immortality of the soul, about reincarnation (the resurrection of the dead), about the Judgment, about punishment beyond the grave for those who create evil in this world, about the necessity to establish moral duties in relations between people, justice, and mercy. Due to his wisdom, Mohammed managed to lead Arabs out of their deepest ignorance and political chaos and to show them the way to civilised cultural growth and prosperity.”

“Perhaps it was really so. But what about the ‘sacred war against the unfaithful’? In fact, Muslim people claim that Mohammed himself preached it.”

“During those dark times, Mohammed had to deal with wild tribes that understood only force. The word ‘musulmanin’ comes from a word ‘muslim’ which means ‘obedient’, that is, obedient to Mohammed and not in the meaning of ‘faithful’, as it came to be much later. So, in those days, devoted people were those who were obedient to the Prophet and who followed him, spreading the Teaching to other territories of Arabia to

transform the chaos there into order. Unfaithful people were those who were not following his Teaching. Mohammed was not only the Great prophet, but he was also an ingenious commander and a wise politician. It was not easy to calm the fervour of wild militant tribes. Besides, Mohammed had to declare 'sacred war' against those religious priests who usurped authority and for whom unification of Arabs, and especially worshipping of other Gods, was unfavourable. He fought against those who, in their mercenary intentions, deceived people, exploiting their faith, and corrupted human souls. In these deeds, he is similar to Christ. So, the Prophet fought for the same purity of faith as Jesus did, for worshipping the One God, for direct spiritual connection of each person with God."

"Well, let's admit, those were dark times and tribes were wild," the novice pressed Sensei. "But now so many years have passed and an incomprehensible 'sacred war' is still being conducted. If God is one, why does the war still continue? How can one understand a person who winds explosives around his body and voluntarily goes into a crowd of peaceful inhabitants for death in the name of God, carrying away lives of other people with him?"

Sensei explained, "Because instead of the Teaching that was given by the Prophet, the Muslim had received religion, the leaders of which are more interested in mercenary purposes, personal well-being, and political influence in the world than in the souls of individual Muslims. They convince him that after this 'pious' act, his soul will get to Mohammed, to paradise. In fact, it will not get there, as the way to God is closed to everyone who creates evil. And this Muslim will have to be reincarnated repeatedly, passing through all terrestrial circles of hell again and again, to make his soul at least as clean as it was before the evil was done by this person. These deceived people are victims of religion. But the real guilty people are those who distorted the true Teaching. This is the victory of the devil over any religion."

"I heard that in the Qur'an there are some 'suras' that reject your words."

"In the Qur'an?" Sensei asked incredulously. "Do you know that the Qur'an was written after death of the Great Prophet? Mohammed's adopted son, Zayd Ibn Thabit, collected all records of his sermons and, take notice, he did some editing of the Qur'an in 651. Mohammed himself preached only orally. Sketchy records of his sermons and lessons were made by his first followers who partially remembered and partially wrote down Mohammed's words... But even despite further additions to the Qur'an during creation of the religion, the knowledge that was truly given to Mohammed from the archangel Gabriel is still there. Now scientists are

simply struck by the fact that while deciphering some ‘original parts’ of the Qur’an, they find real scientific knowledge there...”

At that moment, Tatyana jabbed me in the side and whispered that she ought to call her parents so they wouldn’t worry. I looked at my watch and realised that we should have been home already. We apologised and ran into the club where the nearest phone was located. After our long and persistent knocking, at last the door was opened by an old watchman with sleepy eyes. He had probably already begun to carry out his professional duties. He was a bit peeved, saying, people are hanging around all night long, and there is no rest from them day and night, but nevertheless allowed us to make a call. While Tatyana was speaking to her parents, I had time to jot down in my diary some of Sensei’s words. After informing our parents that we would be late, we hastened to the exit to join our group. When we came out, Sensei was still addressing the novice.

“You refer to the Bible as a primary source with too much bias. I understand that you were taught this way in your sect. But you are a journalist, you should be much more curious than ordinary people. The Bible, like the Qur’an or the Tripitaka, was written by followers. Moreover, these books went through numerous changes, meaning they already reflected religious points of view instead of the initial Teaching that was given by the Great. To focus your attention, I repeat, that literally for 600 years, the Teaching of Christ was greatly distorted and it was necessary to give a new Teaching to Mohammed, but in essence it was the same as Christ taught. But later, this Teaching was also transformed into religion by people who left only its form but changed its content.”

“But the Bible, and the New Testament in particular, were written from the words of Jesus by his followers.”

“If you had an opportunity to hear the Teaching from Jesus Himself and to compare it to the one that you can read now in the Bible, you would find huge blanks in the absence of much knowledge,” Sensei said with bitterness in his voice. “You assert that it was written by His followers, but you don’t even wonder how. They were not the first followers, they were followers of followers. The teaching of Jesus was preached orally for a long period of time. Then lists of sayings of Jesus started to appear. One of the most ancient fragments from the Gospel according to St. John is dated 125 A.D., and the earliest and the most complete manuscript is dated to 200 A.D. You can imagine how the oral sermons could be mangled in two hundred years. One person understood in one way, another person did not understand, the next one concealed something, and so on. Moreover, in 325 the first Nicene Council, under the direction of Emperor Constantine,

selected and canonised the four Gospels included in the New Testament out of numerous versions, with the purpose of strengthening the Church and personal power. Exactly at that time, the Teaching of Christ was completely altered, making a powerful lever of control for managing crowds out of it. It was precisely at that Council that the orthodox point of view on corporeal revival was authorised under pressure of Emperor Constantine. All otherwise-minded Christians and the supporters of spiritual revival were declared heretics, and subsequently they were pursued and slaughtered all over the Empire. Even though early Christians professed the ideology of reincarnation. Some mention of it can be found in the Bible, though not much at all. As a result, a natural question arises: why were authorities so afraid of it? Why did Constantine completely alter the Teaching and transform it into religion? What was the reason behind that? Because the Teaching gave people knowledge that released them from their fear of existence in this frail world. Knowledge brought people true freedom and the awakening of their souls. They were not afraid of death, they knew about reincarnation, about what is concealed beyond the edge. And the most important thing is that they realised there was only God above them instead of any emperor or bishop. But it was terribly frightening for politicians and churchmen to lose their authority, for they were more engrossed in their material interests. The Teaching of Jesus, which should have made people free, was transformed into religion and knocked into people's heads under penalty of death. Expansion of Christianity was being carried out through violence, crusades were arranged, and so on.

“Besides, the Bible was rewritten by hand many times by different people, up until 1455 when Gutenberg's Bible was printed. Dividing the text into chapters was first done in the 13th century by Cardinal Stephen Langton. The division of chapters into verses and their numeration was made by a Parisian publisher, Robert Stephens, who published the complete text of the Bible in 1553 for the first time. I won't even mention the fact that in the modern world, for example, the Catholic church considers itself authorised not only to interpret the Bible according to their opinion, but also to add to it.

“Despite all of these corrections and distortions, the genius of Jesus lies in the fact that some of His knowledge, due to the initial duality of its meaning, was able to reach descendants. That is why even today, the Bible awakens interest in the Teaching of Christ in people. Because of the interpretation of this knowledge ‘in its own way’, Christianity has never been unified and at all times existed as many churches, branches, and sects fighting among themselves.”

The guy thought a little and then asked, "Which expressions of Jesus do you think were kept in their dual meaning?"

"Let's take even His most widespread expression frequently used in your sect, 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.' It is not the plurality of people as your minister asserts. It is the wholeness of one individual, where the soul, mind, and consciousness are gathered for the single purpose of knowing God. Or here are other words of Christ, which religious leaders use to attract people to their sect, 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold on to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Jesus meant a personal choice of life purpose: either a human aspires to God, to freedom, or he aspires to mammon, that is, to riches, to the material world. Everything is very simple."

"It seems to be interpreted the same way in our sect."

"Yes, but under aspiration to God, your religious leaders drum into your head that only through attending their sect and studying their program can a person surely come to God. But in fact, a person can come to God if he changes himself inside, if he adequately grows internal Love and strengthens his faith with knowledge.

"Or, for example, Jesus said, 'So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.' Life is given for us to grow spiritually. During it, you can make a step forward, that is, to progress, or you can make a step back, to regress. Jesus said that if today God has made you a freer person and if He has enabled you to pay more attention to Him, it means that in the previous lives you deserved it. If you used this life for the regression of your soul, then in the next life He will put you in a more difficult condition for you to realise this. And inside, if he concentrates on his deep sensations, any person can feel the experience of previous lives."

"You said that in the Bible there are still some mentions of reincarnation. Which ones specifically?"

"For example, if you remember in the Gospel according to St. John, there is an episode about Nicodemus, one of the university teachers, who secretly came at night to ask Jesus questions. So, Nicodemus asks Jesus, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he really enter into his mother's womb for the second time and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' Besides, there are also such words as, 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' meaning plural existence of worlds.

“Christ told his pupils about the law of repeated births, which allows us to understand that the soul regenerates for full maturation. He talked about how to save the soul and how to reach the Kingdom of God, how to know eternal life. He also said that the more spiritually advanced a person becomes, the harder the trial of the resisting animal nature or devil.”

“Yes, judging by the Gospel, even Jesus was subject to attacks from the devil. I always thought, why? How can it be if He were the Son of God?” the novice asked.

“Of course, Jesus was the Son of God, a strong soul,” Sensei replied. “But He also called Himself the Son of man as the Great Soul of His had incarnated into an ordinary human body. The animal nature is inherent in a human body, it is its integral part. Therefore even Jesus, while he was a Bodhisattva, was subject to ‘temptation’ of the animal nature of His flesh, of His negative thoughts. He felt the same pain, the same feelings as an ordinary person. So Issa was in the same equal conditions. And for Him, it was a thousand times more difficult than for any of you. Because He knew freedom, He knew God...” It seemed to me that Sensei said these words with heart-aching anguish in his voice. The expression of his face changed as he continued, “And here, carrying out this mission, He finds himself in a human body with all its problems, with all these thoughts and emotions. With all the animal nature that had to be put in a corner, in the depth of His consciousness, which always has to be kept like a dog on a leash, and even there it still barks. And your minister still says that this is paradise?!” Sensei poked at his chest, “If this isn’t hell, I don’t know what could be worse!”

After these words, there ensued a long pause. Sensei lit a cigarette.

“But why does the Gospel only mention one episode of Christ’s personal struggle with the devil when He was in the desert? In fact, if Christ was put in the same condition as people were and the devil is negative thoughts, it means that these thoughts should have been in Him all His life.”

“Absolutely right. It is just that Christ was the Great Soul full of the force of Love; therefore, He kept all these negative thoughts in Himself under strict control. And the moment mentioned in the Gospel was the fight of his thoughts of the field of his mind so as to confirm the authority of his soul over his body. This was His personal Armageddon, which everyone is obliged to go through when they are born into a body. And Bodhisattva, unfortunately, is not an exception... Why did He fast for forty days and nights? Because it takes about this long for the body to be exhausted, to become weak, and the animal nature to finally surrender. Jesus was opening Himself spiritually to let His soul completely take possession of His consciousness. But animal thoughts of the body constantly tempted

Him, trying to win control over the mind. They spoke in a hungry body, 'If thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' But his thoughts from his soul answered, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' In this way, He emphasised His strength of Spirit, the essence of a real human, that is, of His soul. Negative thoughts chased Him again, '...If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands, they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.' And Jesus answered Himself, '...It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,' thus showing His fortitude of Spirit and control over stray thoughts of the body. And when thoughts of the animal nature tempted Him to own all kingdoms of the world trying to wake in Him its last main trump card, hunger for world authority begotten by insatiable megalomania, Jesus rejected them also by saying, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' Issa won this Armageddon with honour. He defeated His negative flesh thoughts with the power of His Spirit, with the force of immense Love for God. The Soul of Bodhisattva had completely awakened in Him and He found himself. After that, Jesus began to carry out His mission, using in full all His knowledge and the force of immense divine Love. That is why He created miracles by His faith, cured sick people, revived the dead. Because for this divine force, there are no barriers either on the Earth or in space.

"So, afterwards during His whole life, Jesus had a clear, concrete division of thoughts of the soul and 'harnessed' thoughts of the body. Take at least the words of his body the time He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane before Judas's treachery. Jesus was praying, His Soul left his body, and the body exclaimed, 'O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' The body was addressing precisely the Soul, as the Soul of Jesus was part of God Himself and had His power.

"Or here is another episode when Jesus was already hanging on the cross. He was in great pain. He felt all this pain of a body with His Soul. And so, in order not to be tempted, Issa abandoned His body. When His Soul left the body, His mind cried, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' That means, 'My God, My God! Why have you abandoned me?' It clearly shows how strongly Issa as the Great Soul not only controlled His body but also reigned over His mind.

The novice was silent for a bit and then asked, "Tell me please, for a long time I have being tormented by this question, whether it is true or not that we are initially sinful?"

“The human is initially free, and there is no sin behind him. Since what is, in fact, sin? A sin is something that oppresses us inside at the level of the subconscious, it is something that separates us from God and makes us feel afraid and guilty. So it is a natural consequence of your psyche’s reaction after breaching universal moral laws and values. This is sin. These laws are the code of your honour, your conscience. And since you yourself have broken it, you yourself should become better and purer in thoughts and in deeds.

“Your religious leaders constantly drum into your heads that you are a slave of God and that you are initially sinful. Why? Because they profit if a person supports them financially, paying for ‘sins’ that he didn’t commit. This is a psychological trick. If you make a person believe that he is guilty, initially guilty, fear begins to grow in him. Your religious leaders use this artificially created fear to immediately absolve your sins, of course, until the next time.

“But a human in his essence is not a slave of God; he is a son of God. A Father cannot hate His son, He can only Love him. For God is Love, and Love cannot have any fear. God gave people freedom of choice, and this is His most precious gift to people as to His children.”

“What about the legend of the tempting Serpent, of the harm he brought to people?”

“This information was greatly distorted. The original legend is as follows. When God created a Human, that is a soul, He admired His creation, for it had been created in His image and likeness. A Human at that time was not on Earth in a body as some religions assert now...”

“Why wasn’t he in a body if he was created in the image and likeness of Him?”

“How can you think that God is an unchangeable material individual, that is, someone embodied like you and me and at the same time omnipresent?”

“Well, other religions also say it.”

“What religions?! Study this question more closely. All world religions say that God is One, He is omnipresent... God is similar, how can I explain it... to energy or magnetic, or any other field. This is a single field in which everything exists. God is the mighty energy of thought which creates everything and manifests itself everywhere. But He is not a person with a beard sitting on a throne, nothing of that kind, although if He wishes, He can be temporarily embodied in a Human. God created us in His image and likeness, those of us who are inside of these bodies. A particle of Him, the soul, lives in each of us... Human’s ‘paradise’ was in heavens, as, by the way, Jesus also used to say.

“So, the Being created by God consisted of divine nature, that is, the soul. It did not know bad things, it knew only good things because it inherited divine Love. It is natural that this Being had enormous abilities and no barriers... Besides God, these Beings were also loved by Lucifer, angel of Light, who is the right hand of God. And he said to God, ‘These Beings do not understand how much you love them because they know only good.’ And Lucifer began to advocate the individuality of the Human, his position as a free Being for cognition. He wanted Humans to truly love God instead of simply existing in front of God as a plant pleasing His eyes. God ordered Lucifer, ‘If you love them as much as I do, teach them this.’ God settled people on the Earth, which was specially created for humankind, with seas, land, plants, and various animals. Lucifer created a human body in which God placed a soul, thus giving birth to two natures: the spiritual and the animal. The power of thought was given by God to humans as the Children of God. While the mind became a battlefield where the thoughts of both natures fought. It is this that proves the creation of humans by God and Lucifer together. It is this that shows that Lucifer was and remains the right hand of God as he actively participated in the creation of the human and actively participates in the education of his soul... Thus, Lucifer enabled people to understand and to learn perfectly what is good and what is bad. God gave people freedom of choice between these two natures. Since then, Lucifer has looked after people.”

“Why does Lucifer call himself the Legion?”

“For the same reason: because he acts through thoughts of our animal nature. As a rule, there are legions of these thoughts. Here, just observe yourself. It may seem to you that you are thinking only one thought, which is exactly your own. But try to keep this thought in your mind for even ten minutes, and you will be surprised how many different unnecessary thoughts appear in your head. This is the legion. Therefore, figuratively speaking, Lucifer is always present in us, testing our certainty, the strength of our Love for God.

“The power of thought given to us by God is enormous. And this power is called Faith. The human who is really in faith can work wonders. The proof of this is not only in Jesus but also in many of His followers and followers of other great ones who have worked and continue working wonders to this day. But the problem is that regardless of what someone believes in, this power can be used for both good and evil. The result depends on the side your consciousness is inclined to take. If you are inclined to have evil in your thoughts, that is, your material, your animal essence gnaws at you, then a great number of problems appear in your life. They appear all the time

and everywhere — at work, in your private life, in your family, and so on. These problems gnaw at you because evil thoughts acquire the power of your faith and try to lead you away from thoughts of God in any way possible. If you turn your consciousness to good thoughts, then bad thoughts lose this power, become weak, and after that we can efficiently control them. With the constant support of positive thoughts in our consciousness, the course of our life will become more even. The most important thing is that a human develops himself spiritually and learns the power of Love.”

“Do evil thoughts disappear completely then?” the novice questioned.

“No, they always exist in you,” Sensei explained, “but they do not have the power to affect you. Figuratively speaking, evil thoughts are waiting for an opportunity when you weaken your control so that they can take away the power of your faith again. This vigilant Guard of the animal nature is in your body your whole life as an integral part. As long as the soul is in a body, these ‘toughness’ tests will never stop. But when the soul completely ripens and leaves the cycle of reincarnation, Lucifer is also sincerely happy for it just as a strict and wise teacher can be glad for his pupil because the soul has passed all tests with honour and joined God in its true Love... And God is a parent. He is always glad to see his child succeed...”

“So, our life is school for the soul. Each embodied person experiences his personal Armageddon, taking the side of his prevalent, either good or evil, thoughts. Therefore, the knowledge given to people can lead either to Freedom or to slavery. But no one interferes with our free choice, neither God nor devil. If we choose God, we go to God; if we choose the devil, we go to the devil. That means that we either pave our road to paradise, to nirvana, or we throw ourselves into the hell of reincarnations.”

“So alright, if a human is not inherently sinful, then why does Christ’s death constitute redemption for human sins?”

“Just reflect deeply on this sentence. What kind of a redemption can there be? If it were in fact true, if only Christ took our sins, then whatever sins we commit now, everything is already forgiven. Is that right?! All this is nonsense. Each human himself is responsible for his sins before God.

“The death of Christ has been made the greatest mystery, and religious leaders still argue about it. Why did He let them crucify Him? Jesus was the Son of God, He was able to destroy the whole planet, not just a group of miserable people, as the power of God was given to Him. People wanted it to happen when they crucified him. They said, if you are the Son of God, come down from the cross. But Christ could not be tempted, He allowed them to crucify His body. Why? Because **the whole purpose of Christ’s**

coming was not only in the Teaching that He gave to people, but, most importantly, it was all about people's choice. Jesus agreed to these tortures in order to demonstrably show God's will, the essence of which is Freedom of human choice: either he decides to turn to God or he decides to remain in the darkness of thoughts of his animal nature. In other words, Christ brought the Freedom of choice to people. This is the greatest deed that was concealed from the majority of people, and it is the biggest sin of Christianity as a whole. As both before Him and after Him, people worked wonders and preached about the One God. But people remember only the crucifixion of Jesus, whereas the second half of His life in the East when He preached, worked wonders, and cured sick people was partly lost in time. All that remained were only a few mentions of Him as prophet Issa in various sources of ancient times, for example in the Bhavishya Mahapurana, written in Sanskrit."

"Did Jesus continue to live on Earth?" The novice was sincerely surprised.

"Certainly. Due to the efforts of Pontius Pilate, the body of Christ remained alive and Jesus had to return to the body. For, as a Bodhisattva born into a body, He must remain in it to his last breath."

"Due to the efforts of Pontius Pilate?!" The novice was even more surprised.

"Yes. Actually, Pontius Pilate understood Who Christ was. That is why he received Freedom from Jesus afterwards, that is, release from reincarnation. His name was engraved in the history of mankind."

"Interesting, very interesting. When did he understand that Jesus was God?"

"When he met with Jesus. Moreover, when he realised Who was standing in front of him, Pilate tried to save Issa in every possible way, convincing Him to run away, warning Him that the crowd would kill Him. But Jesus refused, saying that if it was His fate for His body to die, then so be it, because people had to make their choice. Pilate even tried to convince the crowd that Jesus was innocent, for them to release Him, as there was such a tradition in honour of a great holiday. But people demanded to see Christ crucified and killed. It was their choice.

"However, Pontius Pilate did as he wished anyway. Though for Christ as Bodhisattva, it would be much easier to finish His mission in a human body this way. But because of Love, Pilate tried to serve God according to his own understanding and saved the body of Christ, thinking it was Christ himself. Although Jesus was no longer there. When He was on the cross, He left His body in order not to be tempted by painful torments. But the body still remained alive."

“How could the body remain alive if it is written in the Bible that ‘One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once out came blood and water’?”

“The reason is that it was performed specially for the public by Pontius Pilate’s men. This blow was struck by one of Pilate’s best soldiers very professionally. He hit between the 5th and the 6th rib on the right side of the body, to the left and upwards, creating the illusion that he had punctured His heart. But actually, no vital organs were hurt. The body was unconscious but still alive. This is one of the important facts confirming Pilate’s participation in saving Jesus. It was done to assure the crowd that Christ had died. Although the shins of the other two crucified but still alive criminals were broken. It was done this way so that they would not be able to stand on their feet and would die a painful death from suffocation.

“Moreover, in those days the crucified were not allowed to be buried in separate tombs or to be given to their relatives for burial. They were thrown into paupers’ grave. The body of Jesus, again per Pontius Pilate’s order, was taken off the cross and carried to a cave. For almost two days, the body of Jesus was looked after, treated, and constantly smeared with herbal potions for bringing it to consciousness. To say it in modern language, they tried to reanimate him.

“But as a matter of fact, the prophecy of Jesus said that He will be resurrected from the dead and will appear shining on the third day. So Jesus was to come on the third day not in flesh but in the Spirit of God to dispel all doubts that He was sent from God. But Pontius Pilate and his supporters did not let Christ’s body die. Thus, Christ was forced to come into the body.

“In his understanding, Pilate certainly saved Christ. That is why Jesus appreciated his deed and released him from a loop of reincarnations. Pilate was the first who talked to Christ after His ‘resurrection’.”

“Well, that for sure is not known.”

“It is known. Even to this day, some mentions of it have remained. And someone keeps them carefully hidden so as not to shake his authority, but everything is in vain and he will pay for it. So when Jesus regained consciousness, Pontius Pilate talked to Him and begged Jesus to leave the country so that persecution of Him by priests in power would not start again. Pilate asked Him, ‘Take pity upon me, do not go out to the people.’ Jesus answered that He would comply with Pilate’s request but that He would leave only after He saw His pupils. And He stuck to His word. Since the main mission was finished, Issa left and went to the East with His mother and one of His pupils. Jesus lived more than a hundred years

and was buried in the city of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, where He settled down in His last years. This picturesque place is located between two lakes at the foot of the Himalayas. His tomb is located in a crypt of the sepulcher 'Rozabal', which means 'the tomb of the prophet'."

"Maybe it all really happened that way. But, it is impossible to prove that those are the remains of Jesus' body in that tomb."

"Why is it impossible? It can be proved. There are some traces of the crucifixion left. In particular, scratches on the bones of the hands, on the feet, and even traces from a spear on the ribs. Moreover, He has a distinctive badly healed up fracture in the distal half area of the right leg tibial diaphysis."

"A fracture? Was His leg broken during the execution?"

"Oh, this is not connected to the execution. It happened much later when Christ was quite elderly. That is why I draw your attention to the fact that the fracture is distinctive, it is badly healed up. It proves that Issa lived until old age."

"What about the record that Jesus rose into the sky in a body?"

"Apparently, such an insertion was necessary for someone to make in order to strengthen his flock's belief in the material nature... Actually, you should read the Bible more attentively: out of four Gospels, only two of them mention the Ascension. In the Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. John, it is written about Jesus' meeting with His pupils on a mountain. And in the Gospels according to St. John, it is even written that, after this meeting, Jesus left with His favourite pupil. There are numerous mentions of Issa staying in the East after His crucifixion. This information is kept not only in the East, but also in the Vatican library..."

"Let's suppose you are right. But that happened in troubled times, why not tell people the truth now, if you say that there are numerous mentions of Jesus staying in the East and these documents confirm it. The times have completely changed now."

"Times have changed, but people strive for power just as they did thousands of years ago. Can you imagine what it would mean for the top religious leaders to tell people the truth and show the world the historical documents they hide so carefully? It would be a great catastrophe for them! It would undermine all the foundations, defined once by themselves, would shake belief of the novices and their huge flock, and consequently would undermine their whole power structure. Nobody would ever do it.... But a human who is in a constant search of knowledge, without a doubt, will sooner or later come across these records."

"In general, you may be right," the novice said thoughtfully. "To tell the truth, I had some doubts concerning the Ascension, but about Pontius Pilate... who would have thought it!"

"Yes, even though Pontius Pilate deserved God's favour for his Love, he certainly set Issa up hard," Sensei said deep in thought. "He doomed Him to more than eighty years of wandering in a body. But evidently that was Christ's payment for Pilate's salvation."

A short silence ensued, with each participant of this conversation immersed in their thoughts. We also stood silently, not daring to interrupt such a fascinating conversation.

"I wonder," the novice started talking again, "why did Jesus come to the Jews and not some other nation? Is it because it was some sort of a dominant, chosen-by-God nation? And everywhere in the Bible it is written starting with Abraham that God calls them His favourite people."

"You see, God has no distinctions of nationalities, colour of skin, and so on, as all people are children of God. God loves them all equally. But when one of your children falls ill, you give all your attention and love to this sick child so that he recovers more quickly. The same is true with God. Recall the words of Jesus, 'Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do.'"

"Is the number of His pupils somehow connected to mysticism or numerology? Since there were twelve of them and Jesus was the thirteenth?"

"No, there is no mysticism in it. He simply searched among people for pupils with more or less mature souls. He was lucky to find twelve individuals among those people, and even then one of them... sold Him out."

The novice grinned, "Yes, if you follow the words of Jesus in the Bible then you are right, a sick person needs a doctor, not a healthy one... Though today, it seems to me that the whole planet needs a doctor and not just this nation..."

"Absolutely right. Just look at what is going on in our country where materialism has been cultivated for more than seventy years. As soon as the slightest freedom of choice appeared, people plunged into various religions as if famished, for their spiritual nature also has a need to develop. Just look how many new sects, branches, and religions appeared and began to prosper all at once.

"In our country, that's understandable. But take a look at what is going on around the world. Everywhere, there is a surge of various religions. People dartle from one to another. With their mind, it seems they like it. Everywhere they are treated nicely, everybody smiles at them, speaks to them politely... But the soul rejects their teachings because it needs real

knowledge, because it wants Freedom, while sects and religions are too limited. They give more food to the mind than to the soul. The souls feel that under this trumpery, this externally 'authentic' shell, the fruit itself is rotten. That's why the soul trembles, while man dartles in search of a whole, ripe fruit."

"Excuse me, but you mentioned that time is beginning to shrink. What do you mean by that?"

"It was predicted by the ancients," Sensei explained, "and even Jesus said, 'And except those days should be shortened, there would no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.' That is, when mankind as a whole faces the key choice or, as it is said in eschatology, when they stand on the threshold of divine justice, one of the main attributes of this time will be its compression... Basically, nothing will radically change in outward appearance. As the clock has been showing 24 hours per day, it will continue showing it. The calendar will remain as it is, and there will still be 365 days per year. But inside of the soul, something will start to tremble and the human will feel this shortage of time. He will notice that time runs faster; a day flies by as if an instant, a month flies by as if a week, years fly by as if months. And as times goes on, it will compress ever more, will become denser. It is a certain signal, a sign for the soul."

"Yes," the interlocutor said thoughtfully, "perhaps the predictions of the prophets are beginning to come true. But this is a prediction of the Second Advent. Is this time really coming?!... I wonder, how would I find out that it is Christ who has come? Do you remember that when Jesus came for the first time, nobody believed for a long time that He was truly the Son of God. And now just look, many people call themselves Christ or say that they were sent by Christ as the Comforter. On the one hand, all of what they say is right, it is according to the Bible, but on the other hand, there is no trust in them. So, how can one tell the true Christ from a false Saviour?"

"It is extremely easy. So, in the Bible it says that Jesus resurrected the dead and that it was enough for a sick person just to touch His clothes to recover. Judging from this, I think it would be most appropriate to use the 'Zen' practice. For this, it is enough to take a big stick and to hit the one who calls himself Christ with all your force. And if the stick blossoms after that, it will mean that it was Christ. If that does not happen, it will mean that he was just a schemer. In that case, it would be good to hit him one more time so that he has no wish to appropriate other people's glory again."

We stood silently for some seconds and thought about the words we had heard. At first, the novice took it seriously. But when he got the meaning of these words, he burst out laughing with all his heart, along with the crowd.

“Perhaps that is the most effective method,” he said with a smile. “But seriously?”

“To put it seriously, you should not wait for Jesus to come as a human, for He will come as the Son of God into people's souls. And He will reign one thousand years as the King sitting on a throne of not only our souls but also our minds. Recall His words in the Gospel according to St. John, ‘God is a Spirit’; ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me’; ‘And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you’; ‘At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.’”

The novice was silent for a while and then asked, “I wonder when the end of the world will come? Recently, different dates have begun to appear in newspapers. Our sect, as I understand, tries to match this date with predictions of various astrologists pointing to the date of the beginning of parade of the planets. So, I wonder when the Apocalypse will come, when will we appear before the justice of God at last?”

“You know, for two thousand years people have been waiting for the Armageddon and the Second Advent of Christ. Almost all religions are based on the idea that as soon as tomorrow the world will end and those who are not in their ranks will all die in Gehenna. Here is what I want to tell you about this. **Each human in his life experiences his personal Armageddon, but not everyone wins it, in fact not everyone understands that he has come face to face with this Armageddon. Therefore, you should not be afraid of the Apocalypse which comes for everybody, for it is easier to die all together. The main thing is to win your personal Armageddon, so as not to find yourself in that crowd later.**”

“That's right! I've been thinking myself that we must do something now because it is not known what will happen tomorrow... To tell the truth, the words you have spoken have somehow relieved my soul... Because this total uncertainty, all these horror stories are already getting on my nerves. Yet, I do not fully understand, what religion do you profess?”

“I do not profess and do not belong to any religion. I belong only to God,” Sensei replied simply.

After that, the conversation turned to more open topics concerning the novice personally. I had the impression that the guy talked with Sensei as if they were alone in the universe. He told Sensei more and more about himself, about his life, as though there was no silent crowd, as though it had dissolved in the night. It seemed to me that both interlocutors were two tired wanderers who met by chance under a starry infinity. They were mutually absorbed in this conversation about the eternal, about the essence of things, as if all restrictions of space and time had disappeared.

“...It’s so amazing... You know, lately, for some reason, I didn’t have luck in finding a good spiritual guide. Either I was not satisfied with their answers, or they were not satisfied with my questions. During our constant debates we, as they say, beat around the bush, spending our time in vain. But the things you say... I simply catch myself thinking that I cannot argue with you because it coincides with my internal conception of the world... It would be an honour for me to have such a Teacher if, of course, the Teacher considers me a worthy disciple.”

“You know, I wouldn’t advise you to search for a Teacher either in me or in anybody else. It is not because you are an unworthy disciple, but because have much more within yourself. I see a Spark in you. I would advise you to study everything yourself. Study sacred books of various religions and create a collective image for yourself of such ideas as who God is, what truth, faith, and miracles are, and so on. Because if there were only one righteous religion, then all other people could not be saved and there would be no other miracles. But miracles of faith happen in other religions too. Moreover, if you have an opportunity, study psychology, biology, anatomy, morphology. It would also be good to study astronomy, quantum physics, chemistry... In general, broaden your knowledge in the field of exact sciences as much as you can. I am sure that you will begin to understand what I want to tell you. Now you simply feel it, but then you will begin to understand. When you begin to understand it, you begin to understand God. And the best Teacher is God...”

That evening we took the last tram home. It was already late, after midnight, but I simply could not fall asleep as I was completely shocked at this conversation with Sensei. My diary, as my best friend and silent interlocutor, accepted all the outpourings of my soul. Our thoughts-

and-writing dialogue continued until the morning. Only when the sun rose in the sky and the world began to wake up slightly, only then did the bed, which had been missing me for a long time, embrace my body with its soft coverlets. Thank God it was Sunday — the national sleep-all-you-want day.



41

Time flew by quickly. The stressful period of final examinations began. People were a bundle of nerves and sweat. Strangely enough, during this last year of my school life, I began to regard this intense process more calmly. After everything I had experienced, examinations seemed to be a minor test of my knowledge rather than a hard trial of destiny as many of my schoolmates considered them to be. When all this was over, when at last the long-awaited graduation party came, I still could not believe that my life is continuing and that all this is not a dream.

Watching the sunrise with all our classmates in a picturesque place in the country, we started talking about what professions we were going to choose. Many dreamt of becoming doctors, lawyers, accountants, and businessmen. And when I was asked about it, I sincerely answered, “I want to become Human.”

Of course, my classmates did not understand the meaning of these words to the fullest extent, but many of them became more serious and thoughtful. Indeed, we were poised at the beginning of our independent way of life, at the moment where our personal choice would shape our destiny. It was still up in the air how our destiny would change our lives... If we look closely at the destinies of different people who have already lived the greater part of their lives, we can see that many of their life roads and paths sooner or later merge into one, that is, an attempt to become Human. For, as Sensei once said, this is the true purpose of our lives.



42

Because of a graduation party, unfortunately, I had to miss a spiritual training. The next day, I phoned Tatyana, and she told me some very good news. It turns out that Sensei was due for a week-long vacation, and the guys persuaded him to travel to the seaside with them. Even Nikolai Andreevich decided to use his days off from work, which he had been saving, for such a rare occasion of a round-the-clock dialogue with Sensei.

“I said that you would go too,” Tatyana said over the phone.

“That’s great, you’re a real friend! For sure, I won’t miss it.”

We decided to go in three cars: Sensei’s Zhiguli⁶, Nikolai Andreevich’s Volga, and Andrey’s old Zaporozhets⁷ that he had borrowed from his grandfather. All the necessary items were found collectively. Volodya promised to get tents. Stas and Zhenya turned out to be passionate scuba divers and provided a supply of fishing accessories, including an inflatable rubber boat. Tatyana and I took responsibility for the dishes, and Kostya was responsible for supplying well water.

6. Zhiguli — is a compact sedan car produced by the Soviet manufacturer AvtoVAZ and introduced in 1970. *Translator’s remark.*

7. Zaporozhets — was a series of rear-wheel-drive superminis designed and built from 1958 at the ZAZ factory in Soviet Ukraine. *Translator’s remark.*



43

On the appointed day at five o'clock in the morning, rattling our bowls and spoons along the silent streets, Tatyana and I arrived at our meeting place. Ruslan and Yura were already there. Then came Stas and Zhenya. They told us that Sensei would be an hour late because he had worked until morning. The guys said that usually he does not stop until he has seen the last patient. Considering the long queue, this would take until about two o'clock in the morning. But that day, apparently, having found out that the chiropractor was leaving for a week, people came in droves. That is why it was already five o'clock in the morning when Sensei had finally finished seeing patients.

A bit later, Andrey and Slava arrived in his grandfather's jalopy, which seemed to be as old as Andrey's grandfather himself. But Tatyana and I were happy to go even by such means of transportation. When you are in good company, a Zaporozhets isn't any worse than a Mercedes. We began to put things into the 'steel horse', filling the trunk almost to the top with our luggage.

"Well, Kostya will have to put his bag under his feet," Andrey said businesslike, barely closing the trunk.

But when Kostya arrived, Andrey's jaw dropped a mile. Kostya's luggage arrived by Volga together with a fully loaded trailer. As we helped unload these endless bags and sacks, Andrey almost lost his gift of speech. Helplessly waving his hands, he blew up at last:

"You are out of your mind! It looks like you are going to the North Pole. We are going for a week, and just the food you brought will be enough for three years! And on top of it, these huge flasks with water! Sensei told you to take one, not four. Why not bring a tanker!"

"To tell the truth, I wanted to but I couldn't. There was no suitable transport," Kostya answered with a smile, nodding at his father's Volga.

"You're nuts! Just tell me, where can I fit all this in? What do you want me to do with these barrels?! Unless we attach them to the Zaporozhets instead of wheels?!"

"But Nikolai Andreevich supposedly promised to bring a trailer."

"That's just it, he only 'supposedly promised'."

"OK, don't lose your cool, we'll think of something."

For a good fifteen minutes, Andrey indignantly circled the huge heap of Kostya's treasure. But Kostya only laughed the matter off, saying, "I will see how your Excellency will thank my Majesty for unforgettable comfort at the seaside."

While Andrey broke out in the next fountain of emotions, Tatyana asked Kostya, "Really, why did you pack so much?"

"Well, why not enjoy ourselves? I tried hard, not for myself but for everybody," the 'philosopher' said slyly. "And anyways, all this is only ashes and fuss." And holding her tenderly around the waist, Kostya pensively said, "Of all, thy charming lips are most precious to me."

"Oh, you," Tatyana gently pushed him away and burst out with laughter.

Kostya made a suffering face and said with pathos,

"Ah, pride of heart costs many torments!"

Looking sideways at Tatyana, he added,

"I have so tightly pulled my bowstring,

That I am afraid my bow will be broken!"

"He will not get away from me. I'll give him the what for....," Andrey said unexpectedly loud, continuing to mutter to himself.

All of us roared with laughter as Sensei, Volodya, and Victor drove up. Looking at the huge heap of things, Sensei asked in confusion, "Guys, are you going to the North Pole?"

Our group burst out laughing again, but Andrey, having found a fellow thinker in Sensei, started to complain.

Nikolai Andreevich finally arrived with the long-awaited trailer. But it appeared that the trailer was too small for all of Kostya's goods. Somehow, we managed to push things into three cars and began to ram our bodies inside. Slava moved to Sensei's car. Tatyana and I placed ourselves among the bags on the back seat of the Zaporozhets. And Kostya, as the guiltiest person, got a 'vacant seat'. It was in front, near Andrey, on a seat which was not only non-standard and very low, but also rocked here and there due to being fastened with only one screw. So Kostya, because of his height, felt all the charm of the three-hour trip in the Zaporozhets. But the never-

ending humour of the guys smoothed out all the discomfort with friendly, cheerful laughter.

Our Zaporozhets rumbled ahead of the whole convoy. Andrey tried to squeeze all possible power out of it by pressing the gas pedal. Sensei and the senior guys followed us, keeping a distance. Nikolai Andreevich, loaded up to the top, drove slowly somewhere behind Sensei. It was not enough for Andrey to head the line, so he decided to show us that that Zaporozhets was the coolest car on the road. He began to overtake one car after another, speeding and throwing his chest out with pride. Kostya crossed himself for fun at these manoeuvres, clutched at the front panel, and started to pray about the salvation of all drivers suffering from such an inveterate ‘cattle driver of this jalopy’.

We had taken the lead by a little bit. On the way we saw a small roadside market. In the distance, Tatyana saw strawberries in baskets on the ground and shouted to the guys through the noise of the roaring engine to stop the car. When we stopped at last, Kostya gave a sigh of relief trying to get out, as he said, ‘from this tin in which he had to double himself up like a mackerel’. In order for us to get out, Kostya had to drag out his chair again. The whole market was observing the comedy show. Moreover, when Kostya at last slammed the door, a mirror fell off of it. Andrey looked at him as though he had ruined the most sacred thing,

“Master’s fist should strike your body and his leg should strike your muzzle! Who on earth slams a door like this?! For three days, I have been assembling this car. It is a valuable antique! It must be treated gently, like a woman...”

And there was more of a lecture on this topic. The guys scattered into the market, choosing berries. I remained near the Zaporozhets waiting for others. Sensei arrived with the guys, but when they got out of the car, something strange happened.

One woman, about forty-five years old, who had been standing behind her goods in black neckerchief, her eyes red from tears, having noticed Sensei, hastily stepped over her berries, practically scattering them all over the ground with this motion. Running up to Sensei, she fell down at his feet and began to implore him, lamenting in tears, “I beg you, Gabriel, take care of my sonny. How shall I live without him now?! Please, Gabriel, take me to him too. I do not want this thrice cursed life any more, I do not want it! My Lord, have mercy on me, let me go to my sonny...”

I was standing very close by. And then I saw Sensei’s eyes change. Some kind of glow appeared in them, or more correctly, some soft, tender light that changed Sensei’s features. At this moment, I felt my ‘lotus flower’ begin

to vibrate intensely. And this impulse force came not from my thoughts but, as it seemed to me, it came from Sensei. He bent over the woman, lifting her up.

"Rise, woman," he told her in a very calm, quiet voice.

It seemed to me that his voice became somewhat unusual. The woman rose a little but did not stand up from her knees, continuing to beg him, but this time it was more quietly, looking directly into his eyes. Sensei tenderly put his hand on her head and said,

"Do not worry, woman. Everything is fine with your Nikolai. He is a righteous man. He has already been taken care of."

The woman stretched her hands out to him. Her eyes were lit with some sparkle of hope, and her face became stiff in a single impulse of begging, "Let me go, Gabriel, let me go to him..."

Such words of despair made me shiver. At this moment, Sensei's face was covered with a light haze, and his face became even more beautiful because of it. My 'lotus flower' pulsed even more.

"Everyone has his own time. You still need to take care of Ksyusha. You will celebrate her wedding, await her firstborn, nurse him for a week. And on the ninth day, you will go to your Nikolai to tell him what a fine grandson he got," Sensei said calmly.

With each word from Sensei, the eyes of the woman became lighter and kinder. Teardrops of joy began to shine on her face. The woman broke into a smile. Not knowing how to express her gratitude, she began to fall down to his feet again. Sensei tried to raise her up from the ground. Then some old women who traded next to her ran up, lifted her from the ground, took her arms, and led her to the village saying, "Hush, Mashenka, dear, let's go, let's go home..."

The woman went quietly, whispering something and constantly crossing herself. The other old women began to collect her scattered goods. All these events happened within one minute.

Then Nikolai Andreevich arrived. Approaching the group with Yura and Ruslan in tow, he inquired what had happened.

"Some granny went off her rocker," Zhenya said, who at that time was standing far away from the teacher. "She fell to Sensei's feet, all in tears, was asking for something..."

Sensei silently lit a cigarette. When Nikolai Andreevich began to ask, he changed the topic to usual things, answering shortly, "Yes, things happen in life. A woman is in distress."

"I see... And why did you stop here? We did not plan it." Nikolai Andreevich asked Kostya.

“Well, we wanted to buy some strawberries.”

Our group walked once again around the market with Sensei. And choosing ripe berries, Sensei bought a big basket for all of us. A happy old woman, packing strawberries into three packets, tenderly saying:

“You, children, do not take offence. Not even a month has passed since the woman’s son Nikolai died in a crash. He was her only son, her hope and support. Her husband died a long time ago... And such sorrow again. He, her sonny, was so young. A little daughter of his remained, Oksana, she is five... Masha’s destiny is a hard one. She brought her son up almost alone, and now she has to raise her granddaughter together with her daughter-in-law... I don’t understand what’s come over her. She has, probably, quite a weakened from sorrow.”

“Yes,” Nikolai Andreevich agreed with sympathy. “Post-traumatic stress disorder... Stress can cause even worse mental disorders. I remember there was one case...”

Having heard eloquent examples from his practice, my consciousness calmed down a little. “Well,” I thought, “then it’s no wonder she threw herself at the first man she saw.” As we drove, the guys chattered cheerfully about their own matters while eating ripe strawberries. During another of Kostya’s jokes, it suddenly dawned on me. At this moment, I precisely recalled that woman’s babbling and Sensei’s answers. “Stop! She didn’t mention her son’s name, and moreover she did not say the name of her granddaughter. But Sensei precisely named Nikolai and Ksyusha.” I nearly choked on a strawberry because of this discovery. I did not want to eat it any more. Recalling Sensei’s face, my ‘lotus’ started to vibrate again, spreading pleasant sensations all over my body. I physically felt the presence of Sensei nearby. More accurately, I did not feel Sensei himself, but I felt the force that came from him at that moment. And I felt so nice and cosy, as if someone had wrapped me up in soft petals. In this state of bliss, I dozed off.



44

I woke up because someone was shaking my shoulder.

“Wake up, sleepyhead, we’re almost there,” Tatyana said.

At the next stop, we stretched our numb legs. The air smelt of sea and freshness. While Andrey, Victor, and Volodya tried to repair the pinging engine of the Zaporozhets, we had a snack in the nearest outdoor cafe.

Half an hour later, our motorcade arrived at the resort area, where people with beautiful chocolate colour bodies lounged around in a carefree way in their bathing suits. Sensei's car headed our fleet. Andrey could not concentrate on the road, trying simultaneously to look around and not break any traffic laws at the same time.

Passing by one of the guest houses, Zhenya pointed out a billboard to us that he saw from the window, on which written in huge, bold type was “A well-renowned psychic of international standard, manual therapist, fortune teller, magician, and wizard Vitaliy Yakovlevich... carries out medical and recovery sessions. Sessions begin at 20.00 daily.”

“Who is he?” Tatyana and I asked the guys.

“I don’t know,” Kostya shrugged his shoulders.

“Look, isn't it that the "Neanderthal man," the one who hung spoons on himself? Do you remember?!”

“Yeah, that odd fellow?! Maybe. If I'm not mistaken, his name was also Vitaliy Yakovlevich. What did he call himself... the ‘Pantocrator of the Universe and the whole Earth’...”

The guys began to noisily recall that case, laughing at the tricks of this ‘minor deity bum’.

Meanwhile having crossed the resort area, we drove to a peninsula that measured about 12 kilometres. It’s just as well that we had a car as

the camp was in a secluded place. It seemed the local authorities didn't want any more adventurers in the neighbourhood, as a huge pipe was laid across the only road. Right there in the bushes, though, the guys found two extremely wide boards, which were left by caring drivers for their kin. After placing the boards on the pipe, our drivers rolled the cars to the closed side of the road like professional stuntmen. Though dealing with Nikolai Andreevich's trailer took a lot of effort.

Having reached one of the most beautiful nooks of nature, we chose a place that obviously had been "warmed" by "campers" more than once. After collecting all the garbage left by careless tourists, we burnt it and began to set up camp. Sensei again appeared to be a talented and skilled leader. He had prepared for all eventualities, even the possibility of a storm. All the guys were busy, enthusiastically helping Sensei and each other. All Kostya's things turned out to be really useful, transforming our camp into a cosy, comfortable "settlement". Kostya did not miss any opportunity to emphasise this fact, reminding us that, because of these things, Andrey the 'sadist' had tortured him the entire journey on an 'electric chair'. Tatyana and I worked on a kitchen. The guys put up a special tent for food and gave us a kerosene stove for cooking.

And so, life in our camp got underway. After lunch, we swam in the sea to our heart's content, then warmed our bones on hot sand with great pleasure. The senior guys floated in the sea in the inflatable rubber boat. Nikolai Andreevich read a book and Sensei dozed in the shadow of an umbrella, having covered himself with a towel. We decided to play cards. Kostya tried to memorise which cards have already been used and to calculate which ones everybody had. However, it was practically impossible as there were too many of us and we played with two decks of cards. At his next failure, Kostya started to count card combinations in his head according to his special arithmetic system. While doing one of these odd calculations, he raised his eyebrows as if surprised and asked, "Sensei, what is the largest prime number you are able to make calculations with?"

Sensei answered without opening his eyes, "In short or in full?"

"In short, of course."

"2 to the 13,466,917th minus 1," Sensei said simply, as though the question was about a common multiplication table. "This number's only factors are 1 and itself. I think that is the largest prime number that I am capable of counting in my head."

Kostya turned towards him in surprise. Then he started to calculate something energetically again. Sensei, opening his eyes, added, "If you want to calculate my IQ, you are wasting your time; it is much lower than yours."

After saying these words, Sensei turned to the other side and sank into slumber again. Kostya was slightly shocked, "Say! Sensei is cool! How did he know about IQ? I just thought it."

"Yeah," said Andrey, "and this question remained a sweet dream in his memory until it turned blue from old age, waiting for your answer."

The guys laughed, having beaten Kostya again at cards.

That evening, Sensei failed to meet our expectations that he would tell us something unforgettable, sitting at the fire beneath the stars. Right after dinner, Sensei went to sleep, probably because of an accumulation of fatigue. But we sat at the fire for a long time, laughing light-heartedly and telling each other different stories from our lives.



45

In the morning, I woke up around seven o'clock from seagulls squawking obnoxiously somewhere nearby, and heard a conversation between the guys, as they had apparently left their tent upon hearing the noise. Stas was saying to Zhenya in a sleepy voice,

"It's so early, but Sensei is already fishing. I wonder what he is trying to catch from the shore, moreover, with a fishing rod. Let's go and check."

My curiosity became much stronger than sweet sleep. I hastened to get out of my tent. Sensei sat peacefully on a folding chair with a fishing rod in his hands. A three-litre jar, half filled with water, stood nearby. A few seagulls ran around him shouting indignantly. When we came up, the seagulls flew up and hung in the air near Sensei, examining us from above with curiosity.

"Sensei, are you fattening up the seagulls or something?" Stas grinned, looking at the empty jar.

"Not exactly. They are teaching me how to catch fish," Sensei answered without any shadow of embarrassment.

We took it as a joke and laughed.

"Why didn't you wake us earlier? We could have brought a fishing net ..."

"Oh, forget about the fishing net. I just wanted some fish soup."

Just for fun, Zhenya demonstratively glanced into the empty jar, turning it around in the light, and said with humour, "Yes, the soup will be rich with such big fish."

At this moment, the seagull that was flying above us dropped a small fish which fell right next to Sensei's feet. Everybody laughed.

"Look, Sensei! There's a fish for you," Zhenya said with humour, putting it into the jar of water.

Volodya and Victor arrived and asked, "What's going on?"

"You see, Sensei with his fishing rod made even the seagulls feel pity," Zhenya said. "They are probably getting tired of looking at this empty jar."

We laughed loudly again. Sensei said smiling,

"Alright, those who are laughing at me the most, will clean fish for the fish soup and for shashlik⁸, too."

We roared with laughter, imagining the comic picture of cutting up this tiny fish while a big hungry crowd waited for it. Sensei laughed at us, and then said, "Alright, you storytellers, go ahead and pull that out..."

He pointed at a thick fishing line that was fastened with one end to the leg of a chair, while the other end was deep in the water. The guys started to pull. We were shocked when we found a couple of sturgeons about 4 kilos each and about 8 huge flounders. Everyone exchanged looks in bewilderment and asked almost in unison, "All this with just a fishing rod?!"

Sensei smiled. "Of course, there was no fishing rod. I just got up a bit earlier and saw that some fishermen had come out from a fish factory to check their nets. So I thought, by the time I get there, they'll be coming back. And that's just what happened. So I went and bought some fish... Fish wouldn't bite the bait even once," the Teacher complained with regret.

As we carried the fish to clean it, Zhenya told Stas half in jest, "Yeah, sure he went. The only way to the fish factory is 4 miles on foot."

"But maybe he went by car," I suggested my version.

"No, he didn't. First of all, it is next to our tent, we would have heard everything. And secondly, there are no footprints on the sand."

While the other guys woke up, this story acquired many more mysterious details. Sensei's mood was excellent that day. After a light breakfast, he suggested a jog to the end of the peninsula. We left Kostya and Tatyana as volunteers on duty, and so as not to be left without dinner, Nikolai Andreevich also stayed in the camp.

On our way, we stopped a couple times to do warm-ups with intensive muscle load. All in all, training in nature, and with such a beautiful background, couldn't be compared with a stuffy gym. Here, as they say, the soul and the body come together in a single impulse.

Having almost reached the end, we saw a real colony of seagulls. Our group kept to the coast so as not to disturb their peace. Nevertheless,

8. shashlik — is a dish of skewered and grilled cubes of meat popular in Eastern and Central Europe, the Baltic region the Caucasus, the Central Asia, Afghanistan, Israel, Iraq, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Turkey, and other places. *Translator's remark.*

many seagulls persistently squawked and circled above us, trying to frighten unexpected visitors away from their nests.

After a while, the most beautiful view, skillfully created by nature, opened up to us. At the end of the peninsula, waves met in the shape of perfect rhombuses in a single chain off the distant coast. Outlines of their wavy edges were emphasised with white seafoam. All this magnificence was supplemented with an unusual play of various palettes of seawater from light turquoise to dark blue. The amazing blueness of the sky with only one whitish cloudlet created a unique masterpiece of this grandiose view.

Sensei gave us fifteen minutes to rest, while he and Volodya sat down in a “lotus” pose at the edge of the coastline. Some of us, including my persona, hastened to follow their example, sitting down beside them. Gentle breeze blew about. Coastal waves created a melodious noise which was supplemented with the calls of seagulls reaching us from a distance. Either because of contemplation of this divine beauty or because of Sensei’s presence, my “lotus flower” began to increase its activity, spreading pleasant waves all over my body. For a short period of time, I had such an unusual feeling in me as if I were dissolved in all this surrounding beauty and became its integral part. This sensation was almost instantaneous, but it was unforgettably fabulous. Sensei interrupted this state of bliss when he announced, “Let’s go back.”

The sun was already burning quite a bit. And Sensei, in order to make our way ‘easier’, said that we will run waist-deep in water. This turned out to be incredibly difficult. Volodya and Sensei rushed forward like two torpedoes overtaking each other. Thanks to their competition, our group could cheat a little: some ran knee-deep and some even ankle-deep in water. But when we finally got to camp, it was the cheaters, my persona among them, who sprawled out limp on the sand. Sensei and Volodya continued to radiate their rousing optimism, which seemed to come from nowhere. After this ‘marathon run’, they suggested to the crowd that we play water polo. To our great surprise, the senior guys agreed with pleasure. And the other ‘ailing bodies’ shuffled off to help make lunch.

Busy with cooking, I was observing Sensei. He laughed, played around, and scampered with a ball like all the other guys. He was absolutely the same as others, a young, strong, funny, and healthy guy. On the one hand, he was an ordinary person... But everybody who was present saw in him something special, some charm, found some features that attracted them by simplicity and at the same time by their refinement. His Soul was like a multifaceted diamond that each of us admired with his own angle of sight, with his own angle of refraction of internal light. But in

fact, nobody could penetrate him completely, nobody could understand who He actually was.

When at last the guys calmed down at the hottest part of the day, our camp fell into profound sleep. I woke up at about four o'clock and awakened Tatyana to help me cook something tasty for our big group. When we got out of the tent, I saw Sensei sitting on the sand with Nikolai Andreevich, talking about something. Sensei was explaining something, making three little hills from sand. After their conversation, Nikolai Andreevich and Sensei stood up and slowly walked in our direction. The first hill suddenly began to move and a pigeon, having appeared from nowhere, flew out of it. I was startled by the unexpectedness of the action. I couldn't believe my eyes. Tatyana dropped a potato and opened her mouth with surprise. Then the second hill began to move, and another pigeon flew out of it. Sensei and Nikolai Andreevich only turned around carelessly, continuing the conversation, not even flustered. The third hill began to move, and from within jumped out... a sparrow. Everything grew cold with fear inside of me. The sparrow did not fly away as the pigeons did, but followed Sensei, jumping. Having run up this way in front of him, it ruffled its feathers, spread its wings wide apart, and began to twitter loudly as if indignant over something. Sensei stopped, observing the desperate twittering of this ruffled sparrow, and then spoke to it with a smile, "Well, as you wish, so let it be."

After saying these words, he bent down and covered the sparrow with sand again, making a hill a bit higher than the first one. I stood up with curiosity. But what happened next finally nailed me to a chair. As soon as Sensei turned away, the hill began to move and a black vulture of an impressive size flew out of it. It immediately flew away towards the peninsula.

"Where is my thanks?" Sensei asked in surprise and made a helpless gesture, following the vulture with his eyes. "Though, it is as usual..."

Sensei dropped his hand hopelessly and went to his tent for cigarettes. Tatyana and I sat stunned. And when Nikolai Andreevich and Sensei started to move away towards the beach, I heard the following words, "So that was an illusion of my thought?" Nikolai Andreevich asked calmly, as if the conversation was about ordinary things.

"No. This was precisely materialisation of my thought."

"Then why did my attempts end only with hallucinations?"

"Because you had doubts. For materialisation, purity of faith is necessary. It is very hard to achieve, for the slightest doubt will destroy everything..."

A gust of wind carried away Sensei's words so far that I couldn't hear them. I wanted so much to go after him and to listen to such an interesting

conversation. But at that moment, Tatyana came out of her state of shock, broke into an endless stream of thoughts, and poured them into my already puzzled head.



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As the day drew on, one of the senior guys suggested we organise an evening of entertainment and comedy and go to see the healing therapeutic session of the “great magician and wizard” who was giving his first session that day. To get there, though, it was necessary to trek five miles on foot. Only half of our group, including Sensei and Nikolai Andreevich, decided to go. I didn't want to miss anything interesting for myself or for my diary, which was already full of unusual recordings, even though it was only our second day at the seaside.

By eight o'clock in the evening, we took our seats in a summer theatre where about seventy people had already gathered. A young woman with a three-year-old boy sat near Nikolai Andreevich. Other children rushed around the rows and noisily chased each other. But this child quietly sat in his mother's lap. I gave him a piece of candy but it turned out that the child did not see it. His mother said that her son had congenital blindness. Nikolai Andreevich started talking to her, finding out some professional information. Soon the woman had confessed the whole story of her life. It appeared that this boy also would not talk after a trauma he experienced at the age of two. The woman also had an older son and a daughter who were quite normal children. Nikolai Andreevich sympathised with her and began to write down the addresses and surnames of the best experts in this area of medicine. The woman was happy and joked that in any case she had not come to the session in vain.

At this time, Vitaliy Yakovlevich took the stage. We could hardly keep ourselves from laughing as it really was that “magician and wizard with spoons on his belly”, with whom we had the “great honour” of getting acquainted in autumn. Now he looked much more decent. His face was

smoothly shaved, and his hair was neatly trimmed. He wore a clean summer suit. Despite this significant transformation in his appearance, his haughty look and manners remained the same.

Vitaliy Yakovlevich came out on stage, regarded the crowd with his “magic gaze”, and began his lecture. For a good forty minutes, he told almost the same story as the first time in the sports hall, with the only difference being that he did not stick spoons to himself and his speech was full of different obscure esoteric and medical terms. Assertively waving his hands, he walked about the stage, thrusting his chest proudly. And finally, having finished talking, he invited to the stage people who suffered from any of the illnesses he had mentioned.

It seemed to me that he had listed almost all diseases from the “Paramedic reference book” we had at home, and even in the same alphabetical order.

About fifteen people came up to the stage. Someone said that he had a heart condition, someone else said that his stomach hurt, another one complained about high blood pressure, and some old woman said that trophic ulcers on her legs were festering. The woman with the child also went up. Nikolai Andreevich commented that people who are in sorrow are ready to believe any nonsense, hoping for who knows what.

When all the volunteers had gathered on stage, Vitaliy Yakovlevich began to wave his hands strenuously and talk all kinds of nonsense of ‘cosmic fluid’ sort. To my great surprise, again I felt my “lotus flower” begin to strongly vibrate. I was looking at the stage and could not believe that all this delirium of Vitaliy Yakovlevich could really have caused this tidal wave in me. Concentrating, I felt that all this vibration emanated not from the stage but from somewhere behind and to the right. That was even more strange, as Sensei sat behind and to the left of me. I looked back, but Sensei wasn't at his seat. Then I looked back to the other side, where the source was according to my sensations. Far away in the corner, at the very end of the empty rows, I saw Sensei. He was sitting and staring with concentration at people who were standing next to the stage. Every second I felt this current grow in force. Waves of pleasant sensations were already spilling about my body. But the current still grew.

There was a pause in Vitaliy Yakovlevich's verbal outpouring. And at this moment, the blind kid said “Mum!” — not loudly, but distinctly. The woman broke into tears, hugging her son tightly. She drew everybody's attention. And then complete pandemonium began. A woman said that her headache eased, a man said that his stomach stopped aching. But the old woman with the squeaky voice shouted the most that her trophic ulcers began to dry up before her eyes. Unable to believe it, she tried to show them to anyone who would

look. Many people in the hall also got up from their places and ran to the stage. Even Vitaliy Yakovlevich himself was taken aback from gratitude, from requests for help for people and their relatives from all directions. Meanwhile, Sensei came back to his place in the hall.

The young mother pressed the child to her breast and sobbed violently but could not get out of the crowd, as general crush began and nobody paid attention to her. Nikolai Andreevich hurried to help her. We got the woman out of the cinema and into fresh air, sitting her down on a bench. Nikolai Andreevich began to calm her down. The kid sat next to her and, hearing his mother's crying, began to scrunch his face with his own emotions. Sensei sat down, squatting opposite him, and tenderly stroked his head, saying something quietly under his breath. The child calmed down and began listening. Then he began to blink quickly with his long eyelashes... And then the kid looked purposefully at the watch that gleamed on Sensei's arm as he stroked him. The boy, catching Sensei's hand, seized the watch, trying to pull it off. He looked into Sensei's eyes and gave a short but fairly meaningful command, "Give!"

The kid's mother fainted from everything she had seen. While Nikolai Andreevich and the guys tried to bring her around, Sensei took off his watch and gave it to the kid, saying with a smile, "Here, kid, keep it to remember this."

The kid, smiling happily, began to play with it, examining and testing its durability... When the woman came to, she still could not believe that her son had recovered his sight. She gave him everything that was in her handbag, and the kid examined everything with real pleasure, turning the objects into improvised toys. When she was convinced of his newfound sight, the woman grabbed her son in joy, thanked Nikolai Andreevich and all of us for help, and ran to her building to tell her husband this news.

On our way back to camp, Nikolai Andreevich was still surprised.

"How could this Vitaliy Yakovlevich, with his chattering, awaken so much faith that he could achieve such therapeutic effects?! In fact, I saw with my own eyes that the boy was blind. The others could be fake. But it's hard to comprehend this case!"

I looked at Sensei. I was curious what he would say. But Sensei only said, half in jest, "You probably listened inattentively to his lecture. Next time, you should definitely take a notebook with you."

On our way, we gathered dry wood for our evening fire. The senior guys picked up some half rotten wooden columns that had once served as pylons for electric lines. All in all, judging by Sensei's excellent mood and the gathered stock of firewood, the night promised to be long and unforgettable.



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On the road to our camp, the Teacher and Nikolai Andreevich started an interesting conversation. Our psychologist, impressed by everything that happened, asked Sensei, “Well, I understand, adults under therapeutic influence can partially ease the process of disease with help of suggestions. But children?! At such an age, they can hardly understand what is said to them. In this case, though, the result is evident. Even I do not understand how it could happen. Because if this three-year-old blind child began to see; it means, logically we should admit the fact of treatment from a distance.”

“The whole history of mankind, if read attentively, is full of such facts,” Sensei said with a smile.

“Yes, but to read and to see are two completely different things! If it is really so, then I don’t understand anything at all.”

“It’s not difficult to understand if you have a holistic conception of what the world and the human body actually is.”

“And what is a human body?”

“The human body, as well as all other matter, is just emptiness. It is an illusion created by God’s thought.”

“So you want to say that this tree and I are basically identical because we are emptiness?” Nikolai Andreevich asked half in jest, passing by a big tree.

“Basically, yes.” Sensei grinned and added in a more serious way, “Your matter, as well as that of the tree, is generated by one and the same initial energy, but modified and transformed into different wave states. Hence the difference in material features. What does a human body consist of? A body, as you know, consists of a system of organs, organs consist of tissues, tissues consist of groups of cells. Cells consist of basic chemical elements. And

the greatest part of a body, about 98% of it, is made up of oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, and hydrogen, and 2% are other chemical elements.”

“I don’t understand, how is that?” These words accidentally escaped my lips.

“Well, for example, for 50 kg of your weight, the allocation formula will be as follows,” Sensei looked a few seconds at my body as though estimating something, and then said, “Oxygen in various isotope states 30.481 kg, isotopes of carbon 11.537 kg, isotopes of hydrogen 5.01 kg, and isotopes of nitrogen 1.35 kg. That is 48.378 kg in total. Well, and I won’t list all other elements where the weight is just grams. In general, they account for only 1.622 kg of the total weight... If we are going to be more exact and add everything that hasn’t been digested: the remains of ice-cream, sweets, and the drink that are not included in a chemical reaction of your body, then... in total, the weight of your body will amount to 50 kg and 625 grams.”

I was simply struck by such high-speed calculations of my body at just one glance. I had never thought about the structure of my matter. Meanwhile, Sensei continued to address Nikolai Andreevich,

“So then, what are our chemical elements? It is molecules which make up a cell and exist according to their own biophysical laws. Note that there is emptiness around molecules. Let’s go deeper. Molecules consist of atoms, and between them again there is emptiness. Atoms consist of a nucleus and electrons rotating around them, and between them there is emptiness. The nucleus of an atom again consists of elementary particles — protons and neutrons — with the same inherent emptiness between them. Let us note that variations of a chemical element differ in the number of neutrons in an atomic nucleus, which is a feature of isotopy. Protons and neutrons which form the nucleus of an atom also consist of smaller particles. So look, each time when physicists make the next step, a new level of knowledge opens up to them, expanding their relative borders beyond the horizon of infinite knowledge. Simply, as much as human perfected a microscope, that is the extent to which he learnt the nature of the microcosm. I shall not continue enumerating what is divided into what, but in the end, division comes to absolute emptiness out of which everything is born. It exists everywhere, both in a microcosm and in a macrocosm. That is pure energy which is called ‘ P_0 ,’ making up an integrated field of interaction of all kinds of energies and, therefore, variations of the matter arising from it. That is why it is said that God is omnipresent. It is the pulses of energy P_0 that generate the waves that change the curvature of material space and time. That is, in the depth of its essence, all matter is a set of a certain kind of waves and exists according to laws of the wave nature.”

“This is something new,” Nikolai Andreevich said thoughtfully.

“By no means,” the Teacher objected. “I’d say these are well forgotten old things. The fact that matter is a generation of great emptiness, ‘Dao’, was known to Indian philosophers more than four thousand years ago and to Chinese wise men about two and a half thousand years ago. Just read their treatises. They visualised absolute emptiness as smooth surface of a lake in the absence of wind. The particle of matter arising from emptiness is compared with the occurrence of ripples on the smooth surface of the lake caused by wind.”

“What then is the ‘wind’?” Nikolai Andreevich inquired.

“The ‘wind’ in this case, is a divine essence, it is the thought of God with which He creates and destroys everything. And it is exactly our soul that is a part of this mighty power, which can control the primary energy Po. Therefore, if a human cognises his soul with his consciousness and merges them into a single whole, his abilities, as well as his knowledge, will become unlimited.”

“Nevertheless, it is new, at least for me,” the ‘Common Sense’ of our group said with a smile.

We arrived back at camp. The guys who had stayed on site were already eating sturgeon shashlik which they cooked for our arrival and which almost didn’t live to see us. We shared our impressions of the events we witnessed and had a good dinner in the open air. Then we sat down by the fire in anticipation of the forthcoming conversation. Nikolai Andreevich quickly returned to the topic that was consuming all his thoughts,

“So it means that the world is nothing more than an illusion?”

“That’s right.”

“Then why are we able to feel everything so realistically, we can touch, taste, that is, to assure ourselves, using our five senses that, for example, this stick is a stick, and not emptiness and illusion.”

“Because our brain, from birth, is attuned to the frequency of perception of this reality. But it does not mean that its abilities are limited to this frequency. Different programs are embedded in it. And if we change the frequency of perception, the whole world around us will also change.”

“How is that?” Nikolai Andreevich did not understand.

“Very simply. Let’s examine what our brain is. Basically, the central nervous system is a special ‘device’ for transmitting and receiving waves of various ranges with corresponding frequency characteristics. As you know, the major elements of the structural-functional organisation of the brain are neurons and glial cells, out of which the central nervous system is made. The neuron has an ability that distinguishes it from other cells.

It can generate potential of action and transmit it across great distances. This special cell represents a complex device with several states (rest and a number of states of excitation at various frequencies) which essentially increases its information capacity. The information about stimulus is coded by a nerve cell as the frequency of potentials of actions, averaged over a short time interval. So, as a whole, the work of our brain is the work of information managing device in which frequency is the 'language'. Therefore, the conscious and subconscious processes of psyche occur at a level of neurons' discharge frequency. When changing the state of consciousness, for example, during meditations and spiritual practices, the frequency of pulses changes which causes changes of the molecular structure of the body. That is, a person tunes in to a completely different frequency of reality and consequently perceives this world only as the lowest illusion... There is an expression, 'When a Wise man was asked what Life is, he answered, "A laughing-stock to him that hath had experience thereof."' And this is a completely fair answer.

"A person who is stuck in matter, a person with too many hang-ups in the material world of thoughts, is very limited in his perception. Judge for yourselves. He receives information about the world around him through his brain which since his birth has a certain frequency of perception peculiar to the animal nature. Therefore this brain, as any other animal brain, perceives information through its sensory organs. And though a person is surrounded by a whole ocean of electromagnetic vibrations, frequencies of various types and parameters, he perceives only a tiny part of all this variety. The main information comes in through his visual channel, the visible part of which is electromagnetic waves with a length from 400 to 700 nanometres. Everything that lies outside of this spectrum, a person does not see. Therefore, the reality beyond this range does not find any reflection in his brain. It is the same for sound, which a person hears in a range from 20 hertz up to 18 kilohertz.

"Why have meditations and spiritual practices always been given to mankind and why have they never been secret? Because they opened a completely different world, the real world of God, to people and, as a result, a new turn in the maturation of the soul.

"So a human is a very interesting creature. He is born an animal, but in the course of his life the power of thought can transform him into a Being close to God. And the most amazing thing is that freedom of choice in his individual development is given to him... The power of thought is a truly unique creation of God. There is this ancient expression written in Sanskrit:

**‘God sleeps in the minerals,
Awakens in plants,
Walks in animals
And... thinks in man.’”**

“What is the root cause of a nerve impulse creation, that is, the birth of a thought?” Nikolai Andreevich inquired.

“The same energy P_0 . It is exactly what causes the original impulse.”

“But if energy P_0 is the divine energy and at the same time, the reason that all thoughts appear, then what about bad thoughts that come from the animal nature?”

“And who told you that these thoughts don't have one root? Birth of thoughts that takes its origin from the animal nature is managed by Lucifer, the most faithful and devoted servant of God. It is due to these thoughts that he pushes you to various tests of your true faith. He tempts you into evil for you to learn good. But you are free in your choice, I emphasise once again, you are free! You can see these thoughts as call for action or reject them and turn to good thoughts coming from your soul. That is, what kind of thoughts you embrace, what your observer consciousness will choose, that is what you actually are.”

“What is a soul? Is it energy, too?” Victor asked.

“Yes. It is divine energy, it is a part of God in ourselves. **The most important thing is, the reason we have all these incarnations, the reason that bad things happen, the reason we have problems is because we are in a material body that we are 99.9% dependent on. But if we liberate ourselves from that, even just a hundredth part, and immerse into the soul, we will acquire infinity and omnipotence. The most important thing is to break through the internal Guard to the ‘gate’ of our soul. For it is exactly in the soul where the true power, the power of Love, which creates everything and which is capable of commanding energy P_0 , is hidden. All the main energies are based on it because in the real world only Love exists. Evil exists only in the illusory human world for development of an immature soul. Therefore, it is very important to generate a constant frequency of the energy of Love and good, instead of a variability of fluctuations.**”

“It sounds interesting,” Nikolai Andreevich said thoughtfully. “So, a human, on the whole, is a creature of a wave nature.”

“Absolutely right, both spiritually and physically.”

“How do you mean physically?” Victor asked.

“Well, in the human body, there is an informational network that, together with nervous, blood, and endocrine systems, coordinates physiological

processes. A person is, so to say, permeated with waveguides by which important information is transferred with the help of bio radiation in a microwave band. All this, naturally, interacts with the magnetic field of the Earth, with cosmic rays and so on... But the thing is that informational function for the body is carried out only by weak fields. Otherwise, the mechanism of self-protection is triggered in the cells and they stop perceiving information."

"What fields are inherent to our body?" Kostya inquired.

"There are plenty of them. For example, electromagnetic radiation of various spectrums, an electric field, a magnetic one... Acoustic radiations, that is, various sounds that come from a body. Chemical secretions that can conditionally be called a chemical field, and many, many others there's no point in listing now."

"I ask," Kostya continued, "because I recently read a book about the art of prophecy on Earth. It is called... geomancy. In short, it was practiced in ancient India, China, Egypt. So, there it is mentioned that there is a certain field from which a person can draw information about the future. They say that ancient prophesiers entered a special state in order to get this knowledge."

"It is really so. This field still exists, and its information is still used as it has been used in the past. There are certain techniques that allow a person to reach this state of consciousness. But ordinary people who are engaged in strenuous brainwork are also capable of spontaneously entering this state of consciousness, as a rule, either while sleeping or in a state of deep concentration when their brain is switched off from extraneous thoughts... Given information is true only as it pertains to the past or the present as well as exact sciences. As for the future, for example, of mankind as a whole or of any particular individual person, it is unstable because the future depends on individual or collective choice of people."

"How is that?"

"Very simply. If, for example, a person changes internally, then, according to his choice, his entire life changes from that point and into the future. These are laws of nature. Since change in the frequency of perception attunes a person to a completely new wave, that is, to another reality. The same applies to mankind as a whole. If mankind's attitude to life, its balance between the spiritual and the animal nature changes, then correspondingly, the general frequency of energy changes, and therefore its future also changes. So both a person and mankind as a whole, by personal choices, predetermine their possible future on a daily basis.

"Then how do the prophesiers predict the future?"

"If you noticed, the great prophesiers made their predictions enciphered, with double meaning. Many of them were mistaken, many did not mention significant events because the future is changeable and exists in time and space in a multitude of possibilities. Prophets could tune in to the frequency of the wave that carried the given information. But they got data only from that reality into which they could penetrate."

"And what about individual predictions?"

"Predictions for an individual are based on the wave that his consciousness is on at the present moment. And if a person does not change radically on the inside, they will come true as programmed on this wave."

We sat by the fire, listening to Sensei's amazing tale. Bright stars shone in the sky for a long time already, and the sea caressed our ears melodiously with an easy rustle of waves, harmoniously filling the pauses. Lights from a big steamship appeared in the distance.

"Wow, what a beauty!" Ruslan exclaimed upon seeing it. "Look, it's so huge. I imagine we could go for a voyage on it in grand style."

Everybody turned that way.

"Well, well, well. Everyone tells stories, but a sick person talks about his pills," Zhenya remarked mockingly. "Go for a ride, in great style. The Titanic was even bigger, and even so, God rest their souls."

"I was just..." Ruslan started to justify himself jokingly to everybody's laughter.

"By the way, about the Titanic. Not everything is clear there." Nikolai Andreevich said. "I read that on board the Titanic there was a sarcophagus with a well-preserved body of an Egyptian priestess and prophetess who lived during the reign of pharaoh Amenhotep. They say that the mummy was reputed as fatal. It was excavated in 1895, and between 1896 and 1900, everyone who participated in the excavation died. Only Lord Canterville, who was heading the project, remained alive. So it was the Lord who was accompanying this mummy on board the Titanic, planning to display the body of the prophetess at the exposition of archaeological finds in Los Angeles. The most interesting thing is that the mummy was placed not in the hold but in a cabin, near the captain's bridge, so it would be more convenient for passengers to look at it. And later, in the official investigation, the reason for the collision with an iceberg was called 'bad navigation'. How do you like such coincidences?"

"That's nothing," Sensei said lighting a cigarette, "The most surprising fact is that people were warned about the wreck of the Titanic sixteen years before the accident happened."

“What do you mean?” Stas inquired.

“I mean that Morgan Robertson’s book ‘Futility’ was published in 1896 in England. In this book, the wreck of a huge passenger steamship by the name of Titan was described in detail. It precisely specified the time, the place, and the reason for the wreck, that is, in 1912, in the Atlantic Ocean, on its way from England to America, on a cold April night, the ship collides with a huge iceberg, and people die. Moreover, Robertson even gave the exact number of passengers — two thousand people — that corresponded to the number on the Titanic. He also listed all parameters and characteristics of the ship which also coincide with the characteristics of the Titanic. There were only insignificant discrepancies. For example, he described the length of the ship as 243 meters, and the Titanic was 268 meters in length. The displacement was described as 70 thousand tons whereas the real ship had 66 thousand tons. In the book, the speed at the moment of collision was 25 knots, and in reality, it was 22 knots. All other details, four pipes, three propellers, and so on, everything was predicted... If only people had been a bit smarter, many people would not have died.”

“Yes, I recall reading about this phenomenal prediction,” Nikolai Andreevich said. “But wait, he was a science-fiction writer, and in addition to that, nobody knew him. And his book wasn’t published again. How could people have known? If only he had written it as a prediction of what could really happen someday, if he had called it a prophecy, I think people would have paid attention to it. But he called his novel science fiction.”

“You see, the thing is. A person receives pure knowledge. But to save himself from the inquisition of fools, he calls these books science fiction. It was science fiction for clever people, for those who could understand it. After things happen, everybody starts to understand it, even the fools. But a clever person could have understood even then and taken a grain of truth out of this so-called ‘science fiction’.

“Simply put, you mean to say that a clever person, having read this book, would never have booked a ticket on the Titanic.”

“Absolutely right... And it doesn’t just concern this book. Just read science fiction. All science fiction is divided into clever science fiction and fairy tales for adults, but it is embarrassing to call it a fairy tale, so they write ‘science fiction’. So, writers of clever science fiction simply download the information from time levels of various realities. They download the future, which can come true with the right combination of certain wave conditions. That is, they receive knowledge and describe it. This, in turn, psychologically prepares a clever person, who has read this book, for forthcoming events. It forms skills of multidimensional thinking, allowing

them to orient themselves in the quickly changing conditions of life. All this expands not only a person's adaptational range, preparing his consciousness for a qualitatively new leap in perception of the surrounding world, but also creates preconditions for the internal change of a person himself, simply speaking, for transition to another wave of 'new reality'.

"Just recall books by H.G. Wells, who correctly determined and prepared mankind for future scientific and technical progress. Or Jules Verne, who predicted many discoveries and inventions that subsequently came true. Or, in particular, take Alexei Tolstoy's book, "The Hyperboloid of Engineer Garin", written in 1925-1926 in which the laser is actually predicted. Even though the first laser wasn't invented until 1960. And take Alexander Belyaev books! For example, his novel "The Star KETs" written in 1936 practically carried real prophecies about the ways of astronautics. There are many such examples... And how many grains of truth are reflected in the books of writers such as Ivan Yefremov, Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Alexander Kazantsev, Stanislaw Lem... There are many such talented people to prepare a clever reader for forthcoming events. But they have to write their books in the genre of science fiction since clever one will understand it anyway, and at the same time, fool won't take offence."

Nikolai Andreevich grinned.

"You know, to be fair, I also treated science fiction with much prejudice, reading it as you have said like a fairy tale for adults. But once I read a note in a magazine that John F. Kennedy, when he was president, invited several science fiction writers into his 'think tank' for forecasting possible developments of the future. It was also mentioned there that a hobby of some talented, world-renowned scientists was reading science fiction. And that many scientific terms have even come to us from science fiction. To tell the truth, it surprised me."

"This is a normal situation. You see, when a person reads a book, he starts to live as though in its world, that is, he begins to attune himself to the same frequency of perception as the author. And here the reader can face a surprising phenomenon, a peculiar burst of brain activity. Call it what you will: generating ideas, insight of the subconscious, or anything you wish. But it is this burst that is, in fact, a short-term transition to the corresponding frequency of perception of the book which our memory records. Corresponding ideas are then born on the basis of available personal knowledge and experience. That is why many talented scientists, politicians, and ordinary people, who aspire to understand themselves and the world around them, get ideas and future discoveries exactly from books, including science fiction, from this unique database of non-realised realities.

At that, it can ‘emerge’ in memory in any form and at any time — right at the moment of reading, or in a dream, or can suddenly dawn on you later...”

We were silent for a little while. The fire quietly crackled as the branches in it burned. Its flame bewitched and fascinated us with its mysterious living beauty and bright range of its light play. We could stay there for eternity listening to Sensei’s unimaginably interesting stories in the open air in this finest nook of nature where, it seemed, even stars came down from heaven to better hear our conversation.

“I wonder whether there are prophetic dreams?” Nikolai Andreevich started talking again. “Or is it just work of the psyche by way of forecasting future events?”

“Prophetic dreams certainly exist. If a person has enough personal spiritual power or if he is tied to someone with the force of Love, his brain can spontaneously adapt to that frequency that coincides with future events. He then receives this data in a dream, so to say ‘directly’, bypassing analysis. But later, giving out this data, his psyche participates in direct processing of the information. That is why we can see events not in their pure state but in their interpreted version on the basis of our emotions, experiences, former impressions, images, and so on...”

“You know, I had a prophetic dream once,” Stas started to tell about his life experience.

For a long time we talked about different oddities in this world and about its amazing occurrences. We recalled stories connected with it and listened to the simple and, at the same time, unusual narrations of Sensei about the mysterious human psyche and its unlimited abilities. Only at daybreak did we finally go to bed.



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Strangely enough, either because I had heard so many things at once or for some other reason, that morning I had an unusual dream. It was bright and emotional. The most important thing was that I had never had such a dream before. I felt as though my consciousness was floating above the Earth, observing from above everything that was happening in the world. At first, everything was quiet and peaceful. But then I became kind of uneasy and frightened, as if I was expecting something. And then, I noticed a bright red star that was descending from the tops of high, snow-white mountains in the East. This star drew nearer and quickly grew in size. A transparent trail followed in its wake. The closer it came to me, the more space this trail covered, changing the world and making its outlines blurry and translucent. When I looked more closely, I saw that everything that got captured by the trail was boiling over, growing in force, as if nature itself rebelled against human civilisation. Exploding volcanoes shook the Earth with their rumble. Enormous waves arose in the middle of oceans and quickly worked their way towards megalopolises. Fires stormed where water wasn't accessible. Winds twisted huge tornadoes, destroying everything in their path. It was as if nature had brought down upon the humankind all the negative force that was produced by people during all the existence of civilisation. I became frightened and closed my eyes. When I opened them, I saw myself standing in the middle of an amazingly magnificent field with various beautiful flowers. The star was still approaching rapidly, changing the space behind itself. I looked back. Behind me were cities full of unsuspecting people. And all of this unrelenting force was approaching them.

When the star got very close, I made out that it was — a Horseman. His attire and armour were made of pure gold which gleamed brightly and

shone like red fire. Even His horse was covered with a horse blanket made out of fine platings of pure gold. The dazzling clothes completely hid the Horseman, leaving only his eyes visible. In his hand, He held a spear. At the end of the spear, there was a flag depicting a bud of a lotus on it, inside which was a pyramid, an eye, and also some hieroglyphs and pictures. The Horseman streaked on his horse across a huge field of beautiful flowers.

Suddenly, at full clip, the Red Horseman sharply pulled the reins, halting the horse. And that's when I saw His gaze which seemed extremely familiar to me. The Horseman's attention was caught by a modest forget-me-not with five sky-blue petals. He dismounted from the horse and bent over the flower, as if examining and admiring it. And as soon as the Horseman dismounted, all the element forces started to cease and calm down. Only a light echo of this huge force, which moved after the warrior, made it to the cities. For me, this was puzzling — why was such a mighty Horseman stopped by this ordinary-looking flower? When in fact, there was a whole field of the biggest, most beautiful flowers around him. And did He stop for a long?

Even when I woke up, the feeling of reality of this dream did not leave me. These two questions were imprinted distinctly in my memory. Certainly, I had had dreams before, but I had never had a dream so real, so full of sensations and emotions. And the most important thing was that in the dream everything was absolutely clear, I knew the real meaning of all that was happening, I knew that it was very important. But when I woke up, I could not recall in any way what it meant and how to comprehend it. The only things that remained were bright emotional impressions and those two questions which simply burned into my memory.

This dream really intrigued me with its uniqueness. At first, I thought that my brain had just shown me yesterday's information this way. But nobody had even mentioned the things in my dream in such detail. This kind of puzzled me.

I chose a moment when all the guys went swimming and approached Sensei. He was standing in shallow waters, gradually getting used to the water temperature. Taking advantage of his solitude, I began to tell him my strange dream, lamenting the fact that I could not recall its meaning. I only remembered that it was very important for me. Contrary to my expectations that he would fully decode this dream from physiological and philosophical points of view, Sensei only smiled and, looking at me mysteriously, said,

“The time will come, and you will find out everything.”

SENSEI'S APHORISMS

1. Life is unpredictable, and anything might happen in it — even the most unbelievable things that you cannot imagine.

2. A young body is not at all an indicator of the age of the soul.

3. All great things are ridiculously simple, but it takes a lot of hard work to master them.

4. A human is a thinking being, and his fundamental force lies in his thoughts.

5. The most important thing is to have a great desire, and the opportunities will come soon enough.

6. For every Vijay there is a Rajah.

7. Fear begotten by imagination sees danger even where there is none.

8. With healthy thoughts, there is a sound spirit, and with a sound spirit there is a healthy body.

9. Any blow caused by you in rage will come back to you in the end.

10. The potential of a human is limited by his imagination.

11. You should not wish bad onto other people, even in your thoughts. Because with the power of your thought, you are setting a trap for yourself, for your body and mind. And the more you think about it, the stronger its net becomes, the tighter its loop.

12. Become a friend to your enemy and forgive his deeds, for you are also imperfect.

13. Life is too short, and you'd better succeed in glorifying your spiritual nature in your heart.

14. You have to constantly work on yourself, for each minute of your life is valuable. You should use it as a gift from God for the perfection of your soul.

15. If you want to make God laugh, tell Him about your plans.

16. There are no accidents. An accident is only a natural consequence of our uncontrolled thoughts.

17. The quality of instants lived is much more important than the senseless years of existence.

18. Wisdom is a virtue of the soul and not of age.

19. Any action is begotten, first of all, by our formed thought.

20. The power of word revives the power of thought, and the power of thought generates action.

21. The one who does good deeds with good intentions has no need to be sad about something missed, for he gets much more power for cognition of his soul than when being idle.

22. Science fiction in its essence is only an unrealised reality.

23. True, genuine faith arises from knowledge. And knowledge comes through a word, through persuasion of your mind in the validity of an occurring phenomenon.

24. It is necessary to respect another person's aspiration for knowledge instead of immediately attacking him with bayonets of your egocentrism.

25. To learn everything is impossible, but you should aspire to it.

26. The most valuable way is understanding God through your mind when true knowledge overcomes the animal nature and opens the gate of the subconsciousness with help of the key of Love.

27. A fool will be given his due for understanding; and for the clever one, it is foolish not to understand.



The book "AllatRa"

Anastasia Novykh

This is a live encyclopedia of primordial spiritual Knowledge of the world, society, and human being. It does not just speak to everyone about the innermost. It answers the most secret, deeply personal, and disturbing questions that a person hides inside and does not reveal even to close friends. AllatRa book immerses one into a wonderful state of versatile knowledge of Truth; it quenches the thirst for the search of the meaning of life from the eternal, vivifying Source. It is a foundation of primordial Knowledge for the spiritual awakening and radical transformation of a Person and the society as a whole.

- Soul is most precious in a Human being
- Sensations in science
- The meaning of a person's spiritual development
- The meaning of human life
- Multidimensional structure of a human being
- What unites all religions?
- Ancient spiritual practices and meditations
- Society of the future - free of politicians and priests
- What happens after death of the physical body?
- Active signs
- Untypical children's behavior
- Sacral symbolism of the icons
- What is the System of the Animal Mind
- The structure of the Universe
- What is hidden behind the supernatural powers
- Dialogue with God
- Holy Grail
- Ancient parables

This book, as well as other books by Anastasia Novykh, has been translated by volunteers – ALLATRA IPM participants. If you have suggestions to improve the book translation, please send your comments and ideas to info@allatra.com.ua

♦ The books by Anastasia Novykh are well-known all over the world as spiritual, intellectual bestsellers that give answers to exclusively personal questions of every person, that give a deep understanding of the world and oneself, strengthen the best human qualities, inspire to inner self-knowledge, inspire to broaden one's outlook, gain victory over oneself and do real good deeds. The books of the writer - "Sensei. The Primordial of Shambala" (four volumes), "Ezoosmos", "Birds and a Stone", "Crossroads" and "AllatRa" are translated into many languages. They have become a handbook for people of different ages, nationalities, religions, living on different continents, in various countries.

♦ The phenomenon of the works of Anastasia Novykh is that everyone sees in them something innermost. It is a mine of knowledge about the world and human being, about his meaning of life and practical ways of self-knowledge and self-improvement. These books have united many people on the planet by their universal knowledge and by novelty of perception of the world and oneself. All books are freely available to everyone on the Internet on the official website of the author

**schambala.com.ua
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The unique books by Anastasia Novykh have become the basis for a large-scale association of like-minded and kind people all over the world. Thanks to these books, good people from all over the world who want to apply their skills and abilities towards creative actively unite. These people implement large-scale projects that develop and strengthen morality, spirituality and culture in the world community. The example of such an association of kind, unselfish people is ALLATRA International Public Movement, which global international activity plays today an invaluable role in the formation of spirituality, morality and humanity all over the world.

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ALLATRA

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC MOVEMENT



ALLATRA IPM is a global association of those who actually do Good and maintain Peace for all people. ALLATRA movement unites people all over the world regardless of status, social categories, political and religious views. In a short period of time hundreds of thousands of like-minded people in more than 180 countries around the world have become active participants of the movement.

Our strategic goal is to induce people to actively participate in life of the society and together with people of good will from various countries be involved in useful activity for the world community.

We are outside of politics and outside of religion.

Thanks to the initiative and unselfish actions of active participants of the ALLATRA International Public Movement, various creative projects and good deeds aimed at creating conditions to unlock the creative potential of people and at revival of universal human spiritual and moral values in the whole global community are implemented around the world.

Among the projects are: the nationwide initiative - "ALLATRA Global Partnership Agreement"; international Internet TV - "ALLATRA TV"; international web portal for bringing people together in common socially important affairs - "ALLATRA - Crowdfunding with Conscience"; creative media space - "ALLATRA RADIO"; "ALLATRA SCIENCE" - modern innovative research in the spheres of climatology and physics; International portal of global positive information space - "ALLATRA News" and many others.

We do not divide people into leaders and executors, every one of us is a leader and an executor, and together we are force.

Our General Manager is CONSCIENCE.

We invite everyone who would like to show kindness and to help the international community to take the path of spiritual and cultural development through socially important joint projects. Everyone who wants, who is able and who acts is with us.

It is timely and fashionable to be a good person!

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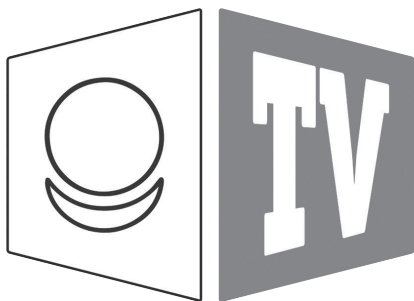
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AllatRa

**ALLATRA TV – International Volunteer Internet TV
of the ALLATRA International Public Movement**

Official website: allatra.tv

ALLATRA TV is the international, nationwide Internet TV with relevant and interesting videos on various subjects: science, good news , information and analysis programs, interviews with famous people, friendly humor, educational animated videos, family programmes, and many other sincere and positive programmes which increase humaneness, kindness, and unity in the society. The reality that affects us all!

The ALLATRA TV shows are interesting to all people who are striving for self-improvement, spiritual and cultural development, and strengthening of the best qualities in themselves and the society around them.

Join the ALLATRA IPM international team of volunteers and realize your creative ideas and projects through the new national television format!

Especially popular among the audience are “The Truth is One for Everyone” series of programmes and a new film "CONSCIOUSNESS AND PERSONALITY. From the inevitably dead to the eternally Alive".

CONSCIOUSNESS AND PERSONALITY

From the inevitably dead to the eternally Alive

This is an alive conversation with Igor Mikhailovich Danilov. It is an alive book. It is a beginning of global events that will inevitably have a further development. It is a consequence of what happened on December 21, 2012. It is the next step after the book “AllatRa”.

It is an unmasking of the system. It is the Knowledge lost in the centuries. The instruments with the help of which many people can gain real Freedom from the enslavement of the system which secretly acts through consciousness. It is a unique experience and practice of being in touch with the Spiritual World. It is an alive conversation for those who want to become a part of the Boundless World.

Here, the instruments are given so as not only to resist the Evil in oneself but also to bring here, into this world, something that has been missing for a long time - it is more sincere, real God's Love and that Freedom which is like fresh waters washing away the filth and lie of the consciousness and quenching the Personality's Spiritual thirst. The alive conversation is a Key for the Personality and a Path of person's transformation from the inevitably dead to the eternally Alive.

THE TRUTH that reveals the system AND CHANGES YOU FOREVER!

IN THIS ALIVE CONVERSATION:

- practical experience of self-cognition;
- what a Personality is as a Spirit;
- what the difference is between autogenic training, meditation, and a spiritual practice;
 - what the Prophets had faced;
 - a human being was created twice;
- how it was: “a human being was created in the image and likeness”;
 - what is the original sin? You are not sinful!;
 - the consciousness as an instrument of the system;
- until the eighth day, there is no difference between a human being and an animal;
 - how the system works, what people do not see;
 - how the system speaks with people;
- tricks and substitutions of the system in practice: peace and power;
- how to get in touch with the Spiritual world: experience and practice;
 - physics of the supernatural
- unity is a new format of the person and the society;
- magic of the consciousness; the whole truth about magic
- predictions become true: the end and the beginning.

The programme's text version edited by Anastasia Novykh and translations of the text version of the programme into various languages of the world can be found at allatra-book.org

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The phenomenon of the creativity of Anastasia Novykh is that everyone sees, like in a mirror, something of his own, purely internal. The “Sensei of Shambala” book reveals the inner world of a sixteen-year old girl who suddenly finds herself face to face with death. This prompted her to rethink her life and the search for answers to eternal questions: “Why does a person live, what is the meaning of life? Who am I really? Why are most people on earth – believers? After all, if they believe, that means they are hoping for something. How do the great ones achieve inner immortality? What is hidden behind the concept of the essence of Human?”

The unbridled energy of her inner search leads her to a meeting with an unusual, highly erudite man, a master of martial arts and a very mysterious Personality – Sensei. Impacting one to the depths of the soul, Sensei’s extraordinary worldview, his fascinating philosophy and knowledge about the world and a human being, dynamic martial arts, the wisdom in everyday situations, the alternative medicine and ancient spiritual practices (including effective techniques of fighting negative thoughts), the phenomena of human capabilities — the heroine comes to know all this and much more by coming into contact with Sensei’s world. But most importantly, she finds the answers to her main inner questions and learns from her own experience that humans have been granted the most powerful creating force from above – the power of faith and love.

*Share goodness and
knowledge with others
and the world will change
around you!*

*Good
creates
good!*