

Concordia Antaro

TWO LIVES

Volume III

Chapter 1

Arrival to Ali's estate.

The first impressions and meetings

We were travelling with I. for a very, very long time until we reached India. I. often used to stop somewhere for a long time not only for the rest, but also because he wanted to give an opportunity to me to observe the nations' life, their customs and nature.

A bend after bend, partly for his own business, but mostly by broadening my "universities", he took me to Bagdad and he persuaded me jokingly that I certainly had to feel the charm of the real Bagdad and not to judge about it only by the taste of the sweet cakes.

Our journey that lasted for several months, not only hardened my organism, but also changed my character because of the daily I.'s care and influence. I've already almost grown out of the habit of "catching crows", my attention submitted to discipline and – I didn't even know myself how it happened – I didn't get irritated anymore.

It is impossible to tell about all the miracles which we've seen, like it is impossible to represent the whole complicated life of the nations of modern times in one sculpture. I can tell you only this: however I. was preparing me for that what I would see in India, it surprised me more than all other miracles which I saw during the long journey. I knew that we were going to the foot of the Himalaya, that Ali's estate was in a wonderful, picturesque valley, but I didn't expect to get into such spellbinding beauty.

Judging by those little houses of I.'s friends in which we used to stop, I expected to see the same small and dazzlingly clean house with a plot of soil in Ali's estate, the only one fireplace and only the most needed housekeeping articles. As in many other places, here too, I absolutely missed the mark. The house in Ali's estate was wonderful, it was made of the white stone similar to marble, with a lot of pillars and separate rooms.

Two great rooms on the first floor with balconies were waiting for us with I. As soon as I went to the balcony I was so enchanted by the view that opened up for me from it that I forgot about everything, I turned into the previous Lovushka and "I was catching crows" until the sun hid behind the mountain, while I was still standing, having forgotten about everything.

I came to myself when I. touched my hand lightly. Ah, how charming he was! I'd never seen him so unusually handsome as now when he was standing before me. He was wearing an orange chiton, his hair had already grown long again and curled, while his topaz eyes were just as good as Ananda's stars.

I wanted to cry for him: "How wonderfully handsome you are, I.!" – but I couldn't utter a word. For the first time I felt how great my friend was, how he surpassed everything what was daily and human. I was covered with feeling of my devotion and loyalty for him, of a sacred honour and gratitude for everything what he had done for me. I was looking at him silently. I. understood my feelings, he gave a smile to me and uttered.

"I didn't disturb you, Lovushka, because I knew how this house and this view affected the man who's seen it for the first time, but the evening is nearing already, and it is growing dark here instantly. We have to be in time to the dining-room for the supper. Come, I will show you where the bath and the

shower is, I will introduce you to the house-manager and the servant who will be for both of us. You can put some Indian clothes on which everybody is wearing here, or you can stay with your European ones if you prefer them more, but to come in time to the dining-room – this is the only rule which everybody keeps here very strictly. Don't worry, you'll be in time," I. smiled when he saw my anxiety not to be late.

We went to the house-manager who was wearing the white Indian clothes like everybody else and who was, judging by his appearance, a typical native. He was handsome, still young, slender and agile, his oblong face was sunburnt, he had a dark, little Spanish beard, dark eyes and the white turban on his head. He answered in English to my greeting him, but with a sharp accent and melodiously. His voice was melodious and tender, his look was kind, but attentive and concentrated, as if he had tried to remember me, to discover or understand something within me. I didn't have time to think about it, I only memorized that his name was Kastanda. I was very surprised by this name, but I remembered the bath immediately and I scuttled there with the only thought: to come back to I. as soon as possible.

One surprise after another was waiting for me. I was hoping to see an ordinary washbasin like the ones which I saw on my way here – in most cases the shower with water warmed by the sun, which was arranged in the remote corner of the garden, - and I got into an excellent bathroom with tile floor and walls, with hot and cold water that was running from the water supply taps. And what is more, as soon as I had time to take off my clothes, the servant... a Chinese entered the bathroom. By smiling benevolently, he announced that Kastanda sent him to help me. Without even allowing me to recollect myself, he threw something warm and liquid on me from a jug instantly – it turned out that it was a liquid, smelling sweet soap. He soaped all of me instantly with a soft loofa, placed me under the shower and then he started shampooing my head in such a way that I had only to cover my face with my hands.

Having snorted and by not bringing myself to open my eyes, I felt that the servant was taking me somewhere carefully from the shower.

"Now, sit down in the bath, monsieur Leon," I heard him say in French.

I was prepared for everything, but having heard French language from Chinese who was hardly speaking English not so long time ago, I couldn't bear it anymore and I roared with laughter so strongly that the soap got into my eyes.

Having jumped into the excellent bath that was made of the same white stone like the house, I was rubbing my eyes and choking with laughter.

"Young Ali told me exactly this that monsieur Leon was very merry," I heard the servant's voice again.

"Do you know young Ali?" I was surprised.

"How could I not know him? I brought up the young Ali. He sent me to you and to brother I. He will come here himself. Then I will have three masters," the servant answered me by pronouncing the words in a funny way.

Having jumped out of the bath, I wiped myself dry and put the Indian suit on quickly, which I knew well already. Having thanked Chinese for his help sincerely, I asked him what his name was. Having been silent for a while, he answered me.

"What's my name – that's another business. Address me as Yassa – young Ali and everybody else here call me like this."

"I will call you Yassa only when you start addressing me as Lovushka, as young Ali calls me and as everybody else here is going to call me."

The Chinese gave a laugh and told me.

"Agreed, if I. tells me to do like this."

"He will certainly tell you this, you can be calm."

I rushed to I., but I turned to the opposite direction, and again only with help of the same Yassa I found I. in his study, talking to Kastanda.

"Am I not too late, I.?" I came running into the room and gave a joyous shout.

"The gong will be only in fifteen minutes," Kastanda answered me. "Please don't be surprised if your and I.'s places in the dining-room are decorated with flowers. Our dear host Ali Mahomet warned us about the arrival of his friends, and every dweller here soon wanted to express their greeting for the coming guests in some way, while elder Ali himself is greeting you with his presents which you will find in your places at the table, too."

Kastanda left, while I. explained to me.

"Lovushka, simplicity prevails both here and in the dining-room, but it doesn't mean that man loses his comfort. Now you became blind, absent-minded and you knew neither where nor at what to look. Tomorrow you will perceive the surroundings better. Now let's go to have our supper, don't be embarrassed because of many strange people. Many women will be there as well."

I felt sick at heart. Anna flashed before my eyes like a living ghost. Oh, how clearly I could feel her pain now. She could have been here, with us. Ananda could take her here himself, but one moment of her doubts and jealousy – and everything disappeared.

"Anna didn't disappear irreversibly," I. told me silently and tenderly. "She will become stronger and she will come. The storm of jealousy won't rise within her anymore, but she will be here only when Ali's daughter Nal with her husband, your brother, comes here as well. Then Ali will bring Anna here himself. Don't be sad for her. Help her with thoughts of your joyous love. Every morning, every evening send help of your cheerfulness and courage for her. You won't be able to help her with anything more active in this moment, but don't think that it isn't much. This is a very big help. A daily joyous thought about a man is like the quick building of a bridge on which you can learn to meet that man in your thoughts, about whom you will be thinking with joy, purely, attentively and constantly."

The gong rang out. As always I. guessed my embarrassment, he took my arm and we went downstairs.

It was almost dark already, it was warm, almost hot. To my amazement, the electricity lit up the hall of the dining-room clearly. All the doors in it were opened, the windows were covered with moist material, tens of big ventilators were spinning under the ceiling by raising the cool wind, but it was stuffy anyway.

I understood how strong I became. I wouldn't have held out such heat before at all. The stuffiness of Constantinople seemed to be ridiculously weak in comparison to it. I would have fainted away here instantly several months ago, and now it was only stuffy for me. The Indian suit and the sandals on my bare feet helped me a lot.

We were among the first ones who entered. Kastanda approached us immediately and he accompanied us to our places. They were by the edge table which was laid already, just like all the other ones. Many who entered were greeting I. like their old friend, the others were bowing to us from the distance like to the friends who came back. Apparently, everybody here knew one another and they didn't feel shy. When everybody was seated in their own places, the tables were being served in a very original way. The bowls and small dishes were drawing up on the little, very beautiful pushing tables, from which everybody was taking that what he wanted and as much as he wanted to. We were sitting at the edge, by the window, and the food came rolling to us from the window side.

I. proposed me to put some food for him and for myself, while I was unable to decide what and how they were eating here. When I noticed tomato salads, potatoes and cauliflowers I began to put them into our plates, but suddenly I saw an excellent melon. Having remembered that "the wise man without a melon wasn't any wise man", I already wanted to take it, too, but I. gave a laugh and held me.

"Lovushka, as soon as we eat the vegetables, the little table will come rolling soon again, you better pay attention to the flowers dedicated to you and to something else. Perhaps, Ali's greeting will move you."

I directed my look at the flowers and I saw that the white lily was put in a high green vase before me. Ali must have had his own hothouse here as well; but I was unable to concentrate my attention on anything at all. There were so many faces before me – the ones of men, women, young, elderly and old - and what kind of faces were here! I wanted to take a peep at all of them in passing, but every face to which I directed my look seemed to me to be unusual and I could hardly take my eyes off it.

"No, Lovushka, don't even try to take in all of them and everything at once," I heard I.'s voice. "More than a hundred people are here, and you will become acquainted with them little by little. Eat, look at the plates and at least at those who sit at our table."

I gave a sigh by comprehending how far I still was till I. who could take in a hundred people at once and describe everyone's characteristic in several minutes, tell exactly that what was important for everybody and keep the energy in everyone with his only word or look.

These I.'s qualities didn't surprise me anymore. I had seen enough of such Florentian's and Ananda's qualities. I was surprised by something in the very hall full of people. I had seen a lot of people lately, too, but there was something especial in this hall, something what I hadn't yet seen anywhere else. It had to do not with the hall itself, but with people in it, with their inner side which I couldn't feel with my eyes, but I could feel the spiritual culture clearly. Now I could feel this crowd of people in an absolutely different way. It was impossible to imagine here that suddenly, in some corner of the hall a sharp cry, a sarcastic laughter or a vicious phrase could be heard...

I. distracted my attention again and he forced me to eat by telling me that the little table would come soon, while I was behind. I began to chew something by not understanding what I was eating, I cast a glance at the table-napkin and I was dumbfounded. The napkin was put through a wonderful ring with Ali's name which was laid out from tiny, green jewels and white pearls.

"I told you, look round you, didn't I?" I. said to me by smiling from my stunning absent-mindedness.

I wanted to know what kind of I.'s ring was, and... I was dumbfounded again. The ring of his napkin was made of the white wood on which it was written "Ali" with white coral. Then there was an inscription in the language which I didn't know.

“When I was going from C. with Florentian,” I said to I., “I didn’t understand a single word what he was talking to the natives. I was always irritated and dispirited. Then I swore to myself to learn that language, because I was enraged with my ineptitude of it. I still didn’t started fulfilling my first oath, but in spite of it I swear for the second time: to learn that language in which the inscription is written on your ring. I don’t get irritated anymore. My ignorance doesn’t oppress me anymore. With my current self-control I can see it even better. I., will you help me to fulfil both of these oaths for me?”

“My dear friend, I only ask you, please don’t take any hasty pledges anymore, because here, in Ali’s community you’ll have to live for many years, while I took you here only for a short time, so that you could prepare yourself for your future life next to Florentian.”

“Ali’s community?” I asked I. in an absolute amazement.

“Yes, but I will tell you everything later. Now eat, look round, answer the questions, although I think that nobody will ask you anything.”

In this way I began to examine our neighbours attentively by listening attentively to the conversation at our table. I touched the flowers next to my plate and suddenly I noticed two little envelopes among them. There was my name written on each of them. I recognized the large and clear elder Ali’s handwriting immediately and the same clear, but much smaller and womanly young Ali’s one.

The whole cloud of memories together with great joy poured into me. I relived the feast at Ali’s again, as well as the separation with my brother, meeting with Florentian and the episodes of my travelling with him. Love for my brother in my heart was always the same strong, only now not the separation of my parting with him was buzzing in my memory like the most resounding string, but joy for him, joy because he was happy, safe and because he was living next to Florentian. I was thinking about the elder Ali with great gratitude not only because now I was sitting under his roof, but because he did so much for my brother and because both of us were really indebted to him for everything.

All of a sudden I could feel the already familiar trembling of my entire organism. It seemed to me that I could see Ali who was standing in the distance by the round window, that I could see his burning eyes and that I could hear his strong, clear voice: “Learn, Lovushka. Your first task – to learn self-control, the second one – to learn fearlessness, the third one – to learn tact. When you acquire these qualities you can go to the world to work again and to serve people. I. will help you, while I will accept you to the circle of my co-workers.”

Ali disappeared, it seemed to me that it became much darker in the dining-room. I came to myself, because I. obligingly helped me to stand up. The sickly state of the illusive views didn’t repeat for a long time already, I thought that I was recovered from them completely and now I was distressed, because I understood that I didn’t become strong enough.

Everybody was rising from their places, the supper must have been ended. By submitting to I.’s hand, I also rose and I saw Kastanda next to myself.

“Lovushka, apparently you were very tired after your journey and from the heat. I will tell them to bring your flowers to the balcony, and maybe you would like to take your letters now, immediately,” Kastanda told me by extending them to me.

I thanked him, took both letters, I also wanted to take the ring, but I. told me that we would inspect it tomorrow, in the daylight. He introduced me to some of his friends who approached him, but I was still like in the mist and I could hardly see their faces which seemed to me so significant not so long time ago. We went out to the park. For the first time I could watch the sky in such big space, but I had so

little strength that I asked I. to sit down on the first bench. I pressed myself to I. The vital energy was flowing from him to me. Little by little I became calm and I felt that my heart was already beating normally. I said to I. that I wanted to go to my room and to read both Ali's letters.

"Soon, much sooner than it seems to you, Lovushka, you will learn to control yourself and to hear your friends' voices through big distances, without any strain," I. was talking to me tenderly by accompanying me home.

Now I was able to comprehend only one thing from the entire surroundings: the silence of the night corresponded to the silence within myself. Dark shadows in groups, in couples and alone were moving along the paths of the parks. While the walking people were passing by, I felt their goodwill spreading to me again, like in the dining-room. I didn't know how it manifested itself and how I could feel it, but I was absolutely certain that nobody here was going to condemn me, to dismantle me, but that they would accept me to their community with love and very easily.

I. was leading me in a roundabout paths, and I understood that he wanted to give me a chance to calm down completely. All of a sudden it seemed even funny to me: was I. really thinking that I was the previous Lovushka, that an irritation could remain in any little crack of my essence?

"My dear I., I'm ready to read my letters for a long time already, everything is all right with my head. Could you really suspect that I got irritated today? I've already forgotten how one did it," I looked at I.'s face merrily in the light of the stars shining brightly.

"Lovushka, I know that you cannot get irritated anymore, and if I'm leading you in the park for so long, then I do it so that already in the very first night when you enter Ali's house, you would enter it with the perfect balance of your strength and feelings. We are in Ali's community. Every one of us by coming here has already covered the path of the cross of our lives, but not every one of us who was able to cover it could come up to this house. You'll see only those here who became bright in their suffering, who understood, accepted and blessed their circumstances, who wanted to live by serving people, by thinking about the common welfare. Today by entering this house, think, my dear boy, about everybody who was left in Constantinople, about everybody who now is next to Ananda and Florentian, also remember sir Vomi and everybody who stayed with us and who left comforted and gladdened. Both Alis will talk to you through their letters, thank life for meeting them. Throw off the whole burden of your former pain and misunderstandings. Enter under Ali's roof by being free, light and joyous. Don't think what tomorrow prepares for you, but end today with such completeness for your feelings that your entire organism could gather to itself the words of elder Ali written to you."

We entered the house, went upstairs, and I said good-bye to I. so that I could read Ali's letter alone, whose wonderful face looking at me from the ether through the round window I saw not so long time ago.

My friend, my brother and dear son!

Neither distance nor conditional separation exists for those whose hearts are burning with inextinguishable love. Death doesn't exist for those whose consciousness has comprehended the living Eternity within themselves.

Today you entered my home in the East. Enter it not as a guest or a family friend, but as the member of my family enjoying equal rights. Everybody whom you'll meet here, - all of them are your brothers and sisters who are walking the path of their development and work.

You were endowed more than many of them. You have the power to see and hear me, Florentian, Ananda, sir Vomi at any time. I. is going to lead you by always helping you to develop your psychic powers into the highest levels of knowledge. You are going to control your inner and your outer powers.

What is needed from you, so that everything would happen successfully and all your creative powers of spirit would open within yourself?

Your loyalty is needed. What is the disciple's loyalty for his Teacher? That is his eternal unity with his work and his paths. If you are going to light the heroic strain of your strength and your thoughts, you will unite with the intensive flame of your Teachers' creation, and Eternity is going to open all your talents within yourself, but your loyalty – that's the only key to all your knowledge.

Live freely, easily and without any fear. Those who are unable to live like this every day, the knowledge is out of reach for them, even if they stepped over the threshold of the Community. One can live among perfect people and see only their external manners anyway. One can live among the same people like you are, imperfect, but who are striving for joy of knowledge, and who see the sparkle of fire of Eternity in them. Then you will try not to disturb this sparkle of fire within man and you will try to help him, so that he would turn from the sparkle into the bonfire in an easier, simpler and merrier way. I repeat to you that neither the Community nor people, not even the nature with its beauties is going to give the key to such path to anybody. The key is within yourself, in your loyalty.

There isn't any "special" knowledge which opens for man with efforts of his will in special places during some special rituals. The black occultists are engaged in these affairs. Their knowledge acquired in such a way is poor, and you already had the possibility to make sure of it. But the temptation which they are spreading in the world, the wounds which they leave are terrible, and they destroy ignorant people. By acting through egoistic passions, the black occultists recruit their own armies, they burn down the will for kindness within man with their hypnosis.

That Community in which you are living now, - that's the net of salvation where the soldiers for fight against the evil, robbery and burning passions are trained. The hearts of those become hardened here, who want to live for the common welfare, for the people's calm and joy.

Knowledge – that's the engine of life, while joy – that's the lubricant for it. From this moment on when you've entered under the roof of my Community, perceive the new order of things and notice the new present which Great Life gives to you.

You have the period of entire seven years before you of complete liberation from all troubles of your practical life. While being completely liberated from your private burden, perceive your great inner freedom. Perceive that your I which is free from passions is able to move heaven and earth if your loyalty is really whole, and if no doubt or fear is able to beat the smallest crack through it.

My friend, accept my energetic handshake and walk through life with an ordinary kindness. As soon as your kindness becomes daily and usual engine of your life – you will be able to begin and to start your every meeting calmly and joyfully.

*Believe me – everything what man must achieve in his meeting – that's to begin and to start **each** of them calmly, with compassion and kindness.*

The time which I mentioned to you – seven years which seem like an eternity to you now, - would fly past like a single moment. When you leave the hospitable shelter of the Community, you will

persuade yourself that you still don't feel enough strength within yourself to go to the practical life and to create the paths for people to the common welfare and calm.

*But... everybody has **his own** time, **his own** hour of creation, his own time of development and actions of his heroic powers.*

That person who hurries – doesn't reach. That person who lags behind and lingers – finds only death. Don't lose your courage, my friend. You've started your path well – continue it in exactly the same way. If you need my help in the moment of disharmony, think about me strongly and firmly, call me by name, and I will respond to you immediately. Accept my regards and calm.

Your friend Ali Mahomet

I put out the light, took the letter and went to the balcony. The dark and silent night with the sky studded with stars surrounded me. The glamorous contours of the big palms were difficult to see. The unknown sounds of this night, some rustles, a very distant voice of the little pipe, the aroma of roses and pinks – everything merged into still unexperienced calm and bliss for me. The harmony reigning in this night seized me as well. I stopped feeling to be a separate living being, I felt a joy of existence, a happiness to live in this wonderful universe where I perceived myself to be a little living part of it.

Having pressed the letter to my lips, I was thanking Ali for his entire benefaction for me and for my brother. I read the letter again not with my eyes and mind, but with my heart. My love for Ali poured in a hot wave by opening his great strength for me. I perceived another aspect of my great friend – love. I wanted to come nearer to knowledge so that I could come nearer to him as well. I was standing for so long in the balcony that the stars began to go out already, and the east began to grow red. I remembered the young Ali's letter and I hurried to my room. I opened all windows one after another and I began to watch how the red band swimming out from the tops of the mountains was widening and becoming bright. Suddenly the little edge of the sun slipped off, and I could hardly refrain from shouting with fascination. The row of the mountains with snow-capped tops, illuminated with reddish light opened in the distant horizon. The wide valley with picturesque settlements, the changing gardens, clearings and the forests were spreading up to the foot of the mountains. I stepped back from the window only when I saw the gardeners leaving the distant buildings of the Community. Life started awakening in many places instantly. I saw how the people dressed in white, with frottier towels on their shoulders were going to bathe in the small river of the mountains. I sat down on the chair and I started reading the second letter.

"My dear Lovushka, my dear brother," the young Ali was writing to me in a fine and unusually beautiful handwriting. By looking at this strong-willed handwriting of his, I imagined him in an especially clear way. I remembered the first moments of our meeting when he, by not seeing us, put the querulous aunt off the cart and how he was smiling to Nal stealthily. I remembered him in that moment when Nal gave the flower to my brother Nikolay... I saw him dressed in Indian clothes in his uncle Ali's estate. How this man had to suffer back then, whose letters of the writing were winding in an even line like some harmoniously knitted knitting. What kind of endurance of his will and love has to live in this harmonious living being that after the deadly blow he could live the life of full value again, he could smile and be happy. Now it was clear to me that exactly when Nal gave the flower not to him, but to my brother Nikolay, Ali was dead. The careless Ali in love was dead, the groom who was dreaming about love and

family was dead, and the new man remained to live, the warrior, the creator of life who was next to the elder Ali and who's already forgotten about himself forever.

Now I didn't ask myself already: "Why was there so much pain in the world?" I knew why it was needed, I knew that only through pain people were coming to knowledge, only by overcoming obstacles they grew and hardened themselves. I started reading the letter again:

The whole troubled life of your late months rises before me. Suffering was breaking my heart many times, I wanted to exchange my role with you and to take your entire heroic deed upon myself by giving the peaceful life next to uncle Ali to you. But... you cannot choose your path. The path stretches there and in such a way as man himself has paved it.

You cannot tell everything what you would like to pour out of your heart, and our words are too small for that what I would like to share with you. I certainly have to tell you one thing: worry neither about myself nor about your brother.

You see, your life on the earth – that's your liberation through work. We are created in such a way that we bring onto the earth and we grow within ourselves many passions and superstitions which tangle us round like some adhesive lianas. The more beautiful the blossoms of our lianas are, the stronger we attach to them, the stronger we are seeking after them. When the time of our inner maturing comes, we have to break off the chains of our illusions, and if they have been rooted deep in our hearts, then in that moment when we pull them out, we die. Sometimes the entire parts of our essence die, so that joy of liberation would grow in the place of our passions which were chaining us.

I cannot state that I've conquered the levels of my growth and liberation in an easy and simple way. I died many times from lianas of my passions which caught hold of me and I rose again by always thanking Life for sending me the lesson of my liberation.

I can see how tens of lessons fell on you instantly. I can see in what stoical way you withstand them, my dear friend Lovushka. It seems to you that there's too much suffering around you, that Compassion of Life could have cared better for people's joy. No, Lovushka. Not Life gives awards, good luck or punishments, but man himself gathers that during his days what he has scattered round him during the centuries with his creation.

It is impossible to dry up or to take out the turbid water with a jug, which you've poured into your life yourself. You need to pass it through your consciousness and work. Only then the water that has passed through the filters of man's own kindness would soak into the soil and leave the crystals of pure Love around him on its surface. These radiating crystals can neither become turbid nor break. They are the little pieces of eternal Love that exists in you and in everybody else. They are light and pure, and they are pouring out of us like the rain of diamonds if we think not about ourselves, but about the people whom we meet during our current earthly commonness.

The more love we have in our free and purified heart, the clearer and wider is radiating the carpet of love around us, on which we meet our own people. While you are still only coming nearer to a man, you feel the aroma of the atmosphere of his carpet of love from the distance. That man whose atmosphere captivates you with energy of his tenderness and power was always dying from his passions for many, many times before they became the crystals of his liberated Love.

Lovushka, you had to suffer a lot, but you still have a big and long life before you. You still are going to experience a lot of things along your way, but know only one thing: such stages of development

doesn't exist, which would fall on a man's shoulders from heaven by themselves as from the horn of plenty, which somebody's hand is holding by strewing his path with flowers. Each flower – that's the labour of a man himself. Your every good fortune – that's your victory against yourself.

"Good fortune" which you will call by this name, - that's only your knowledge, your achievements along your path of liberation. That will be your inner strength and victory, and not that external welfare which people call to be good fortune by trying to amass as much wealth as possible by using strange hands and their work.

If you ever feel especially unwell, know firmly that you already end one of the levels of your liberation, that a part of your illusions dies within you. The organism of the earth always withstands their death with very much difficulty, because it possesses the consciousness, strength and feelings of the both worlds – the ones of heaven and of the earth.

By knowing this, when pain already winds round you, remember and lean on such people like I. whose shining carpet of love has already grown into the big sphere that encompasses both himself and everybody else who came up to him. My uncle Ali told me that he would send me to you, to the Community. I've already been there twice and I would be glad if I meet you there.

My dear friend, accept my sincere regards. It is not worth even talking how I will be glad if you don't refuse our friendship and you write to me. While I'm always with you in my thoughts and I dare to call myself your loyal friend.

Ali Machmed

This was the second letter received from younger Ali. It flowed by itself from my memory how I was protecting Florentian's sleep and how I was reading his first letter in the stuffiness of the carriage.

In comparison not so much time had passed, even less than a year from our first meeting with Ali, and there were so many events already. Such events that buried the boy who came to his brother's to K. I gave a smile to myself when I remembered that naïve, always irritated Lovushka who was going to Ali's feast and who imagined that he was a hero of the masquerade. It seemed to me that now I couldn't have even felt so expansively as back then. I remembered my disappointment, my solitude, the tears of the abandoned living being which excited the sensation of the grave within myself, and I understood clearly that I had already stepped over the certain level of my consciousness and that I would never search for happiness in life in the external form again.

Probably I would have still reflected on different questions of life for a long time, which were rising from associations of my recollections, but a flower thrown through the window drew my attention. I picked it up, went to the balcony and I saw I. who invited me to bathe in the small river of the mountains.

"Lovushka, but you haven't slept. You cannot do like that," my friend and guardian told me in a falsely austere tone. "Today I want to introduce you to many of my friends, there will be many charming ladies among them, and I don't want you to make an impression on them of sleepy and boring Lovushka during the breakfast."

I assured him that I wouldn't disgrace him, I hid the letters, snatched the towel and caught up with I. quickly.

Now we were walking along that picturesque valley which I saw from my balcony. The path suddenly turned left, we went round a little garden, and I was taken aback by the view that opened again. The small river of the mountains came flowing from far away, it was falling down in cascades, it was roaring and foaming, but by the sandy shoal where I took me, it poured out in a big lake like a cup and then it was flowing again in a narrow little river, plunging into waterfalls.

Palms were growing around the lake, and there were many bathing places constructed. The lake was deep, the water was cold, and only few, the best swimmers and athletes used to swim across it. There were many bathing places on its another side, too, I could see some moving people.

It was hot already, I was dreaming about getting into the water as soon as possible, but I took me further, towards the upper reaches, to another terrace of the mountain. Here I saw the same view, the river poured out into a lake and then it kept flowing down, but this lake was smaller and shallower. I explained to me that those who came to the Community for the first time were not allowed to bathe in the lower lake instantly, because too low temperature of the water could provoke one's cramps and even harm one's organism to death, but by inuring oneself to the high air temperature and the cold water little by little, which had many curative characteristics, one could not only cure many physical illnesses, but also revive one's organism. Many people who lived in the Community for six or seven years left it looking ten years younger and they almost stopped being ill.

I didn't want to leave me alone, so he was bathing together with me in the upper lake. I don't know how I would have felt in the lower lake, but the water of this lake simply enchanted me. After the sea in which I often used to bathe during our long journey, the soft, absolutely clear and pleasantly cool water of the lake in which I could see the smallest stones, the ground of which was like a velvet and in which there wasn't a single jellyfish, seemed like the real bliss to me. I couldn't get out of the water in any way, and only I's threat that the hour of the women's bathing was drawing nearer, while I detained the ladies, forced me to go ashore, although I sighed and I promised I to find one more lake for myself tomorrow already where I could bathe as much as I wanted to, without being afraid of being taken by surprise of the ladies.

I was laughing and he frightened me that he would introduce me to one American, very rich lady who didn't like recluse youths and who turned all of them into her pages. I was filled with indignation and I asked him to remember that I wouldn't go to America for anything and that I wanted to become acquainted only with Russians. As soon as I had time to finish my tirade, voices and laughter were heard behind the bathing places.

"What does it mean?" I heard a joyous, very young womanly voice that was speaking in English. "Are the lords still in the lake? Didn't seven strike already?"

"No, dear ladies," I answered, "the lords still have three minutes left. Besides, one of the Russian counts who's just come, was late on purpose, so that he could become acquainted with American lady. He heard so much about her mind and talent of education that he was dreaming of becoming her page."

I was telling all of it to somebody on the small bridge of the bathing place by imitating the intonation of the womanly voice and her somewhat incorrect accent that I was holding for a while, but then I couldn't bear it anymore and I burst out laughing in my previous boyish way. I opened the door of the bathing place, took me to the bank and... I got stiff by becoming Lovushka, the Catcher of Crows.

Two women were standing before me. One of them was stout, of middle height, with curly hair, unattractive brown-haired woman. Her big, grey, goggled, unquiet, commanding eyes as though didn't

fit in this corpulent body. It seemed to me that these eyes needed to know everything, to poke her nose everywhere, to participate everywhere. She was about thirty years old by appearance.

A girl was standing next to her. She was young and small, looked sickly, dark-haired, very neat, very kind and... rather sad. I couldn't understand anything. The voice must have been of the young one's? But then the elder one began to speak – and as though it gave me the shivers: the voice was hers. To whom of them did I. promise me as a page? Probably I couldn't please in any way to these electric wheels and not womanly eyes.

The elder lady smiled – as though she drilled a hole in my heart – and she began to speak again.

“If there was my will, and if my great respect for you, doctor I., didn't hinder me, then I would forbid the children younger than seventeen years old to come to the Community. Especially for such nervous ones like your friend.”

“It's nothing, Nataliya Vladimirovna, my friend has already outrun many, and the most importantly – we should have to start applying the prohibition from you. You came here when you were still younger than seventeen, didn't you? And anyway you were accepted with joy, and life here didn't harm you.”

I. introduced me to both women by calling one of them Nataliya Vladimirovna Andreyeva, and another one – lady Berdran.

“In a day or two you will call me Nataliya anyway, so you may not memorize my patronymic,” Andreyeva told me by extending her hand to me.

How subtle and pleasant this hand was! I felt friendliness for her instantly and I stopped being afraid of her eyes.

“Well, you have awls, and not eyes!”

“My God, and I just wanted to say that your eyes – that's electric wheels! Probably they would find even a nail on the sea ground. I already felt how you drilled me through with them, Nataliya Vladimirovna.”

“Well, who am I then?” lady Berdran gave a laugh. “I have neither awls nor wheels and I cannot drill any holes. To which circle of mortals do I belong?”

“Lady, you are the star of fortune. I'm sure that you always bring luck to people whom you meet. Your sadness arises, because you take heartbreak from everybody and you give your kindness to them in exchange.”

“Have pity on us, I., you needed to bathe your friend in the lower lake instantly,” Andreyeva burst out laughing.

I. took my arm, looked at the ladies merrily, gave even a merrier laugh, made an appointment for them in the dining-room and ran by dragging me along with himself, as the schoolchildren were doing.

I was surprised again. Indeed when I settled in the Community I couldn't do anything else, but only to be surprised. I. who was so serious, so solid, who laughed so rarely, who always only smiled, here he was absolutely different. I couldn't imagine that I. could run and play pranks with me like a child.

Soon I asked I. to walk as slowly as possible. There wasn't any sign left from my bathing. I was wet, while my sandals were full of dust. It seemed that I. had just left the sitting-room.

"Don't be sad, Lovushka, you will get used to the climate, you will learn to walk and run without raising any dust. Go, change your clothes, take a shower, invite Yassa, he will help you. I will wait for you here."

I. sat down on the bench in the shadow by the porch, and I didn't have time even to go upstairs when a big crowd of people surrounded him already.

Yassa advised me to take a cold shower, and I did it with pleasure. He gave a clean chiton and sandals to me, and he explained to me that in the mornings everybody was walking only in a light chiton, while for their dinner they were wearing two of them. The dinner was early here, at two o'clock.

I was amazed how they could eat in such heat, but I didn't say anything. Yassa who as though understood my thoughts explained to me that the morning dining-room to which we would go now, - was in the west. They were dining in the very end of the park, by the small river, in the northern open dining-room which was overgrown with lianas and creepers, while the tea-room was in the eastern part of the park, by the rock. The hottest was not during the dinner where they were always watering the verdure which was would round the dining-room and where the wind of ventilators was blowing, but in the tea-room. There was even a grotto arranged here in the rock for those who couldn't bear the heat. It was always chilly in the grotto, and many people were working there during the midday heat.

I went downstairs together with the gong. I. introduced me to some of his friends, he took my arm, and all of us went to the dining-room.

I looked round by being worried, because I thought that my new acquaintances were late for the breakfast. And a surprise was waiting for me here as well. Andreyeva and lady Berdran were going from the opposite side of the park. There must have been another, shorter path from the river straight to the park.

Now I could examine both ladies better. Andreyeva was walking in a heavy gait, as the stout people were doing it. Her eyes really looked like electric wheels. Again she made an impression of a magnetized person on me. It seemed to me that her friend was keeping some distance from her consciously. Lady Berdran gave a smile to us and settled at the adjacent table where a not young man was sitting. He was very handsome, shaved, agile, with excellent manners. I considered him to be a Frenchman. He greeted his neighbour, pulled the chair for her deftly and sat down himself only when she settled at the table conveniently.

I. explained to me that he was Pole, an ordinary worker who achieved the higher education himself and who was fighting against the czar's yoke many times. His name was Jan Sinecki, he wasn't for the first time here.

I saw a man of short stature next to Andreyeva with beautiful, kind and childish naïve eyes. His luxuriant, grey beard and the same curly hair, his big, short-sighted blue eyes were merry and comically roguish, so everything was so beautiful and nice that even the glasses didn't spoil this face. His cheeks were reddish, his lips were red, he had teeth like a pearl – he could be a model of a kind-hearted man for a sculptor. The smile almost never disappeared from his lips, he was dressed with light, irreproachably white suit made of the very thin silk. Neatness and good order were blowing from him, what emphasized the contrast with his neighbour even more.

The rough features of the commanding Andreyeva's face, the unusual alertness and attentive look of her eyes, the stern power spreading from her made an absolute contrast for her neighbour. Everything was untidy in her. The white lacy headscarf covering her hair was tied slovenly, her dress was crumpled, the book in her hand was ragged, the bare rods were stuck out of her umbrella. Both of them, so contrasting, drew my entire attention immediately. Every one of them looked attractive in their own way, and I thought: however differently these two people would reflect, they could solve some task of life together and supplement each other harmoniously.

When I already wanted to ask I. whether they weren't husband and wife, I heard the loud, joyous Andreyeva's laughter, and she told us across the table.

"I., I told you that you needed to bathe that count-awl of yours in the cold lake instantly. He found a subject for his future novel, and poor mister Oldenkot got among the first of his heroes."

"I don't think so, Nataliya Vladimirovna. You've frightened Lovushka so much that probably he would be searching for a subject of his works in other sectors of the Community," I. answered her by flashing his eyes comically.

Regardless of Andreyeva's external rudeness, the power of benevolence was blowing from her when she was looking at me. Inside of me I struck up a friendship with her instantly, what I was surprised myself of. I understood clearly for the first time that Andreyeva didn't possess any external tact; but her wisdom was greater than everybody else's who was sitting next to her. I gave a smile and I told her by not being afraid of her eyes at least a little anymore.

"I don't know what would have happened if I. had told me to bathe in the cold lake, but the warm one excited the only wish for me: to become your page."

Not only I., Oldenkot, Sinecki and lady Berdran, but also those who were sitting further from our table couldn't refrain from laughing. Kastanda who approached I. to ask him what dietetic table he had to give to me was laughing until he began to cry. Nataliya Vladimirovna waited until her neighbours calmed down and again she began to speak in a clear, sharp voice that was unusually young according to her age.

"Lovushka, remember this day and this laughter well. It will be a great excuse for me when Ali comes here and asks me what I've done for the man who desired to become my page voluntarily. The joint laughter of my friends tells in what tyranny I held my young friends. Only always everything ends in such a way that I fall into their clutches and become an object of their escapades and amusements."

I didn't understand very well what was hidden behind this joint laughter and what was the essence of Andreyeva's words. I. was looking at me merrily, he forced me to eat the vegetables salad, then a very tasty porridge and finally to drink some excellent coffee which I had missed during the long time of our trip, because I used to get only cacao and chocolate everywhere.

A tall, slender, neatly shaved youth – mister Chergiston was sitting next to me. He turned out to be mathematician by education, but he studied history in this moment. He also was for the first time in the Community and he came here only several weeks ago. I felt that he hadn't yet been accustomed here. Mister Chergiston had a letter for I., of what I said to my friend instantly.

"Yes, I know, mister Chergiston. Your friend wrote to me when I still was in Constantinople that he sent you here. He asked me to be your guide, which I undertake to do with great joy. Ananda also told me about you. I brought his letter and a small parcel for you," he said to the Englishman tenderly.

I will never forget what happened to the youth when he heard that Ananda sent the letter and the parcel to him. The reserved and strict Englishman gave a start, the fork and the napkin fell out of his hands, he flushed and uttered with his eyes full of tears.

“Did Ananda himself really write a letter for me?”

“Yes, mister Chergiston, not only he wrote it, but also explained scrupulously to me how I had to prepare you for meeting him. When he comes here, you must be ready to accompany him to the distant and long journey. Ananda asked me to tell you that you would try to overcome your shyness, because you would have to live in big, noisy cities among people and to communicate with them constantly.”

“Apparently, I’m not destined to live in such a way as I would like to,” mister Chergiston gave a sigh. “I was dreaming about a monastery, and I would get into the world and even to the racket of the city, but in order for me to be next to Ananda, I will walk any path with joy.”

The breakfast was over, we said good-bye to our neighbours and the new acquaintances, and we went upstairs to our rooms together with Englishman.

“Please, doctor I., and you, Lovushka, call me Alver,” Chergiston uttered. “My dearest people call me like this, and I would like to hear how both of you address me like this.”

“Great, Alver, we’ll do exactly like this,” I. told him and gave the letter and the parcel to him. “Come to the park in half an hour by the most distant pond along the hundred-year-old palms if that doesn’t disturb the program of your day. I want to take Lovushka to the foot of the near, green mountains and to acquaint him with environs a little, and at the same time with botany.”

“How happy I am that you will take me together with you! I will be by the palms in half an hour.”

Alver left by carrying his dear letter and the small, but rather heavy box.

“Alver has suffered a lot during his life,” I. told me when we left for the park, armed with shovels, big felt hats, knives and baskets. “His life until the last two years was the entire horror in the family of his stepmother and her children, which he supported by working without taking a rest. When the youth was already falling into despair, one of Ananda’s disciples met him. He took him to Ananda when he was on his way to Dover, and since then Alver rose again. Ananda also helped him to get here.”

“Ah, I., how difficult it is for me to concentrate my attention here. I would like at least to take in everybody who is living here with my eyes, and now as soon as I look at one of them – I’m immersed in him and I forget about everybody else. Until now I used to concentrate my attention in such a way that I could see both a man – even a very exceptional one – and I could take in the whole surroundings. While here my attention is enough only for one person.”

“Lovushka, this is not because you are absent-minded, but only because your attention became concentrated, and you started feeling the emanations and vibrations of your encountered people in a more subtle and stronger way. Your organism, its psychic and physical characteristics became hardened in comparison to your previous ones, and you can see a man clearer. If you remember your sensations during your meetings since you left C. you’ll notice that the streams spreading from people were always destroying you. Even after your communication with such high and bright powers like Ali, Florentian and Ananda we always needed to strengthen you with sap of herbs and plants through the sweets, pills and drops. Now you’ve forgotten about all these means even during such stormy meeting with Andreyeva. And besides, namely she could destroy your peace, and it could still happen in the future. Did you notice that

the American who's living next to her for a long time already is trying to keep aloof from Nataliya Vladimirovna? Everybody next to Andreyeva felt anxiety since her very childhood, while things used to jump as soon as she used to come nearer to them. And now she isn't allowed to enter the studies with medical electric devices. The electric devices become corrupt even from her presence, because they don't sustain that enormous electric strength which her organism radiates. All psychic powers are uncovered within her. She is one of those suddenly renewed people in whom Eternity absorbed her bestial origin instantly and returned all her previous talents and knowledge, but the power of divine fire isn't flowing in harmony with fire of the earth within her, which slips out of her like tongues of her flame, although the fire of Light always surpasses and calms it. Both these fires don't merge into harmony within her, besides she is prone to get irritated, that's why she might infect also others with her instability. And anyway you remained completely controlled before her, although she saw and read all your peculiarities in your aura."

Alver approached us, for whom we've been waiting for several minutes already by standing in the nook of the fantastic beauty, under the hundred-year-old palms surrounding the pond, the huge, spread wide crowns of which were reflected on the water. Black and white swans were swimming in the pond, while the reddish flocks of flamingos and some other unseen birds were standing about among the palms.

Several little houses could be seen further in the thick verdure, and the white peacocks were walking about with dignity and their wonderful trains stretched out. People dressed in white always used to go past us. Apparently, all of them knew I. well, as well as he knew them. I was amazed by his memory. He used to greet everybody by calling him by his name, he used to ask different questions for everybody, but the result was always one and the same: the people's faces used to brighten up, joy and cheerfulness like the sunbeams used to shine in them.

While we were walking slowly down the shady park, I was sighing in my thoughts: what an enormous gap was between me and I. in comparison to our knowledge, strength, talents and finally love! From where could burn such inextinguishable bonfire of this love within him so that he wouldn't dry and empty his heart with streams of his attention and warmth with which he simply would pour every person encountered?

"Well, Lovushka, no melancholy thoughts may exist in the Community. Only those got here who've overcome all the possibilities to deny, to grieve, to be sad and to complain within themselves. Throw off all your doubts and prepare for the first test of the desert. As soon as we leave the shade of the park, the heat will overtake us from all sides."

I. pulled the big felt hat on my head strongly and lowered the net from it on my shoulders which I hadn't noticed up to now. Indeed, as soon as I stepped behind the gates of the park I felt like in the fire stove instantly. I appreciated Yassa's care to put on high sandals with thick soles for me. The sand which I touched unintentionally was as hot as the charcoal. I began to sweat in streams, all my clothes got wet immediately, then they got dry and wet again, the vapour was rising from my body. I got befogged so much that I could hardly lumber till the foot of the mountains where the streamlets were oozing, the springs were spurting by irrigating the luxuriant vegetation, the grass and the flowers. I. showed several bushes of wild blackberries to me, which were big, ripe, they were hanging till the very ground with their weight. I fell upon them and I told them that I had never eaten anything more tasty during my life.

"And how about melon? Aren't you a wise man?" I. was laughing.

All of a sudden I gave a cry, because I almost trod on a snake which crawled out of my feet.

"This isn't a snake," Alver uttered by taking the disgusting hissing slug into his hands peacefully. "This is grass-snake, Lovushka, it isn't dangerous. Not so long time ago I was really shocked by a wandering snakecharmer whom Kastanda told me to feed, while he showed gratitude to us and performed the whole performance with his cobras and the big rattle-snake. The snakes submitted to the sad, plaintive melody of his little pipe and in the beginning as though they were demonstrating a dance by becoming straight and swaying on their tails, what I found to be disgusting. The all of them together began to attack their master. Many of us were frightened, we thought that his own snakes would strangle their master, but he kept playing in a cheerful mood, while the snakes hung on his neck, hands, legs and hips like living beads. I was looking at him as bewitched and I couldn't understand in any way how the man was controlling these scarecrows, because if they had stung him, he would have died in several minutes. Finally the master sent the snakes to the baskets and sacks, he left only one of them and offered somebody to take it to his hands. He persuaded us that the snake wouldn't bite that one who wouldn't be afraid of it. Oldenkot was already extending his hand to take the snake, but suddenly Andreyeva seized his hand, even faster snatched the snake and threw it to the master. It happened so fast that nobody had time even to react. "Did Ali send you here to teach charlatanism?" Andreyeva shouted so loudly, in such commanding voice, the sparkles began to pour from her eyes in such a way that many of us moved backwards. The snake that was flung aside with such disrespect flew into a rage. The rest of them began to coil in their sacks menacingly, luckily the sacks were tied up already. The master was crying something to Kastanda in the language which I didn't know, probably some not very respectful words. Kastanda interpreted to Andreyeva that the master reproached her for the evil spirit aroused in the snake and that now, if she didn't tame it herself, the snake certainly would bite somebody. Only he didn't take the blame upon himself, because he didn't control any evil spirits. All of a sudden Andreyeva uttered several words to him in the same language, while Kastanda interpreted them to us: "Take your snake as soon as possible and get out of here immediately; if you delay for at least five minutes, I will set the horn on your head of that deer that already comes running here." I couldn't describe in any words what happened to the haughty and arrogant snakecharmer. He snatched the furious snake in a flash, shoved it into his bosom, grasped his sacks, baskets and scuttled off like the deer. He was mumbling some enchantments and he always kept turning back to look at Andreyeva."

"Alver, please put down this unbearable grass-snake," I was asking him bitterly. "I'm not Andreyeva, I cannot cry commandingly, but I'm so tired of that grass-snake of yours that most likely I would whirl away like the snakecharmer."

I made my fellow-travellers laugh, but I gave a lighter sigh when the Englishman let the grass-snake go on the grass.

I went up to I. and asked him why he didn't warn me that there were many snakes in the mountains.

"Because, Lovushka, you will see here not only snakes, but also tigers, lions, you'll also get used not to be afraid of them. And now, my friends, let's mow down the grass, these flowers, let's gather the leaves from those distant bushes. Today is the last day when we can gather them for a treatment goals."

I. showed us how we needed to mow down the grass carefully, without grazing the ground, and on the contrary, how we needed to tear the flowers up by the roots, how carefully we needed to cut only young little leaves off the bushes.

It seemed to us that the work would be easy, but until we with Alver filled up our baskets we were dead-beat. If I wasn't afraid of the snakes, then I would have lain on the grass a long time ago. I.'s basket was full to the brim, he could hardly close it, while he himself was fresh and charming. He was

casting looks on us with a roguery in his eyes. I wanted to ask him very much what he was thinking about Andreyeva, but he was humming a tune, he was telling me that it was time for me to learn to play and to sing, because otherwise I would always remain know-nothing in this field. He didn't allow us not even to rest, he told us that it was time to come back home, because we would be late for dinner. None of my requests to rest helped. I. was laughing at my fear to come back during the heat, he damped my hat in the streamlet, pulled it on my head again and he was looking at my sad expression joyfully.

"But this reminds me of the dervish cap. What will happen if I fall sick?"

I. laughed even more joyously, he seized my hand and started running down. Only now I understood why I got so tired by climbing up the mountain through the grass. The grass was slippery, and I perceived it only now when I was running down with I. I even wasn't running, he was running, while I was only sliding like with skis by catching hold of his hand and shoulder. We must have been going down like this only for several minutes, but they seemed to me like the hours of Dante's Inferno. I was only thinking that I would stumble over some hummock and lie with broken arm or leg. When we descended successfully and stopped by the foot, I. was red in the face, his eyes were shining not worse than the sun, he was so happy, he was so glad that I couldn't utter a single word of reproach to him, although I was prepared to pour a hundred of them and to tell him that I didn't play like this anymore, that I wasn't ready to fly down from the mountains. I. looked back, I did the same. By catching hold of a tree, Alver was standing in the middle of the mountain helplessly. He was big, broad-shouldered and he must have gotten stiff with amazement by looking at our Valkyric flight. His entire pose with his opened wide mouth was so ridiculous that I gave a jump up and I was rocking with laughter by having forgotten about everything in the world.

I. got to Alver in a flash like a cat. He heaped him on his shoulders and ran down as though by carrying a bird. I was so surprised that I even stopped laughing, but then I burst out laughing again until I. told me that he would tell Alver to bring the grass-snake in order to restore my balance.

Alver himself was so dumbfounded that he couldn't recover, so I wasn't afraid of any slugs. I caught hold of I. and I was choking with laughter for nearly a half of the way. Apparently, the event on the mountain, the whole its comicality, the up to now unknown I.'s characteristic – his swiftness, - which excited such enthusiasm within me, obsessed me so much that I completely forgot that we still had a long way to go, that the heat was exhausting us and that there was a storm of sand which the caravan of the walking camels stirred up. When we reached the shade of the park, I. took us along the absolutely different way. Alver looked round surprised and uttered.

"It is so strange, doctor I., I'm here for the second week already, and until now I've seen neither this part of the park nor those beautiful little houses in the distance. They are like toy, white, shining. What kind of the settlement is there?"

"You haven't seen this part of the park, because only the narrow path through the gorge connects it with the big park. Probably you used to come up to the gorge and think that the whole Community ended in that place. In truth, exactly here the Community's activity begins. Those houses about which you ask me – that's the first children's colony. There are tens of such colonies in the Community. They are located around the park and along the river. You can see the school in the distance, while the hospital is in the very border of the settlement, on the right. The shelter and the school of the deaf-mutes are on the left. After some time when both of you with Lovushka get used to the climate and learn to ride on camels, I will take you for a three or four weeks trip, or perhaps even for longer. We'll ride around the whole Community. You'll make yourselves familiar with activity of those who are always living here and who don't come here for several years like you do."

Soon we went up to the gorge, and it seemed to me that there wasn't any way further, but I. went round the big stone, and I saw a beautiful little path which reminded me of the bed of a dried up river. By walking down the path we struck against another side of the gorge, against the monolithic wall. Suddenly I. stooped, entered a grotto that opened for us on the left side, and after a while we already were by those hundred-year-old palms from which we started our journey, only from the absolutely different side of the pond. I glanced back and I couldn't decide from which crack of the mountain we came out. There were many caves behind our backs, which were woven by lianas, roses and other convolvuluses in the same way. There wasn't any time to reflect, because I. came up to the water earlier than we did, he untied a small boat, and in this way we rowed across the pond, while swans and flamingos weren't even afraid of us.

We were just in time for the dinner, because we still had time to take a shower and to change our clothes. When we took our places in the dinner dining-room which I saw for the first time, I noticed that all tables were round here, while our neighbours at the tables were the same. I met attentive Andreyeva's look from the adjacent table. The scene with snakes rose clearly in my imagination, especially when Oldenkot moved the chair up for his neighbour, gathered her belongings thrown everywhere carefully and put them onto the special, side shelves dedicated for various things. I noticed that the rods weren't stuck out of her umbrella anymore, I was moved when I thought that he sewed them like a careful nurse for her.

I forgot to tell you that all chairs in all the dining-rooms were the same – the trunks of palms and bamboos covered with buffalo skins. It was easy to fold and to stretch them out, they were solid, convenient and low like the tables which were covered with clean white tablecloths, the vases with flowers were standing on all of them. The vases were ceramic, made by the locals, all of them were different and they seemed to be artistic for me. Several jugs with milk were standing on each table and they were as beautiful as the vases.

Everybody was dining calmly. Although a lot of people were eating, I couldn't feel any racket. I hadn't seen so many people at the single table d'hote, and it always used to be noisy everywhere; here each table had its own waiters, and everybody used to serve himself.

Once again I was surprised by the especial atmosphere of this crowd of people. Not everybody's manners were such elegant as the Pole worker Sinicki's, also their appearance was the most different, but each face which my look used to touch was marked by spirituality, from which kindness and tranquillity was spreading. Only several faces, among which the one of the wonderful American lady Berdran, were sad, perhaps even not sad, but sorrowfully beautiful, what was even more revealed by joviality of the rest.

Without even having time to ask myself why these several faces were marked with such especially strong and full of inspiration sorrow, I heard the unique Andreyeva's voice and its original accent addressing me.

"Dear and curious count, I propose you not to hurry and forestall the events. If you wish, tomorrow I will answer all your "whys" very comprehensively, while today direct your attention to joy. If you want to, you can join our excursion to the melon field after the dinner."

I became worried immediately. I was already used to get the answers to my mute questions instantly from I. or Florentian, Ananda or sir Vomi, but I didn't want at all that also this woman with her electric wheels would crawl about under my skull. I looked at I. who was sitting next to me, but it seemed to me that he didn't even feel or notice my addressing him.

"We haven't yet been introduced one to another," smiling Oldenkot said to me. "My friend Nataliya Vladimirovna told me about your talents. Don't pay attention to her escapades. No limits of human understanding are valid for her, and sometimes she shocks people, but actually she's the kindest person if you don't look at her like an ordinary woman and if you recognize her supernatural character. Then you will feel next to her absolutely calmly and safely. Indeed, she doesn't like snakes, but you have to put up with it," he added by pretending to be sighing and flinging his eyes mischievously at his neighbour.

Everybody's joint laughter and the requests of several neighbours to take them to the melon field helped me to avoid my answer. I shot a glance at Alver who was laughing, too, and he whispered me.

"Agree to go to gather the melons. It isn't far away, you need to go through the park, the field is almost next to it. The melons are great, they have an exceptional aroma, and most importantly is how she chooses them. She sits in the shade, she almost doesn't look at the field and she explains which melons they have to pick. The chief gardener himself and the market-gardeners are surprised how she does it, as though she could see through every melon."

I thought that this new acquaintance of mine could see through the earth as well. All of a sudden I. turned back to look at me and asked me absolutely seriously.

"Lovushka, do you think that it is impossible to see through the earth?"

I became embarrassed, I didn't even know how I had to react and understand his question. Everybody began to rise from their places and to place the folded chairs by the walls. I caught hold of I., I didn't want to go anywhere, I needed to stay in silence with my dear friend or at least alone, so that my stirred thoughts would calm down.

"I think, Lovushka, that we won't go for the melons, I'd better show Ali's favourite room to you. When Ali comes here, he always lives there. Nobody is permitted to enter the room except himself, but Kastanda received Ali's order to let you stay in his room whenever and for as much as you wanted it to. Here Kastanda comes, to all appearance he brings the key for you.

"Lovushka, I received an order from my dear Teacher and the host of this house to hand you the key from his room on the second day of your arrival. You may stay there for as long as you will need to. During my entire life here – soon twenty years – only the second person receives the right to enter that room freely during his first arrival to the Community. Young Ali was the first one – you are the second one. Apparently the Teacher has some weighty reasons to give such great honour to you. Accept my congratulation and respect, and consider me to be your zealous and happy servant. I'm ready to serve you in the same way as I would do it for him."

Kastanda bowed low to me, while I became completely confused, I was agitated and I gave a shout.

"Ali shows this honour not for me, he does it only as a great favour for me and from love for my brother. I still couldn't deserve such exceptional Ali's kindness with anything. If such unusual and exceptional attention is showed to me now, then apparently, my great friend Florentian asked Ali. It would be painful for me if you thought that I was worthy of this honour myself. I'm here only as modest servant of my brother, of Ali himself and of my guardian I. I., please take the key, I will use the room only when you allow me to do it."

I extended the key to I., but he didn't take it. On the contrary, he embraced and told me.

"Make bold, Lovushka, learn to carry the burden of happiness and misfortune in the same easy way."

We went up not to the big house, but to the small two-storied cottage with a little tower and the balcony, which was standing among powerful palms like in the separate little island to which one could get through the little bridge across the streamlet that surrounded the whole island. The place was wonderful, remote and poetic. The walls of the white house were made of an especial stone which was flat, shining and which looked like white coral. Calm and purity were prevailing here; squirrels were jumping in high cedars, birds were chirping. A white peacock came running to us, as though by wishing to greet us.

An old, toothless servant with Oriental clothes met us by the porch. Having seen the key in my hand, he bowed low and opened the door of the porch. We entered and went upstairs on the upper landing. The stairs were made of the same stone as the walls. Then we came to the door which I. told me to open with the key.

I cannot find any words to describe my feelings which surged me when I was unlocking the door. As though I was standing by the goal for which I was craving ardently and I could see clearly the alive, burning Ali's eyes, as though I could hear his voice telling me.

"Black pearls exist – those are the disciples who are walking along the path of sadness and carrying it for everybody whom they meet. That isn't your path. Disciples who are carrying reddish pearls of joy for everybody, - this path is for you. Go, my son, I congratulate you, be loyal and pure."

I thought for a while that I was delirious again, but having lent a more attentive ear, I could hear clearly the commanding elder Ali's voice which had a peculiar timbre.

"If you meet the disciple of sorrowful face who's walking along the path of sadness, come to love him doubly and extend the whole power of your cheerfulness and energy in order to help him, because his path is the most difficult one from all deeds of Love on the Earth."

How many words I had to utter now in order to tell you what I understood and heard back then, but actually all of it flew through me like a lightning whirl, it quivered my organism, eliminated any distance between me and Ali, merged me with his thoughts in an unusual way which I was unable to understand back then.

Finally the heavy door opened, and we saw the room. Right before the entrance the door to the balcony was opened wide, and the windows were opened till the end from both sides. Their frame was so narrow that it made an impression on me as though I was looking at the continuous panorama. The widest view to the valley, the mountains, the scattered settlements, the mosques, the gardens and the grazing herds of the cattle opened for me. Life was boiling everywhere, beauty opened for my look everywhere, from which it was impossible to tear myself away. We were standing with I. in the balcony in silence.

"Lovushka, look round the room, and I will interpret the inscriptions for you which you will see on the walls."

We came back to the room. Although the day was hot, it wasn't stuffy here, because the morning sun had already turned away, while the stairs and the tower covered the room from the south and the evening sun. The white inner walls were flat, the same was the floor – it was the real coral little house! That what I considered to be the thin borders of the walls turned out to be the inscriptions from the same little pieces of the stone like the walls, the floor and the whole house.

"Lovushka, memorize well the first, main inscription above the door of the balcony and the windows. It is written here:

Man's power – Love. It carries him from century to century. The power of love gives birth to man and it comes into being within him when his harmony matures.

Love – that's harmony, and man has seven paths into it.

"Know only this inscription for a while. You've sworn to learn the Oriental languages. Besides them you also have to learn Pali language in which these inscriptions are written. It opens the door to knowledge for those who knocks at it."

I was looking at the secret symbols of the inscriptions with sacred respect and I was thinking: "Will I find the key for the door of knowledge?"

Low white sofas were standing along the walls of the room. An armchair was standing by the white window, as well as by the fireside. The armchair by the fireside surprised me with its form. It was very artistic, very ancient, made of the big trunks of the dark, almost black wood. Only it alone like a black spot stood out in this brightly white room. The trunks were upholstered with fur which also seemed to be very old. Its hair was almost shed already, and the skin of unusual thickness could be seen.

The writing-table made of the white wood was standing by the window on the left, it was covered with a beautiful lid similar to the leaf of palm and it could be turned over in the middle to both sides. I didn't feel absolutely comfortably here. A sacred respect restricted me, as if I was standing in a temple. I wouldn't have agreed to sit down here anywhere for anything, because now the host of this room seemed for me to be so unreachably great. I didn't bring myself even to talk, I only gave a tug at I.'s sleeve and showed to the door with my eyes by inviting him to leave silently.

He smiled, examined the whole room again, as if by saying good-bye to all the inscriptions on the walls which I didn't understand yet, and we left. We closed the door in silence, we also crossed the whole island and the park in silence, and we came back home.

The white peacock and the Oriental servant accompanied us till the little bridge, the bird stretched out its wonderful train shining with gold and blue colour for farewell, and it bowed its head with little crest.

When we entered our rooms, I. told me.

"Lie down for a rest till the tea. You cannot get overtired here for a while. You need to habituate yourself to the climate of this land bit by bit."

I didn't contradict him with a single word, although I absolutely wanted neither to lie down nor to sleep. In the beginning the heat was tormenting me, but I didn't even feel how I fell asleep and I only woke up when Yassa was arousing me. I caught up with I. downstairs, who was walking with two men whom I hadn't seen yet. One of them Oswald Rasten was blond, typical Swede, what I successfully guessed. By appearance he seemed to be youth, and I was surprised when I found out that he was already for the second time in the Community. The second I.'s companion was brunette, Frenchman Jerome Manule. If the first one's language, manners, gait were rhythmically calm, then the second one was as lively as mercury. His gait, movements, language – everything showed his great temperament, but there wasn't any flounce: you could feel his benevolence, joviality and lightness. His eyes were dark, not very big, but they had beautiful form, they were shining with intelligence, they were looking often and attentively. He looked like a writer to me, and it was confirmed so later on.

The Swede was from the traders family, he chose the career of the scientist against the want of his relatives and he already was a chief of the department of history in one of the German universities. When I. introduced me to them, both of them cried out at the same time.

“How could it be? The captain T.?”

“No,” I answered them. “I’m his brother.”

“Soon you can read Lovushka’s story and you will be glad by accepting one more young writer and the future scientist as your friend,” smiling I. told them.

Both of my friends called me their colleague and on the way to the dining-room they introduced me to other two young ladies and to one elderly one. Not the young and beautiful ladies surprised me, but the elderly, grey woman. My first thought when I saw her was: “And they say that old age cannot be beautiful, womanly and charming.”

Her tall, rather stout figure was embellished by – I cannot find any other word – a beautiful, grey head. The sunburn didn’t ruin her regular face, her big black eyes and black eye-brows emphasized her greying hair. There weren’t any wrinkles, her face seemed to be young. Only so much grief was in her eyes and in her smile that Ali’s words which I heard before entering his room rose in my memory instantly: “If you meet the disciple with sorrowful face who is walking down the path of sadness, then come to love him doubly and extend the whole power of your cheerfulness and energy to help him, because his path is the most difficult one of all heroic deeds of Love on the Earth.”

I bowed low to the elderly lady and kissed her extended hand sincerely. This hand, as well as the Andreyeva’s one, was subtle, friendly, its form was almost perfect. Its fingers showed that she was a painter. This guess of mine was confirmed. I. called her Beata Skalradi and he explained to me that senora Beata was Italian painter who’s won many prizes in the worldwide exhibitions, that her works hung in the picture-galleries of many capitals. When I was introduced to some other ladies whose names my memory haven’t saved because of the impression which the painter left on me, an elderly, lean man with a tortured face of an ascetic approached us from the side alley. He must have been hurrying to I. The Swede Oswald Rasten whispered me that he was worldwide famous pianist and composer, Russian Sergey Aninov. While both celebrities were walking in front of the group, next to I., Jerome Manule explained to me.

“Sergey Aninov is living not in the Community, but in one small house in the park. Ali gives him the rest not for the first time already. He’s very nervous, he comes here very rarely, but when he’s playing in the evenings he allows everybody not only to listen to him, but also to order their favourite pieces. Oh, how he plays! It is impossible to imagine anything better.”

Senora Skalradi and Aninov sat down at our table. I didn’t participate in the conversation. By sitting a little further away from them, I took a good look at the faces of my new acquaintances. I liked the painter always more. Her melodious and slow Italian language reminded me of the Florentian’s demonstrated to me many times talk of his nationals. That wasn’t that rattling patter of senoras Galdoni, which I could hardly understand. I marked out every word in senora Beata’s speech, which attracted me even more to her, but Aninov remained a riddle for me. His ascetic, wrinkled face, his sparkling eyes, his sudden movements, his protest and indignation at what was oppressing him, - everything seemed to me to be so far away from harmony that I remembered Ali’s words again, only now as though the inscriptions on the walls lit up in my memory: “The power of love gives birth to man, and it is born within him only when his harmony matures.”

I was talking to myself in my thoughts: "If he's famous, worldwide known musician, then he has to create in a harmonious way, otherwise neither his works nor his performance would conquer the world, only may this face be at least calm?"

All of a sudden Aninov fell silent, his look sank somewhere deeply into the space, his wrinkles smoothed down. Wisdom came to light on his face, as though he listened attentively to something what others were unable to hear, his eyes flashed, his pale cheeks turned red. Suddenly he became absolutely unfamiliar and handsome.

"Excuse me, my dear, till tomorrow. I hear that my muse is calling me. You've inspired me, I hurry to write. Come tomorrow in the evening and bring your friends along. I will play that what my muse Harmony has whispered me now."

Having uttered these words in a hurry and left the tea, Aninov left the dining-room quickly.

I was sitting immersed myself deeply into "catching of crows" and I couldn't take my eyes off the door through which the musician left.

"So what, count-awl," I heard next to me, and somebody's leaden hand, as it seemed to me, fell on my shoulder. "I've told you that you shouldn't forestall the events. You'd rather have been picking up the melons and not drilling the subtle matter with your awls. Here's a melon for you – the one of the highest quality. Every of its bits adds a pound of wisdom."

Andreyeva kept holding her hand on my shoulder, I felt bad from that weight, I even broke into a sweat. One more moment and probably I would have fainted away. I already was sickened and dizzy, but I. got next to me, his tender hand embraced me and pressed a cup to my lips.

"Nataliya Vladimirovna, Lovushka haven't yet become strong enough after his difficult illness. He doesn't have to feel the blows of your strength, while you aren't always capable of protecting a man from the heaviness of your vibrations. Today it is already the second case of your carelessness. Lady Berdran had to be laid up."

I.'s voice was silent and soft, but it seemed to me that it was beating Andreyeva with a stronger power than that one with which she was just pressing my shoulder. I felt so sorry for her that I seized I.'s hand and I said to the woman.

"I'm all right already, Nataliya Vladimirovna. Absolutely not your hand is to blame, but the cap of the dervish which once Ali pulled on my head. Then I fell sick and I still couldn't recover since that time. Please forgive me for the trouble caused to you. I'm glad that I got some wit from your melon."

"My child, I'm sorry, my dear," Andreyeva told me silently and tenderly, and I almost started "catching crows" again.

I couldn't imagine in any way that commanding and rather sharp voice of this woman with imperious intonations could be so tender, melodious and unspeakably kind.

Anyway I was unable to stand up for a long time, and it wasn't an easy task for me to reach our home even with I.'s help.

Yassa was keeping me in the bath for a long time, then he wiped and put me to bed. I took I.'s given drops, but I was distressed that the first day of my life in the Community ended rather sadly for me.

Chapter 2

The second day in the Community.

We visit a shrimp. Arab's presents. Francisco

I fell asleep with difficulty in the evening, but I was sleeping so soundly during the entire night that I didn't wake up for a single time until Yassa woke me up by saying that I. was already waiting for me to go to bathe together.

As soon as I opened my eyes I fixed my gaze on a fantastic landscape, I had a difficulty to comprehend where I was. During our long journey that turned into the way of my life I got used that every day – that's only a peculiar continuation of our trip, and now suddenly I understood that I've come here to stay for a long time, that finally I was at home. Having put my simple clothes on, I understood clearly that I couldn't waste my time by doing anything, that during the entire yesterday I didn't learn anything, except some knowledge from botany, and I didn't fulfil my pledge to learn the Eastern languages.

I could see clearly before me the inscriptions from Ali's room – I only needed to concentrate my thoughts on them and I was all overflowed with joy that Pali language would become the key for me, which would open everything what Ali wrote on the walls of his room. By burning with desire to learn as soon as possible, I broke into I.'s like the wind. He was sitting at the table and writing something, while I snapped out instantly.

"I., my dear, I spent the entire yesterday in vain. Give me the books as soon as possible, so that I could learn the necessary languages. Of course, first of all Pali and then the rest of them. My brother Nikolay used to say that I was gifted for languages. To tell you the truth I wasn't so sick back then, but perhaps my talents didn't become blunt. Only give the books to me quickly."

I. put the pen calmly on the table, he looked at my hair by smiling, which I had forgotten to comb, he looked at my sandals which were knotted anyhow and answered me.

"Your diligence is very praiseworthy, Lovushka, but who has dismissed you from the most elementary duties of your life on the earth now? Your hair is dishevelled, you tread the laces of your sandals, why the aesthetical feelings of your encountered people have to suffer when in the nature of such fabulous beauty they meet you such untidily dressed and combed person unexpectedly. The big mirror in your room is standing not because you would go past it, but because you would put your appearance in order before leaving to meet people. This is the first condition of communication from which nobody has dismissed you. While you are correcting the pleats of your clothes before the mirror, you have to think not about yourself, but about the people who may be irritated by your appearance if your untidiness strikes them, or if you look ridiculously. Remember, my friend, that in most cases those who are slovenly sink in poverty. Even for those who are very developed spiritually, their untidiness hinders them to continue their spiritual path. Every untidy room is disgusting for a very developed and pure man. The second condition of communication: "Hello," which people tell one to another, - who has dismissed you from this politeness in the Community which is accepted by everybody? Here you have to comprehend that word even clearer, as the greeting of love, as the honour for fire and Light within man. This isn't only a simple condition of the external politeness for you, but it is the basis of your own benevolence with which you illuminate the entire man whom you meet. My dear friend, start spreading your great nobility to people through all the cracks of the accustomed conditions of their communication. Become the link of the spiritual channel by

communicating with people in such forms which don't push them away from you or make them difficult to comprehend you, but which attract them to you."

I was very ashamed because of my light-mindedness. I looked at myself in the mirror and I became completely embarrassed. My grown long curls which were stuck out to all sides, my poorly girded and falling down aslant, long, white clothes made me look like a madman. Only now I understood that my egoistic thoughts only about myself choked everything around me so much that I broke into I.'s room like a wind without knocking at the door and without even asking him whether I wouldn't prevent him from working. I needed something and I rushed doing it, and it was all the same to me what was going on around me. When absolutely confused I was already prepared to make off the room, the tender I.'s hand embraced me.

"Now, Lovushka, don't hurry to be pained because an hour ago, having forgotten about everything in the world, you were searching for the book. If you want to win and achieve something you need to notice everything around you in every moment, and not to isolate yourself from the current conditions of communication by seeing only one narrow sector of your actions and by estimating the world only from your own tower, from your personal "I". Everybody is walking down different paths, but the stages of their spiritual growth are the same for everybody. From your very first days here pay attention to the constant politeness of everybody. Here you will meet many people who will seem to you to be both rather rude and odd, but don't focus your attention on it and remember that now the path of tact and charm is before you. In order for you to overcome it, you need to develop your politeness and calm, to make them your everyday habits. Go, my dear, dress up and come back in ten minutes. I will finish the letter, and we'll go bathing."

I ran to my room, but now I already didn't risk to rely upon my aesthetical skills, so I called Yassa and I asked him to inspect me from top to toe.

"Yassa, my dear, I'm a man without any balance. Don't let me leave the room without inspecting me well. I still cannot lace these sandals," I was begging my kind servant.

Yassa gave the other, closed sandals to me by saying that less dust would get into them, and that I would need to do only two buttons. He promised me to change the tying of my other sandals, too, he girded me with a beautiful string in a flash and he assured me that now I was combed and dressed like the real cavalier. I gave a sigh, I derived consolation from the thought that I ended yesterday badly and that today I started the new day exactly in the same bad way, and I knocked at I.'s door.

We were going to the lake already in a moment with the frottier towels put on our heads. Although I was walking down this path yesterday, although I had already seen the palms, magnolias, lemon and orange trees, bamboos and poplars of unusual height, cedars and platans, I couldn't accustom myself anyway that it was the living nature and not the gigantic decoration. We bathed without any interference and trouble.

"Lovushka, perhaps you would like to drop in at some patients' with me, whom Kastanda asked me to visit? This isn't far away, besides it is still early, and we'll come back for breakfast in time."

Of course, I became very glad and I was happy to go together with I. wherever he wanted to go, besides I wanted to get to know the new places. We crossed the streamlet through the bridge above the lake and along the path we turned not to the park, but to the real forest. Only it was very different than that what I used to call by this word up to now. The trunks of the big and thick trees, their branches which were as big as a good Russian pine or a hundred-year-old fir-tree, made such thick crown of trees that it was absolutely dark on the path where we were walking. The lianas at some places were intertwined into

such dense, blooming garlands that they formed some insurmountable walls. It was as cool here, even damp as in a grotto. I already wanted to say to I. that the woods here probably were full of tigers and jackals, but the path before us became bright, wide and it turned into a big, round clearing. Several white, little houses were standing on it, which reminded me of the Ukrainian cottages built of clay, but when I came up nearer I saw that they were built from the rough, porous stone with sparkling, very small crystals. Lit up by the sun, they looked like the cotton wool strewed with Berthelot's salt under the Christmas tree.

A middle-aged woman went out to meet us. She was stout, rather young, with white headscarf, white dress, white apron on which a wide red cross was sewed.

"Good morning, nurse Alexandra, Kastanda asked me to visit your patient who was put at yours yesterday. Did you give my sent medicine to him?"

"Yes, doctor I. The poor calmed down and fell into a doze after taking it for the second time. I dressed his wounds a little, as you told me to."

Nurse Alexandra accompanied us to the most remote house. Several little, white childish beds were standing in the clean and spacious room, but only one of them was occupied, and a slender, short girl dressed as nurse Alexandra was sitting by the bed.

"This is our new nurse who has just finished the courses of the trained nurses," nurse Alexandra introduced the charming girl to us. "Nurse Aldaz is Indian, she enslaved even our grumbler director of the courses, not only all the lecturers with her skills."

Aldaz lifted her dark, big, shining eyes to us and she reminded me of the icon of the Greek queen Eupraxia which I saw in one old orthodox church and I admired it for a long time.

We went up to the childish bed in which, according to the conversation heard, I was hoping to see a child who was bitten all over by a dog.

I was so surprised when in the little bed I saw sleeping a wrinkly... shrimp. He was so old and unhappy that I, of course, just got stiff to "catch crows". I must have looked like rather comically, because Aldaz looked at me unintentionally, she couldn't hold her laughter, and it rang out through the whole room. Nurse Alexandra looked at Aldaz strictly, but having seen me, she could hardly suppress her laughter.

Aldaz's laughter woke up the shrimp. He opened his little eyes, and I turned into the pillar of salt again. The shrimp's eyes were red, like two burning live coals.

As though not seeing anything around him except his patient, I. bent over the shrimp who was looking at him timidly. He uttered him several words that sounded very strangely to me. Here was another language which I didn't understand and which probably I would need to learn as well. If several species of shrimps were living here and the same amount of sects of Indians with different languages, then apparently, I wouldn't catch up with I. in my knowledge of languages.

Being obsessed with this thought, I distracted my attention from the patient and when I looked at him again I almost cried with horror. Three wounds were wide open on his little, bare body. One of them extended from his hip to his knee, the second one – from his throat to his belly, while the third one – from his collarbone to his elbow. The wounds were lacerated, as though scratched out with some claws. I. gave a pill and some drops to the poor. Both nurses were holding his suffering body, while I was told to hold his head that was hanging with weakness. Having poured some foaming liquid on his wounds, I. was dressing them quickly. To all appearance it didn't hurt the shrimp much from the wonderful touches of I.'s hands. The patient got better a little and he gave a friendly smile to his doctor. When he was moved to another little bed by the window, so that he could admire the clearing, he lifted his sound hand merrily,

directed it to Aldaz and said something to I. in his funny, sputtering dialect. This time I wasn't worried because of my ignorance, because both nurses, just like me, didn't understand a single word and they were looking at I., surprised.

I. explained to us that the patient asked that the merry bell, as he nicknamed Aldaz, wouldn't leave him. I. told to give some warm milk with biscuits to the patient immediately and he addressed me.

"Will you be able to find the path, so that you could bring some medicine for this poor thing after the breakfast? But if you think that tigers are going to eat you, then I will need to find some other way to deliver the medicine."

"I will find the way and I've already understood that tigers didn't exist here."

I took offence inside of me, because I. was laughing at me next to charming Aldaz, but she only wanted to cheer up the patient, she was chattering something what he didn't understand, but the intonation of her tender, womanly sympathy was penetrating into his heart.

"Very well, Lovushka. Nurse Alexandra, my friend Lovushka will bring the new medicine to you in a couple of hours. You will mix it with milk and honey, and give a quarter of a small glass to him every half an hour. I will visit you in the evening again. If his pain becomes more acute, give the yesterday's medicine to him again."

We approached the shrimp, he extended us his little hand, burning with temperature, then he put his little finger to his forehead in a funny way and uttered: "Maksa." He fixed his red, cunning eyes on me inquiringly. I. explained this movement and word of his to me. He was asking what my name was and he told me that his name was Maksa. I. told me to put my finger to my forehead, too, and to tell him my name. When I did it precisely, and the shrimp found out that my name was Lovushka, he gave a childish laugh, mumbled something and sputtered what I. interpreted to us as expression of his friendship and satisfaction.

Although I believed that I would find the way, anyway when I was going back I tried to memorize all the bends of the little path.

"I was delayed here for longer than I expected to. I won't have time to visit the other patients till breakfast. Lovushka, would you like to breakfast quickly and together with me visit the other two patients? Then you would bring the medicine for Maksa. Or would you prefer to spend that time for your books?"

"My dear I., if only I can be next to you, take me with yourself. I cannot help you much, but let me be your messenger, your servant. I want to walk through my life here in such a way as you see and know it. I want to learn so much just because I would become worthy of you quicker."

"Lovushka, you move forward very quickly, quicker than it was possible for your organism. Only because of this I hold you back. Although we've just bathed, after this patient we need to wash ourselves and change our clothes before going to the common dining-room. Still today I'm going to tell you who that Maksa is and what has happened to him."

While I. was taking a shower, I was standing in my balcony and I saw how the women covered with towels from the scorching sun were going to bathe. The heat seemed to me to be bigger than yesterday, and I was thinking with pleasure how I would be going through the shady, beautiful forest and see beautiful Aldaz. Finally, after the shower I put myself in order especially carefully, showed myself to Yassa and I decided to go downstairs where I could hear I.'s voice already.

When we entered the morning dining-room, everybody was already sitting in their places. Kastanda came hurriedly to us, asked about Maksa and added another request: to visit Aninov. His servant had come and told him that his master had a strong heart attack at night.

I saw Andreyeva and Oldenkot next to the adjacent table again, while lady Berdran's place was empty. I saw a new face next to the painter Skalradi who had captivated me. He occupied my entire attention instantly. The man who was sitting next to the painter wasn't handsome, but wherever he would go, whoever would surround him, - he would be noticed everywhere. He was so well-proportioned that his tall stature didn't strike the eye, and only when his look would slide to the people who were sitting next to him, you could evaluate his height.

He had grey hair, black eye-brows, big blue eyes with long black eyelashes, beautiful mouth and irreproachable teeth which one could see, while he was often smiling. In all his movements, in his manner to listen to his company, in his beautiful hands – his subtle nobility could be sensed everywhere. Something surprised me very much. This man was simple, open-hearted, it seemed that he was used to attract others attention and that he didn't feel shy at least a little because of it, but I could see clearly that he was modest, kind, intelligent and absolutely not haughty.

He darted a glance at I. several times. I understood that he knew who I. was, but he wasn't acquainted with him. Alver who was sitting next to me whispered me that he was one of the most famous actors whose name the entire world knew, - Stanislav Bronski, the Czech.

It seemed to me that Bronski who was talking to the neighbours of his table in such pleasant and polite way was looking at I. more and more often, and by the end of the breakfast it even seemed to me that I noticed a flash of anxiety in his lively and expressive face. I wasn't mistaken. When we finished our breakfast and when we were leaving the dining-room, hasty Kastanda's steps were heard behind our backs, and he asked I. to stop for a while. Kastanda apologized to I. for disturbing him so much from yesterday's evening.

"Doctor I., of course, you noticed the new face. He's actor Bronski, Florentian has sent him here. He has a letter for you and he knew beforehand that you would come here during these days. He came here from the distant house of the Community, to be precise, he came here on the camel with an Arab guide and with his disciple who is also actor. Bronski asked me to introduce him to you. I promised him to do it right after the breakfast, but the second message from Aninov prevented me from doing it. Aninov had a new attack. Lady Berdran is still very weak. Andreyeva is nursing her very carefully, but she doesn't feel better. Besides all that, also the Bronski's disciple fell sick after bathing in the lower lake after the journey in such heat. I don't even know to which one of them I should invite you first."

Kastanda seemed to be exhausted. I thought that he was worried about something very much and, apparently, he didn't sleep during the entire night. He was looking at I. pleadingly and, probably by concealing something, he was trying not to show his anxiety to him.

"Don't worry, Kastanda. First of all introduce me to Bronski, because he's worried about his friend's health very much. Then I will come to lady Berdran and then to Aninov. Give these drops to the pianist's servant, let Aninov take them with sugar and wait for me. I have the drops exactly for one time, because with such temperament we cannot allow him to cure himself, otherwise he will take all the medicine at once and he will be surprised that he's dying."

I. gave such small bottle to Kastanda that, having compared it to the musician's height and his big hand, I laughed imperceptibly.

Having turned back, we saw Bronski and Skalaradi by the window, and I was surprised how sad the actor's face was. It was full of life and energy an hour ago, and now it was pale and it reflected his inner suffering. He kept listening to his companion in the same pleasant way, but his look was out, as though he had experienced a misfortune.

Having seen that we were coming to him, Bronski came to life again, the reddish colour came back to his face, his eyes sparkled, the smile showed up in his lips. He took several steps to meet us, he bowed low to I. and squeezed I.'s extended hand to him strongly with both of his hands.

"You are very kind, doctor I. Didn't my request disturb your agenda? I'm so happy to meet you, but my happiness would darken if I had disturbed you with anything."

Bronski's voice rather low and metallic. When he uttered the plosive constants, a little emphasis could be felt, which gave a unique originality to his uttered words and which didn't hinder the excellent manner of his speech.

I was looking at him and I wondered how immeasurable the charm of this man was! The white Indian clothes fitted very well, and I imagined him with a Bedouin cloak, riding on the camel. That would be a model for a painter! As always I forgot myself and I came to myself only from I.'s voice, who was telling me.

"Here's my friend Lovushka. He's writer. Forgive him for his absent-mindedness. I bet that he has already drawn your portrait in his imagination, he involved you in some action and he's forgotten where he was and who was next to him."

Bronski extended both of his hands to me and told me smiling that he was also suffering from the same living fantasy which often caused difficult situations for him, because then he would lose the thread of his conversation with others. I squeezed his hands with joy and I answered him by laughing.

"It is true, I imagined you with a Bedouin cloak, riding on the camel through the desert and I was dreaming that somebody could draw you like this. Only your compliments when you compare your fantasy to mine are not meant for me. I wander in my views in vain, while you move them into life and you let the entire world understand the beauty and nobility. I respect your energy and diligence of which I've heard."

"That man next to whom you are living now couldn't have called you to be his friend if he hadn't perceived your creative power. I hadn't done anything yet when I was your age and I've already read your story."

I. sent me to bring the medicine chest and he asked Alver to accompany me to that little house where lady Berdran was living. When I and Alver with medicine chest entered the hall of Andreyeva's and lady Berdran's house, we saw I., Bronski and Kastanda talking to Nataliya Vladimirovna.

"No, it won't work in this way, Nataliya Vladimirovna. Lady Berdran is sick namely because you are next to her, and she is unable to resist your vibrations. You are like a cold lake, and only very hardened people are able to come closer to you. Not only you cannot apply your treatment methods on lady Berdran, but even nurse her now."

I. was speaking to her with a smile, but nobody could have any doubts in seriousness of his words. Andreyeva seemed to be distressed, as though she was unsatisfied and she couldn't understand anything.

"Doctor I., do you really think that Oldenkot who considers to be his duty to stay next to me almost during the entire day is hardened against my vibrations? But he isn't sick, is he?" Andreyeva snapped out not in a very reserved way, but to all appearance, she was suppressing her temperament.

"Oh yes, the armour of mister Oldenkot's kindness and purity are so hardened that he isn't frightened of any vibrations, even of much stronger than yours."

Bronski was observing everything what was going on here in silence. It was absolutely clear to me that he wanted to ask I. to visit his friend, but he couldn't bring himself to do it. Suddenly I. himself addressed him.

"Please wait for me here. Then we'll go to your disciple's immediately. And for you, Nataliya Vladimirovna, I forbid to visit lady Berdran for ten days."

I. showed me to follow him. Accompanied by Kastanda, we went down the corridor till the end, climbed up the winding stairs to the first floor and knocked at the side door. A young native in the white clothes of trained nurses, only without headscarf and with a very small cross on her apron opened the door for us. She was the student of the trained nurses courses on duty.

We went up to lady Berdran, she was very weakened and she could hardly open her eyes. While we were still in the corridor, I. told Kastanda that he would manage without him.

The patient was lying on the sofa with white robe and she was so pale that she looked like a ghost. I. seated her carefully and said something in the native language to the trained nurse. She left the room immediately. I. told me to make a mixture from several bottles and he poured something into it from the Florentian's medicine chest. The liquid began to boil, I lifted the patient's head a little, while I. poured the medicine into her mouth. Lady Berdran didn't like it. She uttered a moan, she almost gave a shout and she frightened me so much that I almost dropped her beautiful little head out of my hands.

"Be careful, my friend, we were in time. Now the spasms will begin, but after this medicine they won't be deadly for her. Now hold both of her hands strongly, while I will hold her legs."

I could hardly hold the patient's hands which she was pulling from me with such a power that one probably could expect only from a man. I broke into a sweat, and it seemed to me that I wouldn't be able to hold her breaking away hands, but the spasms abated, and I. told me to let the patient go. I fell down on the chair, as if I had hewed the wood for several hours. I. took lady Berdran's hand and asked her.

"How do you feel?"

Lady Berdran opened her eyes, looked at I. and me amazed, gave a smile and answered him.

"Now I feel very well, but a moment ago I thought that I was dying and during all these days I had such a feeling as though my vital strength was leaving me. Especially when kind Nataliya Vladimirovna used to stay next to me, I was dizzy, and it always seemed to me that all my strength was flowing to her. I know that this is only my imagination, but I cannot describe my state in any other way."

"If I proposed you to move to that building temporarily where we with Lovushka are living? There's a separate northern room in it, and it would be convenient for me to observe you. Would you agree to move there?"

A complete confusion showed up in her face which was always sad anyway. She didn't answer him instantly, apparently she was fighting against something and she couldn't bring herself to tell it.

"I would like to fulfil this desire of yours very much, but I think that it would upset Nataliya Vladimirovna very much, who is so kind to me, she's done so much for me and helped me to get here. I cannot bring myself to upset her. I bring only misfortune to everybody who become good friends with me anyway."

Two big tears rolled down her cheeks. By seeing her suffering, I addressed Florentian with all might of my thoughts, I begged him to help and send me the strength so that I wouldn't burst into tears.

"Let me do everything myself. Even before coming to you I explained to Nataliya Vladimirovna that first we needed to harden you well, so that your communication with her boiling powers wouldn't exhaust you. Just answer me whether you want to rely upon me and to do a short treatment course under my supervision?"

"Not only I want to do it, I beg you, doctor I., to help me. Right from the first meeting with Nataliya Vladimirovna I understood that something was wrong with me, but lately I began to perceive clearly that I was dying," lady Berdran was talking to him through her tears.

"Well, it is still far away till this happens, but it is necessary to harden your organism and to give some systematic knowledge to you on how you could harden yourself later on."

The trained nurse came back and she told I. that the stretcher and the carriers were here already. I understood it from the gestures of her hands towards the palanquin that was waiting for her in the corridor. I. lifted the patient himself, he seated her onto the palanquin and tucked her in with pillows. The carriers carried her to our house. Soon Kastanda was found, the patient was settled under our rooms, while I. indicated her diet and ordered strictly not to let anybody to visit her. We hurried back to the hall where Bronski was waiting for us by having a chat with Oldenkot. The house where Bronski was living was rather far, but it was next to the Aninov's one.

Having entered the room of Bronski's friend and disciple, we saw, as it seemed to me, a not very young brunette who looked like Georgian, but who actually was Romanian. Having looked at him more attentively, I understood that he was young, only completely exhausted. He was lying and mumbling something.

"Why did you allow your friend to jump into the cold lake, although he was in a sweat and sunburnt? You not only did that yourself, but you were taking a warm bath."

"I was begging Igor not to do that, but Romanians are very obstinate and they think that they know their nature better. Besides, Igor's mother, the Hungarian Gipsy inured him to the constant changing of heat and cold from his childhood. He was never sick during the entire time of our acquaintance. I always had to think about my health, while my friend could waste it in a light-minded way, without any consequences. That's why now I'm so worried about his illness."

"Yes. He's very, very sick, and if he recovers, then it won't happen soon. Either you'll have to leave him here for me or you'll have to stay with him for a long time, no less than for a year," I. was talking to him by examining the patient. "I understand that you need to get back to your work. Apparently lots of contracts call you to different cities of the world. Don't worry about your friend's health, I and Lovushka will nurse him, and he will come back to you in a year."

"Doctor I., I won't leave my friend in bad luck. I know that I won't help you much, I know even better what a happiness it is for my friend to meet you, but for me, too, meeting with you in this moment of my life is more important than all my business and contracts, it is more important than the art itself for which I'm living up to now. I will leave this place only in that case if you drive me out of here."

Please, don't send me from here, read the letter from that man whom I met in London by chance several months ago. He called himself Florentian, in the name which you know well, and he gave a letter to me after our long conversation in my cloak-room of the theatre where I played the role of Othello. He explained the way here and gave his servant as an attendant to me when I decided to come here without doubting at least for a moment. Igor didn't let me go alone. When I introduced him to Florentian and explained to him that my friend wanted to accompany me, Florentian was looking at me for a long time and he said to me: "Let it be, but remember that I didn't send him with you. You can take him on your own responsibility." I didn't want very much that Igor would go with me. I was trying to dissuade him in every possible way, but I was unable to do it, in the same way as I was unable to show my will absolutely anywhere, except the art. I'm harmonious and I'm completely self-confident only in the art. I serve it without any compromises, and in the art nobody could ever lead me astray of the path in any way, which I've once chosen and understood. Don't push me away," all of a sudden Bronski went down on his knees and finished his speech with a grief and suffering in his voice.

I. went to him quickly, he lifted him up, embraced him and told him tenderly.

"Get up, my friend and my brother. I accept you as my disciple with joy. Don't worry about your friend. He will survive, and his character that tyrannized you so much will change for good very much. Only he will still have to be patient a great deal, because not only the roots of his nerves are in inflammation – that impermissible difference of temperatures has hurt his entire nervous system in spite of his imaginary hardening to which Igor's mother had inured him."

I. prepared the medicine, gave it for the patient to drink with Bronski's and my help, rubbed him with something that smelt unbearably strongly and said to the actor again.

"Now we absolutely don't need your help here. The patient will be sleeping for a long time and then he won't recognize anybody anyway. His illness reminds of typhus, but actually that's only a horrible shock of his entire organism, which could end in his insanity if you hadn't met me."

I. sent me to call for the trained nurse on duty, and he told Bronski to take his felt hat and his frottier towel from his room and to wait for us by the exit.

I came back to the patient with a trained male nurse. I. injected the patient with a rather thick needle and, having explained the course of nursing to the nurse, he promised to send the doctor's assistant to him in a couple of hours. We packed our medicine chests, washed our hands carefully and went downstairs where Bronski was waiting for us.

The weather was very hot already. I. pulled the hat over my eyes and lowered the net, he advised to do the same for his new disciple. Having walked down several little paths, we got to Aninov's.

Everything was original in this house. First of all I was surprised that the door from the small hall opened straight to the spacious, white sitting-room, in the middle of which a white grand piano was standing, also several hard, white sofas by the walls and a little statue of the black pedestal made of marble, which looked like Dante to me. Then I saw that it was Buddha's statue.

The servant took I. across the entire sitting-room to the next room, while me and Bronski remained waiting for him here. The actor began to tell me about Aninov, about his success, about his grief. The musician left his motherland a long time ago, he was suffering, because he missed it, but he never came back to it by riding around the entire world. Bronski didn't know what made Aninov leave his so passionately beloved motherland, but he thought that the great cause of his heart illness was his constant longing for it.

I. didn't come back for a rather long time. While seeing that I was interested in his impression of his meeting with Florentian, and since he was also influenced strongly by my great friend's beauty and wisdom, Bronski told me in detail how he came to Florentian's house in London, how he saw my brother there and received my story from him. He saw Nal and her friend Alyssa by whose beauty he was so surprised and captivated that he doesn't know up to now who of them is more beautiful. Alyssa – that's Desdemona, while Nal is so young and at the same time so grand that he didn't find any name for her in his theatrical vocabulary. He hadn't seen such woman yet and he would consider everybody to exaggerate if they told him about the inhabitants of Florentian's house.

"Even now I sometimes ask myself whether I've seen those people in my dream? Could there be so much beauty and kindness in one place of London?" Bronski fell to thinking, as though he went to some place in his thoughts and then he continued silently. "When I saw I. entering the dining-room I understood instantly that that was him, although nobody told me that. Besides his exceptional beauty, I. possesses something else what I cannot define, but especially he reminds me of Florentian. I still don't understand what it is, but that isn't characteristic to anybody else except both of them. I've seen a lot of people and very prominent ones, but I. and Florentian surprised me and they struck my eye with something divine – this is so grand."

The voices were heard at the door, and I. with Aninov entered the sitting-room. The musician's cheeks were burning, probably either he had a temperature or he was very excited. He greeted us politely, offered us all sorts of fruit and refreshing drinks, but I. didn't allow to take anything.

"So finish your work, Sergey Konstantinovich, and postpone the concert for several days. With your permission, I will bring a crowd of people who want to hear you. You are absolutely healthy. Not only you are healthy: you'll have to help me to cure two patients with your music. At this moment they won't recover without music. We will prepare a program with you, and I hope that we will get them back to their senses," I. was talking before saying good-bye to him.

That stunned me so much that I completely went astray by "catching crows." To cure one with music? I left like this without lining up my thoughts, and if not the heat, then probably I would have remained standing in one place. The sun was scorching without mercy even through the net, so I. moistened the thick, frottier Bronski's towel in the fountain and threw it on my head by relieving my state a little. I. told me to lie down for a while at home, while he prepared the medicine for Maksa and he asked Bronski to find Kastanda.

As soon as I lay down I fell asleep. It seemed that I was sleeping nobody knew for how long. Actually I was sleeping for about twenty minutes, but I rested perfectly. I. woke me up, he gave some tasty drink for me to drink and he explained to me that now I could drink already. I took the mixture for Maksa and some other medicine which I had to hand to nurse Alexandra, and on my way back home I had to take the trained nurse especially for Igor. I was glad that I would be walking down the fabulous forest. I.'s drink reduced my sensitiveness for the heat. I wanted to stay alone and to reflect on all the events of these days, but Bronski came back and, having found out that I was going to the unknown place to him, he looked at I. so pleadingly that he gave a laugh, looked at me cunningly and uttered.

"The chosen of Lovushka's heart Aldaz is there! If he decides to sacrifice himself and to take you with himself, I will be glad. You will find a lot to see there."

"Lovushka, I will be as silent as a stump, as obliging as a slave, as thankful as a baby. Take me with yourself."

I was choking with laughter, because such an unexpected expression, to be precise, the whole range of changing expressions, rippled through his face. Bronski stretched himself and he uttered like an oath with his thunderous voice.

“I will be as silent as a stump...”

Then he stooped, as though he all weakened like an indulging slave and uttered in a sweet voice.

“As obliging as a slave...”

Suddenly, having given a wide smile, he smoothed out all the wrinkles of bootlicking of his face and he uttered in a clear, childish voice by looking at my eyes naively and by lisping charmingly.

“As thankful as a child.”

All of it was so unexpected that, of course, having forgotten about everything, I fell on his neck and I declared that now I understood why he had enslaved the world.

While still laughing, we went to sister Alexandra's. I remembered the way well and, although Bronski was such an interesting companion that I could give in to my imagination easily, I felt doubly responsible both before I. and before my new acquaintance who fascinated me with many things. My attention was strained during the entire way, and I didn't mix a single turn.

Maksa was still sleeping, while nurse Aldaz was trying to explain to me with her gestures and mimic of her little charming face in a broken Russian language that poor Maksa was suffering very much. I promised her to tell I. about it and to come to her again if I. prescribes some sedatives for him.

Having seen nurse Alexandra, we hurried back together with the new Igor's nurse. While I was talking to Aldaz, Bronski couldn't take his fascinated eyes off her. When we were going through the forest where I expected to hear his interesting story again, I looked at him and I saw his sad face of a completely different man, gone deep into himself. A metamorphosis has happened within him. A wise tranquillity appeared, which reminded me of that expression that I often used to see in my brother Nikolay's face, but this wisdom in Bronski's face was marked by grief.

A wrinkle crossed his high forehead, his eyes as though couldn't see anything around him, his lips were strongly pressed together, as if he was solving the new, quick question. I didn't dare to disturb his concentration and I even was trying to go slower, more silently, so that I wouldn't disturb his thoughts. I imagined that Bronski became such wise man when he used to reflect on his roles in solitude. Almost by the edge of the forest he gave a deep sigh, passed his hand over his face, eyes and he smiled to me.

“Now I was so far away, Lovushka. Sometimes my fantasy carries me out of the reality, a deep state seizes me, and in my imagination I create the past of those characters whom I will have to perform on the stage, or of those alive people who've made a strong effect on me. I am right or not in my scenic creation – let the people decide and estimate my roles, but the most strange thing in the play of my imagination is that up to now I've never been wrong about the past of those alive people in whom I was interested very much. I don't know myself how and why, but I can see their past very clearly, like the sequence of the pictures which flash before me.

Now your friend Aldaz's appearance and her mimic captivated me so much that I was seized by that deep state of mine and I saw many scenes from her past. In the beginning I saw a little Indian who was sleeping in the sack on the back of a dark-skinned Indian. Her father with a heavy burden on his back was walking next to her. Then I saw the same mother with a teenage girl who was mourning over her killed

father. Then a tall, an unusually tall handsome man gave shelter to both poor things on his horse, while they were sitting by the bonfire in the night. Then I saw mother and her daughter with a caravan of camels, who were travelling across the desert, then – like a school where perhaps thirteen-year-old Aldaz was alone already, and finally a hospital where Aldaz gave the medicine to some old man.

This young life surprised me, it was so monotonous, without any joy, passing in the backwoods, while actually she possessed a great talent for mimic. According to her movements, to her exceptionally plastic gait and her proportional body constitution, she should dance like a goddess, charm people and awaken the highest and brightest joy within them, while she is living in poverty in the godforsaken place. Even in olden times she would have had a place where she could use her talent, she would have been a prophetess, a dancer of some temple. That's what I was thinking about, as always the people's destinies, their exceptional fabulousness stunned me this time, too. Who would have thought that in the depth of the jungle a knight appeared and saved mother and her daughter who were already calmly prepared to be torn by wild beasts! And why did he save them? So that the girl's talent of genius would be lost among the beds of patients!"

With my mouth opened I was standing by the edge of the forest, I was looking at Bronski and I was thinking which one of us has gone mad, and I didn't even see how impatient the trained nurse was, who was also native, who didn't know the Russian language in which we were talking with Bronski. Apparently she lost her patience completely and she told me in a broken English.

"Quickly, quickly, mister, let's move forwards. The doctor is waiting."

I apologized to her and I began to walk so quickly that my fellow-travellers could hardly keep pace with me. Having left the trained nurse and Bronski for Kastanda, I hurried to I. Of course, I would have broken into his room again with even a greater whirlwind than the first time, but luckily, I met him on the stair landing, he was going to meet me. Apparently he wanted to tell me something completely different, but having seen my face, he asked me.

"What has happened to you, my friend?"

"I., let's go to your room, I have something important to tell you. Do you know that Bronski is sorcerer. He can read people's past. I., my dear, can you know who was a man before meeting you?"

I hurried, I was talking complicatedly and very seriously, but anyway I noticed what a humour began to sparkle in I.'s eyes. I came to myself instantly and I told him everything from the beginning what Bronski had told me and how he could see Aldaz's past.

"How I would like to know whether Bronski saw the truth about Aldaz's life. I., my dear, can you find out about it?" I was asking him by burning with impatience and I couldn't understand in any way how I. could sit so calmly when I was telling him about such stunning things.

"Lovushka, I think that simply you could find out yourself whether Bronski could see nurse Aldaz's past correctly."

"How? However I was trying I had never seen any views. Do you think that I have to think about Florentian and ask him about it?" I told him by being blazed with ardour to find out the truth or make certain that Bronski was simply a maniac, obsessed with this passion.

I. gave a laugh, stroke my head, what helped me to calm down immediately and he told me.

"You are still such a little child, Lovushka. Could I really advise you to disturb your great friend for such a trifle. That would be the same if you asked him how you should lace your sandals or how

to put a patch on their soles. I was thinking about the simplest way that didn't surpass your strength at all," my idolized and indulgent friend was telling me by smiling to me and stroking my head in the same tender way. "Ask Aldaz about it yourself when we go to change Maksa's dressing in the evening, after tea. By the way, take this basket, everything is here what we'll need for our evening visitations, and now take a shower and take a nap in your room. You were running so fast that now you need to calm down. If I find you calmed down in half an hour when I come back here, we'll go to Ali's room, and I will give you books for your first knowledge of Pali language."

"Oh, I., you are so kind! I committed a crime again, while you didn't even scold me. You can be sure that you will find me calmed down."

"Look, don't commit a crime exactly now," I. joked by saying good-bye to me.

I didn't even notice how dusty I was, what footmarks I left on the shining floor. With Yassa's help I washed myself, put I.'s room in order and I began to wait for my friend who was delayed a little.

Bronski rose before my eyes again, and his story was restored to life in my fantasy. I imagined very lively the tall knight with a black beard who lifted mother and her baby on his saddle in the dark and horrible forest. Since I had never seen an alive knight, and since I had only one image of the tall, dark-haired man within myself, I connected the views seen by Bronski to Ali's personality.

Everything was getting on so perfectly later on in my poetical fantasy! Ali gave shelter to the unhappy mother and her daughter, he sent them to the Community with his caravan, and Aldaz began to attend the school in it. Ali's picture took possession of me. When I was already prepared to call him and ask whether he didn't gave shelter to the orphans whom he found on his way, the door opened, and I. called me.

"I already know who that knight was who saved Aldaz. Of course, that was Ali. And everything is in line later on," I dashed at I. even without letting him to come to himself.

"It isn't important whether Ali or not Ali saved Aldaz, but that anyway you didn't pay necessary attention to my words and you wanted to disturb Ali for the trifle – that's not good already. It is not worth to make such unhappy face now and torment yourself, but pay your attention to two things: don't utter any unnecessary word until you reconsider well everything what you want to say or to ask something. Second: if I gave a task to you and told you that we were going to Ali's room to learn, then you needed to prepare for that, to recover your balance, so that the place of work would correspond to all your creative abilities. We are going to the room of great man of wisdom. His compassion is equal to wisdom. His compassion for you is great. And your attention, is it concentrated now? Have you cleaned it from any small external thoughts? Do you comprehend that great joy to serve people some time when you acquire the knowledge which Ali decided to reveal for you by sending you here? Only then you will be able to meet Ali and Florentian, and to become colleague of their activity when you learn to concentrate your attention. You will comprehend the creative path of your great friends as much as your loyalty for them will always connect you with them in an easy and simple way, with path of their love for man. You aren't guest who's come here to renew your organism during several years and to leave for work again, with which you would rake the pearls of your genius, so that you would help and comfort people. Here you are guest of Eternity, the Eternity met you here, and you will leave this place with it. Every day of your life – that's the day of your duty on the threshold of Eternity. Not in the Community you "stayed for a while" and you would leave not for it – here is *the entire meaning* of your existence. You've come here from Eternity, you are living *in it* in the temporary form of Lovushka on the Earth and you will leave *to it* being enriched with new experience, opened eyes, by walking the path of development and by knowing how you should work with yourself in order to achieve your liberation. You will see many genii here, you will become acquainted with

their especial path on the earth. You will see even more ordinary people here, in whom only some features of talent open. Whether their path is difficult or an easy one – it depends on the amount of superstitions and their personal weaknesses which they manage to throw down, that is how they succeed to liberate the Eternity, chained with conditionalities.”

I. was telling all of it to me, while we were going to the little Ali’s island where the watchman and the white peacock met us again. While I was climbing the stairs to Ali’s room, I was full of respect and gratitude for my dear guardian. Today his every word fell especially clear to my heart. For the first time I came up to the bookcases boldly, easily and simply, without any doubts and regrets for my insignificance and inabilities.

I. pressed some spring, and a little wall drew back by opening another row of full bookshelves. And there were all kinds of books! I. took out three little books, they were very ancient, he pressed the invisible button again, the little wall went back to its place, and I couldn’t see it anymore.

Having come up to Ali’s writing-table, I. uncovered its domed, palm cover, which form was like two big leaves of latania. He seated me at the table and began to explain the letters and pronunciation of Pali language to me. Everything seemed to be very difficult for me, because I didn’t know any Eastern languages, so absolutely strange roots and suffixes of the words tired me.

The talent of teaching of my wise Teacher did its job well, and when the first gong of dinner rang out, I could read the words freely already. I. showed me how to close and open the table, he set homework for tomorrow, and we hurried to the dinner dining-room.

Having entered the dining-room, first of all I paid attention to Andreyeva who was talking to some old man in the unknown language. From the intonation I understood that she demanded something from him, while the old man didn’t give in and he was trying to persuade her in his turn. Oldenkot who was sitting next to them probably also didn’t understand that language and he looked at I. helplessly when we going past them, as though by asking him to meddle in this business, but I. took my arm, bowed to them and went straight to our places.

The dining-room was being filled little by little, also Bronski with the painter came to their places. I noticed several impressive faces again, but I couldn’t take in everybody at my glance who were sitting here in anyway.

“Lovushka, don’t hurry to take in everybody at once, you will become acquainted with everybody little by little. You will have an opportunity to see many of them closer tomorrow at Aninov’s, and now – I can see how you are interested in it, - I will explain to you why Nataliya Vladimirovna is arguing. She wants to see the ruins of one very old town. Since she’s so temperamental she wants to leave immediately, while the old guide refuses to leave by persuading her that it is dangerous at the moment. They should travel there for eight days across the scorching, arid desert or through the boggy, gloomy jungle which is full of wild beasts and snakes. They need to wait. A caravan will be travelling there in three weeks, and they could join it and travel safely then.”

Andreyeva’s face looked like a stormy hurricane to me now. Oldenkot turned around several times and told something silently to her neighbour. She gave a laugh, looked at me and declared across the whole table rather loudly.

“I gather the company of fearless people who love to travel across the desert. Would you like to travel with us to see one very interesting, ancient town, to be precise, its ruins? They say that during the day they are like dead, but when the sun sets, so many tigers, lions, jackals and monkeys come out of the ruins that all the buildings swarm with them.”

I was almost frightened, but then I decided that she was mocking at me and I answered her in the same tone.

"I don't have any desire to become charred while we are riding across the desert, and I have even less desire to spend the night in the pleasant company of tigers and lions. I still didn't have time to find a snakecharmer, and it seems that it is impossible to do without him in such honourable company."

Andreyeva gave a laugh and said something to the old guide. He greeted me in the Eastern way. I remembered the feast at Ali's. I rose and I bowed to him in the same Eastern way.

The guide with sunburnt till blackness face, with white turban and burnouse was peculiarly handsome. His grey beard made him look like a prophet. Having looked at me with his piercing, black eyes, he said something quickly to I. He smiled, bowed to him and interpreted the Arab's words into English for me.

"Zeiched-ogly asks you to accept his sincere greeting and he says that he can see your distant path. He asks you to accept a little, white peacock as his present to you, which he found lost in the forests, while he was riding on his way here."

I was extremely fascinated. To possess a white peacock! I didn't know what I had to answer him, because I remembered that according to the Eastern custom I needed to show gratitude for his present with my present to him, but I didn't have anything.

"Thank him and agree," I. whispered me.

I accepted I.'s advice with great pleasure and I felt happy like the one who received a treasure, but Andreyeva decided not to let me enjoy my instinct of ownership peacefully.

"The jewel on your chest is shining through your clothes. It is both priceless and of incredible beauty, but you don't even understand its meaning," she stung me, as though she was hewing wood, in Russian this time. "You carry the treasure for which hundreds of lives were sacrificed and many hundreds would do the same if only they could receive it. But you are happy not for it, but for the stupid bird."

Her eyes were sparkling. It seemed to me that their sparkles reached even the jewel itself on my chest and they affected me strongly. I pulled my clothes tighter, covered the treasure with my hand and pressed it to my heart by begging Florentian with sacred honour to teach me to protect his jewel better and to be able to keep it until that moment when we see each other and I return this thing to him, which once was stolen from him. Suddenly I heard the wonderful voice of my great friend.

"Be strong and calm. Everywhere you will walk pure, I also will walk with you. Feel my heartbeat in your pulse. Many paths lead to knowledge, but loyalty is the same everywhere. Learn to know the invisible grandeur of your encountered people and don't judge about them from their visible imperfect characteristics. Protect my jewel, because it is a protection not only for you alone."

Peace came back to my soul in a flash, I looked at Andreyeva joyfully, to whom something incomprehensible had happened. She turned pale, gave a start, bowed her head and as though she got stiff in a pose of a repentant. I looked at I. He was serious, even strict and he was looking at Andreyeva attentively. When finally she lifted her head, I. began to speak very silently, but I think that the woman heard his every word.

"If you try to awaken another person's energy and power, you need to be able to control your own strength. Even in jest you cannot touch that what you don't know well yourself. The retroactive

blow might be deadly. And if now it wasn't such one for you, then it happened only because I accepted it to myself."

Nobody noticed this little scene around us, in the joint background of conversations, and actually everybody had gotten used to eccentric Nataliya Vladimirovna's manner to talk and joke so much that they didn't attach any special importance to her words. Although I didn't understand everything till the end, anyway I perceived that I.'s words were very important for Andreyeva with something.

Her somewhat disdainful tone when she was indignant at my childish joy for the white peacock received as aa present upset me. I thought that I prompted her irritation without even feeling it myself. At the same time I remembered sir Vomi's words that everybody who entered the path of knowledge had to speak in such a way that none of his words would hurt and sting anybody.

I pressed the jewel to my chest again, I remembered the words of Ali's letter: "Everything what man has to achieve during his meetings – that's to start and to finish each of them calmly, with compassion and kindness," – and I decided to observe myself very strictly, so that other people's uttered word to me – in whatever tone uttered – wouldn't cause any bitterness or irritation for me.

The grey guide looked at me several times during the dinner, and I saw great favour in his eyes for me. Andreyeva was sitting with her downcast eyes, she was pale and she was listening in silence to what her neighbours were talking about by nodding her head from time to time. It seemed to me that something especial and very difficult for her was still happening within her, what she was trying to conceal.

Bronski was charming conversationist again, but I saw anxiety in his face. It seemed to me that only calm I.'s look would pour some confidence to him every time when their eyes would meet.

After the dinner I. offered me to go to Ali's room and to do my tomorrow's homework, and I became glad. I. allowed Bronski to sit by his sick friend's bed till tea, he invited Alver Chergiston to his room, and the youth's face brightened up.

The old Arab guide approached I. and he was telling him something quickly by looking at me, which made I. laugh. I promised myself again to learn the Eastern languages as diligently as possible. I. only told me that after the tea the Arab would bring the promised little peacock to me and explain how to look after him, how to feed him.

Being in a cheerful mood, I went to learn. As usually both the watchman and his peacock met me by greeting me with their bows. I wanted to ask the watchman what his and his peacock's name was, but I was similar to that servant who was dusting expensive books by not understanding their language. The books for the servant were lifeless, while here the living beings were before me, but I couldn't utter a single word which they could understand.

I was standing before the watchman completely embarrassed. A smile showed up in his face, he tapped on my shoulder, pointed at his ears and his mouth, and I understood that he was deaf-mute. Now it became clear to me why he was looking so attentively at the lips of the person with whom he was talking. The watchman gave even a wider smile to me, stroked the beautiful peacock's neck, then he tapped on his forehead, pointed at the peacock's head, rocked his head with dignity, made a helpless gesture with his hands, and I understood that he was explaining to me how unusually clever and perceptive his peacock was.

While I was trying to understand my homework, everything seemed to be very difficult for me, but as soon as I mastered it I wanted to keep learning. The language became pleasant and understandable to me. The longer I was sitting by it the more glad I was. Having forgotten about

everything, I missed the gong, I didn't even hear how I entered the room. I came to myself only from his hand which touched me.

"So I knew, my brother, that I needed to drop in here, otherwise you would forget about everything," my guardian closed the book without mercy, covered the table and took me out of the room.

"However you would hurry to fulfil the task given to you or undertaken, you have to respect your surrounding and everything with what you are connected with it. Food cannot wait for you, and the man who has promised to bring the present for you has to find you waiting for him. They say: "Accuracy – that's politeness of the kings." Self-discipline for a disciple – that's the greatest accuracy of his actions and words, the greatest politeness for those whom he meets. A living man – that's the most important task for you everywhere. He's the most important for you during your day, because that's the goal of your Teachers' activity. Notice it, Lovushka, and cherish your external neatness in the same way as your internal one."

We crossed the park quickly, in which the strong heat was hanging, which I couldn't feel at all in Ali's room. When we finished drinking the tea in the grotto, my new friend Arab appeared on the threshold, he was wrapped up in the white burnous from his head to toe, under the pleats of which he was carrying a beautiful little basket made of palm leaves with a nest made in it. A little white peacock who looked very unhappy was perched in the nest. I would have never thought that this long-necked, still almost not feathered hatch, deplorable and ugly, - he was the future king of the birds' beauty.

The Arab bowed and gave the little basket to me. Apparently I turned it strongly, because I was delighted with its exceptionally complicated weave. The little bird gave a sorrowful peep, and this sound squeezed my heart with a sorrow that was unexpected to myself. I felt sorry for the poor little peacock whom I frightened so incautiously. I didn't know how I had to comfort him and to correct my fault.

I was feeling helpless before raising him which was waiting for me, as he was helpless before me with his weakness. I was already about to give the present back to the Arab when he said to me in a horrifying, but absolutely understandable French language.

"Don't worry, aga, everything seems to be complicated until you don't understand how to do it. I've already prepared the food for him and I would tell you everything – how to give him to drink, how to take him for a walk and how to sleep him. You see, he's already used to me and he complains to me of why I gave him to you. These birds are very perceptive, not every man will be equal to them. Well, now I will explain to him that you are his real owner, while you give him this porridge to peck from your palm, and he will recognize you as his only owner."

The Arab took the little bird out of the basket carefully, perched him on the big palm of his left hand, while with the fingers of his right hand he was stroking the little, almost bald head of the bird like the most tender mother and in this way he handed him to me – he seated him on my left palm where he could hardly fit in.

The little bird looked at the Arab in a funny way, as though with dignity, then he pecked from my palm where the Arab had already put some porridge, he lifted his head, looked at me, he pecked a little more and peeped. The peep wasn't sorrowful anymore, but joyful, as if he had habituated himself to his new owner.

The Arab advised me to put the little bird back to the basket and to cover him with duvet shawl which he pulled out of his burnous, because although the heat was hanging, the hatch was frozen and he was trembling. I thanked the Arab sincerely for his present and I expressed my regret to him that I didn't know how I could return my kindness to him.

"That won't disappear anywhere. When you travel to see the desert next year, take me as your guide and visit my home for a rest. I am living in an oasis, it is two days from here."

I thanked him again, squeezed his hand, and together with Alver, Bronski and the painter Skalradi who were delighted with my little bird no less than myself, we took him to my room. I. and the Arab came after some time, now he explained to me in detail how I needed to look after the hatch.

"You know, my friend," Bronski said to the Arab, "your instructions, of course, are great and they show your love for birds, but they are so complicated as if they were given to a baby and not to a hatch. I think that Lovushka won't be able to come right alone, while the bird is still so little. Perhaps I could take part in the bird's care? It would give me pleasure and it would liberate Lovushka a little."

A smile appeared in the Arab's face.

"You and Lovushka will find out something about these birds in a minute. Then both of you will understand why they are so humanly perceptive and why their care is so thoughtful. I think that if doctor I. allows, it will really be very useful for you to watch the little bird's raising. You are kind, pure and you will be nice for the little peacock. He will reveal his talent faster next to such friend."

The Arab smiled again, he extended his hand to Bronski and he gave a small, dark stone pulled out of his little leather bag to him.

"This is a snake stone. An amulet from a snake's bite. It stops wounds' extravasation, heals them faster and saves one from death by cobra bite. If you use it from a snake's bite, its power will be sufficient only for four times. Then it will lose any of its power and I won't be useful for any other goals. Take it as a remembrance about me. You will need it soon."

Bronski reminded me of a weak little bird with his helpless embarrassment. I gave a laugh, because this comparison seemed to be so witty for me.

"Take it, Stanislav Nikolayevich. Both of us will be indebted to aga Zeiched-ogly. Perhaps we'll invent how we could return our kindness to him."

Now Bronski played such a trick that I almost dropped the little basket out of my hands. I hadn't yet finished my phrase, while Bronski embraced the powerful Arab's neck with both of his hands, he kissed his dark face and he was telling him something incomprehensibly, but so quickly that he reminded me of the sexton who was reading his tired palms in a hurry. Of course, Bronski's patter was very significant, and the Arab understood it perfectly, because he was laughing merrily and he responded to Bronski's supplications with his nods. Suddenly the actor dashed out of the room like a bullet, he even left the door opened wide. So how could I "not catch crows"? I was so stunned that I decided that I would rather sit down and put the little basket on the floor.

The Arab's eyes were looking at me with undisguised humour. I. was flashing his eyes, too, without uttering a word. Only Alver could comfort me, because he was good match for me. Now he was standing with his mouth opened like back then on the mountain when he was watching my and I.'s Valkyrish flight. Our joint silence, as it seemed to me, continued for a very long time, and this pause was already tiring me.

The Arab went up to me, he lifted the basket with little bird from the floor and put it on the leather stool at the head of my bed. He uncovered the duvet shawl and showed me how the little bird had burrowed in the nest's dawn by imagining that he was safe like under his mother's wings.

“You didn’t understand anything from your friend’s words. It is absolutely not surprising. I could hardly understand him as well, although he was talking in Turkish, and I know that language well. Apparently I pleased him very precisely and I gave him exactly that what he wanted to have. He asked me to accept a ring from him in exchange for the stone and he wanted to become brothers with me for the favour which he could feel in my words. According to the custom of my country, I cannot accept a present for the present, but in this case I also cannot insult the man who possesses so much childish naivety. I can see from his face that he was suffering a lot and he is still suffering. I will be happy if I can take away a part of his suffering with his ring.”

Zeiched-ogly told me the last words more silently and slower, his face became so earnest that I was looking at him, surprised. I. was also serious, perhaps even a little sad. Finally, quick steps were heard downstairs, somebody was running quickly on the stairs, and then Bronski showed up. Apparently he was running here and there, he was sweating, and his clothes were wet.

“Well, here you are, please take it in order to remember our meeting. You are the first person who showed such confidence in me by seeing me for the first time. Usually people expect strong impressions from me and they meet me in a distrustful and cold way. In my unbearable solitude I’m happy by finding the man who’s met me in such a tender and brotherly way.”

Now Bronski was speaking in French, he was speaking slowly. I could see how strongly his heart was beating under his fine clothing.

The Arab took the case which Bronski gave to him, he opened it and nodded his head. He was examining the ring with black pearl that was changing in all colours of the rainbow. It was placed in the circle of shining diamonds, as though in the cup of the shining water. The Arab kept directing his look from the pearl to the exhausted actor’s face, he was nodding his head and, having pressed the ring to his heart, he bowed to him in the Eastern way.

Then he bowed to I. in exactly the same way, as though by asking him to bless him for this step, he put the ring on the little finger of his left hand where it could hardly fit in, although it was made for the forefinger according to the fashion of that time.

“From this moment on, my dear brother, I accept all your sorrows to my heart, I share all the tears and misfortunes with you. Let it pour out in streamlets into my path. Perhaps my loyalty for friendship and my tender love will help you to pass on to the path of those who bring the reddish pearls to all their meetings with them. Glory to Allah, honour to your God and to you. Protect the remembrance about this day in your heart as about the happiest one in your life.”

Zeiched-ogly bowed to I. again, he bowed to us and left the room silently. I saw that Bronski didn’t understand anything from that what the Arab was telling him, while I understood only that the actor’s trouble was that he was like a herald of misfortune to his encountered people, and they were afraid of him.

Again Ali’s words which I heard by the door of his room began to sparkle in my memory: “When you meet the disciple who’s walking down the path of sadness, come to love him doubly.” In this moment I loved so much not only Bronski, but also that great man of wisdom who just was here as an ordinary dweller of the desert! How immense his heart was that was beating in his chest if he rejoiced at happiness to accept another person’s sorrows to himself. I. embraced Bronski, gave a sweet to him, he offered him to take a shower and added that he would go to the distant little houses to visit sister Alexandra in fifteen minutes and that he would take all of us together with him.

I also wanted to bring my little bird with myself, but I. didn't allow me to do it. Alver asked I. timidly whether he also could go with us. I. smiled and answered him.

"Of course, my friend, I didn't do any exceptions, did I? And I told you that I would take all of you with myself. Besides, from this day on you, like Lovushka, may consider yourself to be my disciple. Tomorrow I will specify the new daily routine for you. Both of you have to know that here, in these houses, the people are living who, for certain reasons, are in the initial stages of their discipleship. You can see here many people who visit the Community not for the first time already, but anyway they are living in these houses of neophytes. And on the contrary, you cannot see those whom you met on the first day, for example, Oswald Rasten and Jerome Manule."

Bronski came back to the room. He was refreshed, he changed his clothes which the almighty Yassa gave to him, and we left with our medicine chests. The heat was still scorching, I could feel it very strongly, but my fellow-travellers were walking in such a way as if our northern summer had been here. I. noticed that I was walking with difficulty, he took my arm and flung my medicine chest over his shoulder by disregarding any of my protests.

"Lovushka, I promised to tell you something about shrimp Maksa. I think, my friends, that it'll be useful for all of you to find out about the destiny of this little man who is suffering so much now.

If every man could control all the powers hidden within himself, then there would be neither suffering nor mistakes in the world, the result of which is all people's misfortunes. The passions which surround man obstruct his entire earthly path. They take the possibility from him to see clearly and to recognize the true reality in the ocean of illusive beauties, which allures him and drags him to the imaginary, charming world of his personal life, of his personal love and happiness. Man isn't free. He is living chained with his conditional attachments, and finally when these oppressing bonds of bodily love fall off his eyes, it happens through great suffering.

The entire earthly life, while wisdom is awakening within a man, is nothing else as the great path of his liberation. If from his childhood man could be educated in such a way that his entire organism would grow harmoniously, then he would easily become free by maturing, because his consciousness, his nerve-knots and his heart wouldn't get overgrown with all sorts of lumps and tumours of his passion eruptions which people usually call diseases. Both man's hearing and his eyesight would develop not only physically, but also psychologically, while his organism would be absolutely harmonious.

Soon we'll see the victim of passions fight, the victim of good and evil, and again, unfortunately, we'll name it in the words of life vocabulary. In the presence of the truth, neither good nor evil exists, there's only a certain level of knowledge, a certain level of man's liberation, the moment of pure love and peace in his heart or the moment of his passions and ignorance.

People are living in gloomy forests which are impenetrable and surrounded by swamps, through which only narrow paths pass, who are trying to get the secrets of the nature. They are striving to achieve the ability to control the nature elements by using their knowledge.

The goal of these people is to rule the world. Their wants – that's to control all the wealth for their egoistic purposes in order to enslave other people and not for the work for everybody's general welfare. They are black occultists who often unite in horrible sects with all sorts of sexual perversions and often victims of people. By using their servants, they allure people everywhere where only they are living obsessed by envy, hatred and the passions of greediness, without any balance and who easily submit to irritation. These black powers entangle them in the nets of the illusory happiness, they help them to achieve several little victories so that they wouldn't allow them to become free of the nest of snakes, which

everyone will build for himself who is caught on these hooks by being tempted with charm of the imaginary wealth offered to him.

By taking advantage of their rather great knowledge – “great” until they act among the weak, enslaved people, and poor when they meet really free men, - they created the whole tribe of shrimps. These beings with their disfigured appearance are very angry, educated in insidiousness, deception and unfaithfulness, they have been taught a lot of tricks of hypnosis and magnetism. However, the black occultists who are striving for their personal goals through the occult knowledge not always succeed to ruin all the unfortunate ones till the end, whom they managed to take possession of. Often some martyrs are living among the shrimps, for whom the evil, hatred and hypocrisy is disgusting. They try to escape after their unbearable suffering and punishments for their dislike of evil, for their refusal to commit crimes. The Great workers of the Bright humanity often find such unfortunate ones, they save them and bring them to the Community of white Brothers. Now you will see one of such martyrs.”

We had covered a half of the way already. It was dark and humid in the forest, and I imagined how the unhappy shrimps had to suffer, because they were forced to live in impenetrable forests among dishonest people during their entire lives.

“If the great workers of the Bright humanity succeed to save such shrimps caught by the blacks, then especially favourable conditions are created for them, they are surrounded by the purest and most tender people, they learn to write, they develop in every possible way, and the workers try to raise their crushed spirit.

Anyway, having spent their childhood and youth in slavery, ignorance and being run down, these unhappy shrimps look like wrinkled, dried up mushrooms with their spiritual form. They don’t control a single thread of spiritual powers for as much as to strike a spark from within themselves and set fire to those shoots of rough tissues which their cruel masters have squeezed into their organisms through fear and pain. They cannot incarnate as people anymore, because they would need to reanimate all the centres of their physical and spiritual powers instantly. The Compassionate Life sees their disability and helps them to live one life as a bird. They incarnate as white peacocks. That’s why these birds are so perceptive, often they even can understand a language if people teach them do to it.”

All of us gave a shout in one voice with amazement.

“Only don’t think that all the white peacocks are certainly incarnated, kind shrimps without exception. Life always leads those who are walking down this path to the Community of white brothers,” I continued, as though by not noticing our excitement.

“And how about my little bird, I.? Is he also a former shrimp or simply an ordinary, wild peacock whom Zeiched-ogly found in the forest?” I asked him with my heart in my mouth with excitement that my peacock was an ordinary, wild one and that I wasn’t destined to protect a dear man’s life.

“Zeiched-ogly got your peacock in a special way. The Arab knew that he had to give the little bird to you and he came to the Community specially for this purpose. You will find out how, why and when you are connected to that unhappy shrimp through the karma of great gratitude, who now has come as white bird to you because of it, you also will find out that he was your most vicious enemy and murderer during one of your lives. In your turn now you have a chance to show gratitude with your care and love to him for your saved life in the distant past.”

We came to the clearing where it was hot again. Nurse Aldaz with very worried face was going to meet us.

“Miracles, miracles and miracles,” Bronski whispered.

“Miracles don’t exist, only knowledge, knowledge and knowledge exists,” I. answered him.

Without any greeting nurse Aldaz began to tell I. something in a very excited voice. Her face which now I was observing very attentively after Bronski’s story about her was changing like in a fairy-tale. She all was changing together with mimic of her face. Suddenly her figure as though used to grow heavier or it used to become absolutely light depending on her words which she was saying. Everything was so harmonious within her that it only intensified her expression, and I understood that the shrimp was fighting against someone, although I didn’t understand her words. He was afraid of something and he tried to escape.

When we entered the room where the shrimp was sleeping, nurse Alexandra was holding the tossing patient’s hands, who probably was delirious. I. was lingering with him for a long time, he would tell me to give him this and that until finally the patient calmed down and began to breathe evenly.

Having allowed him to rest and to have a nap, I. began to change his dressing. Since I saw his nasty, wide open wounds in the morning I prepared to see that horrible view again, but I was surprised when I saw that they didn’t bleed anymore and they were covered with a greyish white coat. I. prepared a foamy liquid, he moistened with it the plasters prepared at home and stuck them on his wounds. The patient was flinching, but he didn’t open his eyes and he kept dozing. Only when his wounds were already dressed and when I. stroked his little head, he opened his eyes and he was surprised when he saw so many people around him. He fixed his gaze on I. and smiled.

I. took the sound patient’s hand and began to talk to him tenderly about something. In the beginning, as though he didn’t want to answer him, but after a while he began to speak quickly, bitterly, he was asking him for something and he was afraid of something. I. calmed the patient down, he sent both nurses to have their supper and he told them to bring trained male nurse along with them on their way back, who would spend the night with patient and who would step aside from him only when the patient was sure that he wouldn’t allow anybody to hurt him.

The trained male nurse came after a while. His face surprised me. I had seen many kind and bright faces during this time, but I hadn’t yet met such stream of love which was pouring from this man’s figure.

As soon as the shrimp flung his eyes at him he smiled instantly, he purred something, extended his sound hand and he wanted to lift it, but I. forbade him to do it instantly. This male nurse’s name was Francisco. He looked at everybody’s eyes and gave his hand, but both his look and the movements of his hand were so different when he greeted every one of us, that I became Lovushka the Catcher of Crows instantly.

He was looking at Alver attentively, he raised his hand high, smiled and told him in perfect French clearly and loudly.

“You are good lad. Keep walking as you’ve started – you will achieve a lot!”

He was looking at Bronski for a long time, he was nodding his head, bowed very low to him and he said to him silently.

“Enough solitude and wandering. Now you have a lot of friends. Here you will leave all your tears and sorrows, and you will leave with reddish cloak, while your black one will lie on my shoulders,” he told him and bowed low to him again.

Bronski turned into the salt post, apparently he didn't have any strength to perceive everything what was going on here. I was the last one to whom Francisco came, because I was standing rather far, by the table and I was placing medicine chests until I started catching crows.

"Peace to you, my dear brother, carry joy for people. It is so rare when a disciple is walking with happiness to spread joy and light for his relatives. Don't stand in one place, live everywhere, carry peace wherever you would live. Your talent may turn other hearts to spirituality. Learn self-control here – then you will enter harmony and strengthen people with it."

Francisco extended both of his hands to me and as though the wave of peace and warmth poured into me from them. He sat down by the bed of the shrimp, moved a little nearer to him and began to feed him. The little red eyes of the unhappy martyr showed satisfaction. He forgot about everything and he was laughing merrily between his bits.

I. helped me to pick up things, because I simply wasn't suited for anything, as well as my friends, by the way. I. had to send all of us back to reality and remind us the elementary rules of courtesy, because we were already prepared to leave without saying good-bye. While saying good-bye, Francisco said to me.

"Take care of your peacock sincerely, my dear brother. This is the soul that has suffered a lot. The more attention you will give to her now, the higher she will rise later on. It will be a pleasure for me if you visit me. I will teach you to see "through the earth," he added with a slight smile.

Now already I was prepared to turn into the salt post, but I. said good-bye to Francisco by laughing and he took me and everybody else out of the room.

On our way back every one of us was immersed in our own thoughts. In spite of the cool of the forest, Bronski was wiping the pouring sweat off himself with his handkerchief. The Englishman was walking as though by leading a regiment behind himself, while I was dragging my legs along, held by I., and I was unable to comprehend the diversity of people's paths.

Now I remembered that there were millions of the paths, while the stages were the same for everybody, now I was thinking that many people's lives existed, while Life was one, and I couldn't understand how such small people like myself could enter that harmony about which Francisco was telling me. Indeed everything got mixed in my head.

"Lovushka, think about today. We'll come back, you will feed your little bird, he must have missed you already. Concentrate your attention on the current affairs, and pour fearlessness and nobility into them, while tomorrow you will think about tomorrow," my guardian was persuading me tenderly.

"Ah, I., my dear, if at least with a one hundredth part I could be such careful friend to my little bird as you are to me, then I would be happy that I do at least this lesson. How I would like to be worthy of your care," I answered him by drinking as always the calm and confidence that were spreading from my friend.

When we reached the Community, I. said good-bye to our friends by reminding them that they couldn't be late for the supper. As soon as I entered the room, a joyous peep of my new friend of my life met me. I dashed at him, took him out of the nest carefully and fed him from my palm. I. helped me to give him to drink, because that was a serious problem.

Having finished the procedure of feeding him, I stroked my white treasure and put him to the nest again. The gong was heard, and we hurried to the supper dining-room. It was bright here, the ventilators were cooling.

Many new people used to come to I. The painter who said good-bye to us after the tea now was asking me where I was and what I saw during the rest of the time. I answered her that I saw so much that I was unable even to find room for everything. Bronski interrupted our conversation and he declared that his friend was as though better already, but he wasn't yet allowed to visit him.

I didn't listen to the conversations around me. I didn't have any appetite. I didn't even look at what they gave to me, but I submitted to I.'s instruction to eat.

However strange it seemed to me, I was so drowsy that after the supper I went straight to my room. When I took a bath I finished my second day in the Community without even noticing myself how I fell asleep next to my new friend, the white peacock.

Chapter 3

An ordinary Francisco's day and my friendship with him.

The wicked shrimps, the fight against them and their liberation

A lot of time passed, maybe three or four weeks until finally I became acquainted with a big park of the Community and its ponds. Now I already knew well the suddenly opening views or the little houses that emerged at the bends.

My friend, the white peacock whom in the beginning I was always carrying in my arms, now began to run after me in a funny way everywhere by demanding with his peep and comical flapping of his slowly growing wings that I would take him in my arms when he was tired already.

Every day I was visiting Maksa alone or with I., sometimes – actually rarely – with Alver whom I. entrusted a part of nursing by Igor.

Bronski mostly used to spend the time with me between the tea and the supper, while during the entire day he was occupied in writing of some complicated work of his specialty, because he wanted to give to his students everything what genius of his creating actor has opened to him.

My learning in Ali's room was successful, it was so successful that I. offered me to learn the Arab language, too, because I wanted to understand my new friend Zeiched-ogly very much and not torment myself over trying to suppress my laughter fit from his French language.

Every time when I used to come to the hospital, to nurses Aldaz and Alexandra, I always met male nurse Francisco. He either used to walk with me in the forest if he had some time, or he used to invite me to the pharmacy where he produced the medicine, while I used to help him, or he used to take me to his room which stunned me when I saw it for the first time. From the balcony of the first floor of his little house that was standing in the clearing of the forest – above the chopped off tops of the trees – the view like from Ali's room opened to the distant settlements and to the mountain range.

Three rows of the parallel mountain groups called the green mountains, the lowest ones, overgrown with grass and luxuriant trees began right behind the valley. The herds were grazing there, one could see working people there. The range of infertile black mountains rose behind them. You could reach them only after crossing the desert. And finally the dazzling and stunning, snow-capped mountain tops which opened from here with their entire power and beauty. The mountains in this place were curved in semicircle, they formed as though an amphitheatre to which the balcony of Francisco's room was directed.

Room? Is it possible to find the words in order to describe Francisco's room or himself? Several bookcases with books were standing in the room, a small table of a strange shape, it was rather narrow, high, made of the white marble with red veins which were so dense that the marble itself seemed to be bright red. A big cross made of big red jewels was hanging above the table. When the sunbeam used to touch it, the warm, red colour used to sparkle by reminding me of the mixture of fire and blood, and it often attracted my attention. I used to think many times how simple and noble this cross was, how proportional this table was, but I was unable to decide in any way what its purpose was? To write? Too high. To eat? Inconvenient.

Anyway, the owner of the room himself used to enslave my entire attention so much that I never had any time to ask him what the purpose of this high table was. Three arm-chairs were also in the room if one could call three sitting places in this word, which only cavemen could possess. They were made of the palm logs and leather, they were big and beautiful in their own way anyway, and it was convenient to sit in them.

The wooden trestles covered with a cloth were standing by the wall instead of the bed. You could place the bedding on them anytime, but whether it was convenient to sleep on them I couldn't decide in any way. An ordinary washbasin, a little glass shelf for washing accessories and the towels above the washbasin, a writing-table, a hearth – these were all the furniture of the room.

When I came to Francisco for the first time, I was seized by a charm, almost the same feeling of happiness which I used to feel when I came to I., Ananda or sir Vomi. My eyes could see simple things, while with my entire heart I could feel not them, but that person who was living here, who has filled this entire room with atmosphere of calm and harmony. Whatever my look used to touch, as though I could see the words of love everywhere, cut on all the things by Francisco's heart.

From the very first impression of our meeting till this day, the charm of that personality was always growing. He didn't tell me any especial words, while I, by observing his behaviour in the most ordinary grey commonness, understood perfectly what a liberated man he was.

When I couldn't see him, it seemed to me that the day had lost something, some beam without which I already couldn't consider the day to be valuable. I saw that the others also – from small to big one – were searching for Francisco and that they respected him, they appreciated every moment of communication with him. Everywhere he would pass by, everybody would burst into bloom with their smiles, as if he had been walking and sowing smiles like flowers.

In the beginning he was duping me, because he was reading through every person's feelings and thoughts, but soon my astonishment grew into ecstasy of respect. From his example I comprehended clearly for the first time what love within a man was, love that was pouring in stream and not demanding anything in exchange for itself.

Francisco's love was flowing into the world of his day not because he comprehended with his mind how to liberate himself from his personal feelings, but because the word "to live" was the synonym for word "to love" for him.

My joy when I used to see him wasn't a simple joy. When I was with him, my entire egoism used to become numb. I wasn't thinking how I should prepare myself so that when I entered Francisco's room I would be worthy of him with my purity, but when I used to see him I would be filled with his atmosphere still from the distance. I was always feeling clearly – as though I had crossed the limit, - that Francisco wasn't far already, that the streams of his love were flowing into me.

Little by little I comprehended why Francisco could understand every man so well, as if he had known him from his very childhood. Nothing was disturbing him within himself. No partition existed between him and a man, the partitions which wouldn't allow him to accept the man such as he was, the whole, without any personal demands. His heart was opened till the end for such power of love that when a man would come to him with his entire heartbreak, his tears and doubts, he would unite that power, leave his passions in it and feel relief instantly. The man used to leave his bitterness to him and leave him comforted and gladdened.

Now I saw all those wise and great truths which I. used to tell me and which I comprehended with my mind and heart, but which I considered for myself to be only as an ideal of my distant future, as the simple man's kindness in his everyday life.

Francisco was living not only by loving others. While he was communicating with people, he used to keep everybody under the influence of the power of his love in such a way that the man used to relax, stop raging and raving.

Once I was a witness of a shocking scene. A father who looked more like a furious buffalo than a man was chasing his son with a huge bludgeon. He had already almost caught up with unfortunate, he already raised his hand with bludgeon, but Francisco got in front of the furious father at two bounds and covered the youth with his body.

I gave a shout with horror and I rushed to help him, but the escaping youth who probably had lost his mind completely thought that I wanted to stop him. With all his strength of horror of approaching death he grasped my chest and pushed me. I didn't expect his attack and I stretched myself on my back; luckily I fell down on the net of lianas, I entangled in them, but I didn't hit myself very strongly. Anyway I felt an acute pain in my backbone and to all appearance I lost my consciousness for several minutes.

When I came to life, Francisco was on one of his knees and he was holding my head with his hands tenderly. The youth was sitting on the ground next to me and he was crying with his hidden face. His father was sitting on the trunk of the fallen down tree at a distance with his hung head and he was panting.

"My poor boy, you have a concussion again, while your organism needs a complete calm so much. I don't know whether you will be able to stand up, but anyway you won't be able to come back to I.'s, to the Community. I will bring you to my room."

As though Francisco wasn't telling anything special, but the tone of his voice, the expression of his face, his eyes were radiating an endless love and such calm, tranquillity, such tenderness and bliss as though the drama hadn't just happened, as though he had meditated about the growth of flowers and grass a moment ago and not saved the man from death by risking his life.

I had never felt such love, bliss and joy. As though a stream of warm blood was pouring from Francisco into me. I forgot about my pain, about the youth's cry which hadn't ceased yet, I became light, joyous and silent.

Francisco laid me on the ground conveniently, he wound his and my hats, put them for me instead of a pillow, he went up to the youth and put his hand on his head. The youth lapsed into silence, wiped his eyes with his sleeve, looked at Francisco and told him.

"Who are you? I've never seen you here before. Why were you running to the death instead of me? Oh, you are saint! I've seen an image of God at the missionary, it was exactly as yours. So, hence he showed you to me? What do I have to do now? You probably will demand me to take the monastic vows? I don't want to do it very much, but I know that anyway my life now belongs to you and that I have to live in such a way in the future as you will command me to. I submit to you, my saint brother, command me."

The youth was on his knees with his hands put on his chest like for a prayer. Only where could I find the words to describe Francisco's face? He was looking at the youth like the most tender mother, caressing her little son. He smiled, and his smile illuminated all of us like a bliss, like a ray of light.

This smile was ringing to me. It was ringing like Ananda's laughter which I called the clank of swords, like sir Vomi's laughter which reminded me of the jingle of the wonderful little bells and the babble

of the spring streamlets. This smile in the silence of the fabulous forest was ringing like the part and parcel of the whole nature, like the power to live in happiness of love.

I was so immersed in thought that I came round only when I heard Francisco's voice.

"My friend, the saints have nothing to do on the earth. They can work above us, where me and you still cannot reach. I'm as sinful as you are. I don't need your life, but you need it yourself; all your relatives, the earth on which you are walking, all the people with whom you communicate and all the children who will be born from you need you. Every man's life is needed and valuable only when his heart loses the ability to dread and to irritate all the people around him. You didn't want to marry that one whom your father has chosen for you. You could ask him to postpone the marriage, then everything would have ended well, because that one whom your father has chosen for you is in poor health. She won't be living for a long time. However, instead of a calm conversation you started reproaching your father. You were trying to insult him as much as possible. You were playing with your father's passions, but you didn't know their power and you pushed him into a rage. If this murder had happened, then your father would be less to blame than yourself. Your entire life from this moment till the very death has to become the continuous lesson of love. You won't dare to irritate any man, but you will have to learn to calm everybody whom you will meet. Well, that's the only of your pledges, it is a saint thing for you. Go, my friend, think about that what I've told you, and if you feel unwell, visit me at the hospital. You will always find me there, or they will tell you where I am."

Francisco took his hand off the youth's head, but he seized his clothes and told him pleadingly.

"Saint brother, put your hand on my head again, don't drive me away, accept me as your servant, I will be happy if I could live next to you."

Again Francisco's smile rang like the entire symphony of love, even wider than before, and he told him tenderly.

"Your wants are excellent like this flower. The flower will cease blooming in a week, while your beautiful wants will dry up in five days if you stay here. Your life – that's flowering of the earth in your body, while your spirit still only sets like buds on a tree. Live like your parents and your brothers are living, love the girl in the same way as you love your mother and your sister, create your own family, so that nobody ever would hear your strict or irritated voice as I've already told you. Go, try and be kind to everybody."

The youth stood up, bowed to Francisco and turned to leave. He was going slowly, as though with reluctance, while Francisco was looking at him always with the same smile of love which, as it seemed to me, overflowed the whole surrounding space. All of a sudden the youth came back, he went up to his father and told him with great effort by fighting against himself.

"Father, forgive me. He tells me to live in harmony with everybody. How will I be able to live in harmony with others if I don't become reconciled with you? Then I will have to die, because now he controls my life, and I won't be able to fulfil my pledge."

The thick-set, hefty figure of his father, his powerful neck of the bull, his downcast head – nothing gave a slightest stir. Francisco came up to him and touched his shoulder – his eyes full of rage, madness and anger rose, he fixed his gaze on Francisco's eyes, and at the same time the big father's hand rose. I was prepared to jump for help again, it seemed to me that now the disaster was inevitable, but the father's head hung again, his hand drooped on his knees. Francisco came up absolutely close to him, he stroked his head and said to him tenderly.

“Did you spend your youth without any sin? Why are you surprised now? Were you showing an example of kindness and tenderness to your children? If you really consider yourself to be without any sin, then throw a stone at your son. If you know how much difficulty lies in your heart, embrace your son, he will carry a part of your suffering and he will take a lot of it off you. Now he asks you to forgive him. Shouldn’t you ask your son for forgiveness three times, because you’ve deceived him three times already?”

The man jumped up from the stump like a tiger, he seized the tender Francisco’s hand with his big paws and exclaimed in a wild voice.

“Who’s told you about it? Only I alone know it. Where have you been? Were you spying on me? Were you listening to me?”

“Calm down, father. Can’t you see how tender the saint’s hands are? You will break them.”

The strong man let Francisco’s hands go, the bluish red stripes and his strong fingerprints were left on them. I moaned when I saw these as though bleeding spots. The strong man himself probably didn’t expect such an effect of his touch, he seemed to be very embarrassed and he whispered.

“Forgive me, saint brother.”

Now his look became soft, a human expression appeared in his eyes.

“But you don’t know what he conceived, do you?! You see, he needs to learn. He felt like learning the writing. He has heard a lot of it in the markets of the tale-tellers and he also struck up a friendship with one Arab, so he desired to read,” again the father was shouting by raging always more, he as though was roaring.

“And how about you, didn’t you ask your father to let you go to the school in your childhood? Didn’t you cry when he didn’t let you go there? But he didn’t beat you for your wish to learn, did he? Why were you chasing your son by wishing to kill him? Think a little and confess: your envy for his destiny better than yours, that’s what made you furious.”

“Maybe it is so,” the man rather gave a groan than uttered. “But I didn’t want to kill him, but only to frighten him slightly. As though I’m not myself during all this time. And I don’t understand what is going on with me. Some very disgusting two shrimps are turning round and running about me. As soon as they show up, as though the evil spirit gets into me. Everything irritates me, I rail at everybody, as though I become not myself. Well, now it happened too. I was walking with my son and talking to him, but suddenly those two little devils jumped out of somewhere and began to babble something, to poke their fingers into the hospital’s direction. I understood that they needed to go there, but that they were afraid of the doctor. I took the hand of one of them by wishing to take him there, but he poked me with some sharp, little stick – my heart was pierced like with a piece of hot iron. I let his hand go, and both of them started running to the thick of the forest. Then my son said something to me, now I don’t even remember what, but I became angry with him and I raised my hand with bludgeon against him,” he was silent for a while, pulled the sleeve of his clothing and showed the big bruise next to his elbow, in the centre of which there was a little wound like a pin.

Francisco looked at his hand, he lifted the father from the trunk with an unexpected power and commanded him quickly.

“Follow me immediately. Death or something even more terrible is menacing you.”

He took me in his arms, the youth helped him to carry me, and he broke into a run to the hospital by telling the peasant to go in front of him. In the beginning he was walking rather quickly, but by

the threshold he already had to lean upon his son and, as soon as he entered the room, he sank into an arm-chair almost without any strength.

Francisco put me to his bed – I still could feel an acute pain in my backbone – and he began to prepare some medicine quickly. Having given it to the father to drink, he lifted the cover of the marble table easily and took a little stick out of there, as it seemed to me – it was made of glass and it was sparkling in all the colours of the rainbow.

The fire that was burning on the tip of the stick surprised me mostly. While Francisco was humming something continuously, he touched the patient's wound with this fire. He gave a start, but evidently not from the pain, because his face remained calm. Francisco was touching the wound with his stick for many times, as though he had been sucking the poison with fire out of it. The blood came pouring from the wound in several minutes. But what kind of the blood it was! It was dark, clotted, it wasn't flowing, but it was breaking in some clots which looked like some dark corks. Francisco kept humming his continuous hymn, and finally the stream of the red blood appeared from the wound.

The foam showed up on the patient's lips, he coughed a little, and the blood appeared from his mouth. Francisco wiped it away quickly with towel. He put the stick in its place in the same careful way as he did it when he took it, he lifted the cover of the table a little and told the youth to go to the big house, to find the chief trained nurse and to ask her to come here immediately. He gave some liquid for the patient to rinse his mouth, waited until the extravasation stopped, then he gave some more drops to drink to him. Francisco dressed the patient's hand very skilfully, tied it under his neck and said to nurse Alexandra who came in in French.

"The patient needs an absolute calm. Besides, nobody could be allowed to get to him, as well as to your little patient. Fence in the little house very well, in which the little one lies, and tell brother Kastanda that I ask him to send two watchmen with white peacocks to me, to the hospital. He will understand everything. Send somebody to I., tell him that I ask him to come here immediately. He also will know what he needs to bring with him. And right now, immediately, tell nurse Aldaz to bring her patient here. Somebody, you also could do it, my dear friend," he addressed the young peasant in the native language again, who was so stunned with such unexpected events that he was standing with his mouth opened wide, "go together with chief and bring the little baby bed here which she will show to you. Help your father to come," Francisco continued.

While Francisco was talking, he pulled the screen aside, which in the beginning I considered to be a little wall. There was a niche there where a neatly laid bed was standing. They put the patient on it, and Francisco said to nurse Alexandra in French again.

"Hurry, because two shrimps are rambling about the forest, they are angry and dangerous. Neither the little patient, nor this strong man may be assaulted by them. Even meeting them may be dangerous for them. I will be protecting my patients and nurse Aldaz, while you hurry to fulfil everything what I've told you to."

When the nurse and the youth left, Francisco with his face shining like a quantity of sunbeams, moved some furniture about in the room, and I understood that he was preparing a place for the shrimp's little bed. While I was looking at him, I was always more surprised. My God! What kind of eyes he had, what kind of his movements were! I felt it with my entire body that Francisco carried not the chair to another place, but that he was praying. He wasn't just living on the earth by carrying out the most ordinary work, but he was glorifying God with his every movement. The smile didn't disappear from his face, the smile of happiness to live. He looked at the lying, gloomy peasant, he saw that suddenly the tears

began to stream down his cheeks, he went up to him and told him several words which I didn't understand in such tender voice that my heart even melted.

Having stroked the dishevelled man's head, he helped him to turn over on another side, and in a while I understood from his even, calm breathing that the man was sleeping.

I still could see the red spots which the strong man left on Francisco's hands with his clutches. Now they seemed to me even more terrible, I thought that soon the blood was going to pour from them. I wanted to say to him that it was the time to take care of himself, but nurse Aldaz carried in Maksa in her arms, who was covered with a bedsheet. The youth brought the little one's bed, and in his face now one could see only fascination in the girl's beauty. He was standing in the middle of the room just like that, without taking his eyes off the charming, little Aldaz's face by holding the light, little bed made of bamboo in his hands, absolutely unconscious. Evidently he was unable to perceive so many contradictory events that had happened in half an hour and he looked so comically that I couldn't suppress my laughter by seeing the living portrait of myself, Lovushka the Catcher of Crows.

Maksa assented to my laughter, Aldaz didn't hold her seriousness, too, while Francisco took the little bed, put it in the place prepared for it, put the shrimp into it and as though said to himself.

"Just in time, just in time."

I didn't understand the meaning of those words, but having looked at the youth, I saw the sudden change in his face. He turned grey, then a rage flashed up in his face, he extended his hand by showing something to Francisco through the window, he was sputtering curses quickly and he wanted to run there, but Francisco stopped him and explained something calmly to him in his dialect.

When Aldaz looked through the window, her face also changed, she seemed to be frightened and she was looking at Francisco sadly, while he, by not stopping to smile, seated her by Maksa's bed and told the little one.

"Sleep, my child, you need to sleep until doctor I. comes."

Maksa closed his eyes, and I was surprised how he fell asleep peacefully in a flash, even his laughter became silent instantly. Francisco told the youth to sit by his father's bed and explained to him that he would need to sit here and not to stand up until doctor I. came.

However I was trying to see through the window who had frightened Aldaz so much, who had enraged the youth, I couldn't see anybody except the wonderful forest view.

"Your eyes still cannot see "through the earth," Francisco sat down next to me and smiled. "Well, look there, at the jasmine bush. Can you see how several of its twigs are moving, although the others don't even stir. There isn't any wind. Who may be moving those several twigs? Somebody may move them only from below. Define the direction of the twig movement. It leads to the windows of that little house from which Maksa was just carried out. Now I can hear already how the watchmen with many white peacocks are coming here quickly, and I. is coming here even faster. I know that you are still unable to concentrate your attention like this, so that's why I advise you: don't take your eyes off the flower garden with jasmines and you will experience a great lesson of your life today, much greater even if I had been telling you three times of what the evil will and power in a man was."

Francisco told us once again not to move from our places in any way, even if an arrow flew in through the window; not to move or touch anything, even if something was thrown through the window. He left the room and stood up in the doorway of the porch.

I was watching the bushes and the flower garden, I saw that the twigs were still moving gently and I took a good look closer to the ground by trying to understand what could be the reason of such constant movement. It seemed to me for a couple of times that I could see some child among the flowers, but no matter however I was trying I couldn't see anything else. All of a sudden something fell down with noise and broke in the room where Maksa was lying before. In the silence that was reigning, this rather small noise seemed like a cannon shot to me. I was afraid that the patients might wake up, but the sound didn't make any impression on them.

I rose a little and I saw that now Francisco was standing in the middle of the clearing with his face towards the bushes and his back towards the former Maksa's room. The same expression was in his face, as if he had kept glorifying the happiness to live. Suddenly he extended his hand, and I trembled in such a way that I felt a sudden pain in my back again: an arrow was stuck up on the ground by his feet. I was looking at the bushes with all efforts of my will and now I saw how the second arrow flew out of there and pierced the ground next to the first one. I was all paralysed. I couldn't understand in any way why Francisco was standing by the bushes where death was menacing him. How could the man with such undisturbed love in his face stand by the boundary of the evil and death? The noise that was coming from the distance interrupted my thoughts. I was unable to decide in any way what kind of the noise it was. It seemed to me that several people were running.

All of a sudden, white peacocks covered the whole clearing like the cloud of snow. Several men were grouping the birds into three circles according to Francisco's instructions: one circle surrounded the flower garden with bush of jasmine, the second one with Francisco who was standing in the middle of it was protecting all the entrances to the hospital, while the third one – all the exits to the forest.

The people were holding the metal nets in their hands and they shared ten peacocks each. Having taken a better look at the man who was standing on the forest path straight before Francisco, I recognized I. The view was so fascinating and interesting that I had to concentrate all my strength so that I wouldn't distract my attention and start "catching crows."

The peacocks were making the first circle around the jasmine bushes and the flower garden narrow. Also the second circle was coming nearer to the bushes where Francisco and I. were standing one before another one. They raised their hands up both at the same time, and I was dumbfounded instantly. I.'s face was so strict and so commanding that I couldn't even imagine. He looked like a God of power whom nobody could resist, while Francisco looked like a God of love who possessed such power of love that nobody was able to withstand.

A wild scream was heard in the bushes. It was the scream of anger, fury and protest. A shrimp jumped out of there and he started running, but the peacocks closed ranks, stretched out their trains, they climbed one on another's backs, formed a white wall and blocked his way.

Then the shrimp dashed to another side where a gap appeared when the peacocks closed up. He was scuttling straight to I. with entire speed of his little legs, but I. seized the net which his nearest neighbour threw to him and cast it down on the shrimp. The shrimp who didn't expect any obstacles from above fell to the ground and screamed in a wild voice – how could such a small being give such a horribly loud and angry scream! – he began to roll by getting entangled into the net always more, which he was trying to tear with his hands and feet, to gnaw with his teeth, to cut with knife that nobody knew where and when showed up in his hands.

I. extended his hand towards the ball that was rolling at his feet and uttered something to him in a very commanding voice. The shrimp as though got stiff for a moment, but soon he started screaming even more terribly, he started spitting and, apparently, cursing. I. came nearer to him and told

him something again. This time a warning was heard in his voice. The shrimp fell silent, and suddenly simply satanic smile distorted his face. He huddled up into the ball, drew the bow with lightning speed and shot an arrow straight into I.'s chest. Nurse Aldaz, the youth and me cried with horror. Aldaz covered her face with her hands, I was trying to run for help, but I didn't have any strength not only to run, but also to rise a little. The arrow sang away up, and I expected to see how it pierced I.'s vertex. But instead of it, it fell down onto the clearing, just between I. and Francisco.

I.'s voice was heard again, but this time I didn't recognize it, which was so dear, wonderful and tender to me. It was like a thunder, as though an echo would join his every word, strengthen it a hundred of times and it would unite with whole nature.

The shrimp began to tremble. I saw that the net in which he got entangled began to turn red, as though it became heated. Having seen this horror, having understood that he would be burnt down alive if he didn't submit to I.'s order, the shrimp began to pull some rootlets, arrows, powder out of his clothes, he threw down his bow, some other bags and looked at I.

The net still became heated. I. warned the shrimp for something else, but he shook his head with disapproval. I.'s face changed, it became compassionate, but... I understood from the gesture of his hand that an inescapable death was waiting for the shrimp who didn't want to submit to I.'s demand and to give up the evil.

The shrimp also understood that he wouldn't succeed to deceive I. and that death already threatened him. He went down on his knees – his grey with fear face was simply disgusting – and dropped several black little stones. The flame of the net that was already coming nearer to the unfortunate one went out. I. went up next to the shrimp, pulled a little stick out of his belt, lifted the net with it, threw it aside and covered the shrimp with another one which his neighbour threw to him. The shrimp remained lying like this at I.'s feet. Now a scream was heard from the bushes, as though it was mourning over something. There was so much suffering in this sound that I all covered inside of me.

Francisco who was standing motionless up to now walked several steps towards the bushes, and the flock of the birds followed him. He stopped close to the flower garden and began to speak to somebody whom I couldn't see.

I understood neither his words nor the meaning of that what he was telling him, but his voice intonation, his endless tenderness, calm and kindness which I could hear within him told my heart that help of his love didn't know any limits or rejection. My heart simply fainted when I was looking at Francisco's face. Oh! This pale face in ecstasy of love and kindness used to rise before my eyes for so many times during the difficult and dangerous moments of my life, in the moments of disharmony and deadly longing.

Pale, with his big shining eyes, with smile of joy in his lips, he was extending his hand to him, and as though I could hear the words in this pose of his: "Come to me, and I will comfort you."

I saw how the second shrimp crawled out of the bushes on all fours. He was even more degenerated than the first shrimp. He was terribly disproportionate, because his head was rather big, his waist was long and his legs were short. Somehow he managed to stand up and he was going straight to Francisco by howling like a dog by the dead. His long hands were hanging below his knees, his protruded jaw had bare gums, while his mouth was from one of his ears to another one. This horrible, inconceivable parody of man stopped three steps away from Francisco, he was panting and gulping. I was expecting that now he would take him in his arms, but everything happened in a different way.

The first shrimp began to shout something for his associate by showing the arrow stuck in the middle of the path and those black little stones to him, which he had thrown out of his spacious

pockets. In the beginning the second shrimp was listening to him attentively by covering his monstrous jaw with his degenerative lips, then he looked at Francisco, jumped back and began to howl by covering his eyes with his hands.

The first shrimp began to shout even louder. Francisco waved his hand to him, and he became silent. Again the voice was heard, which I translated to myself: "Come to me, and I will comfort you."

The shrimp shot an arrow with lighting speed like his friend before, and it pierced the ground next to the first one. Then both shrimps as though went mad. They began to scream so loudly and to roll on the ground, even to gnaw it around themselves that Francisco took the net from his neighbour's hands and covered the degenerate with it tenderly, like with a cotton wool.

He also got entangled in the net like the first one. When Francisco came up to the raging degenerate and he was telling him something, his voice was sounding tenderly and calmly like a harp.

The second shrimp calmed down. He took everything calmly out of his pockets, put everything neatly in a little pile and put the same black little stones on top of it, which the first shrimp had thrown out. Then he went down on his knees, looked at Francisco's eyes attentively with his red eyes, and as though a smile of satisfaction distorted his lips. He extended his hands to Francisco pleadingly and pointed at the neat little pile of his wealth. He touched his heart and his throat, he ran his hand over his neck as though by showing to Francisco that his masters would take his head off.

Francisco said something to him again, and again his voice and his eyes penetrated into my heart: "Come to me, and I will comfort you." It seemed that the shrimp already understood that he found a great protection that wouldn't betray him. He knelt down again, uttered a friendly scream and touched the ground with his forehead.

"Lovushka, concentrate all your strength and come here," I heard I.'s voice.

I rose with difficulty, but without any special strain anyway by being surprised how I was unable to stand up when I was trying to do it. I left the house, and I. showed to me how I had to go past between the two rows of the peacocks, because they were running towards me from all sides.

The peacocks closed up into two thick rows and left a narrow gap between me and I., so that I could go past them. When I went up to I., he embraced my shoulders with one of his hands and said to me.

"Neither me nor Francisco may touch these unfortunate ones, because they will die instantly from our touches, in the same way as it would have happened to those whom you had to touch in Constantinople at sir Vomi's request. You had your loyal assistant, the brave captain there. Here you are alone. Do you want to help me and Francisco? Those people who are standing here may not help us because of their own reasons. Remember that in order to help us now you need not only an absolute fearlessness, but also your entire compassion, your entire joy, your entire human love for God. You need to forget about the whole external nastiness and to penetrate into the Light and Calm that are hidden within man. My friend, do you want to save these unfortunate ones?"

"Oh, I., how can you ask me whether I want to save them. The question is whether I will be able to be useful for you. And there may not be any fear within me when you are next to me. I would like to help these poor martyrs from the bottom of my heart, so that I could show gratitude to you at least a little for everything what you've done for me and what you are still doing for me. By calling for my dear Florentian, I will try to concentrate my entire attention. I'm ready, I obey you."

I. gave the little stick which he was holding in his hand to me.

“Hold the stick straight before the unfortunate’s heart. Love him in such a way as only your heart is able to understand this feeling. Be glad as Florentian is glad now by seeing your complete self-sacrifice and your desire to save these deplorable, angry beings. When I touch your hand, touch the shrimp’s forehead immediately, no matter what he would be up to. Try to do it with lightning speed and hold the stick at the level of his heart again.”

I took the stick. I was all embraced with a charming feeling of happiness and joy. I felt to be exceptionally calm. My feet which were walking so weakly here now as though grew to the ground, and I felt an infinite power in my entire body.

I. began to talk something continuously in Pali language, as though he was chanting a hymn. Now I already knew Pali language so much that I could recognize it. I could understand separate words, but I was unable to comprehend the whole contents. Suddenly I.’s intonation changed completely, the thundering was heard in his voice again. I squeezed the stick stronger, looked at the shrimp and I almost threw the stick out of my hands. By piercing me with his terrible eyes which didn’t affect me at all now, by drawing himself up and standing on tiptoe, he was trying to reach my stick, but his efforts were unsuccessful. As though he was stuck and he couldn’t move from his place. I felt I.’s touch above my wrist and at the same moment I put the stick to the shrimp’s forehead. He gave a shout, he wanted to seize it, he staggered and fell down.

I thought that he was dead. I. continued the hymn and he touched my hand again. I put the stick to the shrimp’s forehead again, he trembled, stretched himself and uttered a moan.

My eyes must have been tired from the strain in the bright sunlight, but it really seemed to me that the dark steam was rising from the shrimp’s mouth.

I.’s voice became stronger, so commanding notes were heard in it that even all peacocks bowed their heads to the ground. I. touched my hand for the third time. Again I put the stick to the shrimp’s forehead immediately. He sat up, looked round in amazement, stood up, looked at me, at I. and suddenly, having wrinkled his face childishly, he broke into bitter tears.

My heart was beating. I was ready to embrace and quiet him, but the other two hands already took the net off the poor one and they were stroking his dishevelled head tenderly. I. took him into his arms and he was pressing him to his chest, while he kept weeping bitterly.

Francisco gave me a sign with his hand, he said something loudly to the peacocks, they all ran to the second shrimp and surrounded him in a close circle. I. told me to put the stick into the case by his belt and to hide it in a special narrow pocket which I hadn’t noticed in his clothes up to now.

Now Francisco called me.

“Lovushka, this shrimp leaves his dirty trade of evil in his good will. While I’m telling the mantra, touch all the things from this pile which he put here with the stick one after another at my command. Here, take the stick. When the whole pile turns into ashes, lift the net with the stick, take the shrimp by his hand and bring him here, absolutely next to me. And when I indicate it to you, touch the vertex with the stick.

I did everything as Francisco had told me to do. While the things were turning into ashes, the effect was the same as in Constantinople. Only here everything also stuck together into a piece of tar. As soon as I touched the shrimp’s vertex, he also wanted to seize the stick, he even jumped up, but he didn’t

achieve any results as the first one. This shrimp wasn't angry. He didn't cry – he was laughing like a child and showing his satisfaction in every possible way.

Having received Francisco's command, I lifted the net with the stick, brought the shrimp to him, he dashed at his feet, embraced them and he was trying to express his love in every possible way. Francisco took him into his arms, he told to take out all the birds, except three of them, which he picked out himself. He also told to call nurse Alexandra.

When I returned the stick to Francisco and came up to I., the shrimp was sleeping calmly in his arms. When nurse Alexandra came, the second shrimp was already sleeping, too, and both of them were brought to the same room where Maksa was living.

Now the clearing looked like always again, all the tracks of the fight between the Light and the Darkness that took place in it were gone, and we went to the Francisco's room.

I was worried about Francisco's red spots on his hands, but he as though didn't notice them. When I was already ready to tell I. about them I heard his voice.

"Francisco, sit down, I will dress your wounds again. Otherwise you will be put to bed again."

Francisco and wounds? I couldn't perceive or imagine that Francisco who didn't worry, who was radiating, who in truth was pale, but who was so strong and calm, could suffer from wounds. Without having reproached with a single word, Francisco sat down on the chair, while I. rolled up his sleeves.

I could see the wounds above the red spots from the peasant's hands, they were like burns from which the blood was already oozing.

Neither before nor after that I had to feel such inner suffering. Francisco kept silent by enduring the pain calmly, while I. was dressing his bleeding wounds. Such an expression was in his face as though he would have glorified the entire universe, but I could hardly hold my tears.

Francisco looked like a saint to me and to the peasants whom he saved today. Why the saint had to suffer? I wanted to give my hands in exchange, only if I could save him from his suffering, only if I could always see this wonderful face in the ecstasy of kindness and love.

"Lovushka, I've already told you that the saints have nothing to do on the earth. Some divine messengers may exist on the earth, but I'm not the one of them. I'm a sinful man. And everything what I can do for people – that's actually only to exchange my blood with theirs. But there isn't any greater happiness for man on the earth. I'm not a leader of mankind. I'm an ordinary man. My path of kindness is leading me as harmony that is living within me. You have not to suffer by looking at my wounds, but to understand that every path is the karma of centuries which you cannot throw off. Well, you also have your own karma: you carry the wonderful jewel of your Teacher which was stolen, desecrated and purified again. Whether you know it or not, but it will be a great help for that person to whom you will return it. And all of us who help you to develop your psychic strength within yourself which you need in order to carry it and to return it to its owner, we are all tied up with a gigantic karma of gratitude and salvation with that person to whom you have to return the jewel."

I couldn't understand Francisco's words and everything what I had seen today till the end, but I didn't ask him anything, because now I already knew that I. would explain everything to me as soon as I have enough strength to understand it.

Having said good-bye to Francisco, I. and I left the hospital territory and came back home. I was walking with difficulty, I. was holding me and, as soon as we went upstairs to my room, he put me to bed.

Yassa took me to the bath in an hour. I. himself instructed him what kind of massage he had to apply for me, but I was still unwell both after the bath and the massage. I had to go to bed again.

I couldn't even comprehend all the events. I couldn't imagine what time it was, it gave me the shivers, I became always weaker until finally I dropped off to troubled sleep.

Chapter 4

I become acquainted with new home of the Community.

An orange little house. What I saw in it and what happened in it

I woke up from the weight on my shoulder and from the light tapping on my hand. I didn't comprehend instantly where I was and what was going on with me, I opened my eyes and I burst out laughing loudly.

My small friend peacock who now wasn't so small anymore climbed on my shoulder and he was waking me up in a funny way. Since he was used to go to bathe with us always at the same time, he wanted to tell me that it was time for me to get up already. Besides, the sensitive bird wasn't satisfied only by waking me up. He jumped off the bed, ran to the opened door of the balcony, looked at the distance and, while flapping his wings with anxiety and crying harshly as though by asking for something, he came back to the door. Having pulled my blanket with his beak, the peacock ran to the balcony again, then he came back to me again by crying even harsher. He was trying to tell me that I would look at what worried him.

I stood up by laughing merrily and went up to the balcony door. I was so surprised when in the distance, on the way to the lake I saw I. who was already close to the rock behind which he had to go soon. I covered my careful friend with kisses, he cooed with joy and made me laugh even more by doing so. I dressed myself in a flash without forgetting to comb my hair nicely this time, which Yassa had taught me, I took the towel and the peacock in my arms, and I rushed to chase I.

I was feeling completely healthy and in this early morning I didn't remember what had happened yesterday.

I was so used to the heat that the scorching sun didn't torment me anymore like in Constantinople or at my brother's in K. Now I could walk very quickly. I already almost learned to walk without raising dust and not to get tired.

When I came tearing along to the lower lake I saw I. who was standing by one of the bathing places with a tall man. The elegant stranger's figure and his face struck the eye. He didn't look like native, although he was brunette. His aquiline nose with nicely bent little hump – everything showed clearly that he was Georgian, and I recognized him to be a mountaineer from his light, graceful and hopping gait.

"Lovushka," I. turned his face joyfully to the loud greeting of my peacock. "How did you wake up, sleepy-head? We need to ascribe it to a miracle that me and Yassa didn't need to shake you by trying to wake you up."

He took the peacock in his arms, while he perched on his shoulder unconstrained and he began to rub his little head to his cheek. While I. was stroking the wonderful peacock's back next to the "mountain eagle" in the background of the blue lake, lit up by the sun, he was so charming that I couldn't hold the outburst of my feelings, I embraced my friend and I was begging him.

"I., my dear, don't refuse it! I want to have your portrait exactly like this, here, by the lake, with my peacock on your shoulder, in the morning. It seems to me that this pose of yours, your cheerfulness and energy as though bless the upcoming day and people by sending them strength to create

and love. Oh, I., don't refuse it. I will ask Bronski that his friend would paint you like this for me. Only agree to pose for senora Beata."

"Insatiable Lovushka, isn't it enough for you my constant stay next to you during the day? I have to hang above your bed during the night, too! And again, my friend, according to your words, you've committed a crime. Recover your balance, make yourself free from too great admiration in my personality and become acquainted with one of my and Ali's friends."

I. was talking so tenderly, his eyes were pouring such flows of love and joy which I hadn't noticed within him up to now as it seemed to me.

"Lovushka, this is my old friend, my brother in arms in many of my words, whom I haven't seen for a long time. His name is Nikita for you, while his surname is Davshchvil. And here is Lovushka, count T.," he introduced us one to another.

The stranger was surprised, he looked me up and down, looked at I. and all of a sudden, as though by having remembered and understood something, he began to nod, he gave a charming smile and extended both of his hands to me.

His mute greeting, his great sincerity which I felt with my entire heart surprised me. He was especial with something, I even thought whether he wasn't deaf-mute, because his look was so attentive.

Having extended both of my hands to him as well, I looked at his eyes by knowing that the deaf and the dumb were looking at people's lips, but Davshchvil was looking straight at my eyes. I couldn't tell whether he was deaf and I heard I.'s laughter and his words.

"Nikita, you aren't that dumb servant in the Caucasus mountains anymore, are you? The habit of your silence of many years surprised Lovushka, because he expected a verbal greeting from you. He must have decided that you were dumb person."

"Forgive me," Nikita said to me, "I got used to be silent in my long solitude so much that now I cannot use a language instantly and I mislead people. Only this time as it seems to me you were stunned not only by my silence. I couldn't hide my amazement when I heard your name. I was amazed, because many years ago a heavy snowstorm in the mountains brought an unexpected guest under my roof. The snowstorm was raging for nearly the whole week and it snowed up the roads so much that the traveller had to live in my cottage during all that time. The guest was an officer, and his name was exactly as yours. I didn't notice any resemblance between you and my guest in the first moment of meeting you. Now I remember his face clearly and I can guarantee that he was your brother. His oval-shaped face, the section of his eyes and his lips – they are absolutely the same, but your brother's hair was blonde, his eyes, too, while you are brunette. I remember faces especially well. If I. hadn't told your name to me, I would have asked it myself anyway."

Davshchvil was speaking in English with a strong accent. I thought that he should speak Russian with an accent, too. From the thought that he accepted my brother in a hospitable way, that maybe he even saved his life, Nikita became close and dear to me instantly. While still holding his hands, I told him passionately.

"Nikita, how I would like to hear the story from you about those days which my brother spent with you. I haven't seen him for so long time and I still wouldn't see him for so long time that I would be happy to talk to you about him."

"Lovushka, what is more important for you?" I. asked me by passing the peacock to me. "Is it my portrait or the story about your brother's life at Nikita's?"

"I., of course, your portrait is more important for me, because it symbolizes the entire life for me which I've understood through you. When I have your portrait I hope to put it into my heart forever as the path of happiness and power which you've taught me to understand. If now I heard how my brother was living in the godforsaken place of the mountains for a week, almost buried alive in the snowstorm, then probably I would understand many things about my life before meeting you differently. The symbol of the white peacock which I saw on Ali's, Florentian's and my brother's little boxes..."

I didn't finish my phrase. The alive peacock whom I was holding in my arms after taking him from I. suddenly as though tore the veil in my memory. I remembered yesterday's events. The whole view of the clearing, I. with Francisco in it, surrounded by the snow-white peacocks with their shining golden trains, rose so clearly in my memory that I forgot about everything else in a flash and I was standing dizzy from the new flow of my thoughts, from the new opening.

Yesterday I was unable to comprehend that great work in which the birds were taking place and helped to escape their brothers shrimps from the evil and suffering. I comprehended neither where nor for how long I was standing, as though I was reading the words of Ali's letter: "And let this white peacock be the symbol of peace and activity for people's happiness and welfare for you." An acute pain in the small of my back – I must have turned suddenly – forced me to come to myself: I was lying on the bathing place, the peacock was perched by my head, while I. and Nikita were standing next to me. Florentian's little bottle was in I.'s hands, I recognized it and I understood that I didn't manage without fainting away.

However strange it was, but now when I was looking at Nikita, some vogue recollections, something from my distant childhood rose in my memory. It seemed to me that his face which now was so worried was connected with the fragments of my recollections about a horse from the Caucasus mountains, about some journey, but I couldn't remember anything concrete, so I waved my hand and I decided that it was again due to the thick Dervish cap, but when Nikita touched me by helping me to stand up, this touch seemed to be familiar to me.

"Well, Lovushka, we'll try to bathe you in the cold lake, as Nataliya Vladimirovna recommended us to do," I. told me.

"So she, my dear friend, is here again?" Nikita was very surprised when he found out that Andreyeva was not only here again, but that she was still living in the houses of the first level, as he called our houses.

To my question what "the first level" meant, he answered me that there were many first levels in the sense of both the life of the Community and of one's private life and of the spiritual levels. The first level how one needs to understand it in the sense of the house, - that's some kind of a distributor, because a man himself doesn't choose the place which he likes in his life, he is living exactly there and in such a way where and how his spiritual strength allows him to do it. Namely this strength predestines his place in the Community and it doesn't give him a possibility to live differently, in another house of the Community.

He told about himself that this time he was living in the house of the fifth level, while many years ago he left this place after reaching the third one. Now when he came back he found his house in the fifth level, which he couldn't even see when he was living in the lower level.

I. told me that if I hold out the bathing successfully, then he would take me to those houses of the Community where my possessed strength already allowed me to live and to breathe. He added that one could possess a very developed psychic strength, even be the source of great enlightenment for people, but anyway, due to the lack of harmony in one's organism, one may not have enough strength to

withstand the vibrations of those levels, the atmosphere of which demands harmony as the initial point of existence. The man who is unable to control the powers which break out of him is suffocating in the atmosphere of higher harmony, he stops as before the most real wall, although there aren't any external obstacles before him. The flows that break out of him passionately create this wall by overshadowing his own spiritual and physical vision with a thick screen, and the man doesn't even see the entrance or the path to those places where more developed and high harmony beings are living.

Luckily, my bathing ended without any excesses, although the water temperature was really low in comparison to the weather temperature. Maybe actually it wasn't so low, but the water seemed to be ice-cold to me. When I dipped into it, it was fizzing like aerated water, and my entire body was covered with silver little bubbles. Even when I went ashore I was still all with silver armour and I was red as a lobster. I was still feeling the coolness during the entire way up to our home in the heat and I wasn't afraid of the heat anymore.

Andreyeva was the first who greeted me when I entered the dining-room.

"Ah, mister count-awl, how you've changed and become better-looking during that time while I didn't see you. Aren't you bathing in the lower lake?"

"You've guessed very precisely, Nataliya Vladimirovna. They bathed me in the lower lake today, and the experienced feeling reminds me of the state of the shaggy poodle if you threw it from the stove straight into the frozen pond. I don't know whether one becomes better-looking because of it, because I didn't have time to make certain of it."

"Ah, those writers," she gave a sigh by pretending to be unhappy. And suddenly she puckered her brows, relaxed her lips, gave an expression of kindness to her face with sharp features – she became the real Oldenkot.

I doubled up with laughter. I also remembered how Florentian in K. park was performing an English lord before the young officers – and there wasn't any end to my laughter. Andreyeva soon regained her usual facial expression and she was asking I. naively whether he didn't realize the course of my joviality. I. answered her that he didn't know it personally, but that he didn't doubt that mister Oldenkot really knew it.

"Oh yes, I know it and I'm not surprised that it is ridiculous for your friend," entering Oldenkot answered. "It is so unexpected to find a resemblance with me in Nataliya Vladimirovna's face that I would laugh myself if I wasn't afraid of making my friend angry."

For some reason today I was especially interested in all the people surrounding me. Up to now I was close only to Bronski who helped me to train my peacock, and our friendship was becoming always stronger. Since he knew the world and people well, he was observant and attentive, he could introduce a timely original example from his own life – he was a very interesting company and educator. He was always speaking in a picturesque, expressive way, in essence and, while I was associating with him, my perception about people and the art was growing within me.

I used to meet Alver Chergiston only at the table, as well as some others with whom I became acquainted during the first days. Only that what I. or Florentian were telling me attracted my attention up to now, but today after the bathing and after yesterday's events in the clearing of the forest I began to look more attentively at the gallery of the faces that were sitting around me.

For the first time I understood completely clearly that all the people gathered here at the same time were living also their inner, invisible to others life, that probably they were experiencing here the same miracles and events, the witness and even the participant of which I was myself.

I heard that Andreyeva was writing a work of the colossal importance, that she was charged with an especial mission for which she was preparing here not for a single time already and that now she was preparing again to spread to the wide world the whole flow of the new knowledge for people. The words that I heard from Nikita about her today interested me even more. I fixed my gaze on her and I met her look which was attentive and... sad. This face was changing amazingly! It was reflecting all her spiritual waves like the water on the lake surface. Not so long ago it was childishly mischievous, full of humour, and her rough, graceless features were irritating the eyes with their disproportionality. I cannot choose another word. It was really wonderful. Her features became soft, as though a miraculous shroud of kindness had covered them, her look wasn't burning and drilling anymore, but it loved, blessed and expressed respect. It was illuminated by wisdom. If I had met this Nataliya Vladimirovna from the beginning, I wouldn't have recognized that she was wild and noisy Oldenkot's friend. Her attractiveness and charm enchanted me, and when I heard her tender, velvet voice instead of the sharp one I didn't even understand in the first moment that she was talking.

"Not everyone is destined to enter Ali's room. Not everyone is allowed to contribute to the highest help for mankind. The path of joy – that's absolutely not the one of the perfect ones, but certainly the one of the calmed ones, while calm – that's not an external tranquillity, but peace which one carries inside of one, in one's heart. You can be loyal till the end, you can undertake the task of great importance and solve it successfully, but anyway you may fail to rise with your harmony. From today on you will begin to see not with your awls, but with that knowledge which your alive, calmed heart has opened for you. Only there's no sense to grieve for those whose faces seem to be sorrowful for you. The more sorrowful person you meet, the greater your joy must be, because only then he may throw the part of his grief to you. Grief and fear die next to Wisdom. Think not about me and about my secrets, but about those moments of happiness when you may remain absolutely self-controlled after meeting any man. Only then you will be a help for everybody who lack harmony when you learn to be glad after meeting the sad man."

Andreyeva was talking silently, her voice was lost in the background of sounds, but I could hear her every word so clearly, as though she had been talking straight into my ear.

When I was about to finish my breakfast I saw Nikita coming to us. Again I was seized by the strange feeling that I saw this man not for the first time. While he was greeting Kastanda and Andreyeva, I was always shooting glances at him, but I was unable to decide in any way where I could have seen him. I didn't remember such face from my meetings of late months, but at the same time I could feel closeness to him stronger than by the lake.

Having said good-bye to Andreyeva and thanked her sincerely for her words, I hurried after I. and Nikita who already went out to the alley of high and slim palms. My friends were walking down this alley till the very end of the park and turned to the narrow little path that opened on the left, straight before the bamboos which I thought I was unable to cross up to now.

"It is so wonderful, shady and cool here! This is the place where we need to hide from the heat. And it didn't occur to me before that I could find the path in this jungle?"

"For many times, Lovushka, you will be thinking like this while living in the Community, for many times you will discover Americas where you could see only the forest and the mountains before. Furthermore, you will know well where which house is, but depending on your inner high or low spirits, you will find the way to it easily or you will lose it completely. It is absolutely possible that one day you won't be

able to find the way to Ali's little island and you are unable to enter his room. One's purity and fearlessness – that's the first condition of one's spiritual vision. So, the wider a man is able to become free within himself, the faster all his characteristics pass on to the aspects of the Only One, until the whole the Only One bursts into flame in man while he's rising through the levels. So the houses of the Community are arranged according to these levels. It is already impossible to meet a man in the Community who would be swaying between the good and the evil. Only those are living here in whom all the aspects of the Only One are opened and operating. Since there isn't a single man in whom his liberation would happen in the same way as in the others, then the path of Light of those who were walking it down before is adapted in all sorts of possibilities for all those who are following them or who are searching for their liberation independently. Now we go to the second level houses. There are seven of them here. Why seven and why each of them has different colours, Lovushka, I. will tell you about it when the time comes for it."

With these Nikita's words we left the bamboo undergrowth and got into the wonderful outskirts of a field where all sorts of flowers were blooming in the green meadow. Many of them had such forms and colours which I had never seen before. The paths were spreading in beams through the meadow by moving away to different sides.

I. who led the way chose the central path which led straight to the hills overgrown with palms and eucalyptuses. When we climbed up to the top of the hill, I stopped in amazement. A wide plain was extending behind the row of the hills with very beautiful big, medium and very small houses.

The hills rose also another side of the valley, even a little higher than those on which we were standing. All their slopes were overgrown with great forest of the mixed leaf-bearing trees, but the powerful cedars stood out in some places with dark patches. The beautiful little houses of the most different colours, of the most fanciful and the simplest styles were standing in the green background of the palms and the forest, scattered like coloured little stones here and there. A violet house especially captivated me, it was like an old middle-aged castle with little towers, stairs and balconies.

The house looked like an amethyst in the bright greenness of the trees, it was lit up by the sunbeams, with a wide white central stair and a fanciful, also white spiral stair which descended from the side towers.

The red house stood out on the left, also surrounded by the forest. I saw the yellow house on the right side, behind it the blue, the green and the orange ones. These little houses of strange colours looked like flowers in the green thicket.

"It is beautiful, isn't it?" Nikita asked me.

"Yes, it is very, exceptionally beautiful. I only will confess that it is somehow inhumanly beautiful. They fit and flow here in such an artistic way that you accept their strangeness as if it should be like this. But could you imagine something like this in the conditions of an ordinary life? If somebody thought of building such little house – forget-me-not in his village or this one of ruby colour, such man would probably be considered to be a hotspur with wild fantasy or a man without taste. But here they are very nice, and I would like to live here for the entire century."

"Lovushka, many things seem to people to be incomprehensible and impossible only because in their daily routine they didn't have and see those things which they deny. To be precise, they used to pass by many things, but they could neither see nor feel them and they denied them due to their ignorance," I. was explaining to me. "Of course, if a man built such strange green dwelling without coordinating its colour with surroundings, if he painted its windows in white, the fences in yellow, the roof in red colour, then he would show only his poor taste. You can see here not only the harmonious range of

one colour in every house, but it is also coordinated with nature, while the groups of the trees of different colours only supplement each building. Besides, that what you see here is absolutely not the fruit of fantasy or certain conditions, that's the organic characteristics of people's lives and paths which painted these houses exactly like this. Here, look at this red house. The roses, geraniums, climbing lilies surround it, the red colour of which is bright like a flame. Actually this house is white like all those houses which you can see in the valley, but the people who are living here covered its walls with love emanations of their auras, - so the house is burning with colour of blood, and you can see it like this. Only if your spiritual vision hadn't opened within you, painted in this colour by your own characteristics, that is if you didn't possess the living love within yourself, then you couldn't see that colour which is burning in the auras of the people who are walking down the path of love, - the ray of the red colour. You could see only the white house or probably you couldn't see absolutely anything. Also hear the first rule for every disciple who enters the second level Community: not to tell anything about that what you see and hear to the person whom you meet and leave without your Teacher's permission. Learn to keep silent, learn to keep in secret that what your Teacher didn't allow you to tell to others. In this moment I'm your Teacher. Do you want me to lead you until Florentian comes here, and when you are ready you will go with him?"

I was very excited by that what I. told me.

"If only your love and patience is enough for such absent-minded disciple, I will be glad, because I love you from the bottom of my heart and I called you my Teacher in it for a long time already. I promise you to make all my efforts, to concentrate my entire attention in order to make your work easier, my dear guardian, my loyal friend and Teacher."

"I will be glad to help you, Lovushka, with my whole knowledge and with entire loyalty of my love and friendship. Don't understand my words about the secrets of the disciple's path wrongfully. We've already been talking with you many times that no secrets existed in the world of the spiritual powers, that only a certain level of knowledge, that is of liberation, existed. Therefore the people's convictions, their moral demands, their joy or sadness depend on the level of immersion into their personal passions or their liberation from them. A man's subjectivity and negation of his time for one or another reason is always a clear and real sign of his ignorance. Therefore, for you to think that you could lift somebody to a higher world lookout that has opened for you through your own activity of love is the same mistake as to try to explain the beauty of a song to an unmusical person. You won't reach any positive results by trying to give to another person your most precious truth that is unquestionable to you if your friend isn't ready to perceive it. In this way you always risk to profane your sanctity. Not because the man is bad or dishonourable to whom you revealed it, but only because he's still not prepared for it. They say about it: "Don't throw pearls to swine..." On the other hand, that one who's crossed all the levels of his liberation understood Love completely, which is creating in that part of the universe in which he is living. When he begins to understand this creation of Love, then all the cases of the man's body open for his outlook, and he's able to read not only another person's course of thoughts at the present moment, but also his entire karmic destiny. By revealing new things to you, I have to see what you can understand easily and simply now, what will cause a big strain for you and what you won't be able to perceive, because you haven't yet liberated those origins within yourself through which all individual powers may and have to flow in order to merge with your powers from birth. The entire category of knowledge exists, which only a man himself may acquire. You may not give it to him by any outside help. By developing and liberating man himself asks questions – his own and in his own way – to the mother nature, and it answers him. That doesn't mean that every man who still doesn't understand anything in his path of discipleship will be able to ask those questions which he thought of with help of his cunning mind. The man read ten or more intelligent books, he loaded himself with even bigger burden of relative concepts and he decided that now he is prepared, that he is leader of those or other people, that his knowledge – that's the top of wisdom. Here's the

beginning of all sad deviations. Here's the beginning of who is right and who is to blame of all divisions, stubbornness, doubts and arguments. Instead of benevolence one for another and peace, what the liberated people spread everywhere, the man who caught only the mirage of knowledge, rouses irritability, dissatisfaction and gloominess for others. Observe closely and learn to distinguish. That person who is able to forgive people for their sins easier than others, always gives kindness, compassion and calm with his every meeting. He begins his every meeting with them and he ends it with them. That person who came to somebody's home and brought irritability is always unjust, although he would explain his coming with the most important reasons."

Two men showed up behind the big, blooming bushes of azalea when we were standing on the top of the hill and looking at the valley. I recognized instantly tall Oswald Rasten and Jerome Manule. I. introduced them to me on the very first day of my arrival to the Community, and I didn't see them since that time. Now I understood that they were living here, so I didn't meet them in the park by our home.

A thought flashed that probably it was difficult for I. who was so wise to always live among the people without any equilibrium and also to have such sickly, absent-minded disciple so close to himself.

Both men greeted I. joyfully, but they did it not by squeezing his hand as in the dining-room of the park, but they bowed low to him as the monks do. By responding to their greeting, I. put his hand on everybody's head, as though by blessing them or asking them to bless somebody. He pointed to Nikita for them.

"Here's that brother from Caucasus, about whom I was telling you and to whom I entrust you as your closest guardian. Tomorrow he will come to you, and all of you will prepare the new learning program. Besides, we'll travel to the distant parts of the Community in two or three weeks, and if brother Nikita finds the possibility he will bring you along. Now let's go to your house, so that Lovushka could see your life. Soon he will have to move here."

We climbed down the hill, crossed the valley and went out to the orange little house. It was charmingly revealed among the blue and white flowers, the dark maples, the big wonderful cedars and the white acacias which captivated me so much. These beauties were standing, decorated with big, snow-white caps and they were diffusing a heady aroma around themselves.

As soon as we entered through the gates of the hedgerow which was buried in blooms, two white peacocks came running before us, who were perched on the stair among the flowers. The birds were big, beautiful, and it seemed to me that they were very calm, as if somebody was training them in a special way.

Both peacocks were running straight to I., he gave a piece of sweet bread for each of them, he was stroking them, smiling and telling them something. While carrying the bread in their beaks, the birds jumped back to their places and they started pecking only there.

The wonderful house which we entered had the big hall with very beautiful stair made of the dark wood, which was decorated with flower-pots, the flowers looked like yellow, almost orange lilies and mimosas.

I remembered the stair with yellow flowers and blue flower-pots in sir Vomi's house in B. I remembered Chava about whom I hadn't heard anything for a long time and... Anna on whose shoulders once I saw the chiton of the same colour as these flowers.

Sometimes the thoughts about Anna used to come into my mind, and now I felt her especially sharply in my heart by thinking about her misfortune and my happiness. She could have been here, together with us, with Ananda and she could live this fabulous life which opens up for me.

“Lovushka, aren’t you waiting for the door to open upstairs and Chava to come down here?” I.’s voice pulled me out of the “crow catching.”

“You are right, I. The room and the stair indeed awakened my remembrances about B., about sir Vomi’s house and, of course, about Chava, but now I fell to thinking so much not about her, but about Anna. About nice, dear Anna, about her music which we miss so much here and about her life in this moment. It seems to me that I would agree to live as a hermit for a couple of years and to take the pledge of silence, only if Anna stood here now, next to you. This little house makes no less impression on me than sir Vomi’s house. It fascinates me with something, it enslaves me, and I fee such calm, such joy in my heart as if I entered Ali’s room. Why?”

“Soon you’ll become acquainted with this little room better and maybe you will solve this question yourself.”

There was a big library on the left from the hall. Many people were here. Some of them were turning over catalogues, the others were sitting at the tables and leafing heaps of books, apparently they chose what they needed to. While the others were placing the books onto shelves, some of them were reading attentively by not paying attention to anything.

This room of the library was beautiful, too. I could see a row of books through three big windows made of the Venetian glass.

Two very young girls surprised me especially. They served out books from behind the beautiful desks, decorated with flowers. Having received an order, they were walking between the shelves silently and smoothly. One of the girls was an absolute blonde, while the other was brown-haired. Both of them were black-eyed, elegant and they were all alike. “Sisters”, - I thought and when I already wanted to ask I. about them, the blonde saw Nikita, cried “Uncle!” and fell on his neck.

All of a sudden everybody became numb in the room, as if somebody had waved the magic stick. They got stiff in those poses as they were standing or sitting. My feet also grew to the ground and, like everybody else, I couldn’t take my eyes off the girl who embraced Nikita and who was weeping on his chest.

What was in that cry which affected everybody so much? A joy? A pleading? No, most probably it was a piercing cry, asking for forgiveness, a happiness that the ills of life were over. I. came up to the girl, touched her shoulder and told her tenderly.

“Laliya, why are you crying? Your uncle Nikita is back now, isn’t he? If you were suffering for your unwariness for so many years and now you see him alive and healthy, who has done the lesson for you. Don’t create another drama, try to forget all the sorrows from the past.”

“Oh, Teacher, if not your compassion, if you hadn’t given shelter to me, this meeting had never happened. Forgive me my tears, once again I showed that I wasn’t worthy of that what you and my uncle did for me.”

Now Laliya was standing absolutely next to me, and I could see well that she wasn’t more than sixteen or seventeen year old, while her hair was... grey. Absolutely naturally grey! What kind of drama this girl had to experience that even her hair turned white!

The second girl was standing behind Laliya and she was looking at Nikita by smiling silently, waiting for the moment to come up to him. Not only love was shining in her dark eyes. I felt that there weren't any limits for her loyalty. Having torn away Laliya somewhat from himself, Nikita extended his hand for the second girl.

"Nina, you are still strong like a rock when you were eight-year-old, when I left you to your elder sister. If I didn't give way to despair for a single time during those seven years which I've spent in the severe mountain-gorge when I parted with you, then my support, my hope from which I derived my strength was the reflection of the girl with burning heart. Thank you. Take Laliya, I will come to you both in several hours."

Nikita passed the sister to Nina, she embraced her tenderly and she was trying to comfort her. I. proposed to Laliya who was still sobbing silently to go home and to invite somebody else to work in her place. Laliya wiped her tears quickly, bowed low to I. and answered him.

"Teacher, forgive me once again, now I will never be crying anymore. Those were my last tears which were lying like a stone in my heart from the heartbreak that my disobedience destroyed the entire line of my uncle Nikita's life, who saved both of us with my sister from death. Now I'm breathing easily, my heart is liberated from my eternal sadness for my uncle. I will keep working."

"If during all these years you had carried not the stone of sorrow and regret in your heart, but your uncle's image in your thoughts by sending joy, cheerfulness and merry laughter to him, then you, my child, would have shortened the term of his living in the mountains and his separation with you in half. Remember that. And if you have strength to work now – work."

While still being affected by impression of the drama unknown to me, I left the library arm-in-arm with I. My joyous happiness, peace and tranquillity which I experienced when I entered this little house as though were shaken by the buzz of the blown over storm or cannons... "Is there a serene calm, a harmony anywhere in the world, which wouldn't be shaken by the dramas of people's hearts?" – I thought for a while and I heard my dear friend's answer, who as always managed to look under my skull.

"Lovushka, life is a fight and an eternal movement. No walls may protect a person from the riot of passions within himself. To open the new page of life – that doesn't mean to take the pledge and to enter an Order, to receive a rank or a degree. Undisturbed and strong tranquillity comes to a man's heart when his Love opens up and when he sees how the wave of the Only One life is rolling through himself and through the people, the flowers, the trees and the animals who surround him. Then both temporariness and conditionality disappear from man's comprehension. His heart cannot die out for Eternity at least for a second anymore, and he comprehends his encountered person without any case on his eyes. Until that time all people aren't protected from dramas and tragedies, from hesitations between their personal illusions and joy of Reality. The aura of their bodies is always excited. Man's development – that's constant change of his aura, while aura changes only in the activity of one's grey daily routine. To imagine that man's ordinary, grey daily routine on the earth – that's the sequence of people's interrelations, that's success and misfortunes, which depend on goodwill of the people from his surroundings who can help or harm him, - that's the lowest level in which creation of man's spirit hasn't yet flowed into the affairs of his day and into his meetings. He's still only a master who's doing his job by using only the skills and knowledge that rise only from the requirements of the elementary earthly science; he still isn't that inspired actor who pours his creation himself into his daily routine and for whom the entire universe is ringing. It is ringing not with a passing and temporary joy, but with love of Eternity which is already liberated from the earthly superstitions of life and death. The only eternal Life exists for him. Live your day by always seeing the stage in it into the perception of Joy that is ringing in the entire life, then no people's anxieties and heartbreaks will disturb your Harmony, because Harmony living inside of you will be stronger than all the swaying and

unstable powers surrounding you. Memorize it well. This house is the beginning of the same orange houses group. You will see them scattered in the park which you considered to be the forest.”

We were talking in the room on the left of the hall, the purpose of which I didn’t understand. Usually it could be a rest or a smoking room. The sofas upholstered with beautiful orange material were standing along all its walls. The fireside was bricked into its inner wall, an arm-chair was standing next to it, which form was similar to the arm-chair in Ali’s room. The floor was covered with mats of very beautiful, orange hues, they were woven very nicely.

I wanted to ask I. about the purpose of this room, but he took my arm and brought me upstairs.

“What a wonderful stair!” I shouted as soon as we climbed up on the first landing.

The scent of the wood and the flowers was so pleasant and refreshing like in the newly built house where the wood diffused the purest aroma of the sun and the air.

“This is the cedar, eucalyptus and camphor tree timber. All of them together diffuse this wonderful aroma. Now you will enter my room, Lovushka, which is closed for everybody like the white Ali’s room. Now you already know Pali language so much that you will be able to read all the inscriptions written in it.”

I was amazed. I imagined that Ali could have his own room in the Community, because he was the owner of this estate and he could act as he wanted to. Suddenly it turned out that I. also had his especial room here where the strangers were prohibited to enter!

We climbed up to the very top. We turned to the left by the corridor of the first floor, on the right side of which I could see many doors, we turned left and by climbing the same sweet-scented stair, decorated with flowers, we got onto some mezzanine, to be precise, a tower.

The room was rounded, the windows were rounded, with convex glass, absolutely like lamps. The balcony door was wisely opened. When I came up to it and looked down I stopped like rooted.

The avenue of high and branchy fir-trees was so long that it seemed that it had no end. It divided the park from this side into two parts. As far as my eyes could cover the small houses and several lakes were everywhere, while the forest was behind them again, up to the bare rocks.

The landscape ended in a severe way – with bare rocks. There wasn’t that joy and joviality in it, which I admired every morning, but there was no less charm. Of course, I forgot about everything, I went out to the balcony and I was even more surprised when I inspected the balcony and house construction.

The balcony was built on two trees, the trunks of which were intertwined. They were growing by the wall of the house, while the wall and the entire house was the rock in which the rooms were cut out and arranged. Remote ages began to blow. For the first time I could see such trees that would hold the house balcony. They were stout, powerful, knobby and they were simply buried in blossom. Their big, smelling sweet clusters reminded me of olives, but they were much bigger and they had orange colour.

“Lovushka, you are so surprised that you didn’t even read the inscription above the entrance, and it is as wonderful as the house in the rock.”

“Forgive me, I. I’m so rushing about from one surprise to another one that I’ve missed the most important one, although you were telling me about the inscriptions.”

I started looking for the inscription, but I couldn't find anything, only some artistic ornaments. When I already wanted to go to another place of the room, it seemed to me that I began to distinguish two hues of the ornaments. Having taken even a better look, I found the third orange hue and I could see clearly the contours of the Pali letters, but I couldn't comprehend in any way how those letters combined one with another. Finally I could see three inscriptions one under another and I even cried with joy when I understood the first words.

Don't try to understand the depth of meaning where you don't get any help from your own self-control, - I read the first inscription below of the darkest hue slowly, but without stopping short.

While you are looking at man, don't measure his height and spirit, but open the presents and joy of your spirit for him, - I was reading the second inscription.

Don't seek for knowledge when you are paralyzed with fear. Only the fearless man is able to find the temple of the truth, - I finished reading the third inscription above the door.

I already turned away from the entrance, while the words were still burning in my heart in the same way as the words from Ali's room from my first entering there, which were protected in my heart like the signs of fire.

"Now read the inscription above the balcony door. I think that you will be able to read it in the same easy way," I. told me by putting his hand on my shoulder.

I felt so strange now! For the first time some new feeling struck me. I could feel clearly how I.'s power was pouring into me, as if my spiritual eyes were opening.

In the beginning I couldn't see absolutely anything above the balcony door. The solid wall made of the yellow wood seemed to be monochrome. There wasn't anything like an ornament, any difference of hues.

All of a sudden something flashed quickly in my eyes like an electric sparkle. I thought that apparently the bright sun damaged my eyesight. When I already wanted to cover the eyes with my hand and to complain I. of my health, I noticed that the sparkle on the wall began to shine, it became straight like a small stick and turned into a big burning letter in a flash, then the second one appeared, the third one – and I read the entire word. My whole soul was filled with happiness. I couldn't move. Each new shining letter gave such charm to me, such pure joy which I could feel only in my childhood, on my brother Nikolay's hands. I read the phrase.

Vengeance, flattery, jealousy and hypocrisy died out in the hearts of those who entered here. That one who can read the signs of fire has awakened the fire within himself. Once the disciple is able to read the word of fire, he may not spend his time in vain anymore. His speech loses the sting of condemnation and waspishness.

The inscription went out. I. turned me to the left, and I saw the whole row of the burning words immediately.

The path is the man himself. Activity – that's his life of ages. His calm is pouring into the hearts of the people who surround him in every moment. By not reducing the fire within himself, the disciple is passing his light to his each encountered person, if he has mastered the fire by loving. And everybody's harmony becomes stronger, and fearlessness of his encountered person is growing.

The further I kept reading, the more my happiness and honour was growing. I. turned me to the right, and I saw the whole row of the words again, which was burning not in that monotonous yellow fire like the inscriptions read before, but here I saw the real effect of colours and light. The words were burning like wonderful fireworks in the white, blue, green, yellow, orange, red and violet fire.

The view was so attractive, the little flames were trembling and sparkling in different colours, as though by changing one with another. I didn't have any strength to tear myself away from this sight and, if not tender I.'s touch of my forehead with which he must have wanted to remind me that I came here not to be carried away, but to read, then I would have been "catching crows." I concentrated my entire attention from the beautiful sight into the letters and I read easily.

The people who are pure like the water pearls don't exist. The path of one's liberation goes through the ray, and there are seven of them. Everybody's consciousness possesses the rudiments of all seven rays, but one of them is prevailing. That person who had the strength to enter this house of light possesses the aspect of each ray that came to life again within himself, so he can see its light and calm in each of them. The door of all seven rays is opened before everybody. Nobody is left without any attention. When man is prepared – his Teacher is also prepared.

The wonderful flames went out. Suddenly I seemed to myself to be grey, everything around me as though became gloomy, faded, and even the bright sun wasn't shining so brightly.

I. took me to the balcony.

"Lovushka, you read the words which those who enter the second level of discipleship must observe. Did you understand from these inscriptions that the main axes which support all other characteristics in the man of this level – that's first of all his complete fearlessness and second – his complete self-control? Whatever talents would develop in man, whatever great qualities of spirit and heart he would possess, if he isn't completely fearless, if his self-control didn't bring him to an absolute calm in all the moments of his life, he won't be able to enter the second level – that's the most important action of his own spirit. Not that is important how and why you met a man or what kind of man came to you. It is important how you managed to pour your light into his aura and to penetrate to his light. It is important how your love and calm, your comfort for him poured into him. The rules of people's moral code, only the earthly rules don't exist for the disciple of the second level anymore. Only the rules of Love, of the entire Life exist for him. His acts are honourable, noble and wonderful not because the rules of moral require the ethics of conduct from him, but because his spirit has already united with fire of Eternity and his acts may be only the beauty of unity, because they are his own actions of Eternity, the actions of his revived aspects of the Only One which he carries within himself.

I don't ask you whether you are prepared to enter that temple which is called "the second level." If you hadn't been prepared, you wouldn't have been able to read the fire inscriptions in the room. Only don't think in a one-sided way. Don't imagine that you will meet only those here who can read the fire writing themselves. It isn't like this at all. There may not be any other people in the second level as only those who have reached fearlessness and complete self-control. This is an unquestionable truth. Only how they reached them, what the path of their liberation was, what other powers have developed within them except these two unchangeable axes, - this is already everybody's personal path which is unique, individual and especial.

It is rare when the man – the disciple of the second level – is reading and writing the signs of fire himself. In most cases, or always to be precise, he has a chance to receive the information from his guardian through some conductor whose path begins from developing of his psychic powers. Your path started from the same. You are happy friend and servant of your guardians, you can help those who are walking next to you, to make their life and spiritual growth easier in this difficult path of one's earthly incarnation. One of the happiest earthly paths – the path of joy – extends before you. You will never bring any sad news for a man, but you will enter his dwelling as the messenger of peace and help. By setting fire to your talents, the great Compassion gives you the new comprehension of the earthly activity and meaning.

Today you read: "By looking at a man, don't measure his spirit and height, but open the presents and joy of your spirit for him." Accept, my dear, beloved friend and brother, these great words as the landmarks of your grey daily routine. Remember your happiness during your every meeting: you are living by knowing, you are living by holding your Teacher's hand in your own, you are living surrounded by your loyal protectors and assistants, their loyalty to you always depends on your loyalty to them."

I.'s voice, his face and his entire body was radiating so much that even the room seemed to be brighter to me. We left it, we climbed down the smelling stairs again, we turned to the avenue which I considered to be the avenue of fir-trees from the balcony. Now I saw that they were cedars which filled the whole surrounding space with their tar aroma.

"Life is so wonderful!" I shouted by completely forgetting about myself, about the people's personalities and their characteristics, the only hymn of the universe was ringing for me now: the hymn of Triumphant Love.

We were walking down the avenue for a long time. Sometimes we used to meet some people who used to bow to I., but nobody interrupted our silence. Now I was so united with entire nature that simply I couldn't have listened to any man's voice. It seemed to me that I could see how the flowers and the grass were growing, how life was circulating in the tree trunks and thorns. We reached the end of the avenue by being in this silence, and we could already see the lake before us, but I. turned to the left, we crossed the long grotto and we saw an absolutely unexpected landscape...

I saw the same little island as in our Community where the white Ali's room was. The island with avenue of the mighty, broad-leaved palms, along which we were going now, was also connected with little bridge.

As soon as we got on the little bridge, through the thicket of the blooming trees in yellow I saw the exact copy of Ali's little house, only it was bright orange. I didn't ask I. anything. Along the narrow path through the thicket of the yellow trees we went out to a beautiful clearing which was flickering with many-coloured flowers and which surrounded the house from all sides.

Here a white peacock came running to meet us, and an elderly man with oriental clothes and orange turban, who was sitting by the wall of the house stood up. I. greeted him politely, they talked a little in his language which I didn't understand, and again I was convinced of my ignorance. I. stopped before the little house and told me.

"Here you will see that living Fire, the words of which you were reading in my closed room. This room is my working place, the place of meeting all of my disciples who follow my ray. Only not everybody who has the strength to enter it possesses enough strength and purity of his heart which would allow him to enter this house and to be taken to the fire of Eternity. The letters in my room where you read them light up with power of fire – the Power of inextinguishable Love. While in this house that sacred Fire is burning on the altar. Only that person who's reached an unshakable purity and loyalty is able to enter the room where it is burning. Nobody's compassion or help is able to help man to enter there. Only man himself with power of his spirit is able to enter it. Read, my friend, how the first inscription above the entrance to the house greets you. It is changing and it is given to man in such a way as his own activity during the centuries has woven it for him."

I lifted my head up and first of all I saw the white peacock with his wonderful, stretched out train, shining like gold in the sun. I was surprised how I didn't notice such beautiful bird instantly when I was examining the entrance door and I saw only the rounded, convex window above it, which the peacock covered now. It was burning in fire above the shining feathers of his train:

Enter by protecting the eternal memory about your activity during the ages. Gratitude and bliss of those meet you here, whom once, a long time ago you saved. Their hearts desire to give their duty of gratitude to you and to become your protection and help, traveller.

The greeting words touched me strongly, because I didn't expect that they would be dedicated personally to me. I didn't comprehend them, but having looked at I., I understood from his face that all the questions would be solved later.

Only how I understood that I didn't know myself. I. wasn't that I. anymore whom I knew so well, whom I saw shining in his room of the rock. That was a being of the unearthly world. Divinity was blowing from him that surpassed all the conceptions about physical beauty and love. He was the whole Love in which I couldn't exist as a separate consciousness anymore, but I perceived him, because I went up to the world of inspiration of higher consciousness where the words as the symbols describing the mode of life didn't have any sense anymore.

I. took my hand and brought me upstairs which were made of jasper, as it seemed to me. The stair, the walls – everything was telling about the indiscernible antiquity. I wasn't walking, but as though I was flying, because my body seemed to be so light.

When we climbed up to the upper landing of the stair, two men dressed in long, linen clothes, girded with golden ropelets approached us by bowing low to I. I didn't recognize them, and only when one of them took my hand, I recognized Nikita. My God! How could he change so much? His grey curls fell on his forehead and neck, and as though they framed his dark, sunburnt face.

I looked at the second man who also took my hand and I was surprised even more. That was Zeiched-ogly, the Arab guide who gave the peacock to me and who always showed so much undeserved attention to me.

Both of them took me to the room where the pool with flowing water was. Having showed how to climb into it, Nikita told me.

“Allow me to undress you like in your childhood in Caucasus and to help you to do the washing in this water before putting on the sacred clothes and going to the hall of altars. You forgot me, to be precise, you didn’t recognize me when we met by the lake. I’m happy to return the duty of the eternal gratitude to you. If you want to enter the second level of disciples you need two warrantors. A man can enter this level by using only his own personal efforts, but all his friends have to give their help of love for him. Let me pay you my karmic debt, and become your servant and friend in this happy moment of your life. I take the warranty for you upon myself, I will be the eternal lightning-conductor and protection of your irritation. I will draw all the blows of your anger and quick temper to my aura beforehand, so that the development of your self-control wouldn’t be disturbed at least for a moment.”

“In my turn,” the Arab uttered, “I warrant for you with joy by repaying you for saving my life from the dark powers. Once I was shrimp, and you, still being a little child, hid me among the toys and covered me with your body from death. Now I will make every your meeting with sad people easier, I will take a part of their heartbreak upon myself, so that your joy could penetrate into their hearts easily.”

When I got out of the pool, the water of which was almost hot, both my friends dressed me with the same linen clothes as theirs, they girded me with a golden ropelet, combed my hair. They put the same yellow sandals as theirs on my feet. They took my arms and brought me to the door where I. was waiting for me. He was also dressed in white, but his clothes were from the same material as that one which Ali gave to my brother on the day of the feast in K. The bottom, the sides and the sleeves of his clothes were embroidered in gold. An orange, flower wreath was on his head, while in his hand he had the little stick which I had already seen in the clearing of the forest by liberating the shrimps. When I approached the door opened wide I saw the burning letters on the floor, under my feet.

My home is everywhere. Man’s heart is my home. This is the home of peace and light. Only then the man who enters here will find the door when he creates my home within himself. Step into the sea of my fire without any fear if your heart is pure. My flame won’t burn you down, but it’ll temper the power and clarity of your speech.

I stepped straight onto the burning words by expecting that the fire of the letters would burn me, but to my amazement, as soon as I touched it with my foot, it went out in a flash.

Now I. took me from my warrantors’ hands and brought me to one of the several, high, marble tables which had the same form as the one which I saw in Francisco’s room, only it was almost red there – so many reddish and red little arteries were there.

I. lifted the lid of the table, and I saw a low altar below, in which the fire was burning and before which a high topaz cup was standing, in which the liquid, also of the fire colour, was bubbling.

I. plunged his little stick into the cup with liquid fire, brought it to the blazing fire of the altar, and it flared up brightly. Then as though by humming something which I didn’t understand, he touched my vertex with his stick. Of course, that wasn’t a blow, but this touch shook my entire organism so much that I couldn’t keep my feet and I stumbled. Both my warrantors put their hands on that place which the stick touched, and I felt as though the electric current was flowing from me into their hands.

They helped me to stand up and turned me with my back to I. Now I. touched me two times under both of my shoulder-blades. This time the stick's effect was also strong, but not only I kept my feet, I also felt a very strange feeling, as though the wings had grown behind my shoulders. The new power started flowing to me, and I felt again how the invisible, but strong threads connected me with my warrantors.

I. turned me with my face to the altar himself. Now the fire liquid in the cup wasn't bubbling anymore, the green coloured flames were rising from it in spiral, while the fire behind the cup divided up into three tongues: the orange one was in the middle, the white one – from the left and the green one from the right.

Having plunged the little stick into the cup which was blazing in green spirals, I. took it to the green tongue of the fire. It flared up brightly, the whole stick as though blazed up with green flame, then I. took it to the white tongue of the fire, and the white flame blazed up on the stick next to the green one. I. took the stick to the orange tongue of the fire, and the trident of the flame was formed on the stick: the green flame was in the centre, the white and the orange ones – from the sides.

I. took the golden sceptre from the altar, which was placed there, and by holding the stick in one of his hands and the sceptre in another one, he lifted both of his hands up, while still humming that what I couldn't understand in any way.

All of a sudden I heard clearly: "Florentian, Florentian, Florentian," – the dear name of my beloved and distant friend was repeated three times.

In the same moment I saw Florentian with white clothes, who was standing behind the altar.

"Ali, Ali, Ali," – again I was able to hear in I.'s humming. I saw Ali in a flash, who was standing next to Florentian.

I already prepared that now I. would summon both the young Ali and my brother Nikolay, but the fiery threads of the green hue stretched away from Florentian's forehead, throat, navel, shoulder-blades and heart and they merged with green flame of the stick.

The white threads of the fire stretched away from the same places of Ali and merged with white flame of the stick.

I. brought the sceptre to the flames of the stick, a strong and dry crackling was heard, and all the flames from the stick passed on to the bulge of the sceptre, and I. placed the extinguished stick on the altar. The orange threads stretched away from I. himself – again from the same places as from Florentian's and Ali's – to the sceptre. I. raised the sceptre high above his head and he struck up a mantra which was accompanied by the wonderful music.

Having finished the mantra, I. turned to me, I and my warrantors went down on our knees, and the sceptre touched my head. As though a thunder befell on me, I all trembled, but it lasted only for a moment.

The warrantors helped me to stand up. Now I felt strong, renewed, as though I grew a little instantly – as if all my tendons had been stretched, all my nerves and ligaments had become free from some burden. I was feeling so unusually, as though I was living full of knots and lumps up to this moment, while now everything was purified, all my pores opened, and I was breathing by feeling how the atmosphere of the room united with every cell of my body. I looked at I. and I saw that the sceptre in his hand was extinguished, while all three tongues of the flame were burning on his vertex, between the orange flowers of the wreath.

The fiery threads which connected me with Florentian, Ali and I. were fine and trembling in the beginning, but now they turned into the real streams of the fire. I was feeling clearly how they were penetrating into my body by vivifying and making my new state easier, by creating harmony. I. embraced me, he brought me to the altar, took my hands and told me.

“Protect the purity of these hands, they are given the power of joy to convey the word of the fire to those who are walking next to you.”

He put his hands on my eyes and told me again.

“Protect the purity of your eyes. Live in an easy way by comprehending the heartbreak of the earth as an inevitable stage of people’s liberation. Let not a single tear pour out of your eyes, because every tear – that’s weakness of man’s spirit, outburst of his egoism, although it seems to him that he isn’t crying for himself, that he takes compassion on another person. The man who feels for another person completely is pouring the power of courage out of his heart, and only such compassion helps the swaying harmony of the encountered person to be restored. Your eyes of spirit are destined to see the inner, spiritual world of the man. Protect the purity of your physical eyes, so that the veil of your private love wouldn’t obscure the vision of your spiritual eyes. Go and be connected with pure spiritual bond to those workers of the Bright humanity who provide you help, protection and love before the Fire of Eternity now. Carry the sparkles of their fire in your spirit, in your heart and don’t pass them to your encountered people in high ideas and words, but spread kindness, calm and rest to those who are walking next to you through your grey daily routine. You cannot react to work and people personally anymore. Every meeting – that’s the path of all your Fathers who have adopted you now to the Only One through all your meetings. There isn’t any other path for you as only to lead your encountered people to that circle of fire in which you are standing now across the bridge of fearlessness and courage.”

I.’s voice lapsed into silence. I looked down and I saw that the three-coloured circle of fire was burning on the floor, which surrounded us and the altar with a high wall of fire.

I. took my hands and dipped them into the fire on the altar. I trembled for a moment again, but soon I was embraced by a blissful state of silence, happiness and great love. I. bent my head, as though I dipped it to the fire three times, I was flinching with my entire body even more and then I calmed down – as though I was growing, rising with my spirit.

I. embraced me, pressed me to himself – and I together with him rose to such heights where I couldn’t distinguish anymore who I was and who I wasn’t, - I cannot find any words to convey the sensations of my blissful happiness.

When I came to myself I was feeling as though I had gotten into the case of the human body again. My previous state was so light, joyous and blissful that now I felt the terrestrial gravitation and my weight again.

Having looked round, I saw that the altar was already covered with marble lid, that only I. and my dear warrantors Nikita and Zeiched were in the room. I couldn’t see my guardians and friends Florentian and Ali anywhere anymore. For some reason I remembered how I saw Florentian in the ship during the storm, who was radiating the same whiteness as he was radiating it to me here, several minutes ago.

“Now, Lovushka, you’ve experienced how the limits between the heaven and the earth disappear. The whole Only One Life opened up for you. You understood that no conditional limits exist, created by agreed words like “death”, “birth”, “life”, which have taken root as the symbolic terms during the earth evolution, as the separate stages that designate man’s separation with sadness that accompanies

him or happiness with its tempting illusions. Your today's experience has brought you beyond all the conditional limits, and you've experienced the greatest happiness – knowledge of the Eternal Life. You understood that your life in this incarnation – that's that "now" in which you need to cover the part of the path of your eternal liberation from passions. Go and find the only one, unique book of your life, which is placed among many other books on the table. Everybody is searching for it and only he himself is able to find it in this room."

I turned towards many high, orange little tables made of marble, which looked like reading-desks. In the beginning I could see only all sorts of orange books on them. All of them were the same, and no life was blowing to me from any of them.

The silence of the room and the silence of Wisdom of the books which were placed in front of me filled my consciousness with a calm grandeur of holiness, as though I was walking between the beating hearts that were placed in these big, visually heavy books, but all of them were only the keepers of the wonderful secrets for me, and there wasn't any place for my heart.

I kept walking further. I. and my warrantors were following me at some distance. Now I already started seeing the books of different hues: red, blue, violet ones.

All of a sudden, my look touched a big, green book that was bound in the nephrite cover, wonderfully decorated with malachite. As though a warmth blew to me from this book. I simply dashed at it, I inspected the binding and I saw the white peacock in it, which was beautifully laid out of the small white and green jewels. His eyes were red, while his train had different yellowish hues: from the brightly yellowish brilliants to the darkest topazes. The drawing reminded me of my brother's note-book which I found with Florentian in Nikolay's room in K. and which I was protecting sacredly in Florentian's travelling-bag up to now.

The warmth that was blowing from the book, which I felt from the distance, now covered all of me. I put both of my hands on the green binding, I pressed my head to the white bird, and it seemed to me that Florentian's heart covered me with his love.

I was happy. I was happy in the real sense of that word. I felt absolutely free from all conditional grips of my personality, which were still holding me strongly in their clutches on the earth up to now.

"Open the book, my friend, and read what engagements you had already taken upon yourself during the centuries that you lived up to now: the ones that you've met already disappeared from the pages of your life's book by leaving blank pages; the ones that you've once taken upon yourself and which you didn't meet are burning with fire letters on its pages; the ones that you've taken upon yourself during this incarnation now are waiting for your confirmation by love and loyalty. If you confirm them, they also will flame up with fire light, although now you can hardly see them as an old and faded ink. In this important moment of your life you can ask for your friends and your enemies. You can write those engagements here which Love that is boiling inside of you dictates to you in this moment."

I. lapsed into silence. I opened the book and I noticed that many clean sheets were turning over together, as though they were stuck together. I understood that those were the traces of my activity of centuries and of my long ago finished karmas during my past lives. I turned over some more stuck together pages and finally I found a free page on the white background of which the phrase was burning:

I will achieve absolute self-control, so that I could work next to my Teacher for a long, long, long time.

“Oh, I., I’m so guilty before Florentian and you! I’ve even forgotten that I had already given this promise and that I’m still the same man without any balance! Now I confirm my loyalty for this promise to walk my path with love and tact three times.”

As soon as I uttered these words, the record faded away, the pages turned over themselves, and the same phrase flamed up in bright fire in another place already, and the signature “Florentian” began to shine under it, as though by confirming my promise.

Several pages of the book turned over back again, and on the same page I saw like faded or merged from tears letters. I read:

Let the big, infinite heartbreak never visit my consciousness when my heart and my brain are drowning in the sea of tears and sadness. I’ve experienced the whole abyss of the human heartbreak. I comprehended it as the path that leads to my liberation. I comprehended it, accepted it and I blessed it.

Be blessed my terrible enemy who took everything what I loved and possessed from me. Be blessed! Let my tears not burden your path with heartbreak, let them burst into blossom and decorate your path with joy.

Let you walk down the path of joy and let you go out to the path of Light. I promise you never shed the tears of heartbreak anymore. If some time I’m so weak that I cannot hold them back anymore, - let it be the tears of joy, the wine of God!

I bless the day and the hour of death of everything what I loved. Let me stay alone on the Earth, free from all my personal attachments. Let my days on the Earth fly past being only the servant of each of my encountered person, of my Teacher.

Those words which I was reading and which as though emerged from the sea of blood and tears touched me so strongly that I went down on my knees and I uttered.

“If I haven’t fulfilled my pledge up to now, then let this life of mine be dedicated to the real love for my enemy, for taking care of his family if he possesses it. I want to bring harmony to him. I want to turn his heart into the blooming garden if there’s still a waste land in it.”

I stood up and I read the flamed up letters on the new page:

Your enemy is living with you. You met him as a white peacock who was brought to you to take care of, to train and to raise. You have already met your enemy’s family, too: that’s those two shrimps whom you helped to get out of the trap of evil.

Concentrate your courage, go forward, overcome by loving. When karma with his relatives is opened for a man, then the hour of his actions strikes. And if he didn’t take the karmic knot showed to him upon himself, then the possibility to undo it moved away in time from him – it drifted away like a cloud. And

again he needs to wait until the integrity of man's loyalty, his love and his unconditional obedience for his Teacher grows so much that it impels the circumstances for the new meeting of centuries.

That one who has ears will hear the call, and his cleared consciousness will help him to fulfil the indicated task for him. The eyes and the ears are covered of those who have little love and loyalty. Only the one who believes till the end overcomes.

The man is unable to see the expediency of his meetings, but everybody's life is going only according to this law – the law of great necessity.

He's walking blindfold until that time when the image of the Only One begins to shine in his heart, but in order for it to shine he needs to learn to walk with complete obedience only in the moment of his Eternity.

Due to his blindness man cannot see that moment of the righteous person's path. He can see something completely different, he draws conclusions from it, he reacts in a very sensitive way by trying only to imitate. No creation exists in imitation. Man's heart isn't living yet, so the clearing of his consciousness still doesn't descend on him, therefore he is denying due to his ignorance.

Leave all your dreams, neophyte. Act, act in every moment by creating kindness. And if your heart is without any fear – then your spiritual eyes will open, you will see and hear.

The book closed, the warmth and the light blew to me again, and everything was gone. I couldn't see the desk of the book and even those ones through which I was going up to here. I turned to look at I., surprised.

"Keep walking, my friend. I cannot help you with anything here. I've already told you: everybody here finds himself that what he's destined to find."

I marched forward; my casual look slid down to the floor, and it seemed to me that a little path from small orange flowers was laid before me. I walked down it. It was so joyful and enjoyable to see how the little flowers jumped out before me as though by showing the way to me like in a fairy-tale. I kept following them, I blessed them and I was unable to suppress the joyful laughter that was pouring out of my heart.

Suddenly the little flowers turned to the left, and I saw the little, radiating, high, orange table by the wall. I quickened my step, I felt the warmth that was flowing to me from the little table and, having come closer, I could see the big book with brocade covers, decorated with topazes on it. The beauty of its binding occupied my attention, and I didn't understand instantly that the decorations from jewels and gold formed an inscription. I read in Pali language:

My ray welcomes you.

That one who is begging receives. That one who is searching finds.

Those who are living in their personalisms don't achieve any wisdom.

Only that one who has become free is able to see clearly.

I kissed the binding respectfully and I wanted to open the book, but it opened itself, and I read:

Step into the fifth ray. Here learn to see clearly, to read without any help of your physical eyes and to hear clearly, easily without any help of temporary forms. In every temporary form read her Eternity. Glorify the day and help the consciousness of your encountered person to broaden with your given talent of the writer.

I. came up to me, stood next to me, raised his hand and held his palm above the sheet of the book, a little lower of that place where I was reading. I was looking at the book and I saw that a clear phrase was formed on the sheet below his palm:

The fifth ray – that's the one of science and technology; the ray in every developed consciousness to serve directly the mankind by technically applying her entire spiritual power.

Walk down my ray and spread the perception that comes to you through Love as an ordinary, intuitive action.

Learn to pour your opening love into your little daily work. Only that love which may be poured into everyday work and realised will be a living Love, an action of the Only One.

Not a single man, a single his action may be forgotten in the universe, because everybody who is living and creating – that's only the technical paths and application of Life that is changing its forms.

In order for you to achieve the living Truth within yourself, you need to develop your love for man. By loving man, respect him, and by seeing him as the goal of your Teacher's activity, you will achieve your unity with your Teacher, and by uniting with the Only One in your Teacher you will unite with Eternity.

I.

The letters rose from under I.'s palm, they remained in the book while he was holding his hand, and they disappeared instantly as soon as he pulled it back. Then I. closed the book, bowed to me and told me.

"Today you entered the second level of discipleship. You can see how one person is marching through the levels easily and imperceptibly, while another one is doing it with much difficulty. In my ray, in your everyday joint work you will learn to control those psychic powers which used to cause you illness up to now. Look at brother Nikita. Perhaps now you'll remember more than you did during the first moments of your meeting him."

I turned to Nikita, looked at his kind eyes and suddenly I saw the clear view from my childhood instantly when I was riding on horseback in Nikita's arms, covered with his burqa from the rain and the wind. Then I saw him and myself in some room full of the book boxes... and at the same moment I threw myself on my dear friend's neck.

"My dear uncle who doesn't talk!" I gave a shout. "I called you like this in my childhood without parting with you when you used to come on horseback, and by crying when you used to ride out. Oh, I didn't forget anything! My brother Nikolay told me that you saved my life when I was dead already. You brought the medicine to me."

"I was only the messenger of Ali who sent the medicine to you. From this moment on tell me "you". Those who had the happiness to stand one next to another in this room may not have the conditional address "You". Our friendship – that's our joint path of activity in which the limits for our devotion don't exist. I'm your servant, your friend, your assistant everywhere you will invite me to participate."

"Nikita, I don't know which words I have to use in order to express my gratitude. I only can say that the infinite feeling of respectful gratitude is beating in my heart for your entire tenderness. No veil is left in my memory anymore, I'm standing before you again like that helpless baby whom you were taking care of so much."

"Maybe now you will recognize me, too," Zeiched-ogly took my hand and told me.

As soon as he touched me, I saw the line of houses in the miserable street instantly, I saw an eight-year-old boy who was walking down the street and a frightened, ragged shrimp who was running towards him by searching for salvation from his chasers. I understood, to be precise I felt, that that boy – that was myself. I plunged in the past completely. I even could hear the steps of the running people and I understood that the shrimp would die if I didn't save him. I seized him by the hand, I dragged him into my house next to which I was standing. As soon as the door slammed, the steps hurried past it.

I saw the hall, how carefully I was taking the saved, trembling shrimp upstairs, how I seated him in the corner of the little room and loaded him with my toys, little horses, little carts...

"Now you saw the moment of one of our past lives and you know why I'm indebted to you. Accept my help as my returned debt to you."

I. joined our hands, embraced all three of us and uttered.

"Let's go all of us to work for the sake of our brothers. Let the unconditional obedience and unshakable loyalty help Love to unite us."

We left the room, went downstairs and entered the room which I hadn't noticed before. Here I took off the clothes with which Nikita and Zeiched had dressed me, I changed into my casual clothes which everybody in the Community was wearing. My friends and I. changed their clothes, too, and we left the house.

The servant was waiting for us downstairs and he handed a letter to I. by adding that the man who brought the letter was waiting for us behind the island. When we met him, I. told him without opening the envelope.

"Well, tell Aninov that we will visit him tomorrow, not today."

He turned to me and told me joyfully.

"Well, you see, Lovushka, how well everything is getting on. Aninov has migraine. He asks me to postpone the concert for tomorrow. You wouldn't be able to listen to him today, would you?"

"I couldn't do that and I've even forgotten about it. If Ananda was playing or singing, then it would be happiness," I told him and I moved to Constantinople in my recollections, again the human voice of Ananda's violoncello was ringing to me...

My state was unusual. I was walking, I could see people, trees, clouds, the sun, I could hear the birds chirping, but all of it seemed to be unreal for me, simply I couldn't fit in the form of this life. I was still flying somewhere and I almost couldn't hear anything what was told to me. Words used to reach my ears, but they would slip unnoticed. I came to myself a little only when we went out to the bamboo undergrowth.

"Lovushka, come to yourself," I. told me by taking my arm. "Now you will go out to the park and meet Bronski who misses you very much. You cannot leave your friend without any help in this happiest day of your life. Let the bright happiness that has covered you today be also his happiness and joy. That what you were unable to see in man yesterday you will see in him today. Give a part of Love to him, which you received so generously today. Not your personal path in the universe is the most important, but you yourself as the path of Light, the path of activity and meetings of your Teachers, which extends through the universe. Pour a part of your tranquillity into the suffering Bronski's soul. Then Francisco and the shrimps are waiting for you. We all together will be going to the hospital, invite Bronski as well."

A cloud of regret obscured my soul from I.'s words anyway. It was too difficult for me to descend onto the earth from the orbit of heaven, but I understood instantly how sad my life would be if the people who gave me help weren't next to me, which didn't know any limits and refusals. Suddenly as though some steering-wheel turned within me, I felt happiness to live on the earth, to be glad to help somebody.

"I'm ready, my dear I.," I told him, but anyway I still stopped for a while before coming out of the bamboo thicket. "I'm happy that I can meet Bronski on such important day of my life and give him first the whole clearness of my spirit and my knowledge. Let our meeting be blessed, let me start and finish it in a joyous, compassionate and noble way."

I tried to concentrate my entire attention and my thoughts on my sad and suffering dear friend.

Chapter 5

The day of happiness of my new knowledge and three meetings

Having taken several steps more, we went out to the path. I saw Bronski from the distance, he was walking slowly towards us. He was walking with his hung head, and the nearer he was coming, the clearer I could see what a sadness was covering my friend.

Compassion squeezed my heart that was overfilled with love and happiness. I felt such a flow of love for him, which I had never experienced for any stranger.

I hurried towards Bronski who didn't expect to meet me here, I opened my arms widely and embraced him. Only now I noticed unexpectedly how I grew up physically. I wasn't that small dawdle Lovushka anymore who was running away from K. together with Florentian. Having embraced Bronski, the tall man, I felt that my shoulders were already as high as his, while my eyes were almost in the same height as his.

I was surprised in my thoughts when I had time to grow up and to widen so much, but without going deep into reflections I was laughing at Bronski's fright who got into my arms so unexpectedly.

"Lovushka, my dear friend," he was talking in his charming voice, "from what heaven did you fall down? I'm so happy to meet you in this hour. My God! But you really look like the one who has descended from heaven. You are shining as touched by the holy spirit!"

"Oh yes, my dear Stanislav," I answered him by laughing merrily and for the first time I called my friend without his patronymic, which I couldn't do before regardless of all his requests, but today my tongue itself reflected that love in which I was all burning and it called him as my heart told it to. "Now I've really fallen down from heaven. Several minutes ago I still didn't understand what a great happiness it was to bring heaven onto the earth and to convey to the encountered man its beauty, absorbed with my entire heart. I love you, Stanislav, in that brotherly love in this moment, which needs neither words nor explanations anymore when we want to share our friend's heartbreak and to carry it together along our difficult path of life."

"Lovushka, Lovushka, of course, something extraordinary has happened to you," Bronski was talking silently by pressing my hands to his chest and looking at me with his excellent, sad eyes. "However, whatever has happened to you, however strong your happiness in this moment would be, - wait a little with your promise to share my heartbreak. I've been solving a difficult question during several days already: whether I had the right to associate so closely with you – so closely as I wanted it. My entire life is satiated with heartbreak exactly because wherever I would show up, whomever I would come to love, with whomever I would be friends, - I always used to bring misfortunes and sorrows for everybody inevitably in the end. I've enslaved so many people with my talent in my life!.. They were trying to become acquainted with me, they were proud of my closeness and friendship – the final was always one and the same: a misfortune used to overtake them, and I only had to comfort them. I don't know whether I used to comfort them, but the date of my meeting them was always the beginning of their misfortune without exception. My solitude – that's the result of my conclusions about associating with people. I started being afraid of any intimacy. Like a Wandering Jew I started wandering around the entire world and I haven't created any happy oasis of my personal feelings anywhere. I was immersed only in the art, I gave my entire life to it

without any reservations, but people gave me no rest even for such mode of my life. They – it doesn't matter whether I want it or not – come up to me through the art which I give to them. My love for the art, that for what I was living and for what I am living, I was serving and I am serving for my God and for the general welfare, makes people to draw closer to me, while I'm forced to accept them as my students and colleagues. The view was and is inevitably one and the same: if I used to give people joy and self-disclosure through the art, then inevitably I used to predestine misfortunes in their personal life for them. That started oppressing me so much that I decided to get even with my life, to go out from the earth to the Eternity in which I believe sacredly. When I was already prepared to fulfil my decision I met that great man whose letter I brought to the same great, as it seems to me, your amazing friend I. If not this extraordinary event, I would have never met you, Lovushka. The warmth is blowing from you to me. Your youth, your exceptional talent, your living fantasy and your ability to penetrate to the actor's experiences to the bottom of your heart, your interest and your friendship which you express to me, - everything draws me to you. Now I was walking and I was solving always the same question: whether I wouldn't bring a misfortune to you? Maybe I should step back, so that the heaven's wrath wouldn't flash across your young life?"

"My dear Stanislav," I gave a merry laugh, "I assure you that the heaven's wrath wasn't waiting for my meeting with you. It was flashing across my life in every possible way. I want to contradict you. First of all, where are we now? This isn't that open stage of life full of superstitions and conditional conceptions. Here we, as well as everybody else who come to the Community, can reach the Saint Earth as much as we are able to enter it. Here we are living without any superstitions, without any conditionalities of our private life and the external contacts, dictated by it. Here everybody is creating his day as much liberated as much he already was able to control his passions. Second, you are talking about those external signs which you caused in people's lives, but the heartbreak as the herald of which you were walking wasn't only suffering. It turned into the steps for the inner development of people's spirit. If you stop estimating your and your encountered people's lives one-sidedly by seeing only the earthly plan and if you connect your and all your encountered people's consciousness also with the plan of living and creating heaven, then you'll start living in Eternity yourself and you'll start estimating the facts of other people's lives in two plans by uniting them into one, indivisible totality. By estimating your meetings in such a way, you will find the greatest Wisdom within yourself, because you are awakening the possibilities within people to enter the forever running flow which is the Eternal Movement. Today I felt the bond of the earthly man with love and care of the creating heaven with my entire being. I understood that I had to convey the work of the great brothers of the living heaven to the earth not with my ideas or high words, but that I had to penetrate to the encountered man's spirit with my entire nobility. My love for my motherland doesn't have to manifest itself with theories and pledges. Love for brother man – that's not fantasy and dreams, a meditative form of mantras and prayers, but an effective form of activity in the most common daily routine. I. was telling me about all of it, he told me that there weren't any grey days, but that there was only that what we were creating during them ourselves, however I comprehended it only with my mind, I was delighted, I felt giddy, but... my love kept silent. It was always only a charming lighthouse until there was "love for strangers", but as soon as it used to touch "my own people" it used to grow into my irritation. Today, Stanislav, my entire being was trembling in the fire of Love which the elder compassionate brothers were pouring into me without asking me what I was going to give them in exchange, but they covered me with the net of love and protection, so that I could contribute to their activity with my purity. I can feel their power within myself like a powerful fire, and while talking to you now, I'm happy, because I feel how I give their motive power of fire to you. That what forces you to suffer for love for people when you would like to give only joy to everybody, your ability to push people into the path of suffering shouldn't worry you. Stop thinking about yourself, forget that you are a herald of their temporary suffering. A misfortune as the loss of welfare in one's private life is only an illusion. Only remember that you are worker of the living heaven and that you push people into the flow of sorrows which purifies them. People wake up for their inner life and receive an

opportunity to throw off the grown bumps of their egoism, so that they could go out to the path of Light. Well, that's all what I can tell you. Of course, I. will tell you much more and he will lead you to the new level of perception and activity, while my meeting with you – that's only a blessed moment. I had an honour and happiness for you first to give the pearl of my pure joy, my wonderful pearl of Love which my great friends gave to me."

I was stroking the elegant actor's hands tenderly with which he had covered his face and through which his tears were rolling down. We were standing like this when somebody's hands embraced our shoulders, and I saw Francisco who came up to us.

"I was looking for you, my dear friends."

My God! There wasn't anything special in these most ordinary words, but Francisco's face, his eyes and intonation of his voice, - everything was radiating such love, such tenderness that I understood why people called him saint. His simple words reached my heart, as if they were uttered in other circumstances: "Come to me and I will comfort you."

Having heard Francisco's voice, Bronski cast down his hands, he looked at him and, apparently for the first time he understood in the same way as I did what Love within a man was. He went down on his knees, pressed himself to Francisco, took both of his hands and burst into tears.

My heart as though turned over from this lament. I also went down on my knees next to Bronski, I embraced him, I pressed myself to Francisco and I was praying the living heaven, my friends Florentian and Ali to share the burden of the actor's suffering, to help him to pass him into the new level of the Earthly life and activity in it.

An unbearable heartbreak, his accumulated suffering was felt in Bronski's lament. Francisco was stroking the suffering man's head, he leant to him and he was smiling silently, tenderly. I stopped seeing Francisco as a man who was standing before us. I could see only Light, only Love which was shining around his entire earthly form, which became wider, which grew into the bright cloud and covered him in a circle.

"My dear brother," Francisco continued in the same voice, "your today's tears – that's the fatal boundary of your life. You were liberating your encountered people by splitting their spiritual armour with your genius of the art. You were grieving and suffering by seeing how the transitory happiness was broken. Now you will understand that their happiness that was burnt down from the flame of the match would be changed into the Light of the incombustible Fire. Now you will become the power of comfort of their rebirth. You will understand that the great path of discipleship in the presence of Eternity is equally great both for those who carry the reddish pearls of joy in their cup and for those who carry the black ones of suffering. The cup of joy only seems to be lighter, but actually it is equally difficult to carry both joy and sadness for people in a honourable and well-balanced way. Stand up, my brothers, so that I could wish Love for each of you by greeting and meeting your new life."

Francisco helped us to stand up, and I was surprised again by the power of these delicate hands. He embraced Bronski, he pulled him to himself and he was telling something straight into his ear what I couldn't hear. The actor and his entire carriage changed so much when Francisco let him go from his arms! His face was radiating, his figure became straight and powerful, an energy began to shine in his eyes, now he all seemed to me like a incarnation of the creative energy. There wasn't any single wrinkle left on his such young face now, while in the beginning of our meeting it was furrowed with wrinkles of worries.

Francisco addressed me.

“Lovushka, your brother Nikolay sends kind regards to you. He gives his note-book to you, which you are protecting so sacredly for him up to now and at which you didn’t even look for a single time by protecting another’s secret, which is a rare honesty. Now the records of your brother’s note-book aren’t any secret anymore, you’ll understand everything what is written there. Also accept my present of love and joy. Hang this modest, little ring on your peacock’s neck. Here’s the chain for you as well.”

I was so happy with Francisco’s present! Not only me, but also the peacock, my eternal enemy, received congratulation of love today. No words of gratitude could express the power of joy that filled me. I felt myself on Francisco’s neck by crying and laughing at the same time and by drowning in his infinite kindness.

“Lovushka, you will suffocate Francisco,” I heard I.’s voice behind my back.

While I hurried to meet Bronski, I didn’t even notice how and when I lost I. and my friends warrantors. And also now I didn’t even take thought how and from where they appeared next to me, - all today’s events seemed to me to be clear, simple, easy by itself.

I. took us to the distant part of the park where I saw a beautiful orange summerhouse. Here Francisco said good-bye to us by reminding me that in the evening I should come to him and bring Bronski with myself in order to talk to the shrimp.

It seemed that it was difficult for the actor to part with Francisco, he was holding his new friend’s hand without taking his eyes off him. Francisco gave a laugh, set his hand free, took both Bronski’s hands and gave them to I.

“I’m only love,” he uttered, “but the technique of its application, the development of your artistic talent, your ability to help people with tact, charm and compulsory self-control you’ll find by I. and Florentian. All the knowledge that you need now you’ll find by I. My and his Love will help you to enter the new level of your life, but only you can find the ability to apply this knowledge.

Francisco left us and soon he disappeared behind the summerhouse, but we didn’t stay alone for a long time. As soon as I had time to press the Francisco’s given ring to my lips again and to imagine how wonderfully the red chain would be sparkling on the white peacock’s neck, I. told me.

“Lovushka, Nataliya Vladimirovna is coming here. Meet her in the same way as Francisco has just met you. Give all the power of your compassion to her in the same way as it was given to you today. If you are able to forget about yourself and, by thinking only about her, to press her to your heart without seeing anything in her, except her Love, - then you will help her to get into that height where she needs to find the new strength to end her previous and to start her new work. It is unimportant that you are still only neophyte. The paths of the secret work of people karmas’ masters still may not be revealed to you. It is important that you could give the entire purity of your joy to her, which in this moment she can imbibe only through you. Not the man who is carrying a message is important, but the message itself and love of that person who is carrying the message. Help her by forgetting about yourself in the same way as you were helped today without seeing anybody else except you.”

I. took Bronski’s arm and left the summerhouse. Nikita and Zeiched smiled gently to me and left with them. Very little time passed, maybe ten or fifteen minutes. But what kind of the minutes they were! I didn’t feel the weight of my body. The completeness of happiness of my existence, the sweet feeling of my heart, unexperienced up to now connected me the whole surroundings, as though the sun, the light and the flowers – everything was ringing. I could hear clearly how my own note was ringing in the joint symphony of the universe. I was a part of the whole, I couldn’t tell anymore where “I” began and where “I” wasn’t anymore.

A light rustle was heard, and I saw Andreyeva coming to the summerhouse. As always the white knitting headscarf covered her curly hair, but unfortunately, not as always her eyes were full of the greatest sadness. That weren't those electric wheels to which I had already got accustomed. Her eyes as though were extinct, and her clumsy figure seemed to be even heavier today. As though she was walking without seeing and noticing anything. I thought that perhaps some thought was oppressing her, perhaps she didn't have strength to solve some important question that worried her? I went to meet her, but she still couldn't see me until I took her hand in which she was holding her closed umbrella.

"Dear Nataliya," I said to her with joy which I was full of today, "I'm so happy to meet you in this moment! I don't feel any partitions between you and myself. I know what worries you and I carry the elder Ali's help for you. Dear Nataliya, don't pay attention to my ill characteristics, I'm only that ant that carries Ali's news for you."

All of a sudden I felt already familiar trembling of my entire body and I heard Ali's voice.

"Take your sister by hand and bring her to my room. There you will take the book from the second shelf of the third bookcase, which will shine in your eyes. You will give it to your sister Nataliya, and with your pure harmony and devotion you will help her to read that what she needs without fail."

I was very glad and I was surprised that Andreyeva was standing next to me without any joy, as if she hadn't heard Ali's words which he told me. I retold the received instruction to her. She gave a start, as though she had awakened suddenly. Without allowing her to come to her senses, unexpectedly I comprehended the nearest way to Ali's island and I took my dear sister Nataliya there.

I was feeling strange when I was walking down the new path which I saw for the first time. I was living in the Community for so long time already that it seemed to me that I knew the whole park perfectly, but now I was walking along the new places again.

"Where are you taking me, brother?" Andreyeva's voice was that second one: soft and tender in which tenderness and charm were ringing.

"Can't you see, my dear sister, that we are going to Ali's room on his island? Here we can see it already. Actually I'm also going here, from another side," I answered her as tenderly as only my heart was able to open for it.

"On which island?" Nataliya was surprised. "As far as I know Ali's room is in the white rock, and I didn't hear anything about the island."

We went out of the tree thicket and came up to the little bridge that was tangled by blooming lianas and overgrown with high grass. That was only a narrow, hanging foot-bridge that was swinging above the water. Having put my foot on it, I had some doubts whether my lumbering sister would cross it, I turned back to look at her and... again I almost turned into Lovushka the Catcher of Crows. Instead of her sad, strict face that was reflecting the deepest inner reflections I saw the young and joyous one, with the flow of energies gushing from her eyes...

These eyes became the electric wheels again, which I knew well, but that wasn't that usual Andreyeva's, the middle-aged woman's face anymore with strict, determined features and tightly closed lips. I saw the face of a strange youth, radiant with inner light, which could hear what I couldn't hear, which could see what I couldn't see.

Only now I understood what I. was telling me: "Everybody is able to see and to hear only that for what he's matured. The wave of the sounds of the great importance in the constantly ringing universe

may be spreading through a man, but it won't begin to ring for him if the harmonious, return note doesn't exist in his heart, which could absorb the harmony of that ether wave."

Several minutes ago I could hear that what Andreyeva's harmony was unable to absorb. Now she could hear something, and that was an indubitable fact for her, but I couldn't perceive that.

The strong feeling of respect for the silent inner conversation covered me, I took Andreyeva's hand tenderly and, while going backwards, I was taking her across the narrow foot-bridge. Earlier I could withstand not only her touch, but even her nearness used to affect me very strongly, and I knew that I could fall sick from it as lady Berdran did, whom I was still treating. But today I was holding Andreyeva's hand calmly and joyfully, and there was a wonderful thing – I couldn't get rid of an impression that I was taking a youth with myself.

We crossed the swaying and bending foot-bridge under our feet successfully, we got onto the little island, and as always the white peacock and the watchman met us. When these kind dwellers of the island greeted us, we went to Ali's house which today seemed to me so radiating, as though the golden beams were spreading from the pores of all its stones.

"Stop, traveller, stop and think for a while why you came here," I read the inscription that blocked our way like a white band. I didn't understand where this inscription appeared from, but the fact was obvious: it blocked our way with only several steps till the house left.

"I came here to fulfil my Teacher's and my friend's task," I answered to it in my thoughts. The inscription didn't make any obstacle in the physical sense, which we would have needed to overcome with difficulty, but my feet as though grew into the soil, and there was such a feeling as though an insurmountable wall had risen before us.

As soon as I finished the phrase in my thoughts, the inscription faded away. We took several steps forward, and the second inscription blocked our way:

An unconditional obedience, joy and unselfishness may go through my gates, but only purity may help the neophyte to take away that soul whom he undertook to take into the house of power.

You will have time, traveller. If there's fear within you, if you are afraid of responsibility – come back and don't take the soul entrusted to you into my house.

"My Teacher told me to do like this, and I'm going," I answered loudly, I squeezed Nataliya's hand stronger and stepped straight into the letters of the burning inscription. I thought that I would run into the hot flame, I covered Nataliya with my body, but the inscription went out, and we entered the house.

Having gone upstairs, we stopped by the door of Ali's room. I raised my eyes up and I read merrily the inscription of the white flame above the door:

Be blessed, the one who comes in. Your knowledge broadens not because of your victories against the others or the ones that exalt you, but because of your wisdom, obedience and joy which you've developed within yourself when nobody could see you doing it.

By fulfilling the duty of love for your own people, you show your love for me. And by taking your sister into my house – you are doing my work on the Earth.

I looked at Nataliya and I understood again that she couldn't see any inscription. Her face was meek and chaste. She was standing and waiting patiently until I would take her into the room, and she didn't remind me of that Nataliya by anything anymore, whose main character feature was impatience. Usually she couldn't wait for anybody anywhere for a single moment. Now she was an incarnation of calm.

I unlocked the door, seated Nataliya at the table where I always used to learn myself, I found the book as Ali had explained to me and I gave it to her.

Not only mine, but also any other man's pen could describe that joy and happiness which were reflected on Nataliya's face when I gave the precious book to her! She opened it immediately and, having forgotten about everything, she was absorbed in it. To my great disappointment I saw an unfamiliar type in her book and somehow I comprehended that it was the ancient Hebrew language.

Having expressed my silent respect for my friend's knowledge and smiled to my own ignorance again, I left her to read in silence and went to the depth of the room.

I had never stepped into this part of the room up to now. Every time when I entered through the door I used to turn to the left and go at the table where Ali seated me by using my dear I.'s hands.

Today I tried not to disturb the great concentration of Nataliya, I turned to the right, and the space that opened up for me surprised me. Only this room alone occupied the entire first floor of the house. There were also many books here, on its right side, another writing-table was standing on which the fresh flowers were put in the wonderful white vase. I thought that probably the dumb servant brought them here. The room's chastity stunned me, because it was all made of the white marble and as though it was just washed.

I looked at the books in the glassed bookcases and I was surprised again – my eyes saw such diversity of languages! For the first time after leaving Petersburg I wanted to write. I was so anxious that I was prepared to sit down at Ali's table immediately and to start writing the diary of my life about this nearly whole year that had flown by like the wind.

I already wanted to sit down at the table, but the little, hardly noticeable door on the right, behind the bookcase attracted my attention. That was very unexpected, because I imagined that only this big room occupied the whole upper floor, but now I understood that also another one was here.

I remembered Ananda's room in Constantinople how I. prepared the second, secret room for the "prince and wise man", which nobody was allowed to enter. I thought that Ali also had the same sacred, little corner here which only he could enter and also maybe his most close friends and disciples.

I was covered with respect for the saint secret of that dear friend whom I saw blessing me by the altar in I.'s little house not so long ago. I remembered my whole meeting with elder Ali – his face, his movements, his grandeur and his inexhaustible, inexpressible tenderness with which he used to address a man even when his words were strict and earnest. This wonderful face wasn't strict even when his burning eyes seemed to be reading the depths of a man's heart.

I remembered the feast and Ali's conversation with Nal and Nikolay before it. I remembered my walk in Ali's garden, his conversation with me, how he saw off us with Florentian, how he extended his hand to me for the last time, how he embraced me and pressed me to himself tenderly.

So much time flew past since those days, so many meetings and people were in my life, while that embrace and look remained in my memory like alive, as though only now Ali had let me go from his arms.

I also remembered Ananda and sir Vomi who endured their clumsy secretary so nobly, and I. who gave such big part of his life, troubles and attention to me. As though I was turning the pages over from my life's book of the latest months by experiencing all my meetings strongly again. Young Ali, dear captain James, Anna and Stroganoff, Joan, her children, the kind duke, the Turks, Chava, Henry, finally the horrible Bracano and Bonda...

Such gratitude for all my great guardians for their supernatural kindness, extended to me in such a simple way, such compassion and sympathy for those unfortunate persons to whom I gave the kiss of my Love, but whom I was unable to help flooded me that my heart opened for the passionate prayer. I went down on my knees imperceptibly, pressed myself to the little door and I was calling for Ali, so that my love would reach the unfortunate Bracano through Ali, so that my prayer wouldn't be only a good thought, but that I could find such actions and energy which would turn my love into an active activity for rescuing and happiness of the unfortunate people.

I was immersed in prayer and with my pure heart I was spreading the joy of my new knowledge to all the suffering people who were still in the evil only because of their ignorance, darkness and passions. Neither sadness nor hesitation were left in my prayer as before when I used to pray for the unfortunate and suffering people. I was spreading the blessing for the whole existence with my prayer. Confidence and joy to live after getting to know the Eternal Life within myself didn't have those cracks anymore through which heartbreak always used to flow into my prayers before. The question why there was so much suffering in the world didn't worry me anymore, I understood: "Everything was for good." I couldn't feel myself anymore, I all melted in my blissful address Ali; I united with him...

A tender hand touched my head – I. was standing next to me. He was smiling, he lifted me silently and told me.

"You guessed it, my friend. The "saint" Ali's room is there. Only he can take you there. I don't doubt that he would do it after finding you here. Your pious gratitude for him opened the possibility for you to enter there, but in this moment of your happiness finish your meeting with Nataliya. Finish it with joy in the same way as you started it and be happy, because you received this task."

I went to Andreyeva. My soul was shining, there wasn't any single, at least somewhat darker spot within myself, I was all full of such power of love that I felt that I could move the mountains.

Andreyeva came up to me and raised her eyes at me, and I saw irritation and impatience in them. That only made me smile, I was prepared to accept not only her irritation, but everything whatever she would pour on me, only if I could make her life easier now and connect her to my joy. My love must have passed to her. She calmed down from my look, she gave a laugh and told me.

"Well, can I reproach you and tell you everything what I was going to? Forgive me, I already read everything what I needed to know from this book, I wanted to run and write my work as soon as possible, and I couldn't understand where the door was in this whole whiteness. You left me alone here – so I started growing restless. Besides, I have a strong headache from this dazzling light that is reflected from all the walls. I will fall sick if you don't take me from here immediately."

Her suffering made me hurry, and there wasn't any time to tell her how her words and her poor health surprised me. Hence, she didn't see that I was always here. The room was lit up wonderfully, it was cool in it in comparison with the heat outside, but there wasn't any time for reflections, I took the

book, placed it back in the bookcase, I gave my hand to the poor woman, because she was already turning pale and suffocating, and I took her to the island where she felt better instantly.

I accompanied her across the well familiar bridge to that part of the park where the main part of the Community was, and only here her sickly appearance changed, she became cheerful, she started breathing more evenly.

“What a pity that I didn’t take Ali’s pills. You would get better from them instantly, your weakness would disappear and you would be cheerful again.”

“I’m just in time. It would be great if you, sister Nataliya, would take one sweet,” I told her by extending the box with very small white pills to Andreyeva.

Andreyeva took one small pill, swallowed it and gave a deep sigh.

“What is going on with your Lovushka? How do you temper him? He became a mighty man in three months, not to mention this day. Today he’s simply handsome.”

“And you, Nataliya, sometimes are beauty as well,” I answered her merrily, “but unfortunately, namely in those moments you don’t see yourself, as well as I’ve never seen myself like this.”

“My dear, if you had strength to overcome your impatience and irritability,” I took Andreyeva’s hand and he was talking to her tenderly by stroking it, “already today you could have read the words that were burning for you in Ali’s room. Namely about them Ali was writing to you in his last letter. You must read them yourself, without Lovushka’s help, and only then you may continue working with Ali by bringing that knowledge to the world, for which the time has come to reach people. Ali entrusted me to tell you that that part of the work in which you are stuck now is difficult for you not because you don’t know something, but because it requires much higher spirituality from you. You cannot change yourself, but you can put all your kindness and love for man into that work. Think not about your activity for mankind, but about your love for Ali. Try to rejoice so much with your happiness at serving him with the pen that your thought about your personal feat wouldn’t unite with your efforts. Man perceives the concept “feat” personally. There may not be any other happiness in the disciple’s daily routine as only the happiness to serve his Teacher by gushing with joy. The most ordinary action of every most ordinary day – that’s what discipleship is, but not the feat or that work which make man famous.”

While I. was talking, Andreyeva became always calmer. Her excitement was fading, her face was growing softer, while the fiery reflections in her eyes were going out.

“Doctor I., now you’ve opened the new world perception for me. I’m going to work differently than up to now. It seems to me that I understood everything what you told me,” she uttered, bowed to us and left home.

When we were left alone, I. told me.

“Lovushka, do you still feel that power that you felt in Ali’s room?”

“Oh, yes. Today I understood that love’s quantity may become any quality, any energy. Now I understand what the Power of Love is.”

“Then let’s go to visit lady Berdran. She has already recovered, and tomorrow I want to let her come back from our building and to communicate with everybody. Also I want you to greet her on the great day of your happiness and to give the part of your purest vibrations to her, with which the great and compassionate brothers have cleared you.

“Dear I., I’m so glad that I can visit the patient and give the part of my joy to her, which is pouring round from me today. Your presence will help me to find the necessary words and the way how to share my joy with her.”

“Don’t think about that how the meeting will go. Feel that Ali and Florentian are next to you, and you will do everything as needed.”

We entered the house and turned straight to lady Berdran: I didn’t recognize her when I saw the charming, lifegiving and young woman with the light, white dress on which looked like a beautiful blossom, and not the sad, pale beauty whom I met on the first day of my arrival to the Community.

In her turn lady greeted I. merrily, while to my bow she responded in such a way as if she bowed to a man whom she saw for the first time in her life. Even some disappointment flashed in this charming face. I gave a laugh, I thought how we still didn’t know anything one about another, how this woman didn’t even suspect from where and why I came, she was even sad after seeing the “stranger”.

“Lady Berdran, you didn’t recognize me in exactly the same way as I wouldn’t have recognized you if I. hadn’t warned me that he was taking me to you. If you looked like a tended orchid before, then now you are simply a naughty, resistant flower of the mountains that is growing in these peaks. However you would try to bend it – it straightens itself anyway.”

“Oh, now I recognized you from the style of your talking and your laughter,” the kind hostess of the room answered me by extending both of her hands to me. “But how you’ve changed! If I surprised you with my health and even with my naughty appearance, then I don’t even know whom I could compare you to. You were a lad and now you can be a model of the hero for Beata.”

I answered her laughing that I already had the orders prepared for the painter for much more worthy works by examining the American attentively with my look. The more attentively I was examining her, the clearer I comprehended what power of love I. had to possess, so that another person could recover, become hardened and change radically during such short time.

“What were you doing during that entire long time, lady Berdran?” I asked the hostess when we sat down in the balcony where I. left us by saying to us that he would visit Igor and come back soon.

“I had so many different occupations that I don’t even know from where to start my story. During the first days I always wanted to keep my bed, I was so weak that I couldn’t even read, but your friend didn’t want to hear anything about my weakness and first of all he told me to start from the physical work. It seemed to me that they needed to nurse and to take care of me as my dear friend Nataliya Vladimirovna was trying to do, but doctor I. told the trained nurse to leave immediately, on the third day already by assuring me that the housemaid would be enough for me. I obeyed not without my inner protest and astonishment, but I didn’t feel worse when I was left without any care for entire hours. After next three days he told me, the serious patient as it seemed to me back then, to get up from the bed and go to bathe. Having finished all the medical procedures, - I cannot tell you that it was funny for me to weigh and to measure the powder and the mixtures myself, which were placed on the whole table, - I tried to go downstairs. It was strange, but nothing happened to me. In this way, accompanied by my housemaid, I went up to the lake, I bathed, I came back and I felt always better. In the evening the restless doctor told me to send my housemaid to her motherland, because the climate of this part of India harmed her. That came upon me as a shock. I was used to think that I was doing my servants a favour by allowing them to serve me, that the good salary was everything what the housemaid needed. And suddenly doctor I. says to me that the servant was going here with me only from love to me, out of pity for me, that it was very difficult for her to part with her big, very friendly family and that the girl was simply becoming worse,

because everything here harmed her, starting with the climate and ending with spiritual vibrations of the Community. I couldn't comprehend it in any way. I was filled with indignation. Hence, doctor I. was thinking not about me, but about some girl from the common people. But... one of his looks and the question: "And actually, why did you come here?" – shocked and made me sober. He didn't add many words, but my entire life seemed to be the continuous parasitism and the cruel egoism. It never occurred to me to ask the girl where and what kind of her family was or to imagine her illness, her joy or her heartbreak. The classical differences seemed to be a legitimate and immovable wall for me. I won't tell you in detail my entire rather boring inner metamorphosis. In a few words, I didn't expect myself that there was so much rubbish within myself. For example, it seemed such a difficult work and test for me to put my room in order myself. I don't even talk about the tragedy when I had to wash and to iron my white dress myself. Now when my whole mode of life has already become the usual beginning of every day, I don't even notice that physical work. I'm happy, I do the ordinary, little work and, namely by doing it especially concentrated, I glorify my life, my meeting with Nataliya Vladimirovna, because I met doctor I. through her. When we prepared to come here, Andreyeva was asking for permission from somebody whom she called her Teacher Ali. She was very glad when with great difficulty she was allowed to take me with her. Perhaps, Lovushka, you know who is that Ali?" lady Berdran finished her story.

"I know Ali, but everything what I know about him I can express in several words, because that knowing of mine is very limited. Ali – that is some exceptionally big amount of love in man, which is completely liberated from any superstitions and which has become an almost infinite power. Since I can see neither the beginning nor the end of his power, then it seems to be supernatural for me and it is shining to my little spirit like a divine phenomenon. And Ali's activity is also tireless, many-sided and inconceivable for me as I.'s one. There isn't any idle moment in each of these lives."

"It is terrible," lady Berdran continued, "how much time I've spent in vain. My whole life until I met Nataliya Vladimirovna was only searching for pleasures and amusements. Only now I begin to understand that in life not only joys bought for money exist. Anyway I. has taught me to consider everybody to be a human here. Lovushka, I want to beg your pardon. I was mocking at you, at your feebleness and at your eyes like awls. Now when I look at you I remember the fairy-tale about the ugly duckling. You really became the cob, while I didn't make any movement from the same place, and it seems that I might remain Cinderella forever. Will you forgive me for the stupid mockery? I cannot live with this nightmare in my heart anymore."

"Lady Berdran, I'm happy that that innocent mockery helped us to overcome the mountain of conditionalities and to come nearer one to another in such a way that we could notice both our own and our company's human characteristics. I've brought so much pure love in my heart to you that not a single drop of insultiness may remain within you. I still know very little in my life and I've seen even less. By starting the path of his knowledge, first of all every man begins to understand how he doesn't know anything. Today I understand especially clearly, I feel especially clearly how I still don't know absolutely anything. It seems to me, as well as to you, that the huge part of our lives has flown past in vain, although I'm still only learning. Today I understood two big moments of man's life on the Earth: first, that life – that is namely the usual daily routine and work; second, that only then your meetings in your everyday life will be real when you can see not the personal man's characteristics, but his Light and Calm. Now I'm learning to see only man's Light and Calm, and to give my love to them."

"You said it so simply to me, Lovushka. I cannot understand how I haven't found any expression to my thoughts up to now. My new thoughts were turning round all of it, but I couldn't find such words for them in any way. Lovushka," the American said to me, she stood up and went up to me, "today I see you in a special way. You seem to me to be so strong, self-confident and big. As though you know something new and wonderful what gives calm and self-confidence to you. I'm not self-confident at all."

While I see I., I'm living with my noble flights, but when I'm left alone, my self-confidence clears away, and I don't know again what to do, what is important in my life, and what I should aspire to."

"I would like to pass that self-confidence which I feel now to you, but still no one has ever succeeded to live with a strange experience. If you saw I.'s wisdom and energy which have fascinated you, if Ali allowed you to come here, - believe me that namely here you will find the solutions to all your questions and that something grand will happen in your life here, what maybe nobody else will notice, but it will light up and change your entire life."

The American became so pale and sad that she reminded me of that lady Berdran again whom I met here during my first day.

"Lovushka, if you knew what a sore spot of mine you've touched. My chic, rich and independent external life was the real hell. I didn't bring any happiness for a single living being. On the contrary, everybody who used to come nearer to me became unhappy. You told me that here I could find the answers to my unsolved questions, but who can explain to me what kind of a curse is hanging above me? No one knows it, right?"

"I think that many people exist who might know it, too, lady Berdran. The physical work seemed to be impossible to you a month ago. Now the man's spiritual sagacity seems to be impossible to you. Where can you know from what knowledge will open up for you in seven years? I repeat my question to you: do you acknowledge I.'s wisdom and knowledge, so that you could confide your life to him and you wanted to strive for your development under his guidance?"

"Oh, of course, I bow to I., but... I feel so shy next to him. I couldn't talk to him so easily and simply for anything as I'm doing it to you. I was surprised many times how boldly you were behaving, as if you were equal to him. I experience a feeling next to him as though I was hiding in my shell."

"I don't know, I cannot answer you how it happened that as though I grew together with I. I met him on the very sad hour of my life. Apparently, my childish and lonely heart, the heart of that "ugly duckling" at whom you were mocking, felt an infinite love for I. immediately, his compassion, his care, and they literally saved my life many times during our rather short acquaintance. There was a total mess in my head, I wasn't sure of anything, I even couldn't orient neither in myself, nor in the people surrounding me, nor in events. In truth I didn't notice that I was always bringing suffering and misfortunes for people, but the question why man had to suffer so much in the world was oppressing me so heavily that I was prepared to deny the meaning of life. I. took me out of the deadlock with his wisdom and love. His life full of work, the everyday witness of which I was, which I could see the same here, - the life full of help and calm given to people, - has taught me where I should search for strength, so that I could enter the path of Love and walk at least the first step along it. That first step - that's self-control. It was very difficult personally for me, much more difficult than for you, and I overcame it completely differently than you did it. When you were doing terrible things according to your understanding by obeying unconditionally, but you were doing them only because "the doctor I. told you to do so", you found self-control which already allowed you to make the first, the most difficult step along the path about which I was talking. I'm sure that your shyness before I. will pass as unnoticed as you didn't notice your first step. That is nothing else as your pride and self-love. As soon as you develop love for man instead of your self-love, you will make the second step, that is you will ask I. to help you find knowledge. If you are searching for it sincerely, then cast away all the trifles of the conditional traditions in which you've grown up and start the new life."

"Lovushka, I won't have enough courage to ask I. Perhaps you could ask him to teach me?"

“No, lady Berdran. Such actions in life exist, which people can do only themselves for themselves. You cannot decide blindfold to which side you need to go. Only man himself can choose in his life, as well as in his spiritual matters, in which way and in which form he will be striving for his development. Every man, as well as all the components of his life, is completely different than another one. I only can give my whole selflessness and love to you, personally to you. With the power of my loyalty to my Teacher I can help you to throw down the superstition of exceptionality that is tormenting you. I can try to inspire you with a heroic strain, so that your daily routine and monotonousness wouldn't absorb you. But only you yourself can rise to that heroic spirit of your feelings and thoughts in which your consciousness could broaden, your love would clean out and become free, in which you could find fearlessness to ask I.”

“My God, how I would like to find that power within myself! Now when I have to come back to my room again, it grieves me so much to part with this house. Although I didn't see I. often and you at all, but I knew that he and you were living here, next to me. Now as though he discovered a brother within you, who's very close and dear to me, and I'm very sad to part with you.”

“Lady Berdran, why should you part with Lovushka?” I.'s voice was heard, while we had forgotten our time in our conversation and we didn't even notice when he entered. “If Lovushka is so close and dear to you, if you want, I will oblige him to teach you the Sanskrit language?” I. was smiling by looking at me and he was radiating the flows of humour with his eyes.

“Oh, doctor I., Nataliya Vladimirovna must have told you about my ignorance for languages. Even if Lovushka possessed some supernatural skills to teach languages, even then he couldn't find the way to teach me the Sanskrit language and he wouldn't have enough patience for this.”

“Of course, if you think that your laziness is equal to his patience, then there will be nothing from such lessons, but if you comprehend that you need to read something in that language, for example, why you bring misfortunes for people... And you can understand it only when you can read one papyrus in the Sanskrit language – only in Sanskrit and in any other, because such is the flow of your karma. In this case, probably you will stick to such teacher like Lovushka and try to make the lessons of patience and restraint easier for him with all your strength.”

I looked at I. and I didn't even understand when the sparkles of humour disappeared from his eyes and when seriousness changed his jokes. The familiar, commanding, metallic notes were heard in his voice.

I stood up, bowed to him and I answered him merrily.

“I'm happy to accept this task namely today. I will make all my efforts of love, so that lady Berdran would read her papyrus as soon as possible.”

Not that already familiar vibration rippled through me, which used to tell me that now I would hear or see something from the higher levels of consciousness. Now the new sensation surged over me, as though a turning mechanism had opened between my throat and my chest, which gave me strength to see with my inner eyes and to hear with my inner ears.

I saw Ali, I saw an ancient papyrus in his hands and I heard his words: “If that man doesn't make his sacrifice of love, to whom the lord of karmas assigned it, then it will be made anyway. In that case take it upon yourself. Start and finish the task with such purity which you possess now.”

The feelings that I had never experienced before seized me: the ones of complete balance, unshaken calm and simplicity with respect to the man whom I didn't know very well. I came up to lady Berdran.

"Don't think that I know the Sanskrit language well myself, but by teaching you, I will keep learning myself. As soon as I. allows me to, I will come to you and I will bring the books with me. However difficult that language would be for you to learn, it will be easier anyway than carrying the burden of ignorance every day. If it is revealed to you where you should search for an explanation for your sadness, then apparently, also the way will be showed to you how to leave its circle or how to keep carrying it without any distress."

I said good-bye to lady Berdran, and we went downstairs. The gong was inviting us to the dining-room.

"Let's go to the olive grove. Today, Lovushka, it would be difficult for you in the big company. Nikita and Zeiched are waiting for us in a shady summerhouse, close to the grotto where only the four of us will have our dinner. This day, the day of your great happiness, is also the day of your great returns. Now you've finished the first, easier part of your old karmas, but after the dinner you will take your little bird who is already hungry and who misses you, and we together with the warrantors will go to Francisco's, so that you could start extinguishing the most difficult part of your karma with your angriest enemy. I know that you always want to ask me who "the lords of karmas" are, about whom you don't know anything. I will tell you about them, and also you will find out a little about them from your brother's note-book. Take a rest in this moment, my friend, in that love that now surrounds you so generously from all sides."

As soon as I. had time to finish his words, I saw my warrantors who were coming to meet us. Having entered the shady summerhouse, decorated with the most beautiful flowers, I saw the small table, covered with a white cloth and laid modestly for four persons, and also four tabourets made of palm-tree. The cold snacks and a lot of fruit were already placed on the table.

How different all my senses now and before were! If earlier, as soon as Andreyeva used to touch me, I was the patient already, then now as though my strength kept growing, and it seemed to me that the more love I gave to others, the stronger I became. I wasn't hungry and I was eating only because I. told me to play the master at the table and to show an example for the guests.

Nikita reminded me several times of the episodes from my distant childhood. I remembered them clearly and I understood always clearer how much I was indebted to my brother Nikolay and how little I comprehended about the real human form of my brother Nikolay, whom I loved so much. I believed that he knew about my current happiness. I didn't feel any bitterness that he wasn't here with me. I had the only one desire: to give the greeting of my love, the gratitude of brother-son to him for everything what my brother-father had done for me.

"Forgive your enemy and his family completely, and by doing so, you will do a great favour of centuries for your brother and for his future family," I. told me.

"I., is really everything so strongly connected in people's lives?" I asked him.

"Oh, yes. You are only entering that path in which you begin to comprehend the high laws, while they are namely the only laws of the movement of the universe: accuracy and regularity – remember them."

The light dinner didn't last long, and we went to my room to take the little peacock who – as lady Berdran put it – was becoming the wonderful, royal bird from the ugly duckling.

Chapter 6

Francisco and the shrimps.

My new standpoint of the things and people

As soon as I had time to enter the room, I literally got into my little bird's embrace immediately. Finally today I saw not the small bird, but already the young, strong bird who was ready to become the real beauty. For the first time my white friend didn't need any help and he jumped on my shoulder himself. Having spread his wings, he embraced my head and he was rubbing his little head to my cheek. I was even confused, because I was taken by surprise so unexpectedly and I really looked foolish when my head disappeared in the peacock's feathers, while I could hear only my friends' laughter who came together with me and who saw Lovushka with the peacock instead his head.

I. was teaching the calmed down peacock to bow to every guest, for which he received his favourite sweet bread. Finally, having pecked up and drunk to satiety, he flew on my shoulder again, and we left.

I was carrying the bird on my shoulder along the still heated valley, but I already could feel his weight, so I let him go on the ground in the forest. The peacock was running next to me, which now wasn't difficult for him anymore, but today I noticed something new within him, something which I didn't notice before. It seemed to me that as though the peacock became more spiritual, as though a light was twinkling above his little head and above the places where his wings began, while the new, mysterious, almost human expression appeared in his eyes.

"How will you call your student? It is time already for him to hear his name and to habituate himself to it."

"Zeiched, I want to call him in some beautiful name already, but I'm poor inventor and I cannot think of anything."

"Well, Lovushka, there's no need to think long about the peacock's name. Call him Eternal. Then it will remind you of the eternal memory and the bond with the enemy whom you forgive with such joy now and whom you want to comfort."

"You know, I., Eternal doesn't sound very well. I'd rather call him Eta, which means "age" in Italian. My beauty Eta will remember the short name easily, while I, by uttering it, will remember how much work I have to put in order to develop my self-control, without which, apparently, I was living in that age when I encouraged the hatred of my former enemy, current Eta."

We saw Francisco close to the hospitals of the Community, who was coming towards us. Only now I remembered that I had to bring Bronski along with me. I stopped confused, even my breathing became more frequent. I was so confused that I was lost in my egoistic bliss and I forgot to visit my suffering friend.

"I., my dear guardian, I committed a crime on such great day," I uttered. "I forgot to visit Bronski. I run back immediately. I cannot even understand how I got so absent-minded."

“Don’t worry, my friend,” Zeiched told me gently. “I’m your warrantor who shares all your worries for the sad ones with you, while Nikita overtakes all your worries for the joyous ones from you. I will take care that Bronski not only would come, but also that he would take Nataliya, for which I received I.’s consent. Aldaz will accompany both of them here in several minutes. Today she’s working at Kastanda’s, and he will give this instruction to her.”

“Zeiched, your care and help moved me very much, but let it be the lesson to me that I need to remember everything, to keep everything in my mind, even if the heaven was shining in my soul. I will try that it would shine, but it wouldn’t cover the earth for me, that it would pour to the earth through my work.”

Francisco came up to me and looked at my eyes by smiling so pleasingly as only a baby or a saint could smile.

“My friend, that isn’t your egoism, that is your inexperience. It is very difficult to carry the great happiness and not to give in to the temptation to sink in it. If you knew how greatly valuable your want is that the shining heaven would pour to the earth through your work! Only that already opens the possibility for you to provide help to your enemy’s family. Let’s go, both shrimps are very uneasy today. Foreboding of meeting your peacock excites them. Take the bird in your arms, because I cannot guarantee you that also he won’t start worrying.”

I took Eta in my arms and I already wanted to continue walking, but the quick steps were heard behind us, and Aldaz, Bronski and Nataliya came out of the thick verdure of lianas.

Young Aldaz led the way easily and quickly. It didn’t mean anything for Bronski to keep pace with her, but poor corpulent and heavy Nataliya could hardly move after them. Her face was sweating, but it was calm now. I even noticed a mark of meekness in her face that was so unfamiliar to me now. I couldn’t even imagine this being as rebelling and protesting Nataliya.

While still holding my hand, Francisco approached and told her, as though by flooding her with his love.

“I wanted you to be here today, my dear sister. You’ll see not a performance or an interesting trick, but one of the greatest acts of love and selflessness of those who sent you here. Today you’ll make certain what self-control in the earthly activity is, to which Ali is leading you so persistently. You’ll understand that you cannot achieve it by will. It is born from the sense of bliss and happiness to live. Four elements from the wheel of this happiness to live.

The first element which man begins to feel – that’s bliss of Love. Alive love within man – that isn’t his personal quality or his virtue. That is such liberation of his heart and his thoughts from all the clutches of passions that nothing within man himself is preventing him from stepping into the sensation of blissful love anymore. And no superstitions of how you are going to provide help for people are characteristic for this inner light within yourself; it doesn’t matter whether you are going to bring the news of joy or sadness to them, - it is important that you will be spreading the news of liberation, of that liberation which cleans the way to bliss of love for man.

The second element that allows you to perceive yourself as the unit of the eternal activity, that’s the bliss of Heart’s Calm. Man’s liberated consciousness gives a possibility for him to see the entire great activity of life. To see not the deplorable human law of rightness, but the eternal laws of accuracy and regularity. Having seen the laws, man sees, comprehends his own place in the activity of the universe for everybody’s welfare and joy, and he feels the bliss of his Heart’s Calm.

The third element that opens up the consciousness of the bright, diligent person of the earth, - that's the Joy of Harmony in everything in his universal life. His liberated eyes from which the thick veil of bodily love has fallen down, allow him to see that neither evil nor good exist – that there's only a temporary slavery for good or evil. Both these concepts may become superstitions and both of them may hold the man's spirit equally strongly with sharp hooks. Liberated man feels the bliss of Joy as the most ordinary kindness which he's spreading in his every meeting, because that isn't his quality, but only the alive spreading of his inner bliss of Joy.

The fourth element that shuts down the door to everything what is personal and that connects the wheel of blisses in which the liberated soul is living, - that's the bliss of Fearlessness.

No higher happiness for man of the earth exists as to reach such liberation and such opening of his Love that it would flow into the wheel of Harmony of these four blisses. The whole grandeur of the spirit which the man of the earth may achieve is the wheel of self-control which people call harmony. Actually that's only the beginning of harmony, its initial component parts. That is only the quality that leads to the hall of the temple where the beings are standing, who don't have any superstitions of good and evil, and where you can find out what is the light within you and how you can spread it in your encountered person's way. Every, even a little educated man comes nearer to the eternal activity. He understands that the day as the concept doesn't exist in his life anymore, that only the day of man's duty on the Earth exists. The duty not as a heroic deed, but as the simple happiness to pour an effective energy of kindness into all affairs and meetings. The man who is restrained with the heaviest armour of "good and duty" is unable to develop in the same way as the one who has become heavy from superstitions of evil. Only that person is able to enter the circle of the disciples on duty who has forgotten about himself for at least that much that he's stopped take offence, punish somebody for something, threaten somebody or be afraid of something himself, have it out with somebody or make excuses to somebody. People who are inconstant, unprincipled, weak-willed, who doubt everything are searching for something to read or to philosophize in vain by imagining that that is their entire activity and aspirations by searching for the spiritual life. Not to mention those who see only sale and purchase everywhere. Today not only those who've come to act, but also everybody who is invited to see how love, liberated from the biggest splinters of passions is operating, need to concentrate on four blisses about which I was talking. Let's go, you'll see how the highest act of compassion will be performed: the absolution of the old karma of evil."

Francisco went forward by taking Nataliya's arm and still holding me with his other hand. Everybody followed him down the path to the hospital that was right here.

"If a man's karma with another man, close or distant to him, is already showed and opened to him, then he needs to make all efforts, to give all his love and devotion instantly, which are needed for the indicated karma to end, although due to his blindness the man wasn't thinking much about that another man with whom the karma showed to him as the most important and main action of his life," Francisco continued by slowing down his steps. "If an activity next to his former enemy was showed to a man, and he missed this possibility due to his light-mindedness and his former enemy died without him, then there's no need to moan and cry, or to make excuses that it was more important, useful and necessary to be somewhere else in that moment. It seems to man like this, because he doesn't know. If it has happened like this, then you need to understand and to know that no regrets, begging and justification will help you. He stopped, while the wheel of karma which the lords of karmas drew to him with their tireless work moved away from him without stopping. No one is able to direct the flow of the river back, not only the flow of the Eternal Life. There's only one way for the man who's let the wheel of liberation go: to achieve the total loyalty and to escape the circle of his own superstitions during the last days of his life. He cannot wait and tell himself: "I'm not completely prepared yet" – this egoistic action is unable to open the perception of grandeur of Compassion. Only the man who's forgotten about himself may be prepared for

the activity next to his Teacher. Now visit two unfortunate persons full of joy and bliss, and protect the bliss of Calm in your hearts,” Francisco finished his speech by leading us to the room which I knew already, where Maksa was lying before.

When we entered, both shrimps were building houses from baby bricks. Having seen Francisco and Aldaz entering first, whom they knew well and loved, the shrimps didn't show any anxiety. Even on the contrary, their eyes sparkled with joy. Only when I. entered, and after him I with my peacock, they jumped up, they mumbled something with their wild voices, they began to swing their hands and they frightened my poor little bird so much that I could hardly hold him by trying to inspire my calm to him with all my strength, but Eta was trembling and he was trying to run away from the room. I. put his hand on his back and calmed him down immediately.

Both shrimps didn't find any place where they could hide from the visitors, they caught hold of Francisco by trying to find shelter in the pleats of his clothes. They were shooting glances from there, they seemed to be safe there and they were looking at everybody who entered very attentively: one of their eyes was frightened, while it was interesting for another one.

That was so comical! Although it was clear that they were frightened and suspicious, both little men concentrated all their attention so that none of our movements would slip by, because with their behaviour they had already declared us to be their enemies.

I. came up to Francisco who was stroking the terrible heads of the degenerates who were pressed to him with such love as though they were the wonderful flowers. He opened the pleats of Francisco's clothes in which the shrimps were hiding.

The wicked shrimp who was fighting so terrible on the day of his liberation and who was sobbing bitterly on I.'s chest later on, now pressed himself to him trustfully. I. took him in his arms, he calmed down completely because of this and he began to explain something to him quickly by always showing to my Eta who I was still holding in my arms and who couldn't keep still.

While stroking the dishevelled, terrible shrimp's head, I. was moving always nearer to me. Zeiched whom Eta loved very much and whom he remembered as his first master, came closer to me and, by looking tenderly at my peacock, he extended a little piece of the red cloth to him.

That rag was smelling very nasty, it wasn't very clean, it must have experienced all the ills of the weather and the sun. Eta was looking at this stinking scrap very attentively, while I recognized the fragment from the wicked shrimp's little bag in which he was keeping his poisonous, black little stones, and he handed over them and the little bag only when the fire had already covered the whole net in which he was entangled, and death already threatened him.

I looked at the shrimp in I.'s arms, because he began to shout loudly and to strain after his recognized scrap. Apparently, he was asking I. to give that dirty rag back to him, he still highly appreciated it.

I. asked Zeiched to give the rest of his wealth to the shrimp. He seized it with his hands, but Eta almost ran away from my arms, in his turn he gave a sharp scream and with unexpected strength he pulled the rag out of the shrimp's hands with his beak.

The hand of the grown-up and strong shrimp must have been stronger than the beak of still immature peacock, but the blow was so unexpected, besides Eta's anger gave him strength and he defeated him.

As soon as Eta took the scrap in his beak, he calmed down immediately and he gave his prize to Zeiched. Having put a majestically haughty pose, again he settled calmly on my shoulder, as if nothing had happened.

This quick as lightning scene surprised so much not only me alone, but also Bronski, so both of us turned into the “catchers of crows”. The wicked shrimp dispersed our absent-mindedness immediately. It was impossible to depict his anger and his grimacing. Francisco with the kind shrimp came up to him, he raised his hand and held it for a while by his eyes. The wicked shrimp stopped shrieking and coiling, but he kept howling silently like an injured dog.

The kind shrimp was smiling with his entire mouth and he extended his little hands to Eta. In spite of the shrimp’s friendliness, I didn’t trust Eta anymore and I wanted to step aside, so that I could escape the new tricks of the peacock. This thought of mine didn’t have time to become an action, I felt a strong hand-shake from the right side and I saw Nikita who approached me.

He extended his hand to the shrimp, took his little hand and stroked Eta’s head with it. While examining the shrimp very attentively and absolutely calmly, he allowed him to stroke his neck and his back. It seemed that after touching the peacock the shrimp went completely mad. He was clapping his hands, smacking his cheeks and his knees, he was rocking with laughter, he embraced Nikita’s neck and he jumped in his arms. Without lingering at least for a moment, he crawled over on my shoulder so quickly that I didn’t have time even to orient myself and he calmed down happy next to Eta who captivated him so much. I was waiting for excesses from my jealous ward, but he kept his majestic and haughty pose, he was perched on my shoulder calmly like on the king’s throne.

Francisco went up to I. and took the wicked shrimp from him. Now he behaved very strangely. He couldn’t take his attentive eyes off the other shrimp, he was observing Eta and he was grumbling silently like a naughty child, now by falling silent now by howling again.

As soon as he saw that the kind shrimp settled on my shoulder and that from time to time he was stroking Eta’s neck, back and even my head, he clenched his fists, threatened his friend with them and he was champing his horrible jaws, as though by wishing to tear him to pieces. It seemed to me that he wasn’t so angry as he pretended to be by wishing to do some duty till the end, which he understood as the opposition to the surrounding good. Francisco was persuading him tenderly and he showed to the red scrap again, which Zeiched was still holding in his hand. I couldn’t understand what Francisco was telling to the shrimp, but from Francisco’s movements I decided that the shrimp had to take the rest of his terrible bag benevolently himself and to put it by the threshold. The shrimp kept silent, he wrinkled, clenched his fists, as though by preparing for a fight.

Francisco put him on the ground. I. got next to me immediately and he was in time to cover me. The wicked shrimp was trying to hit me with his head and with his fists to my belly, but he jumped on I. instead of me. Of course, the shrimp couldn’t even touch him and he fell down on the floor by howling, he knocked his head strongly and his fists to the bricks of the floor.

He got furious because of his fall, he attacked me again, now from Zeiched’s side. I. extended his hand before him, and the final was repeated: the shrimp was lying stretched out with his broken, bleeding nose.

He was trying to attack me from Nikita’s side for the third time, but the light I.’s gesture knocked the shrimp down, and he remained lying stretched out on the floor. I thought that he was dead already.

Francisco came up to him and lifted the unfortunate shrimp. His anger exhausted him so much that he was all trembling, he could hardly stand on his feet and he had become black. My heart was bursting with compassion. With the whole power of my love I was calling for Florentian to help me to liberate the unfortunate shrimp from his eternal anger and darkness. At the same time I understood that no one could help him to do his duty, in the same way as nobody could help me to find the altar with the book of my life several hours ago, but I kept calling for the rescuer who had showed his endless compassion many times to me.

Suddenly I felt the blissful trembling of my heart, I saw the wonderful Florentian's face and I heard his voice.

"Today you can ask for anything for the people's sake. I will help you. What are you going to ask me?"

"Let me instead of the shrimp put the rest of his vicious work where I. tells him to put it," I was begging Florentian by kneeling down with both my burdens.

"You cannot touch that power of evil, because then you will take the new, still unknown to you burden upon yourself, which will press down all your possibilities for many years to share the activity on the earth with me and other compassionate friends. But calmed down shrimp and your peacock, both of them together may drag the small scrap till the threshold. It will seem to be very heavy to them, but anyway they will manage to drag it there, because it is their burden. You can only follow them, you can encourage and help them with your love, you can suggest them, so that they weren't afraid of any difficulty. While you remember one and forever: never burden yourself, don't accumulate any debts and engagements without asking your Teacher whether you have to take them or not. By thinking that you are doing the good, you may put the new yoke of evil upon yourself and the whole circle of people. And act assured and easily where your Teacher instructed you to, although everything would witness the other way round and dangers would threaten."

The image of my wonderful friend disappeared. I stood up, and without even thinking how I would explain to Eta and to the kind shrimp that they needed to take the scrap and to drag it till the threshold, I put both of them by Zeiched's feet and I showed several times to the rag and to the threshold for them.

Eta was the first who understood what they needed to do. He jumped up, seized the scrap with his beak, but as if it had weighed a pood, he let it go on the floor helplessly. Now also the shrimp understood from my persistent look that they needed to drag the rag till the threshold, what I showed to him by swinging my hands. He gave a laugh, seized the scrap and he dragged it for two little steps with much difficulty, as if the rag had always been grown to every brick of the floor.

Encouraged by me, both poor things now one after another now both together dragged the burden till the middle of the room. It seemed that both the bird and the little man didn't have the strength anymore, while only a half of the job was done.

The drops of sweat like tears were rolling down the smiling shrimp's face. The strong Eta's legs and his wings were trembling, he opened his beak, his eyes were looking at me sadly. I felt as if I had pronounced a death sentence for my friends, but I was living in the Eternity so intensively, I felt its harmony within myself and around me so much that I was encouraging my dearest for this selfless work joyfully and cheerfully. The poor things dragged the burden almost till the threshold and they could hardly stand on their feet.

I was glorifying God and all His compassionate servants who helped one being to save himself with help of the work of the big circle of visible and invisible people. Actually, the living heaven was descending on the earth and acting through the hands and hearts of the people who surrounded me now. Both the work of these beings who were dragging the rag and the activity of the great brothers who now were standing next to us touched me equally.

Francisco was holding his hand on the wicked shrimp's head. He began to come to himself little by little, and now it seemed that he wasn't as much interested in the peacock's and his friend's work as he was stunned by it. He couldn't understand in any way why it was so difficult for them to drag the scrap of his little bag, the weight of which he knew well. Anger flashed up in his eyes again, he wanted to attack and to take his treasure back, but Francisco's voice stopped him. Francisco kept speaking in the same language which I didn't know, but to my great amazement, I understood the meaning of his words perfectly, which opened to me in some views with his every word.

I understood that my dear friend was explaining to the shrimp again that if he didn't get free from the power of his wicked and terrible masters in time voluntarily, then they would take possession of his spirit as soon as it would leave his body; that Love gave an opportunity to him for the last time to escape the terrible trap; that if others put the scrap by the threshold, then nobody's love would be able to save him from his vicious masters hands anymore.

An inexpressible horror was reflected on the unfortunate shrimp's face. He got to the rag at two bounds, he seized it easily, ran to the threshold and threw it on it. Then he came back to Francisco and he was asking him bitterly to take him in his arms, which Francisco did by smiling and stroking the hideous shrimp's head.

Now it was the time for Eta and his colleague to be amazed. In the first moment they got stiff with amazement, then there weren't any limits for their joy. The shrimp was shouting with laughter, he was rolling, embracing Eta, he was running to every one of us and showing his work done.

I seated Eta on one of my shoulders, the kind shrimp on another one and he brought me to Francisco. Having taken the rebel who was calmed down now from Francisco, he gave him into my arms.

Zeiched and Nikita crossed their hands with my hands, Francisco put his hands on my shoulders, while I. put one of his hands on my hand, the familiar stick flashed in his another hand, and I. drew the fire circle around our entire group with its fire. While still holding his hand on my head, he went round us three times, as though by weaving the net of fire with his stick.

Then he touched every one of us, he embraced us strongly by pressing to himself and he kissed our heads. Now the shrimps turned into the ordinary, joyous children, they forgot about everything and they were admiring the peacock. Francisco left and came back very quickly by carrying something, covered with a bed-sheet.

When he took the bed-sheet off, I was surprised by seeing Maksa. In the first moment, as if he didn't see anybody else, except me and I., then his look slid off to the shrimps, and he gave a very angry cry by trembling with fear and running after Francisco.

When the shrimps and Eta heard the wild Maksa's cry, they were looking at him surprised, in the same way as if one was looking at an absolutely strange living creature, while Maksa was holding Francisco firmly, he was crying and tossing in his arms. I. touched Maksa with the stick, he gave a start, he was sobbing for a while, then he calmed down, as though he had believed in the strong protection of his guardians.

I understood that these small, my eternal enemies who were just liberated from evil once and for all had made all the wounds on Maksa's body. But I was wrong by thinking that all the tracks of the evil were already eliminated. My karma with the shrimps was finished, but their karma with Maksa still needed love and work of our great guardians.

I. went up to the threshold where Francisco brought Maksa. He raised his little stick high above his head. The fire was still burning on its end. Suddenly the fire flamed up strongly, I. touched the rag with its flame, which was placed by the threshold. The stench which I could also smell before now spread across the whole room. The dark, dense smoke was breaking outside through the door. My recollection about the wicked Jinn from "A thousand and one nights" flashed in my imagination. The smoke cleared away soon, and the air smelt of the roses and jasmines again. I didn't have time to recollect myself, and the shrimps were already talking to Maksa calmly by showing Eta and the little bricks to him. Only now I looked at Bronski and Nataliya.

Bronski was standing straight like a soldier on guard, who was protecting a powder depot. His face didn't show any signs of life. That was a white mask with stiff, glass eyes. Nataliya on the contrary, she shrank into a little ball, she even looked lean. Her facial features became stricter, she was all drowned in tears and she was clenching her fists so strongly that it was painful to look at her.

However strongly these actions excited me, I was still glorifying Life with the same infinite note of victorious love with which I had entered here. I bowed to the grandeur of the Power and Love given to me today again.

I. touched Bronski with the stick, and he would have fallen down on the floor if Zeiched and Nikita hadn't held him. It seemed that life was coming back to him. I. went up to him again and he touched his vertex with the little stick again. Bronski all trembled again, his cheeks turned red, his eyes lit up, he took I.'s hand and pressed it to his lips.

"That what you've seen here," I. said to Bronski and embraced him, "will teach you loyalty for those actions and meetings which Life will indicate to you. Don't try to make people's external life easier. Try to penetrate into every man's spiritual world, try to clean their rough tissues there, which prevent everybody from seeing the path of their Eternal Light on the earth.

I. went up to Nataliya, he touched her forehead, chest, shoulders crosswise with the little stick and told her.

"My sister, perform the feat of your activity for people's happiness and wellbeing till the end of this body on the earth. Search for complete self-control and, before you have time to leave this body, you will enter the new, young body, so that you could learn and teach again. Always remember that you won't rest from the activity on the earth at least for a moment and that you will start the new path here again only with such spiritual development which you will have time to achieve now. Fly on the wings of your spiritual enthusiasm with lightning speed, but always keep the thought in your consciousness that every discharge of your enthusiasm which you pollute with your irritation or tear is alienating you from the possibility to pass Ali's work to the moaning earth. You've seen the circle of former robbers and murderers here, the outcome of their old karma, their received liberation. Why could this drama of centuries end? Only because the youth who was always drowned in irritation found self-control and such power of pure love which burnt down all the dirty tissues of his passions and anger in his heart, which had grown into hard, toothed lumps. The youth at whom you were mocking arrogantly, my sister, succeeded to open the gates of his heart for the enemies during this meeting. He was pouring his compassion and sympathy into them, he forgot about everything, except their misfortune. One moment of a complete devotion to the activity of your Teacher, one moment of your opened loyalty and devotion till the end may create the new

harmony within you, which is needed for the new activity of your Teacher with you. Don't grieve for the shock that you have to bring to people anymore. The clearer your heart will be by seeing people's misfortunes and sorrows, the faster you will forget about your "I" which accepts these disasters with such difficulty, and the nearer you will come to the unity in work with the selfless workers of the bright community whom only you can see. It is not enough for the true disciple to hear the working word of his Teacher. He also needs to tune his entire organism in such a way that the power of his thought and the accurate transmission could flow into the fire of his Teacher's stream. Forget your tears once and for all, laugh merrily, but observe vigilantly that none of your words would be stinging when you are talking to your brother. Accept the new rule of your conduct: never say anything about your sisters and brothers when they aren't next to you, say only that what you can utter without any irritation. Every time when a condemning word is about to slip off your tongue, remember how little time you still have to live in this body and how every missed moment destroys not only your spirit, but also everybody else's one in that moment when you meet one another. The invisible circle of your assistants and guards may not protect the spiritual path that stretches from you to your Teacher. In order for them to protect your creative, spiritual channel, your main instrument – your organism – has to keep an unshakable self-control and loyalty. Be blessed. Go loved and loving, glad and gladdening, creating and encouraging creation."

I. touched Nataliya with his little stick crosswise again, who was on the knees before him.

"Come here, my child," I. uttered, and I didn't even understand whom he addressed with these words.

From the direction of his look I understood that he was inviting Aldaz who was hiding in the most remote corner of the room. The girl blushed and she became embarrassed. Having seen her coming, all three shrimps threw down their toys and surrounded her instantly by expressing their love to her in every primitive way. Francisco helped the girl to become free from tenacious shrimps hands, he brought the little ones to another end of the room, he blocked the way with little beds and forbade them to cross that boundary.

"Aldaz," I. continued, "you want to take the pledge of virginity, you want to become a nun and to stay in the Community forever. You love children and you want to become an educator in that house where the Community gives shelter to orphans and homeless children. You see the highest deed of love only in such a way. I don't argue with you: it is the real deed to replace mother for the orphans, but even a greater deed exists. There's a deed of great love: to forget about yourself, your wants and your choice, and to fulfil that lesson and that percept of love which the whole great Life of the universe needs in this hour. Every selfless and honest worker has to hear and to understand the strike of the hour of the highest wisdom, so that he could pour his activity into the wisdom of the hour that has struck in his motherland. Only then he will fulfil, understand and give the highest value of his incarnation. Aldaz, now your motherland is suffering mostly due to disappearance of the pure, honest and kind family. All its misfortunes arise due to the collapse of this primary link of calm and harmony. Now the call of Life is sounding for you through my lips. Do you want to accept this call of Wisdom and to become wife and mother, the centre of the new people family? If you accept this deed of motherhood and education with joy, already today you will give an opportunity for three beings who have gotten into the centre of evil due to their ignorance, to end the circle of their misfortunes. Think for a while, my friend. Don't forget that you are absolutely free to decide, that nobody forces you, that you can walk down the path of your deed – to take care of strange children – and you'll be blessed no less than here. Only you won't do the lesson of the greatest love during this incarnation, which you could do, but they say about it: "Let the one who can do it do it."

“My Teacher, I don’t have to make any choice!” Aldaz answered him in her tender, silver voice. “If you think that I can create such a family which my motherland needs now, then let the will of God and You be.”

“Your life is happy, my obedient sister, you give only joy to those souls who will be given to you to protect, to bear and to educate,” I. told her, bent down to the charming girl and embraced her. “Now go to do your work calmly. I will indicate your fiancé for you and I will explain everything to you about those souls who will be fortunate to have you as their mother.”

Aldaz bowed low to I., also she bowed low to all of us and she left the room silently.

Bronski came up to me, and again I was surprised by expression of his face and his entire figure. I thought for a while that probably he appeared like this for people when he was performing the greatest heroes: shining eyes, energy, gushing power, self-confidence, joyfulness. I was standing, stiff with unexpectedness from this change, and I come to myself only when suddenly Eta flew up on my shoulder.

“Well, Lovushka,” I heard Nikita’s laughter, “your ward not only doesn’t ask your permission anymore, but he also brought all his new friends along with himself.”

And really the shrimps also were trying to jump on my shoulders by imitating Eta and skipping in a funny way. While seeing that it won’t work like this, they were climbing one on another’s shoulders like monkeys, they were clambering on me, and Maksa was the first who got on my head. My friends helped me to become free from this siege of the shrimps, they seated all three misfortunate shrimps on their shoulders, which made them exceptionally satisfied.

We left the room and turned to the nurse Alexandra’s dining-room. Here we gave our little friends to Aldaz and nurse Alexandra. The little ones didn’t want to leave their “camels” on whom they were sitting so conveniently and haughtily, but the smell of tasty food and Aldaz’s love lured them to the table quickly, at which many different people from the hospital were sitting today.

Francisco approached Nataliya and Bronski, he offered them to enter his room, while we came back home. I. offered us to take supper again, which made us all very happy.

My supper was more modest than the dinner, only the greens and the fruit. Although I always had a good appetite, this time I didn’t want to eat and I didn’t even notice what my friends put in their plates.

Contrary to the chaos that used to seize me before when I had to experience many different impressions, now all my thoughts were accurate, clear and they lined up easily into the ranks of harmonious views and recollections.

My dear warrantors rose from the table, they embraced me strongly, bowed to me, and Nikita told me on behalf of both of them.

“Let this day be blessed, with which you’ve started the new period of your life, our friend and brother Lovushka. Now never feel alone. You and your Lord – the two of you are always together. You and your great Teachers – the four of you are always together. You and your obedient warrantors – the three of you are always together. Besides, your eyes have opened up, today you saw an uncountable lot of the workers of the living heaven. Don’t divide the time into day and night anymore. Value only the moment of the eternal happiness – your duty next to your Teacher. Learn to live by working with him, that is to live in unity with all the workers of heaven and earth. We are your servants and assistants in all your matters and meetings to which you will want to invite us. It is a great happiness for those who could meet by the gates of Eternity and to know friendship and loyal devotion here, while still living on the Earth.”

Both my friends left. Me and I. came back home. I. embraced me by my room and he reminded me that my brother's note-book was waiting for me.

Chapter 7

My brother's note-book

Awakened Eta met me affectionately and passionately when I entered the room. I still was unable to concentrate my thoughts for a long time, because I was so overfilled with the energies of joy. Finally my elated state turned into glorification of Life, I felt that great tranquillity, that harmony and light within myself with which I left the little orange house after reading the green book of my life.

I pressed to my dear friend Florentian in my thoughts, I asked him to help me to understand everything what my kind, dear brother wrote in his note-book and not to sully his sanctity, to be able to share those joys and suffering of the path of my brother Nikolay, about which I will have to read.

I kissed Eta tenderly, whose eyes were closing comically, although he was pretending that he wasn't sleeping and he was shaking his head when he noticed that I saw how he wanted to sleep. I put him to his couch and I pulled my brother's note-book out.

Now when I took it from the case, it surprised me with its appearance even more than during those two times when I was holding it in my hands. First time when Florentian gave it to me in my brother's room in K., it surprised me as the miracle of a jewelry work. Second time in the carriage, when I was placing the things which young Ali had sent to me, it already was a living secret to me, a segment of my brother-father's life, which I didn't consider myself to be worthy to touch.

Now when I was holding it in my hands for the third time, as though I was stunned threefold both for its unusual external beauty and for the light of the heights that opened up for my brother and for the unexpected courage that I felt within myself by preparing myself to read the secrets written by my brother.

I took the wonderful little peacock-shaped key and, having tried a little, I found a little lock that was fitted on the side, in one of the figures of the little white peacocks. This figure moved, and I saw the lock under it.

All of it took quite a lot of time, but I didn't recognize myself! I would have been trembling from my weakness, irritation and impatience several months ago, I would have thrown both the note-book and the case, and I would have poured my whole anger with tears and tramp of my feet. Now the more complicated the task seemed to be to me, the more complicated the mechanism of the lock was, the more delighted I was with the master who managed to fit it in like this, so that one couldn't see any signs of its complexity anywhere. I was laughing with joy when finally I grasped all the secrets of the lock. Now the note-book was opened, and I saw such dear handwriting of my only one relative in the entire world.

I was so surprised when I saw that it wasn't my native Russian language which I expected: page after page the whole note-book was written in Pali language.

I felt shyness and lack of self-confidence. I still didn't know this language very well and I thought that probably I wouldn't understand anything again, that I would be the servant who only cleaned the dust from expensive books, but this lack of my self-confidence lasted only for a moment. Florentian's, I.'s and my brother's images floated before my eyes like the great assistants, and courage flared up in my spirit again.

GLORY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BROUGHT ME TO THIS
GREAT MOMENT OF MY LIFE.
GLORY FOR THOSE WHO WILL REACH IT AS I DID.

Such was the title on the first page. There was neither the date nor the location where it was written here. I kept reading:

"I was born today, although I'm twenty-four already. If somebody asked me now how old I was, I would answer him: a year and seven months. The fog obscured everything what was in my life up to now. Everything was only the introduction into my life, while I understood Life only when I was born for the second time, a year and seven months ago.

I ask myself: and what especial has happened? As if nothing. Having lost my way in the mountains, I met a mountaineer and I stayed in his secluded dwelling to wait for the suddenly enraged storm to pass off.

It was an episode which everybody's life is full of. An episode which I had a thousand times and which I will probably still have a lot during my nomadic life.

Only this time the birth of the man began not from the meeting with the host of the cottage, but with his guest.

An Indian was sitting before me when I woke up in the night.

What can I tell about him? His eyes were burning through, one could call them the smouldering coals. This stranger horrified my heart which hadn't known any fear up to now, my whole body was nearly paralysed.

I couldn't move any of my joint. I didn't have any strength to shout. I couldn't answer myself who was sitting before me: a God, a devil or a result of my own fantasy.

The silence of this unusual being lasted only for a moment which turned into eternity for me, for a moment which stopped the beating of my heart and the rhythm of my breathing. I was growing weaker and I comprehended that I was dying from the light that was oppressing me.

All of a sudden, the stranger gave a smile, he lifted his hand with its palm towards me, and as though the power of the raging blizzard behind the window was pouring into me. The stranger's face, lit up by his smile, seemed to be like the God's face, and I couldn't comprehend why I considered the power that was oppressing me in the beginning to be devilish.

The power kept pouring from his look and from his big, perfectly shaped hand to me, which was shaking my whole body from head to foot. This power was piercing me like electric currents.

It seemed to me that I was all covered with a flame, my heart was broadening with joy. This joy was rising to my throat, it filled in my whole brain, and I thought that now, in this moment I would fly out, covered with ecstasy of happiness which I hadn't experienced up to now.

"My son," I heard the stranger's voice. "You are searching for knowledge. You crave for the answers that torment you: whether God exists? Who is He? Where is He? How did those reached Him, who were writing and talking about Him?

In this moment you are in God, and God is in you. Now the entire universe has opened to you not because you've reached the top of your knowledge, but because your heart's purity, your life's purity in the ordinary actions of your everyday life helped you to accumulate joy of the divine power and to unite with it.

I a man doesn't live only by being lazy and by trying to call it meditation; if he's trying to pour his ordinary kindness into all his matters and meetings; if he's prepared to absorb the tears and sorrows of his encountered person; if he was able to develop his loyalty till the end somewhere; if his searching for God wasn't the desire of his personal development, but it gave a selfless activity, calm and rest to people – then the man has entered that level of his spiritual maturity when we, Indians say: "If the disciple is ready – then his Teacher is ready as well."

Today I've come to you not specially, but I responded to your constant call. Why could I approach you and why didn't my power burn you down? Because your heart is pure. And the flame that I have awakened within you now, - that's your own flame. It didn't burn your body down, it didn't bring your spirit beyond the limits of the earth, but it hardened all your consciousness for clearness and power.

Every moment of one's earthly life that flies past isn't a usual, everyday life of one's body and spirit, merged into one earthly form. That is the moment of Eternal Movement that is poured into every form of the earth as the little part of creation. And therefore, no other way of man's liberation exists as only the daily routine of his activity wherever he would be living.

If people are engaged only in meditation, if the power of their mind and heart is plunged only in searching of their personal development – then the path of the Eternal Movement is closed for them, because a possibility to live only one's personal life without joining the worldwide flow doesn't exist in life of the universe.

Man's consciousness is unable to rise if his heart is silent, and if he cannot see the same God in another being, whom he got to know within himself.

Your critical look at the person who came to you will remain an obstacle that is stronger than any metallic wall between you and him, although before he came to you, you experienced the most passionate flight of your searching for the path to the Truth.

Only when you understand that with your every encountered person the Truth itself came to open your own barriers for you, behind the walls of which you keep tied up bags with your love and the untied ones with your superstitions, - only then you will be able to come nearer to the second truth that became our nation's proverb: "No one is your friend, no one is your brother, but every man is great Teacher for you."

As much as you comprehended your lesson by associating with your encountered man, as much as you got irritated, condemned, told a lie, dissembled and weren't kindly disposed to him, - so much you showed to yourself your poverty and lack of love.

The more ordinary you were, the easier you were communicating with him, the kinder you were, - the more you forgot about yourself, the more important the interests of your encountered person were for you. And your meeting was effective, it absorbed the entire complexes of the atoms of benevolence from those invisible industrious persons who are always hurrying to the earth by searching for those whom they could give the work of their love.

No such path to man's development without activity exists on the Earth, which unites him with all the people who surround him. You cannot isolate yourself from any of the living beings who cross the orbit of your movement on the earth.

If you flew into a temper during your meeting – you opened “the jaws” for the bags of your superstitions which were untied anyway. And with yourself during all the work of that day you drew closer patty villains, spiritual vampires and debauchees to yourself to collaborate with you, who are searching greedily to whom to stick to in order to suppress thirst and hunger of their uncontrollable passions that don't die with one's body. The most painful path – that's the one of those who deny. Their eternal karma is accumulating again and again with the new bumps on their already horrible spiritual body.

Now when your state has become bright, the clearer life of the entire universe is for you, the pulse of which you can feel beating in your heart passionately, evenly and strongly, - the clearer is for you also the path of love through the activity of the daily routine to that Life that is operating Itself everywhere and in everybody.

You had only one task up to now: to find yourself and to understand yourself. Now your task has become more difficult: not you yourself must find and understand, but you must become a servant for a great circle of people, so that you could awaken their consciousness, their activity, strength and aspiration to work for the general prosperity.

You love your motherland. Every day, as soon as you hear the signal of danger, you are ready to fight against its enemies without any fear, but that is not enough. You can see the sluggish crowds for which the word “motherland” is an empty sound. You can see hundreds and thousands who try to deceive their government's vigilance and to avoid the military service at any occasion. You can see cowards and idlers everywhere who pretend to be patients, if only dangers fell to another person's lot, while they could choose a better destiny.

Can you go past them calmly? Can you not awaken them? Is it necessary to go down to the hell, so that you could liberate the dark beings there? Crowds of lost people are swarming around you. They think that they are living with love and truth by spending the entire days in vain, by enjoying the happiness of their personal life and by glorifying their own God.

They understood God and his prophets in their own way, and they consider themselves to be farsighted people, favourites of fate, because they have stuck to a certain church or religion, and they glorify it. Only their glorification is inactive, it becomes any power neither for their motherland nor for their encountered man. It exhausts themselves by causing little ecstasies of delusive spectacles and prophecies for them. Don't allow them to hide calmly: find a thousand of reasons for them to work and act, take them out of their lazy happiness.

In your other meetings you will encounter a high spirit that is chained in the degenerate form of haughtiness and self-love. Show an example of ordinary and tender love, prove with your everyday work that nobody needs a man's knowledge if it is given from high and by bringing oneself to do it.

Even more often you will encounter a person who denies, who rails at his motherland for the disorder that is hanging there, for its vices and so on. Such people – always, without any exceptions – are mostly ill with their self-love. There's the same dirt, stench and disorder in their homes as in their entangled thoughts and desires. Their appearance, the manner of their actions and thoughts isn't aesthetical, as well as their manner to dress, to sit, to talk, to sleep. The more difficult task as to come out of their blind negation doesn't exist for them.

In this case find out carefully whom of them you could touch with your sacred love and sincerity, and when you should go past them by sending a blessing to their dark path which they have turned into such themselves.

Every dark path starts with negation. The fighter for the new development of evolution sees his motherland's suffering and he spreads his belief in the better tomorrow in the world by symbolizing the general prosperity with his flag of fight. He's prepared for his fight resolutely, his call tears thousands of consciousnesses out of despair and stagnation of death. He's illuminated by the liberated call of Life within himself and he is calling his brothers to the light and freedom. His path is bright, he illuminates the paths of his encountered people, too. He is working by always seeing millions of people before him, who are enslaved by their passions and who are unhappy.

If he becomes the leader of his nation, then the power of divine love illuminates him by helping him to carry the entire many-millioned nation to the light and glory on his shoulders. Such leader is living by encompassing millions of his nation's hearts with his consciousness. He goes through both joy and pain with every member of his nation. He takes his nation where the Wisdom of the struck hour indicates him.

The dark occupants of power create staff from the people who deny for themselves, they establish their own – separate from the nation – happiness and welfare, they enslave the whole nation.

The leader of the dark powers doesn't call the nation to freedom by striving for power. He throws a bone of petty property to it, he is searching for possibilities to enslave it by thrusting a desire for it to profit by class superstitions, so that it would be easier for him to force his way through to the worldwide ruling.

Go past such people by finding out thoroughly whether your help for them will be well-timed and useful. You can spend much power of your love and sincerity yourself; you can deaden your mind, joy, energies and not achieve anything.

If the people who deny get into the zone of misfortunes, they will come to you themselves. They will accept your help and they will crawl away like satiated leeches, so that they could grow the fat on their body and spirit again as soon as you help them to cross the period of their temporary misfortunes safely.

The true sincerity of the man who has stepped on the path of comprehension of light and calm within himself must manifest itself in a vigilant identification where, when and how he should carry the treasure of his spirit.

It is absolutely meaningless to devote yourself to the religious glorification of your God in your life. If you still haven't reached the comprehension that the Only One God is for everybody and that all the paths lead to Him, the Only One – then your religious life failed. The man has become entangled in his virtues exactly in the same way as the man who denies in his evil. Not a single spiritual comprehension rose above wrongs, explanations, personal dramas, self-love and lashing with pride.

No stops may exist on the path which you are searching for. The power that is driving the universe gives man a possibility to work, work and work by becoming free within him. Sometimes a sickly man – a straw with his physical data – is pulling the sledge for many years with such load for the general prosperity that it is terrible for the one who's looking at him from the distance. Only for himself his life seems to be simple and easy, because he cannot see the meaning of life on the earth at all without becoming involved in his nation's activity.

Little by little the opening man's consciousness throws down the armour of superstitions. First of all the small brilliance of trifle falls down from consciousness of the brightened man – all the punishments and awards, conditional appreciations “for virtues” which he understands as a refusal of something by force by sacrificing himself for another person. He begins to understand the whole grandeur of Life. He starts feeling joy to live by working for another person. He is annoyed if today nobody needed him. If he's going through life with harmony and calm, then the concept “to be needed for somebody” becomes the imperceptible rhythm of his day – like the rhythm of his breathing.

Live your every day as the last one, but the last one not because of the greedy satisfaction of your desires and haste, or because of your spiritual strain, but the last one because of the activity and its unselfish harmony.

You are carrying the question in your heart: where is the personal “I” and where is “not I”? This difference doesn't exist for you anymore from your birth for the Only One Life. Everything with whom you associate is only the path to Grandeur through the temporary form for you. For you an executioner, a victim and the death penalty – is always the same Only One Life, the part of which you are yourself and which you can see everywhere around you.

Live your every day calmly and honourably. Protect your chastity and purity, and you will be living among those who felt to be the part of the Only One Life, the part of the entire universe earlier than you did.

Your path – that's the path of serving God within man. Your activity – that's the path of knowledge which you apply in your everyday activity with love.

Suddenly I felt that the power, that gigantic power that was just pouring into me disappeared. The place where the stranger was sitting was empty.”

The first my brother Nikolay's record ended like this. I went to bed when dawn was already coming, and my friend Eta woke me up in time, so that I could still catch up with I. on his way to the lake.

The records which I was reading during the entire night moved me so much that as soon as I greeted I. I blurted him out immediately.

“I was so surprised that my brother Nikolay could understand everything what Ali was telling him during their first meeting without any strange help and guidance.”

“Why do you think that that was Ali?”

“Because the eyes described in the note-book may be only his, while the sensation that somebody is squeezing and oppressing you when you are next to Ali is so characteristic to him that you cannot confuse him with anybody else. Namely the light that is spreading from him dazzles and oppresses. And that feeling which I know so well changes instantly as soon as Ali smiles or touches you. Then his oppressing power drifts away somewhere, and bliss fills your heart. Neither next to you, my dear compassionate Teacher, nor next to Florentian, nor next to sir Vomi I could ever feel that power that shook the entire organism. That's why I recognized Ali from my brother's words instantly. It is enough to see him once, so that you could recognize him everywhere forever.”

“Maybe you are right by feeling so well the exceptional Ali's power that is impossible for anybody else, but anyway during all those years here when you become strong disciple from neophyte, you

will need to acquire such level of self-control that Ali's power wouldn't oppress your spirit, but open it for activity and fight. You see, Lovushka, that everybody who is living on the earth, everybody is fighting, but that person who understands his path on the earth as the greatest value, that one is fighting and working by forgetting about himself completely. In order for you to liberate your consciousness like this, you need to distinguish in lives that surround you every day: where man went past his "now" by uniting with people with his love and where he criticized them and remained ineffective. Understand, my friend, that many people "understand" high ideals, they accept religion and its requirements, but the only one real religion – that's the heart's love. Religion – that's not what man "knows and accepts", but that what he's able to apply for his work in his actions of the day."

An encounter interrupted our conversation, which reminded me of the first day when we came to the Community: we met Andreyeva and lady Berdran. But how different both friends were now! Lady Berdran's cheeks were flowering like roses, she was joyful and mischievous – the real beauty. Nataliya Vladimirovna was rolling her imperious eyes like before, but she all became as wax. Not only her paleness prompted this comparison to me: she was smelling of softness and tenderness. Her well-wishing irony with which she used to meet me before turned into tenderness. Her voice was like mother's when she answered to my greeting and it caused a reciprocal wave of love and gratitude in my heart.

"My wonderful count, I'm very grateful student of yours. Till now I was thinking that the ranks and levels separated people. I used to accept everybody first by estimating his knowledge in that path after which I was straining myself. Having received the lesson of great obedience through you, I began to see the real knowledge clearly, which now is the most important and effective to me: the spirit, while striving for knowledge, has to open the bag of its love and to tie up strongly the bag of superstitions. Through my meeting with you I understood how many doubts were still within myself. I saw a tremendous lot of conditionalities within myself, which prevented me from communicating freely with people. Now it became easier for me, because I began to see things clearly and I saw where and what kind of the bolts of the greatest superstitions were hindering myself."

The words that she uttered now, namely the same ones which I had just read in my brother Nikolay's note-book surprised me mostly.

"Do really all people have to pass the same stages of their spiritual development?" I gave a shout imperceptibly, standing in the middle of the road.

"I don't know whether everybody passes the same stages," Nataliya Vladimirovna answered me, "but I don't doubt that I've found the strengthening spring within you and I thank you very much."

I, who came to us heard these words of hers, who was talking to lady Berdran up to now. He said to Andreyeva tenderly.

"My dear Nataliya Vladimirovna, the Truth that is living within you is liberated already. It is gushing from you like the purest fountain. The dense veil is covering only those conditionalities which one connected with the structure of the people's society and the hierarchy of the entire universe. You possess greatly developed spiritual power and, whether you want it or not, you are marching stronger and further in the spiritual world than on the earth. From here your certain external arrogance with respect to those people arise, who don't understand much that only the earthly path doesn't exist, or to whom it seems that they can achieve the knowledge with some gropingly learnt yoga exercises. The lessons of late – both with lady Berdran and with Lovushka – helped you to throw down the veils of sympathy or antipathy that oppressed your physical eyes, helped you to comprehend the personal helplessness to affect a man. You've learnt to reveal the joint value of the meetings as the whole creation of Life. Now no one is able to prevent you anymore from fulfilling the mission given to you by Ali. Soon you'll leave for America and Europe, you

will leave a part of your work there and you will come here again to acquire strength, so that you could give the language of the ringing silence to people again. It was very strange for you to cover the difficult stage of your spiritual path with the youth's help. You were rebelling and you were prepared to deny the possibility to move forward with help of those who are "lower" than you. Now you felt clearly that nobody is "lower" or "higher". Neither the good nor the evil exist. Only that place in the universe exists for every man, to which he can step depending on the degree of his Love liberation within himself. It isn't important whether the man is literate or not, harmony is ringing within him with such power that none of his strength, even the strongest one, kills his encountered person, but only gives cheerfulness to everybody who comes to him. From this day on the activity of your psychic power won't be hindering anybody to live anymore. You've succeeded to set them in order in such a way that the power of your tact would open the possibility for you to become help for your own people who are next to you. Up to now you could serve only to the distant people by giving the knowledge to them, dictated by your Teacher to you. By pouring your heart's love, now you will open the stability of your encountered people with your harmony."

We said good-bye to our friends. After the breakfast I. took me to improving Igor whom I hadn't seen from the beginning of his illness. Igor was sitting in the balcony. Bronski, Alver and some other friends were next to him. Igor didn't recognize me. He was so surprised by the change that had happened within me that he told I.

"I always believed in your exceptional faculties, doctor I., and I have tried their effect upon myself, but that man could do miracles, I considered it to be the prerogative from the fairy-tales of the Persian life."

"Igor, if you can see such stunning change within myself, then what should I think about you? Not even I could recognize you, but I couldn't even believe that you could change so much during such short time."

In the beginning of our acquaintance Igor was a pale youth. Now he reminded me of Andreyeva. The black eyes in his sunburnt face were turning with such energy that unwillingly I remembered Nataliya Vladimirovna. His voice was strong, his movements were quick and masterful.

"I'm very glad that you were such obedient patient," I. told merrily and he put his hand on Igor's shoulder. "I understand how difficult it was for you to obey and not to leave the room when you were feeling completely healthy for several days already. Therefore, today you will be able to withstand a long walk. I invite everybody present here to the park. We'll find the gardener there, we'll arm ourselves with spades and we'll plant some sprouts of eucalyptus and cinchona for the future undergrowth. I've promised to take you to the distant Communities. Therefore, Zeiched will be teaching you every day to ride on camels. It doesn't matter whether you can ride the camel already or not – everybody needs to learn to control the camel perfectly, otherwise we won't be able to ride across the desert. I warn you that the journey won't be from the easiest ones."

"Are you really going to leave me by saying that I haven't yet recovered enough?" Igor began to bustle.

"I won't leave you, if you keep obeying the routine," I. gave a laugh.

"Marvellous! Namely today I was prepared to protest, while you as though read that what was in my thoughts already. Of course, doctor I., now I will be as meek as a lamb and as obedient as a domestic pigeon."

We left for the park and soon we set to great work. While we were working, we heard I.'s lecture about botany. Igor who was told to sit in the shade calmly joined the conversation and he surprised

me with his botany and geology knowledge. Once again being terrified with my ignorance, I shouted out unwittingly.

“Igor, when did you have time to become a scientist? You gave your entire life to the theatre, didn’t you?”

“I gave my soul to the theatre and people, but I didn’t seal my brain. I was trying to penetrate into the highest life’s wisdom and into the wisdom of our mute brothers of the earth – plants and animals. I don’t know whether I’ve achieved much.”

His answer stunned me. How little I was going into the surrounding nature myself. I could comprehend only man, and could I really do it?

We were planting the sprouts till dinner. Later I went to learn to Ali’s room and as usually I forgot about the time, the place and my everyday duties. My compassionate Teacher I. visited me and after tea we went to the distant valley to learn to ride on the camels.

We were laughing much from our clumsiness, I showed myself in an especially stupid way, I couldn’t keep the small saddle in any way, while I. was sitting as glued to it.

Nikita came to help me, and anyway I didn’t overcome my first lesson. I could keep neither quick nor slow camel’s pace, I always used to roll down – luckily successfully. The rational animal used to stop patiently, although he could tread on me several times.

Bronski outran all of us, and I was reproaching him jokingly that he kept a secret from us that he could ride, while he was persuading me absolutely seriously that he was sitting on the camel the only time when he was hurrying to the Community, and that I only needed to imagine myself to be an Arab and then I would scuttle by sitting correctly and by controlling the camel. Apparently, the great talent of this man helped him this time as well.

After the riding lesson that exhausted everybody so much we went to bathe, then to have our supper and to listen to Aninov’s music in the evening.

On our way to the concert I remembered clearly Constantinople, Anna, her music and the divinely human voice of Ananda’s violonchello. I could feel some confusion in my soul. I couldn’t imagine that somebody could play better than Anna and Ananda. I was afraid that I wouldn’t be able to remain as polite as I. was teaching me, that I wouldn’t show my irritation for the man, the artist whose life was filled only by the music.

“Are you going there to compare talents? You go there to greet the man’s path. You go there to find those high love characteristics within yourself, which could bring an inspiration for another person. Love the same Power within him, within his path, which is driving the universe, and it doesn’t have to worry you in which level of development that Power has stopped within man now. It has to awaken the energy of your joy and to help to carry the greeting for man. Throw the ring into his temple as I was teaching you many times already, and don’t criticize what kind of the temple it is, according to your understanding.”

Late in the evening when I came back, I opened my brother’s note-book again and I began to read the second record.

“The thoughts from my yesterday’s words don’t calm within you. You don’t perceive how you could greet the Truth with your every meeting, who’s come to you in some temporary form. Many of

your meetings are disgusting for you. Also the constant drinking-bouts, cards, arguments and petty interests of your neighbours are disgusting for you.

But you haven't condemned them a single time. On the contrary, you succeeded to be so impartial for every one of them that all the soldiers and officers came to you with all their questions, they chose you as the judge of honour and they expected help from you when a misfortune befell on them.

Everybody, even the most ardent fighters, who were trying to insult or to frighten you in the beginning used to calm down after trying to challenge you for a personal argument. Your courage used to take any pretext from them to quarrel, while the power of your love for man used to force every one of them to respect you and your home. Some of them used to leave by understanding that they had acquired a friend, while others were surprised that nobody wanted to repeat an impudent prank.

Now refuse your understanding that love and God – that's only beauty. The worst what you can imagine is nothing else as the same love, only it is directed badly within man.

A thief's love for gold – that's the same love, only it is oppressed by the weight of his greediness and superstitions of possession. A husband's love for his wife, a mother's love for her children – that's the same love, only it doesn't possess any strength to untie the tight bonds of love and to see God within man beyond the limit of personal superstition "my" family.

After your consciousness expands, pass to another substance of comprehension of the living, temporary human forms that surround you. Read in them your lesson of the day during your every meeting. Understand one task: that person who came to you is the main and the most important of your business. That is exactly that your "now", it is the most important, give the whole completeness of your strength and feelings to it and don't keep the smallest parts of your spirit and mind for the future course.

While walking through your day, spread unselfishness for all your affairs, calm and rest for those who are working next to you. You are living in a chaste way, so remain like this. Only if you think that chastity by itself as an independent power may lead a man to the great path of his life – you are wrong. It is only one of many component parts of man's spiritual life that is leading him to harmony and liberation, but it doesn't possess any value by itself.

If man is full of superstitions of alienation, his entire possessed chastity won't move him from one place, although he will be trying to develop. And on the contrary, if man is searching for a contact with his Teacher and if he doesn't possess any strength to enter the path of chastity, then all his trials to enter the high spiritual union with his Teacher will be only impure trials that will always threaten to fling him down into the chaotic vortices of the astral plan.

Don't think about the future. Accept the given task "now" and the lesson of your chastity as the necessary link of your self-control today that is leading you to harmony.

There isn't anything unchangeable on a disciple's path, everything is flowing and changing, everything has only one dependency: the development of the disciple's creative powers lead him to perfection in which his self-control and harmony – that's the primary foundation.

They form the disciple's loyalty for his Teacher, they grow the equilibrium of his spiritual powers, but I repeat again, they are changing, because nothing lifeless in the earth and the heaven exists. The powers of spirit are moving within man and they lead him to fearlessness.

All the thoughts that gave joy to you have built the bridge from you to me. If your heart had kept silent and only your sound mind had been guiding you on the earth, then you couldn't have reached this moment when you can see me before yourself.

From now on all your meetings have only one meaning: to read your own lesson, to comprehend what prevented you to begin and to end your meeting with joy.

The disciple cannot form his character in the same way as an ordinary man is doing it. Man is searching for his greatest external happiness, while the disciple is searching for the greatest thoughts within himself, so that he could fill those hearts with them, who are associating with him at the current moment.

The outbursts of energies of man's brain centres aren't connected with his spiritual path and they don't lead him to any development. He only opens the path to the clearing of his consciousness and inspired creation, but they aren't the engine of spirit themselves.

That's why not very literate people may be wise men and prove to be higher than millions of scientists who comprehend only that what could be proved in a geometrical, physiological and other physical ways. However, where we are talking about the spirit's matter, that is about intuition, heart is talking there. That's why, from now on don't search for any answers to your questions in books.

Read the book of your life, live according to the Gospel of your working day and you will reach all the experiences of the world's yogis in your own – impossible for others – way."

Imperceptibly I broke away from the note-book, and my thoughts came back to today's experiences. Again I saw those people before me whom I had to meet today. Their faces and words used to emerge like in the screen, and I understood perfectly how little the real disciple I was today.

With what kind of excellent thoughts was I filling the universe today? I remembered the evening at Aninov's very clearly. The musician met us with desire to play. His eyes were looking at us, but his look was sliding across our faces without distinguishing to whom he was extending to greet his beautiful, but so big hand that my palm was lost in it.

I was feeling very strangely in Aninov's sitting-room. I was observing every external detail, every musician's movement: how he went up to the great piano, how he lifted its lid, how he adjusted his European tail-coat by sitting on the chair, how he heightened the chair to his needed height, how he put his hands on the keys, as though he fell to thinking and forgot about all of us.

Anna and Ananda used to force me to forget about everything, except their faces which seemed to be supernatural for me. This time the musician's face seemed to be unattractive for me, although I had to admit that it was peculiar and original: the face of ascetic, strong, strict, gone deep, without any presumption for equality between himself and the people surrounding him.

I looked at I., and his goodwill surprised me, with which he was looking at the music. Aninov gave a sigh, he looked up at something, looked round and met I.'s look. As though the lightning flashed across him, he gave a start, smiled childishly and uttered.

"An Eastern song of victorious love, as my heart understands it."

The sounds of the Eastern refrain poured from under his fingers, and they reminded me of Constantinople. Once I heard a little beggar singing there, who was beating the tambourine excitingly and dancing, while two blind violinists were accompanying her.

This view became always more apparent in my memory, while Aninov's theme was broadening and developing. I forgot both where I was and who surrounded me, I was in Constantinople, I

saw its streets, Anna, Joan. I was living in the duke's house again. I was drifting among tears and moans, prayers and glorification, I felt the whole Eastern land with its superstitions, experience, passions and fight.

Here was the crowd of women slaves, wrapped in black shrouds. Here were their moans about freedom and independence, about free love; here were the melancholy caravan; the wrathful despot with his harem; here were the childish songs and finally, the calling cry of muezzin.

The Eastern song kept alluring, now it reached the wonderful harmony, and I remembered my friend Turk who used to say: "They can pray only in the East."

Suddenly a hurricane broke into the music, and the sounds, the triumph of passions, the Earth, Earth, Earth were floating again...

Aninov lapsed into silence. His face was pale more than always, he waited for a moment and uttered again.

"The song of the Western oppression and the hymn of freedom."

I could hear the sounds of the hymns of France, England and Germany which were interweaving with the sad motive of the orthodox panikhida in a brilliant way. All of a sudden, the Russian song of the Don Cossacks broke through these sounds that was alluring with the infinite wide open space of the steppes, and the lament of panikhida again...

I was all trembling from my never experienced feelings of love and devotion for my motherland and my nation. It seemed to me that I always loved my motherland, but through Aninov's music I understood the first man's duty about which Ali was talking to my brother, - love for one's motherland.

Here it was, everybody's own place, an especial, unique everybody's place on the Earth; Aninov was pouring his love for motherland to the world, although he had left it a long time ago and he hadn't come back to it for many years. I understood that his name wasn't international, but Russian. The home that was the wound of his heart.

A respect for his secret suffering rushed into me, which reached my soul only now, and I bowed to this heartbreak in the same way as once my dear friend captain James bowed to Joan's pain which he succeeded to read within her.

I understood how still far away it was for me till the vigilant recognition, till happiness to live by recognizing every being to be the divine power.

My spirit was shaken. I couldn't sleep and I went out to the park to wait for the dawn.

Chapter 8

An ordinary night of the Community, and what I saw during that night.

The second record of my brother Nikolay.

My helplessness before the concepts “to be” and “to become”.

My conversation with Francisco and his letters

I came back to my room only when it was possible to read, but I was destined to learn one more lesson during that wonderful and short night. I didn't have time to go far down the park lane when I noticed that I wasn't alone.

Figures were walking without any sound along the distant paths of the park, and when I spoke to one trained male nurse who was walking to and fro the lane leading to the end of the park and asked him whether he couldn't sleep in the night as I, he answered me.

“Oh no, my dear brother, I always sleep well, but it is my turn to be on duty during this night, and I will be glad to help you if only you need my help.”

“The night duty? Why is it needed? Could we expect a night attack of the Community?”

“No, the Community doesn't have any enemies, although some wild beasts come running here sometimes. The trained nurses duty is needed to provide help for people round the clock, independent of if it is the day or the night.”

“But who does need help in the night?” I was asking him by being amazed.

“Who?” the trained male nurse gave a laugh. “Apparently you are absolutely newly arrived to the Community. Let's go towards that light where I've just taken three travellers. You will be able to make certain yourself whether I'm right by thinking that they need help, although now the night is.”

The light to which we were going and which seemed to be so small from the distance actually was far away from us, and it looked like a small lamp to me.

We came to the little house, the three windows of which were brightly lit up. The trained male nurse gave a sign, I went up to one of the windows and I saw a lean, exhausted woman with the tattered native clothes and with a baby in her arms. Another woman wearing the white clothes of the trained nurses of the Community was standing with her back to the window and she was offering a cup of hot milk, some bread with honey and some other food which I couldn't discern to the fellow-traveller.

Suddenly the trained nurse turned her face to the window, and I almost gave a shout: lady Berdran was feeding the unfortunate woman. The trained male nurse who was standing next to me saw that I jumped back and he decided that I already saw everything in this room, he took my hand and brought me carefully to the second lit up window, so that I wouldn't tread on the flowers.

Namely in that moment when I pressed myself to the window, the door in the depth of the room opened, and I saw an old man who probably came straight from the bath. A trained male nurse on

duty helped him to dress with clean clothes. The nurse brought the old man to the table and seated him. I understood from the old man's manners that he was blind, although his eyes were opened.

The door opened again, and the young trained nurse brought in an eight-year-old boy who apparently was washed and combed, and she seated him at the table, next to the old man. I understood that the boy was his guide.

The same trained nurse brought a piala of hot, evaporating soup instantly for both of them, while the trained male nurse cut off a big chunk of bread for every one of them. I hadn't seen such hunger a long time ago, with which the old man and the boy dashed at the food.

Having come to the third window, I saw a woman who was sitting, wrapped in the widow's shawl. She was pressing her belly strongly with both of her hands and swinging to sides by moaning from time to time.

Two trained nurses were in the room and the doctor whom I knew. All of them were toiling at the woman by explaining something violently to her, by persuading of something which she didn't want to understand.

"I met her by the edge of the park and I took her out of the loop which she twisted from her own plait, with which she wanted to suffocate herself. She was resisting so strongly to me that I had to call other two trained male nurses to help me. Three of us could hardly bring her here. I suspect that this was one of a huge number of the widow dramas. The Community saved several women who wanted to commit suicide due to the horrible social superstitions that doomed all Indian widows for death. Ali and many of his friends are fighting against this Indian misfortune with all their might. There are some children shelters among the woods, in the Distant Communities where the unfortunate widows grow their own and strange children. Now, my dear brother, decide yourself whether the night help is needed for this little part of the world."

He brought me to the main lane, he said good-bye to me pleasingly and he turned to the edge of the park again to continue his night duty. Having separated with him, I stopped and I started looking around. Everywhere I could look I could see little lights, the meaning of which I understood well now.

A swarm of new thoughts began to stir within me. I began to understand what it meant not to waste a single moment in vain, "to be vigilant" and to serve the encountered person by serving Life itself through him.

I came back home and I began to read my brother's note-book again.

"We interrupted our conversation in that place where I described your activity as serving God within man," I was reading the follow-up of the second record, as if it was the continuation of my own thoughts. "This is the path of every man who is searching for discipleship. No other hours of life on the earth for a disciple exist as only the hours of his activity; and his entire day – that's his joyous duty which isn't as a duty or a deed for him, but as the most ordinary communication with his Teacher.

The disciple's joy – that's the result of his knowledge. All his superstitions about his difficult duty, his proper behaviour, boredom, tedium of his duty change till that time, his heart becomes free from thoughts about himself, about his "I" till that time.

As soon as it becomes easy for him, because his eyes will stop looking through the prism of his egoism, the disciple will be prepared already to communicate closer with his Teacher.

How do you imagine that mutual activity of the disciple and his Teacher? Do you think that Teacher is always guiding the whole day of his disciple by leading him with the towel under his arm as mother is leading her baby by trying to teach him to walk?

Teacher's tenderness, attention, love and help surpass any motherly care. And his nature is different than careful mother's wardship, because for her the most important are private, purely egoistic worries.

The stimulus of Teacher's activity by protecting his disciple depends on the disciple himself, on the breakthrough of his purity. Teacher doesn't offer his disciple any complex of conditional possibilities and recipe of how to develop, Teacher is awakening his disciple's spirit for activity that is necessary namely for him, for his highest development through which he could find Light and Truth himself, and he could understand that knowledge – that's not a word, a teaching, but that's an action. The knowledge means: to be and to become, and not to listen, to criticize, to accept what suits him, to reject that what doesn't suit his own belief of the current moment, which is full of superstitions. The Teacher's spirit pushes his disciple to knowledge, to ability to observe his own thoughts freely.

The disciple's loyalty becomes stronger every day if he can see not himself in his everyday work, but that love that is flowing through him. Not "I" becomes his mode of life, but "through me". With every day he liberates from more and more of his rammed thoughts that were deep-rooted in his "I". The disciple's fearlessness that was only his enthusiasm driven by his mind before and that was ascribed to his virtues, now becomes his everyday atmosphere, his natural power.

Don't have a superstition that you aren't next to your Teacher only because of the distance that separates you. The distance exists till only the superstition of the earthly life is living in your heart. As soon as the knowledge broadens your outlook, the shadow of the distance and loneliness disappears.

The heaps of rubbish that were preventing the disciple from seeing Harmony don't obscure his cleared up look anymore. Harmony depends neither on the place nor on the temple in which one is praying, and it isn't the temple itself which admires one. Harmony can be reached as much as one possesses it oneself.

Through his inner self-discipline man begins to spread not only his spiritual creation during his day. By trying to comprehend in a new way what "character" is, he is also creating his entire external life newly. If before he used to jump quickly from the bed and run out of the room in the last moment only if he was in time to do his urgent business, then now it becomes clear to him that the atmosphere that surrounds him isn't separated from himself.

If before he was living a disorderly life by justifying himself of his talent and by accepting boheme as an inseparable part of the art, then he wasn't different from any other "theosophist seeker" in anything by considering his vanity as a free addition to "his" searching and to "his" theosophy.

The wider the spiritual horizon opens up for the disciple, the clearer it becomes for him how much beauty he can and he has to spread in his private life in order to become a living example to everybody with whom Life will bring him together.

An ordinary disciple's day, lived vigilantly by working, with attention and benevolence stops to be a boring, grey daily routine if only the concepts "to be and to become", and not "to search" exists in his task.

Only the panorama of the grey earthly facts stops turning before the disciple's eyes. His spirit is pouring into everything and it always connects all the daily events with the bonds of love, it always merges into oneness both working worlds: the one of the living heaven and the one of the living earth.

In order for you to become a high, spiritually developed living being yourself, who could become disciple, you need to understand, to accept and to bless all your external circumstances.

You need to understand that your body and your surroundings aren't the fruit of only this incarnation. They are always the karma of the ages. Not a single external circumstance may be rejected by the efforts of your will. The more persistently you will want to hurl away the certain people's characteristics or the row of circumstances from your path, the more persistently they will be following you, even if you succeeded to throw them away temporarily or to hide from them.

They will change their form, and sooner or later they will rise before you. Only the power of love may liberate the external and inner man's path, only she alone will turn the grey day into the happiness of shining creation.

It seems to every man in the beginning of his spiritual growth that the talent of creation – that's an externally expressed power of spirit. He doesn't evaluate his great, intangible inner strength: obedience, purity, love and joy if they don't sound for him as the useful activity of the earth.

Only every action of his spiritual and physical creation, only his long work by always expanding his consciousness is leading him purposefully to the goal of Eternity. His external order becomes the direct reflection of his inner order, exactly as every consideration of the breakthrough of his everyday creation may not flow into the actions of his day without the base of his dialectical thinking. If a sculptor wants to represent the striving for victory of his nation, he must delve deeply into its history, he must feel with his spirit the invisible pages of his nation's glory and national wisdom, he must feel with his heart its burden of ages, the principal ideas that make it develop – only then he will be able to hear the note with which its modernity is ringing for the nation.

Only then the sculptor will be able to create the living swiftness from the clay, because he has already gone through the whole cross path of the nation in his heart, all the pain of its crucifixion, its great walking along the historical stages of suffering and exaltation that lead to that culminating moment of manifestation of the nation's spirit power which the artist wants to perpetuate in history.

Neither clay nor canvas will sustain the several year test if their creators seized a theme and gave it to the masses as the well saleable and profitable goods. Their works, as the bad advertisement, will get among the similar, casual trash.

An accurate observation of the disciple's, as well as the talented doctor's, spiritual eyes is always leading his creation, which operates directly through his intuition. But intuition – that's not today's product, it's the synthesis of Wisdom that awakens also not in this visible, current moment, it is only the visible consequence of those many invisible, creative strains which are called – Love.

It is impossible to liberate Love within yourself by using the efforts of your mind and to reach the possibility to pour it into all your matters and meetings calmly and simply as your benevolence. While observing freely your flights, instability, scepticism or greediness, you can pave only narrow paths through which the power as the circulation of blood of a new organism will start flowing after some time.

What is the discipleship? That's only the path of one's liberation. Can you consider life without any world outlook to be the discipleship? Such discipleship may not exist. It isn't important for how long and through which ways man would be searching for his Teacher, he won't be able to find him if his

world outlook is light-minded and if he's waiting naively that something will change by itself inside of him, that something will open up, burst like a festering ulcer, or on the contrary, that something will come into bloom like a double blossom.

The most boring "seekers" are those who always turn back and who are searching for confirmation or proof in the presence for those ravings about which they were dreaming in their youth. The most grand path of all work paths – that's the path of one's liberation.

Not a single moment exists which could fall out of the chain of karma without the greatest man's duty to take it upon himself again instantly, because it is always the call of Eternity, it is always leading him to liberation independent of how unimportant it would seem to be for a light-minded person.

The disciple who has evaluated not only his own, but also everybody else's path, that is after he understood the importance of his incarnation, may not be light-minded anymore. It doesn't mean that he has to walk with physiognomy of the one who is carrying out an important "mission" and who cannot laugh. It means to comprehend the value of the flying past "now" in every moment, to be able to take everything from it and to give back to it in a creative way.

One's body and spirit, as indivisible cells, may coordinate the heaven and the earth only by developing in a parallel way. And the more one's spirit is developing, the more one's body cells liberate, they prepare to imbibe the radiant solar matter into the organism.

Death is only the action of the greatest joy for a cleaned organism. Death is the cross road of liberation for a man who was filling the bags of superstitions during his entire life, although he was very honest and kind.

In most cases one's mode of life is namely those walls of superstitions which the departed is unable to overstep. The first rule of the disciple's conduct for you must be your day's easiness as a complicated combination of the mixed spiritual union with the living life of your every encountered man. "Day" for you – that's the invisible assistants who participate always and everywhere, who surround you in all your affairs and meetings independent of the place, time and distance. You are not alone anymore, you are always working with them.

Until the physical disciple's sensations develop, which allow him to feel the presence of the high powers clearly, his loyalty has to grow into great love. Love for whomever it would be dedicated – for God, for Teacher, for a beloved saint, - only then will bring you to your desired union with those whom you worship and for whom you call when it grows into serving people who are next to you, for whom the disciple will learn to bring love regards.

The path of the discipleship is the same for everybody: if the unfortunate people are knocking at your door – then you are on the right way."

The second record was over.

I didn't even feel how I covered my face with my hands and I was plunged in those great thoughts which I was reading. My God! How still far it was for me till those stages of the mature spirit, about which I was reading now. My thoughts strayed to my dear brother-father, twenty-four year old youth, an officer who almost daily used to encounter the mountaineers, who always risked to be wounded or killed, who always used to find tenderness, caress, a soothing smile for his small brother-son.

I remembered that constant brother Nikolay's calm, I meditated upon his entire life anew, and it seemed to be a heroic deed to me now. I couldn't remember a single woman in my brother Nikolay's path of life, and he was unquestionable handsome man.

Now I understood his painful, changed face beyond recognition anew when for the first time I saw Nal in K.'s avenue. Also I understood his suffering in Ali's garden before the feast. I remembered another man who chose the spiritual path, - young Ali. Tears came pouring from my eyes, but they weren't those tears with which one bemoaned mortal sufferings of one's dear people, but they were the tears, rolling down from the respect for a grandeur which man's spirit was able to withstand and what an example of shining help such man may become. My thoughts, my heart was trembling with respect for everybody whom I met lately. I was unable to find any words to tell my gratitude for I. and Francisco, I only could repeat my brother Nikolay's first words of his records:

GLORY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BROUGHT ME TO THIS

GREAT MOMENT OF MY LIFE.

GLORY FOR THOSE WHO WILL REACH IT AS I DID.

I felt that Eta was pulling my sleeve, I took my wonderful bird, I pressed myself to his head and I couldn't hold my tears anymore. Eta embraced my head with his wings as if by understanding these tears and by comforting me. I. entered the room and found us sitting like this.

My dear Teacher's and friend's hand descended tenderly on my head, and his unique, tender voice was encouraging me.

"Why are you crying, my dear friend? That what you've read about dear people to you and about their great friends, and what has shaken you so much, only for you seems to be the heroism of renunciation, right? For them – that's the heroism of creation, the heroism of the greatest, invincible creative power and Joy. Memorize that what I will tell you now and try to apply my words for your actions as the laws of your new life. We were talking about tears with you several times already. And every time I was always explaining to you that tears, any tears were making a man weaker. While you, after entering the path of liberation, took the activity of joy upon yourself to become the power for a weak person, comfort for the suffering one and help for the one who's lost hope. Now don't try to hold your tears by using your will, but every time when a tear is ready to roll down from your eyes, rise up with your spirit and remember all the unfortunate people, there are so many of them in the world even without your tears. There are so many crying people in the universe that the disciple must dry their tears and not increase that flow. As soon as your thought rises above your egoism, you will see that every tear – that's the tear for yourself, however you would estimate it. Now when you can hear the voice of Silence and you can see the images of the people dear to you independent of the place and the distance, your every tear destroys one of the bridges through which you communicate with them. Start your day with a blissful joy to live one more day on the Earth, to have a chance again to greet God in man and to help him. The higher your own liberation is taking place, the clearer it becomes to you how easy man's path may be and into what hard life he turns his own and often his own people's days. My friend, mature in the family of the people who surround you now where you are free from all private worries, from all the conditionalities of your mode of life, mature for that period when you leave this place and you feel the strain of people's passions. Only now you can develop your self-control in an absolutely calm way. Very few people receive this happiness: to shape his mind, heart and character among the people who don't possess any egoism. All your meetings

here – that’s the meetings of your old and new karmas. In order for you not to miss the link of the meetings of those who love and care for you, only one task remains for you: not to pour your tears which obscure the spirit’s eyes, but to pour joy which helps every living being who goes past you to stir beauty within herself, and not melancholy. Take Eta, we’ll go to bathe and we won’t come back – we’ll visit Francisco. I need to talk to him about many things, and most importantly – to find out whether he will let me go to the distant Communities where I’m invited persistently. There’s also much business here, and it will be difficult for Francisco without me. My dear, join the net of our common work interests and forget about the possibility to cry, although you would like to cry out of respect of others’ heroism. That what today seems to be an unreachable heroism to you, tomorrow will become only a heavy burden, while on the day after tomorrow – it won’t even seem to be heavy for you. The task of the day – not the heroism of your feelings itself, but that everything what you reach wouldn’t seem to be reached by the cross road, but that it would come in an easy, joyous and simple way. Today you’ll have a lot of work to do. Did you sleep in the night?” I. asked me by looking attentively at me.

I told him how I spent the night, what I saw and how surprised I was after seeing lady Berdran on duty.

“And again, my dear I., I made sure how immature my perception was, how blind I was by deciding about people, how I couldn’t perceive anything in life that surrounded me.”

“Everyone has his own path, Lovushka. Perhaps many thousands would like to exchange their roles with you, but the scene of life theatre submits to the laws of the universe, and the roles in this theatre may not be distributed according to personal favour of artistic director. The highest artistic direction brings everybody to his own working place in the universe, and how everybody is going to work there – that’s individual and unique. It doesn’t matter how many roles man would choose, he will be playing only that one for which his harmony has matured.”

After having bathed, we went to the hospital to visit nurse Alexandra. For the first time I was so early in the hospital. The view which I saw here moved me. A lot of recovering children were sitting at the little childish tables in the big dining-room. The same older children and young nurses attended to them. Again I reproached myself that up to now I knew neither the size of the hospital nor the extent of help rendered for the inhabitants.

Many fascinated children were greeting I., while I didn’t know again when and where they could become acquainted with him. The shrimps didn’t pay attention to any discipline, they rushed at I. and they were hanging on him like grapes. Francisco came from the distant corner and he took us with the whole burden of the shrimps to his table. Cold vegetarian dishes were served for the breakfast, but everybody who wanted to could get the hot soup, potatoes, besides the fruit was put everywhere.

Francisco, as always when he met me, didn’t let my hand go for a long time and he was smiling tenderly.

“Yes, Lovushka, yes, grow, handsome, grow. Soon you will see the unfortunate people’s life, accumulate joy, so that you could flood them. You will see such unfortunate people about whose existence you didn’t even know up to now. It is time, it is time to reach manhood for you. Don’t worry I., take all of them and travel. They will help me here. Florentian will send somebody soon. Some helpers will show up for me.”

“Francisco, you are always prepared to pile any burden on yourself, but will your health allow you to work so much? Sometimes you forget that Florentian has forbidden you to be on duty in the nights without any rest day.”

“Don’t worry, my friend. I regularly spend three hours a day by the books, and it gives such rest for me that I have enough strength to walk in the night. Tonight a great meeting happened. Oh, how happy I was that I could save the unfortunate woman brought by destiny from the real death! She was already prepared to drown her newborn baby and jump herself after it. Now both mother and her baby rejoice at life, and I’m sure that this baby will be a great man.”

Francisco was all radiant. Love was pouring from him just like that. His face which never became tanned was almost transparent, with reddish cheeks it was notable not only for its whiteness among the dark and sunburnt faces. It would have been notable also among a thousand of white faces – such high power of spirit illuminated all his facial features.

I made certain clearly again what Love was and I remembered I.’s words which he told me not so long ago: “You think that noble people’s behaviour – that’s heroism of their renunciation. For them – that’s heroism of creation, heroism of the greatest, invincible creative powers and Joy.”

Now I could see the living example of these I.’s words, and I could feel the feeling of two kinds. On the one hand, I comprehended how now I still was unable to reach such psyche, on the other – I was still thinking anyway that man could reach such state only through many renunciations.

As though by having heard my thoughts, Francisco put his hand on my shoulder and looked at my eyes.

“Christ had twelve apostles, but only John alone was walking down the path of selfless love. All the rest of them were walking down the most different paths. And if every one of them did their own way of the cross, then it happened only because the power of their passions had to become an invincible fearlessness, loyalty and confidence. I’ve already told you that the meaning of the cross – that’s the combination of four blisses – love, calm, joy and fearlessness. These love aspects developed till the end within a man give harmony to him. Everybody is trying to enter it and to fortify their positions in it in their own way, but only that one will pick its fruit, who will find joy along his path of development. Life, the whole Life of the universe is always affirmative. You can create only by affirming. That one who is unable to learn the joy of affirmation in the daily routine of his life, in his circumstances, that one may not become the light for others along the path. However, Lovushka, you cannot try the cross of a strange life. Only one is suitable for your own shoulders: that what is your own. Now it seems to you that my path is impossible for you. Believe me that the same impossible your path seems to be to me. I cannot imagine that I could sit down and write some novel or narrative. Although I acknowledge the great significance of the writer, inventor and so on, I cannot even think about any of those paths. That would be only making people laugh. I can imagine myself in the roles of Bronski or Aninov even less, although I experienced myself not a single time what a wonderful power an artist’s talent was and how effective its influence was. Man’s talent illuminates all of him in a flash, while other paths of spiritual influence require long and tedious work. But why we are searching for examples of comparison. If I had to live and work instead of our mutual friend I., then I wouldn’t have the strength to, because I couldn’t wander among so many people and I would die without bringing neither use nor joy for anybody. The cross which man is carrying on his shoulders through his daily routine is always light, but man’s sight is so polluted that he’s hammering in nails to his own cross instead of the harmony with which he should create and make everybody’s lives who are walking next to him easier. Instead of the four blisses he’s carrying the cross with nails by rending lacerated wounds for himself.

Now we’ll go to my place. I will give several letters for my friends to you, who are now living in the distant Communities. By handing my letters to them, take a good look at them. Perhaps the man’s life in the secluded, unknown spot of the world without any noisy arena of actions will stop looking so terrible to you.”

We went to Francisco's room, and I couldn't stop wondering at how accurately and correctly he noticed my sensations and thoughts. Actually, I often used to think about lives of the people whom I met here, who were very developed and talented, who were always living in secluded settlements. Even more often it was sad and dreary for me when I used to imagine thousands of people who had never left their out-of-the-way places, who were satisfied with their modest fate in their homes and work one generation after another one, inherited from their forefathers. Francisco perceived all these thoughts of mine and he stirred them like ashes with the poker of his love.

When we entered Francisco's room, first of all he lifted the lid of his marble table, and I saw a wonderful, high vase under it, as it seemed to me from the first look. But that was a cup made of the red jewel, maybe of ruby, and the liquid was bubbling in it by sparkling in all colours.

Now I understood that it was an altar. Francisco's altar didn't look like any of the altars which I had seen up to now.

A high, big red cup was standing in the middle, while some much smaller ones of the most different colours were lined in a semicircle behind it. In the beginning it seemed to me that there were many cups, but having looked attentively, I saw that there were six of them without the red one. Three of them were standing from the right side and three from the left side.

I travelled to the little orange house in my thoughts where I was standing before the same altar not so long ago.

Francisco touched the red cup with both of his hands, its flame blazed brighter, and I heard his whisper: "Let my hands and my spirit be as pure as Your flame when I'm writing Your call for Your servants."

He stood for a while, concentrated like this, he went to the writing-table, took a sheet of paper and began to write. Like all people I often saw how others were writing. I also saw both the absent-minded ones, such like myself, and concentrated, attentive ones, but neither up to this hour, nor during my entire future life I didn't see such face and such figure as Francisco's at the writing-table.

Besides that it seemed that he had forgotten about everybody and everything, his expression was always changing. The mimic of his great face was so clear that as though I saw myself those to whom he was writing and I understood what he was writing.

I was observing Francisco and his work so deeply that I didn't even notice when I left. As though the personal Francisco's conversation with every correspondent was taking place before me. The entire gallery of faces swam past me. The heap of the letters grew, and it seemed to me that not the letters were put in it, but the little pieces of Francisco's soul which he was tearing from himself and putting in envelopes.

But then he concentrated in an especial way, he bent over the sheet of paper, began to write slower than other letters, as though the beams stretched to the lines of his writing from under his fingers, and it seemed to me that I could even see a woman who was pressing a seven-year-old boy to herself sorrowfully.

The illusion was so clear that I already wanted to leave the room and not to disturb the woman to talk to Francisco, but he looked at me and told me.

"Learn to control the space. I drew you into my work, so that it would be easier to give help for all my friends, including your own love."

Now I understood that those views that seemed to be only my fantasy actually were the result of Francisco's love, who connected me to his thoughts.

Having finished the last letter, he fell to thinking, he plunged in a deep prayer, stood up, took the letter into his hands and he went to the altar with it. Here he went down on his knees, put the letter on the fire of the cup, embraced the cup with both of his hands, pressed his forehead to it and became numb in the ecstasy of the prayer.

I was shaken by the power and energy that was spreading from the entire Francisco's being like a cry and demand. I also knelt down, shocked by the ecstasy of his love and self-sacrifice that he had forgotten about everything, except that woman for whom he was praying the higher living beings whom only he knew to help.

Sympathy for that woman for whom Francisco was praying crossed me like the flame of the fire. For the first time I understood the powerful power of the prayer and its true meaning.

I was begging for purity of my hands and my heart as much as I could, so that I would have enough strength to hand Francisco's letters and that I wouldn't pollute them with dregs of my own weakness and passions. I needed plenty of effort in order to control the tears of my compassion and respect by seeing my friend's self-sacrifice and even his hardly bearable kindness.

My heart expanded, I remembered Ali's words for my brother about the impoverished God within a man again, for whom he needed to serve, and once again I perceived my helplessness before the barrier on which the words: "To be and to become" were shining.

Now I saw one of those who didn't need "to become" already, who already "was" an incarnated kindness. Francisco stood up and called me to himself. When I went up and stood next to him by the altar, he told me.

"If a disciple started communicating with one Teacher, then he started communicating with all of them. No separating screen may exist for the look of those who have become bright anymore. Teacher of the ray of Love gives you a task which I pass to you in this moment. Concentrate the entire purity of your heart and comprehend how everything is connected in the universe, how warranty of the ones for the other ones is taking place everywhere. A moment ago you still didn't know about the existence of the whole people company. Now they are your closest and the most sacred friends, because you give them help, while they are suffering. I will put the little scrap of the chiton of one of the purest and most loving living being. If in that moment when you hand this letter you can hold bliss and Light in your heart with which you are standing by the altar now, then rub the baby of that mother to whom I'm writing with this scrap of the chiton. If you feel that you became absent-minded, that my image isn't burning in your spiritual vision anymore, then give it to its mother, let her rub her son's little face herself. Comprehend now that service to your close person – that isn't an outburst of your kindness when you are prepared to give everything to him and then to think where to get something from what you gave again yourself. Service to your close person – that's the line of your behaviour, that's the everyday work which joy of life unites and feeds. Appreciate this joy to live not for the searching for Wisdom, not for the knowledge and your experienced love ecstasies, not for glorification of God as the top of happiness, but as the simple concept: everything is connected, you cannot isolate yourself from a single man, not only from the whole complex of your circumstances. The value of your lived days is measured with only one currency: where and how many threads of love you wove during the day, where and how many of them you were able to strengthen and with what you tied the supporting knots. Keep this moment in your memory and strengthen the tread of your work with me, also together with my Teacher, Teacher of Love, whose name is Jesus. I strengthen my knot that has tied the threads of work of both of us with the whole love of my heart and my entire purity.

Accept my letters by the altar of love and take them with that harmony which you are full of now. Help given with joy and easily always reaches its goal. Man rises to the higher stage, and all the bright ones of the universe say: "We've overcome another stage." Because, as I've already mentioned, everything is connected, everything is unity, nobody may be kept separate from the encounters of life, although he doesn't imagine himself his connection with the Only One Life."

Francisco put the little scrap into the envelope, took the letter that didn't burn down in the flame of the cup, pressed it to his lips, crossed himself with it and uttered: "bliss of Love, bliss of Calm, bliss of Joy, bliss of Fearlessness, fly with the wings of harmony of my loyalty and flow into that heart for whom I pray you, my Teacher, my friend, my assistant of Light and Love."

The flame in the cup flared up. Francisco, and I after him, knelt down before the altar again and closed the lid of the table.

Having handed the whole heap of the letters – only a few words were in some of them – he wrapped them into the beautiful, silk headscarf which reminded me of the blue sir Vomi's one, only Francisco's one was of warm, red colour.

This comparison awakened my recollections about that wonderful man, and I asked Francisco whether he knew sir Vomi.

"I know, I know him, Lovushka, but I don't know Chava, I've never seen her. What do you think, would I be afraid of her blackness?" Francisco was laughing merrily, humour was shining in his eyes.

"Now I am very ashamed, Francisco, but I have to say that back then when I saw her I was so frightened that I remember that feeling up to now. After so long time when I'm among the people for so long time already, whose feelings and strength know neither fear nor irritation, I changed myself, and my perception changed. I couldn't even imagine before, not only to follow it, that every meeting – that's my the Only One. I didn't understand that it was unimportant what kind of his Only One was, but that it was important how my Only One who is living within myself greeted the divine fire of the encountered man. Now I cannot imagine how I could meet a man only according to his personal characteristics and not according to the fire of the Only One Life. Also I began to understand something else about which I. used to tell me often that the healthy mind of the earth and the man's tact formed the integral mechanism without which it was impossible to be on duty and to be able to give Teacher's help to people. Now it is absolutely clear to me that "to know" means "to be able to do." In this moment something what was preventing me from "to be and to become" disappeared within me."

"Lovushka, this is a very big step of man's spiritual growth. Man can behave in an angelic way one or two times, and of course, it is much. But the path of man's liberation isn't based on these acts, but only on his ordinary working day. When you bring my letter to the old man Staranda, take a good look at him. Not only at him, but also at all those old men who are living with him in the same house. That entire big, remote house is full of people who were searching zealously for God and for the paths to Him during their entire lives. But none of them had and have till now the feeling of tact and comprehension of the true beauty. Their spiritual searching was contradicting their actions during their entire lives. All of them were kind without exception, they were prepared to give their last shirt and anyway, they couldn't sow anything round themselves, except irritation. Even after bearing lots of suffering, having reached the Community, and here they cannot be harmonious, their auras are always trembling with the sparkling fire and they disturb calm in any atmosphere, wherever they would get. For some of them, for example for Staranda, there isn't any hope anymore to reach tact in this incarnation and to develop the feeling of beauty. His own overestimation has taken root within him and stiffened from old age. Understanding that only he alone is right has penetrated into him like rust, while others are thinking about the great truths superficially. He

thinks that if he understood his Teacher's words in his own way, then the truth is namely like this. When you see and know that he understood everything the other way round, - then you are helpless to explain it to him anyway, because his tedious, stiffened egocentrism makes him to listen to you silently and to think to himself: "All right, talk, I know myself what I need and what is better for me." Be vigilant when you become acquainted with these people. See clearly what affirmation of Life within oneself and around one is, and what a changed egoism is, which has turned into a stupid and stubborn overestimation of oneself. Such man, without arguing with you, as though by trying not to irritate you, as though by protecting your home and your meeting, doesn't see that he already condemned you even before meeting you, he decided beforehand that you acted not in such a way as it was needed according to his highest understanding. Also before meeting you, by praying for you, he was begging his God "to illuminate" you, but he didn't think that he should stretch the beam of joyous love from his heart, to concentrate his thoughts into the stream of Light and to spread them under your feet like the carpet of love. If a great disaster or trouble befalls you, he will tell you sorrowfully: "Apparently you deserve it," but he won't show big love to you or comfort you with a single word, what tact demands from him, not to speak of the dear energies of sympathy with which he would wash off your disaster or trouble and would help you to withstand them. If he excited your irritation, if he exhausted you with his tactless requests by often getting the things that you need out of you and by bringing them to others, by giving charity at your expense, then his entire gratitude to you will be displayed only in that that he will say: "Anyway Teacher is teaching us to do differently, while you are in a rage here. He himself won't understand again that his heart has turned into a dry sponge and that he cannot give calm, because he doesn't love and he hardly ever loved anybody, although of course, he was thinking that he loved. Often these people were loved passionately, but their inner dryness, although it is covered with their external loveliness, used to alienate everybody from them. They exhausted and disappointed all their friends very much. They remained completely lonesome and anyway they couldn't understand their great guilt for Life. However, every one of them also has great merits, so these people are our own. Life itself finds the way to give longevity to them, so that they would have time to throw the superstition of the external humiliation off, behind which their great haughtiness is hiding. Life is waiting, it gives time to the old, dry sponge of their hearts to be filled with clean and joyous love again. Sometimes Life succeeds, and such man goes through his inner transformation during his old age, he achieves the real humiliation which helps him to bear losses easily. Their intolerance is the most sad thing. They long for a great deed during their entire lives. Often the thought begins to stir in their brain: "To sacrifice myself," but when they have to go through a hunger or cold, that becomes an especially difficult suffering for them. Namely here it turns out how much real heroism the man has accumulated in his spirit, although he was longing for the great deed during his entire life by refusing meat and fish, and when the time came to manage without that without what the great part of poor people manage to do during their entire lives, they don't have strength even to smile to such trifle as an external loss. Take a good look, Lovushka, and learn the lesson not for developing of psychological analysis of the writer, but for opening widely your love and compassion, joy of knowledge: how difficult everybody's path of liberation is and how you may not condemn a man, but only learn from him by opening to yourself your quite big faults and weaknesses. Before you give the letter to every of my addressee, prepare yourself for this sacred task. Remember how we were standing by the cup of the burning love, and before handing the letter, give a wash for your hands and your heart in its fire. Go, my friend. We won't see each other anymore before your departure, but I will be with you everywhere in my thoughts."

Francisco kissed me and added that I should go home alone, while I. will come back when he finishes his business, and that I shouldn't worry about him.

I left the territory of the hospital by carrying the dear letters. For the first time I received the task from the man who surpassed me with his spirit so much. I pressed to Florentian in my thoughts by asking him to help me to fulfil this task with the greatest self-control, tact and love. I was carrying the little

packet like a sacred thing and only wanted not to meet and talk to anybody. I chose the most remote paths and I came back to my room unnoticed by anybody.

Having hidden Francisco's packet, I sat down to read my brother's note-book. My excited spirit couldn't pass to the earthly work immediately. I had to recover an absolute equilibrium and self-control, and my brother's note-book suited the best for this.

Chapter 9

Third brother Nikolay's record

"[...] During our last conversation we were talking about the paths of discipleship, about that that easy paths didn't exist, that man's development always required great effort in all the fields of creative work. And the higher man rises through his creation, the wider his horizon becomes, the further he is able to see his path and the possibilities of his achievements, the clearer he comprehends the infinity of his development and poor level of his own achievements.

That is characteristic to all who are really talented, to all who are creating, and not "contriving", to all who are working with inspiration, and not turning in the vortex of their imaginary expression and trying to put out the shining brightly primitivism of spirit, body and interests with their exalted passion instead of the real creation of the fiery inspiration.

Three paths exist among all different paths of discipleship, in which the difficulties are so big that only the chosen ones may walk them down, who themselves are already close to the limit of perfection.

The first of these paths – the path of love.

The second one – the path of sadness.

The third one – the path of clairvoyance.

I can see an amazement on your face. It seems to you that namely these paths which show the high level of one's development should be easier than others. Soon you will understand what the difficulty of each of these paths is and what every man has to overcome within himself in order to be able to walk them down.

Such path of love as people imagine it doesn't exist. The man who thinks that he understood what love is understood only one thing: compassion is endless and it never pushes him away, so for everything what he will do he will get not only indulgence from the Pope, but also the thorough absolution from heaven itself.

The man always cherishes a hope that those saints will stand up for him, whom he got used to address with his prayers, but what a prayer is, how to prepare for it, he didn't think about it or even knew that he needed to.

He knows how he needs to prepare himself for the meal, sleep, a serious conversation, but his point of view of the prayer is only like this: to cross himself hurriedly, to mumble the prayer even in more hurry or to weep bitterly for a while, to mumble for a long time and... the ritual necessary for "the saint" is done.

People's opinion about those who are walking down the path of love shows itself only in their exactingness for them. People visit disciples without restraint, they pour out all their rubbish on them, they pour their tears for their apparently injured vanity, arguments, lack of means and so on. They take offence if they don't meet them with their spread arms or stroke their heads, but look at this period of their confusion calmly. They came where they must hear them out and comfort them, didn't they?!

Since they still love only themselves and not people, they cannot even imagine what the disciple has seen within them, because he has already passed from the level of self-love to the real love for people a long time ago. Without comprehending it themselves, the people have lost their sensitiveness in the storm of the dregs of their benumbed egoism, which is bubbling within and around them, and which they spread in the disciple's home. They are convinced of their truth and they leave irritated, with their injured pride because of the imaginary coldness with which their "frankness", their complaints and moans were met.

Every disciple who is walking down the path of love experiences tens of such encounters every day. The cases of the real disaster beam like precious pearls in the heap of dung when the disciple, with his entire love, hurries to liberate and to open the eyes for man into the treasure of living Love which is within his heart.

The disciple of the path of love – that's the pure man who is standing by the edge of perfection, who has overcome all his passions. That is that man for whom his personal characteristics and advantages don't exist anymore, but in whom all the aspects of the Only One have come to life and are operating. Since all the aspects of the Only One are operating within him, such disciple isn't only the little part of the entire universe anymore. He is the little part of the Eternal Movement, which is cleaned from self-love and which is spreading only joy of love for people on the Earth.

How do you imagine, how steady this disciple's harmony has to be? What is power have to be, so that he would withstand the constant blows of auras and that he wouldn't break from disharmony of his encounters?

Such power of will doesn't exist. There's only one power: merging with the Only One Life. Since the disciple of the path of love has already overcome his self-love, and love for people is burning within him in the constant flame, then no blows of egoistic auras and attacks are able to disturb his harmony. His spirit – that's fire. No efforts of the evil, dregs and complaints of those who are searching for the wealth of the Earth, but who insist that they are searching for the Light and for the paths to it may extinguish or die out this fire anymore, they may not even quiver it.

Such is the spirit of the disciple of the path of Love, but his body – the matter that submits to the laws of the earth – is often cracked, it is suffering from serious illnesses, because it draws the poisonous and irritable fires of the auras of his encountered people to himself.

A lot of body illnesses happen in all the paths of discipleship. They happen more often along the path of love. Only few masters of karmas who were prepared for serving the mankind in an especial way during the entire centuries are able to master the matter of the body and they overcome the eternal work lesson with good health. Also they are educated differently, they are protected only by using the means that allow to receive the highest knowledge, which you won't understand at the moment.

So, now it is clear to you that the path of love – that isn't a sentimental prayer for the people's sins or disasters. That isn't any comfort of crying juvenile children with fruit drops, but that is the great mission of help to open the veil of passions of every encountered person, which covers the living little parts of the Only One within man with dirty and dark layers.

If the disciple himself would still possess at least a drop of his egoistic "I", his path of love would become an unbearable suffering, and a sudden death would threaten him.

Lips of the loving man burst into bloom everywhere where only he is able to take the turbid wave of the crying encountered person into himself and to open his dense veils till the very heart, so that he could pour a drop of his Light there. And this pouring of spirit into another heart always has

consequences for the matter of the disciple's body. During each of such encounters he takes into himself – into his nerves, his blood, his heart – the dirt and the flow of grief of the encountered person. Having made it easier for the encountered person, this strong poison and stench remain in the disciple's body.

Besides that difficulty, the path of love has another complicated side. With the spirit's eyes the disciple has perceived all the wounds of the man's spirit a long time ago, he comprehended all his possibilities, the whole truth and falsehood of his essence from the smouldering and twinkling fires of his aura a long time ago, while the talkative and complaining person is still talking his ear off by trying to exalt, expose and reveal his suffering as much as possible.

And here the complete inability to feel the irritating or indignant factor saves the disciple.

The disciple of the path of love is unable to walk through life by following only the laws of the earth anymore, only the narrow earthly rightness. He – like a living part of the constantly moving life – is living according to the universal law of Accuracy.

During those moments when people's emanations overload the cup of the disciple's everyday work especially and his spirit is suffering from that heaviness no less than his body, one of the Teachers who is closest to him always comes hurriedly to help the disciple, even if he isn't his personal Teacher or a warrantor.

These moments of especially heavy cup – is always the new stage in the disciple's path to Light and development. Whatever the disciple's path would be, wherever and whatever he would do by saving his own people, these painful moments of crossing the stages of development lead everybody inevitably.

You are surprised. You've already understood the most important rule of the spiritual life: "To know – it means to be able to do" and you decide right by following the earthly logic. If the disciple "knows", it is also easy for him to act. That will be right in that case if all disciple's passions have already become the power of joy. Then the stages that seem to be the most difficult become always easier, and finally the disciple doesn't even notice them, he just feels a surge of an especial joy.

But as I already mentioned to you, only those disciples achieve such state of spiritual power, in whom all the aspects of their Only One have come to life and are operating. Then the spiritual "to know" means "to be able to do".

The path of love gives calming to each encountered person – that's its especial feature. Namely due to this peculiarity the path of love is valued the most from all the paths of discipleship.

In your encounters value not that love with which people are chanting the exalted hymns for their God, Teacher, friends or they are crying and burning with their devotion to you. Those who love like this actually don't care much about devotion and they are watching with envy, whether not too little merits they will get for their loyalty.

Appreciate and spread that love with which your encountered person didn't disturb another one's calm or make a strange heart angry. Now you pass on from the person who is glad and searching to the ranks of those for whom the only path of Life has opened and who has found it among a million of illusions.

But don't think that something changes in the disciple's psyche at that moment when he finds and sees his Teacher. I've already mentioned our proverb to you: "When the disciple is prepared – also his Teacher is prepared."

I've already been expressing my presence to you in different ways for a long time. Once I sent an old traveller to you, who taught you Pali language, but it didn't even occur to you to listen more attentively to his stories.

You were learning willingly, because you desired to read the ancient books which you happened to buy in the poor shack of the mountains and which were meant to be burn down. But your scepticism prevented you from listening attentively to the old traveller's words, to his stories about India. You didn't evaluate him sufficiently. You didn't pay enough attention to the meeting...

Now when I tell you about the difficulties of the path, I especially direct your attention to the feature of the human scepticism. That person who is unable to believe, to feel, to devote himself to a business completely and till the end, that one may not become disciple at all. However the sceptic would be searching for God and for the paths to Him, for his Teacher and for the meeting with him since his youth, if he's unable to stay loyal till the end, all his searching is in vain. With one of his hands he will be searching for books, he will write out the words of Wisdom, while with his other hand, with his everyday actions, a board after board, he will be destroying the bridge that leads him to that Wisdom, to his Teacher, to the living heaven.

Everybody is building the bridge that leads to his Teacher himself. The bridge grows out of his heart and it continues for as long as the man's loyalty is able to reach. Every disciple's bridge of his heart certainly leans upon his Teacher's heart with its another end. And the disciple's loyalty holds both ends.

Now try to understand whether the sceptic is able to build such bridge from his heart if doubts are always nagging his spirit?

I sent the old traveller to you. Why couldn't you believe him till the end? You were full of illusions about the exceptional radiance of the Teacher's appearance. You couldn't understand the primary truth: "No one is your friend or brother, but every man is great Teacher for you."

The superstition that you wanted to see your Teacher, shining with glory and luxury, with miracles of magic and external grandeur prevented you from seeing my messenger in the poor beggar. Remember forever: our messenger doesn't shout like in the market, and if we need it – then also the ant will be a messenger.

Now, in this moment there's left from your scepticism. The energy of loyalty is burning stably in your heart, but did it happen exactly in this moment? Didn't you whisper a month ago by saving the girl from the company of drunk bandits and by attacking five of them alone on not the most swift-footed horse: "Teacher, hurry to me"? And I heard your cry, I sent my help to you: the wind for your horse's feet, the power for your striking hand, sluggishness and horror for the bandits' hearts...

Not only the dragon of doubts, but also the one of kindness emerges before every disciple who is walking down the ray of Love.

The concept of the Earth "kind", that is seemingly kind, may not cross the gates of tests which lead into any path of discipleship. "Kind" that is understood like this won't overcome the gates that lead to the ray of Love. It will conquer the dragon of scepticism and doubts, but it will be helpless before the dragon of kindness.

In order for you to carry the cup of love through your daily routine, you need to possess and to pour not the ordinary human kindness into the actions of your day and not even the real kindness that is necessary for other rays, but that highest Kindness and Wisdom.

What is the difference between these kindnesses? What is characteristic to each of them? Both of them – are actions of compassion, but where the ordinary kindness will search for a possibility to comfort and to calm, the highest kindness will perceive the entire man's path – his past, his present and his future – and it will be searching for the most active means, so that it would awaken the man's own energy not only for comprehension of the facts of the Earth, but also for their connection with both plans, with the whole Life, with Eternity.

The highest kindness of the path of Love – that's the accumulation of tact, joy, self-expression and energy that awakens man's powers. The kind man's spirit is boiling in the cup of his Love. And the freer his spirit is, the more aspects of the movement of the Only One in his organism exist, the brighter the spirit of his creating powers is shining in the cup in all colours of the rainbow, which makes an impression of the bubbling, fiery liquid.

You could call the kindness of the ray of Love to be the kindness of foresight, because the disciple who possesses it sees the entire path in a flash, along which he could direct the encountered person's spirit into self-control, he perceives his strength, the possibilities of his wisdom and... he rarely strokes his head. In most cases he takes the whip and he's driving out sluggishness of the encountered person's heart, the superstitions of his self-love, he is lashing the narrowness of his spiritual horizons.

By penetrating into the most secret man's corners, the disciple of love breaks off the thread of petty complaints, with one strict gesture he shows to man the scars of those wounds which he has made to himself with his superstitions. These superstitions are looming around the man like the mountains of rubbish. If man is able to recover his sight and comprehend that he is sitting, encircled by this created superstitions, then he evaluates, accepts and blesses his present circumstances. And his bond with the disciple of the ray of Love is settled for ages. He is walking calmed, and sooner or later he achieves that spiritual plan when he is living in two worlds. If his pettiness weighed down the Light that opened in his heart for a moment and if the outbreak of his sacred joy is going out, then also his meeting is going out like the wick of the smouldering candle. And the entire centuries may pass until the new, dear and effective meeting happens.

There won't be any scar left for man from such meeting, and what about the disciple? Whether the meeting was effective or futile, the tracks are left within the disciple in both cases. The star of the meeting as the sign of the effective merging of Love remains in the disciple's aura from an effective meeting when the bond settles and man turns to liberation.

If the disciple pressed the cup of his Love to the man's lips, feet and heart uselessly and the meeting remained lifeless, then the bond of this unsuccessful meeting remains for his entire future life. And the record about his unfulfilled lesson appears in the book of his Life. The power of the disciple's unfulfilled duty will keep the pages of the book of his Life glued together until he reaches the creative result with the new meeting and often with the entire row of meetings and succeeds to direct the spirit of his encountered person to Light and calm.

Think about that what I've told you and never gather any duties and obligations which nobody gave to you.

It isn't absolutely clear to you why this law of the voluntary obedience of the discipleship is so strict and categorical. If this law wasn't unconditional and if it didn't protect disciples, then they would get entangled in meaningless obligations completely forever, which they chose through their ignorance.

The most important thing without which it is impossible to carry the cup of Love, - that's courage in the presence of suffering. It seems to man that compassion – that's the downy pillow under his

aching head, while to the disciple it looks like the blade of the knife. The temporary pain saves one from the real and eternal destruction. Not the tender word and tears, but fearlessness and word that help to open spiritual mistakes fearlessly, to indicate the task of centuries and not the small piece of the earthly incarnation. The task of the disciple's meeting – that's the ability to find such means within himself and the encountered person, which would help both of them to set off the fire of calm and wisdom, and to merge them into the joint bonfire of harmony to which the thread of the Teacher would be extending uninterruptedly.

The disciple who is always holding the image of his Teacher on the creative bridge of his heart has to overcome the whole personal perception of the man who came to him. Only by holding your Teacher's hand firmly, by seeing with his eyes that Eternal who is put into the temporary form at this moment and who came to you as man, you – my disciple – will be able to be effectively useful for your company.

Imagine that your old acquaintance came to you, who once was your close friend, but when the years of your intensive spiritual growth interfered between you, they dug up the whole abyss between you. You've passed on to the absolutely different vibrations. Their frequency and length opened new sounds, colours and forms to you, but these achievements came to you through your individual, unique and impossible for another for another spiritual path. You can neither pass it on nor explain it to your old friend who maybe was walking down his own path of liberation, but who cannot enter the phase of your liberation and development.

The oppressive dissatisfaction of your friend – that's almost constant final of the earthly friendships, because they are based on the absolute mutual incomprehension what friendship is, why it exists, where its value for man is.

The final of the friendships that arise only because one of them is lonely and he doesn't have any strength to live his daily routine joyfully and easily, without physical support for his spiritual strength, while the other one can't help enjoying his spiritual achievements, is keeping them in his heart and he has to pass "his" flow of light to somebody's ears and heart, - is always the same, because the failure is hiding already in the very embryo.

These friends weren't carrying the Light to each other's path. They didn't see the Only One's fire in each other by wishing to pour as much as possible calm into his friend's day, so that the power of Light would become stronger within him, so that it wouldn't twinkle and would burn in the even fire, but every one of them was searching only for how to strengthen himself, while the Only One was swinging like the pendant of the key chain among a thousand of trifles that support this friendship.

Also such friendships happen when one's devotion reaches fanaticism. One hurries to fulfil another one's desire, but he's always waiting that his friend would reward him for this devotion. In this case both of them are blind as well, because none of them may become absolutely indifferent and objective to another one's needs. In this case their hearts don't beat with the rhythm of the Teacher's heart, too, so that they would be living only in the creative work of the Eternal, in the two worlds, but not only on the Earth.

I don't even talk about that lot of cases of degeneration which are called friendship when the most important accent is exactingness for man. It isn't worth to talk about it, as well as about love based on exactingness for man. It is still only that low stage of spiritual development where discipleship and Light in one's path is out of the question. It is only the time before dawn where high feelings of devotion and selflessness only start setting, but they still pour into actions only like emotions and flights, and they don't grow into the Light and power.

What is that friendship of disciples? It is simple and the highest kindness without any conditionalities and superstitions. If the disciple gave help to his friend in the difficult hour – he gave it not to him concretely, not with his hand and not out of his generosity, but he was walking as the messenger of his Teacher, because he was sent by him and he was carrying his present for the encountered person.

If he committed himself to another person, he pledged himself to do it not alone, but with the whole circle of invisible assistants and protectors, hence he was the messenger of the two worlds and he fulfilled the task of the living heaven on the Earth. He felt himself to be namely such messenger of the living heaven, having forgotten that the entire wall of conditional formalities which are called the social state, age, wealth or poverty and so on were between him and his friend.

The friendship of disciples doesn't appear to order, just because both of them are walking down the path of discipleship and they "need" to develop the goodwill perceived by mind. Each disciple, if he's on duty next to his Teacher, understands all the incalculable paths of the Light. Therefore, he knows that no such possibility exists as to draw closer to those disciples who are walking down the path of stubborn people.

This is an especial path, and in this stage of your development you won't be able to comprehend why and how people go out to this path. I mentioned it to you, only because you would remember and understand it when you meet very developed people to whom you won't be able to draw closer – not only to make friends with them.

In the beginning of discipleship, it seems to the disciple himself and to many people who surround him and know about his discipleship that he has to become almost saint with his kindness, restraint and tact, but it is thoughtless for himself and others to require some additional changes from the disciple.

This is the same light-mindedness as to imagine that death causes some stormy changes in the man's spirit and that he becomes either saint and goes to heaven, or he becomes sinner and goes to hell by squaring all accounts with his former life in a flash. Neither heaven nor hell exist. There's always the same Life that continues in a lighter form, exactly like there aren't any revolutionary changes in the path of the discipleship. All the incitements, all the ups and downs – that's the time before dawn of the discipleship.

Each strongest experience pushes man to the gorge where he is groping in the darkness until he sees the gate, shining before him. Having seen it, he goes towards it along such even path which he's built himself with his Wisdom during the period of his rushing about and suffering.

What is needed for the disciples, so that friendship would strike up between them? For both of them to be loyal to their Teacher. To be loyal till the end. This is the only condition. Everything else doesn't have any meaning.

But the path of the stubborn person is also an exception here. The stubborn person may be more loyal than all other loyal ones and anyway he will go down his earthly path without acquiring a single friend, he will fall out with everybody for all sorts of reasons.

By glancing over your day on duty, investigate the mistakes of your tact vigilantly – more vigilantly than anything else. Many things may slip by in the work of the day, one may do many things not till the end, but three moments of the disciple's conduct exist where no mistakes may happen. From the very first day of his discipleship, the disciple's attention has to be concentrated on these moments: tact, charm of his manners and not stinging speech.

Spiritual inequality, spiritual isolations don't exist for the disciple of the first level anymore. Of course, I don't talk about the disciples of the ray of Love, who need a high spiritual development in order to walk up that ray, the atmosphere of which is higher than other rays and which oppresses people more. Not a single disciple, however intemperate he would look by appearance, will bite a strange sin or passion anymore. Everybody who is accepted as the disciple merges with the Only One Life within himself.

If the disciple doesn't possess inner goodwill, he might lack some tact. And then external obstacles like chains woven from the thorns of roses and acacias rise on his path from all sides. In this way, having opened with his entire power of Wisdom in many cases, by surpassing many others with his knowledge and inner perfection, he might still be standing in one place, in his first stage.

Whatever the disciple would be doing during his ordinary day, if he doesn't improve the external form of his work presentation every day, if he doesn't develop his tact, then he won't achieve much from the point of view of his Teacher, although in people's opinion, he has achieved a lot.

The disciple cannot compete with an ordinary man with the external forms of his duty. You cannot achieve charm instantly if you don't possess it by nature, but you can observe vigilantly the disorder in your home, the manner of your dressing, your champing while you are eating, the buttons of your coat and the laces of your shoes...

Every meeting where only external, hypocritical politeness was demonstrated, while the thought: "You'd rather leave as soon as possible" inside of you was scraping, was only the same falling out of your duty as the meeting during which you gave a scoop of kindness, but you got irritated or you were unpleasant.

The third moment – a stinging word which slipped off the disciple's tongue has to show not an absolute his benevolence to himself. Hence, he needs to understand that in that moment the man fell out not only of the disciple's duty next to his Teacher, but also of the uniting with all the circles of invisible workers.

How could you develop a vigilant attention for these most important ways of your self-education?

If you concentrate your attention only on these three tasks, then your working day will become even more difficult than it was only from your present circumstances. But if you are simply working next to your Teacher in your thoughts and if you can feel his presence in all your actions, then your attention won't need any special additional tasks.

Besides, for his first steps every neophyte receives such big crew of invisible assistants who observe all his actions that his beginning is rather easy to him.

My friend, you still will have to overstep many fatal boundaries, but one of them is more important than others. Here it is: you've got accustomed to absolute independence, to an absolute freedom of movement, to searching for the Truth without the hands that direct you. Now, if my conversations have stirred the fire of creating spirit and heart within you, if you've understood me and believed in me, follow me, but walk in such a way as I will see and indicate it to you.

I explained to you that the law of unconditional obedience is voluntary and that it exists in discipleship not because it would oppress the disciple's will, but in order to protect him from his too passionate desire to serve everybody and to accumulate debts and obligations which surpass the disciple's strength due to lack of knowledge. This law protects the disciple from flounce. It helps him to stand firmly and joyfully in that place where his Teacher has put him and to not run from one place to another only

because somebody uttered a cry that his help was more needed there, that he needed to leave off everything and to run to help namely there.

During disciple's duty next to his Teacher he has to perceive himself keeping watch with the bayonet by the powder depot where his Teacher put him. He cannot run from one place to another. If he receives his Teacher's instruction to go to another place or even to change the whole method or his path – then nobody will explain any details.

You need to understand yourself that the shoes bound with metal don't suit by the powder depot, and you don't climb the mountains with rubber soles.

The greatest independence in active daily actions is needed in the discipleship. And by developing such independence you need to learn to develop all your qualities and skills for your work on the earth among the most different characters, positions and people.

Now it is clear to you what the path of the disciple's liberation is. Understand it in a many-sided way, till the end. The disciple accepts not the obligations or the yoke of the monastic views, but he steps into the new, wide and joyful period of his life dedicated to knowledge which somebody's love gives to him after hearing the cry of his pure heart.

Next time I will tell you about the path of sadness."

My brother's inscription ended, and apparently, some time had passed between these just read and new lines, because both the ink and the manner of writing was different.

The words of the inscriptions enslaved me so much, the contents interconnecting with my own experience surprised me so much that I didn't even notice how the time flew past, how Eta began to appease his hunger and how the day was closing in behind the window. I opened another page and I started reading again.

"Having stayed alone, I came to myself not instantly. It always seemed to me that I could hear the deep, rich voice of my wonderful guest.

I was feeling strangely. It seemed to me that even the snowstorm behind the window was wailing somehow melodiously. The silence in the room was hanging around me, but for the first time in my life it was not mute and dead for me, but it was talking, singing, shining!"

Oh, how I could understand these words of my brother Nikolay now!

The silence of the nature began to speak to me not so long ago. I began to understand the voice of the silence not so long ago. I started feeling the life of the flowers, lawns, trees not so long ago...

Again my thoughts strayed to my brother-officer's life. Again I thought how it must have been difficult for him to live in the surroundings which were poor spiritually and mentally. And what kind of my brother's spiritual strength had to be that he succeeded to achieve an encounter with Ali independently. And that that was namely he, I didn't have any doubts anymore.

I remembered my brother's words and actions which only now were getting on into a logical row of views for me, I comprehended always clearer who was my brother Nikolay and how I was living next to him, even without thinking, next to how great man I was...

I didn't allow myself to stray to my recollections even more and I began to read again.

"I began to notice something new within myself, too, a certain recovery of sight. As though all my nerves became more sensitive, my ear – subtler, while my eyes could see clearer. It was very strange, and I myself was surprised. After my conversations with the wonderful friend the contours of his figure remain fixed in my memory, and it always seems to me that I can see the shining cloud in that place where he was sitting.

I comprehend my presence here little and I only notice that suddenly I come to myself, as though I fall down from heaven, because the dumb servant touches me and he shows with his gestures and smile that I need to go to eat and to sleep, or to go to visit the horses, or something else.

It is strange – it was stranger than everything else, - but I began to understand clearly that my servant wasn't dumb at all. And second – I really began to read all his thoughts, as though a thread of moving views would connect my and his heads. In the beginning it stunned me, and I got stiff by looking at the dumb servant, but having noticed the humour that lip up in his eyes and his naughty smile with which he was darting glances at me, I came to myself instantly.

I value absolutely soberly another new power that opened within myself: I know precisely when he, my wonderful friend, will come. And not only I know when he comes, but I can feel him coming from the distance, only I couldn't note the moment of the guest's coming a single time. Now I used to be exhausted and doze off from the great strain of waiting, now I used to gape at something, now the servant used to distract my attention with his expressive silence, but I used to give a start every time when my eyes met the stranger's ones absolutely unexpectedly.

The fire of his eyes still chains me, but I don't feel the pain from his unusually oppressing purity anymore, which surpasses me like an unattainable God's purity and love.

This time I also didn't detect when he came: I rose my eyes and I saw him sitting in the place of the shining little cloud, but even brighter and clearer than the last time. He didn't start talking instantly. Apparently, he didn't need the formality of greeting as well as I, because my entire being not only was waiting for him greedily, but I hadn't even parted with him by still chewing his left thoughts.

"Today I want to tell you about the most important path of discipleship, about the path of sadness.

First of all, what is the path of sadness? That isn't the path of liberation of the disciple himself, that is a great self-sacrifice by deciding to walk on the earth as the messenger of sadness, disasters and misfortunes for all of those whom the masters of karmas or the Teacher's hand sends to him.

What is the meaning of the path of sadness for people? According to the Christian belief, Christ descended to hell in order to save sinful souls from the eternal destruction. His descend to hell was Christianity's prediction which brought the law of karma for the new humanity and which dispersed the illusion of good-natured, moral indifference for every moment of life's flow, for that "now" with which man is living, which he can spend in vain by relying only on Providence.

The active energy which Christ has brought to people pulled the main support of hypocrisy from under the feet of ignoramuses and showed an example of the action “till the end”, an example of the action of his personal kindness and love.

You can bring only the news of awakening for the sinful people, and only it will be the news of their salvation. But to bring the salvation itself for somebody – that means to turn man only into the big sheaf of straw that may be turned inconveniently and that complains of discomfort of his state, and Christ destroyed this illusion.

His mission – that’s to awaken man for his spiritual growth of full value. He is still living now, he is living, working and creating by using people’s hands and feet. Every disciple of the path of sadness is his closest worker, his primary weapon with which the spiritual path of the whole company of people is formed.

The messenger of sadness – that’s always the man who is endowed with many great talents, who always possesses higher than mediocre skills. That is the last stage before incarnating as the genius.

There are many stages along the path of sadness as well as along any other. Some of the disciples of the path of sadness who are more developed spiritually are walking along by comprehending their strength completely, they give sadness to people by not suffering themselves from those blows as the messengers of which they come, and they come with the olive twig of peace in their hands. Such disciple, by hitting their encountered people, are pouring peace and strength for them not only to awaken, to recover their sight, but also to go out to the new life after learning to overcome by loving.

Their younger brothers of the path don’t know that they are walking down the path of sadness. They notice that their approach with people, their love and friendship destroys people’s wellbeing. With great suffering they learn to overcome their fear to bring disasters to people. Their talent helps them to break through to the knowledge in a certain way, they meet their Teacher, and then the path of Light begins for them.

Their consciousness becomes completely free, tranquillity comes to their shaken organism, and the disciple of the path of sadness is already walking down his own path easily. He understood, accepted and blessed all his circumstances which he considered to be tragical before. By understanding completely that not a segment of life exists – one separated incarnation, but that only Eternity exists, which is poured into the flying past “now” as into the form of his incarnation, the disciple begins to understand all his encountered people only as segments of Eternity.

While keeping watch of Eternity, the disciple of the path of sadness begins to comprehend all the misfortunes of the temporary forms as joy by understanding that the external man’s path, the whole meaning of his presence – that’s to achieve liberation as soon as possible, to throw down the oppressing screens of his understanding of life as forms of only the Earth and to start acting as the living consciousness of the two worlds.

All sorts of persons from the society flash before you. A row of births, a row of deaths. You are living in the atmosphere of the long, cruel war and you know that a bullet of the enemy may meet you from behind every cape of the mountain.

It seems why you, the man who is searching for high spirituality, with such development and erudition, possessing an exceptional intellect and talent, why you should live in the presence of constant death, among cretins and murderers, among dullards and libertines whom you must meet several times a day?

The question of the external justice isn't raised in the discipleship: why and for what purpose? The distance between the humanly "happiness" and the disciple's work – work of love and calm – is the same as the one between the primitive man who doesn't move away from his settlement further than 10 miles and the person of culture.

Even this comparison will help you little to understand your own and other people's earthly circumstances if your eyes still may cry, if your ears still may hear insults, and your tongue – to utter a stinging word.

Until these characteristics are still alive within you, you won't have enough strength to hold the cup of your Teacher in your hands, who has taken the common work on the earth with you upon himself.

Now rise with me above this small room where we are sitting, above your daily circumstances, above your worries about your brother, above the war and the constant encounters with the Caucasus mountaineers to the arena of the universal activity of Life.

Which of your fundamentals have remained unchanged within you now? What do you see now in the light surrounding you? You can see only two things – the fruit of which is the earth itself and everything what is on its surface, - love and work.

Love is creating without any stopping. Its work is of two kinds and inseparable from itself. It is toiling by awakening people to the high path and by helping them to develop. And at the same time it pours with its actions through their work on the earth by bringing people together, by uniting them, by growing them like the flowers and the fruit for the future generations.

Among the thousands of chaotically moving forms – the twinkling and smouldering fires – you can see some separate fires which are burning evenly, you can see even some separate areas which are burning with a calm flame of the bonfire. What is it? Why are some of the fires – majority of them – twinkling and spreading stench around them? Why don't some separate little fires go out among these fires of the swamp? Why don't those burning posts and bonfires of the flame burn down everything around them?

The trembling and twinkling little fires – that's those who are working in the flow of passions and comprehension of only the earth alone. All the incarnations of these people don't have any sense, because nobody understood from them that they were standing by the Eternity. And their activity by developing their personality is unable to break through the conditional partitions and it doesn't grow into the eternal spiritual creation. Only their personal love, rare cases of their self-sacrifice, their desire for beauty revive their spirit, it begins to shine for a moment and then it plunges into the shell of their personality soon again.

You can also see some very tiny, hardly smouldering little spots. Take a good look at them, some of them are shining in a faint, but even little fire – that's the animals. Some of them are flashing. That's the wild beasts, as well as the faded away people's consciousnesses. Now you are still unable to distinguish the consciousness of the wild beasts who are splattering the beams of red sparkles from the dark, faded away human one, which also are flinging sparkles and flashes. Both of them now are equally repulsive for your consciousness and they are stinking.

Now look at the shining, wide, evenly burning areas of fire. Those are the little pieces of the Earth, which are cleaned from the human tears, sorrows and suffering. Those are the places where those who know are living. They know that life on the earth – that's the life of work when all passions

experienced and you go to Eternity. Those are the places of the hearts who are happy, liberated from passions, who are working calmly.

To live without any work on the earth is the same as to live without any use for yourself and the entire universe. Nobody ever needs to be afraid of too hard work, because each heavy burden is forming a certain habit of the spirit discipline within man.

There are many people who are walking down their own paths of the earth and who are stooped from their back-breaking work. Never feel sorry for these people. They can form within themselves the habit of the disciplined obedience only through this compulsory work, the work for the bit of bread. And eventually the rudiments of this work discipline form the kernel of their spirit. Only that man may develop the entire spiritual power within himself who himself succeeded to create the basis of his spiritual kernel in this temporary earthly form, without any strange help. And for that he certainly needs to reach the heroic strain. He must turn it into his daily work form, then he has to achieve firm self-control of his entire organism, so that his work would become easy for him, and finally he has to rise to that inner harmony which gives the sense of charm and not difficulty to his entire working day.

Only from this moment on a possibility for the man opens to comprehend that “day” is only that what man put into it and not that what came to him from outside. The more persistently he is trying to perceive it, the clearer he can see and understand that he’s carrying all the “miracles” within himself. He stops waiting, hoping for something and he starts acting.

Come back to your life in the small room again. Now you understood that nobody may be forgotten, left alone or given too little, because everybody is demonstrating his spirit himself – from the kernel till the whole his strength, and nobody except the man himself is able to force him to burn brighter, to die out or to twinkle.

Why are personally you living in such unsuitable surroundings for you now? Did it prevent you from meeting me? Did it move our meeting away?

My questions surprise you. Not only you showed any dissatisfaction for a single time that you were living among dunderheads, but you didn’t even ask yourself why were you put away to such godforsaken place? Heaven could hear only your gratitude for the nature’s beauty in which you were living from you, but nobody could hear any anger, dissatisfaction or envy from you. That what could disturb a doubting man made you only stronger. The more thieves of the state’s property, bandits, deceivers and hypocrites you saw, the clearer the value of your each own word was for you, the more persistently you were searching for a possibility to awaken the perception of the Life’s grandeur of your encountered man. You were growing in the surroundings which were toxic, shaky and where they were drinking hard, but you didn’t fall down together with them. You strengthened and cleaned with your own living example everybody whom only you could help.

Now it is clear to you that your inner tranquillity, your calm approach to your surroundings, your blessing of all your circumstances and your pure searching for God not for meditations, but with your daily work, sped up our meeting, shortened your path to me.

You’ll have to separate with your brother whom you love so much not because it would hurt your heart, but because the path of clairvoyance has to open up for him, in which neither you nor even I could help him.

He must cross the fire of his work himself, and the higher he will have to go, the denser the screen of his suffering will be, which he will have to rip open. His path – that’s the path of clairvoyance, the third among the most difficult ones of the discipleship. We’ll talk about it tomorrow.”

The record ended again, and I kept reading after several slipped lines:

“You understood me correctly: everything is strictly logical along the path of discipleship, but the laws of the spirit’s logic are completely different than the ones of the earth’s logic.

From the point of view of inhabitants of the earth, the earth is turning in a dead space, in the ether which comes to life for them only when the Earth itself transmits its news through it or receives them with the waves which you can catch with physical means.

You need to attribute the discipleship to those phenomena where the physical means of reception and transmission play the most insignificant role.

The disciple’s look that even doesn’t possess a possibility to see more than others do, possesses an inner flexibility. He penetrates into the whole being of his encountered person with the warmth of his heart and he rejects his personal impression, because the fire of his own straining after the Superior burns down the conditional estimation within him instantly.

The disciple is trying not to hear or see the buzzing arrows with which his encountered person pours him. In the beginning it is difficult for him to hold out in the high waves of the ether. Then he develops a habit to build the bridge of help from his heart, on which the image of his Teacher is shining, and finally he learns to stretch his hand always together with his Teacher’s hand. From then on the disciple’s life becomes easy and simple.

In this stage some psychic skill opens up for every disciple: either he begins to hear or to see, or a new talent of the artist opens up in his conductor.

Such is the path of development of the spiritual powers within man who has crossed the fiery wall of his suffering and who has lost his personal passions in that suffering. Having acquired the spiritual power, he threw out all the rags of his old and newly acquired passions, he entered the life of activity and collaboration with his Teacher naked in the same way as he came to this world when he was born on the earth. The path of one’s liberation is the same for everybody in all the paths of discipleship.

But the third from the most difficult paths – the path of clairvoyance – doesn’t submit to this law. This path is maturing for many centuries. Many times man brought it to the earth differently during each of his incarnations. Depending on the man’s karma of centuries, he either possesses the talent of hearing and vision since his childhood, or it opens up for him only in his old age, or it shakes his youth unexpectedly with its sudden appearance.

This man’s talent pours in the most different forms. His Teacher always shares with man the responsibility and difficulties of his talent. The whole high spiritual power of the clairvoyant not at all always reveals itself during each man’s incarnation. Depending on the link of the man’s brought karma, depending on the connection with the surroundings of that incarnation, one or another part of his talent reveals itself stronger.

The person who is walking down the path of clairvoyance meets two difficult tasks inevitably: either he is walking through the depth of passions and fire, and he has to live in them every day by cleaning himself and his path with the greatest tiredness, or the high assistants who take care of him are preparing him for this in a special way.

In the first case the work with the disciple's Teacher only on the earth, in its grey daily routine among working people is given to him. During the most difficult days the centres of help are created through him for those who want and who are searching for liberation and who cannot leave independently during the hour of their earthly suffering.

It is the most difficult for the disciple-clairvoyant who isn't distinguished for any other skills from his surroundings to associate with inconstant people and those who comprehend the life of two worlds with difficulty.

Their constant exactingness for the disciples whom they consider to be their servants, who have to show attention to them all twenty-four hours a day, often ruin the Teacher messenger's health, because he doesn't have enough strength to withstand the attacks of the restless auras that surround him. Only then the constant trembling of the entire disciple's aura grows into the post of fire when his Teacher covers him with his cloak, when he stands between him and people like a protective buffer. In these cases Teacher is always connected with the disciple in one or another way.

Why do I tell you about all of it? So that you would be calm and secure for your brother's fate. He will be walking protected by his high guardians, while you've understood and played your role – the role of brother-father – correctly. Now it is finished.

When man's Teacher shows to him that his role is finished somewhere, that his karma is finished in certain respects, then you need to understand that the paths of the disciple are opened till the end for the Teacher's clairvoyance.

Compare the Teacher's clairvoyance with that drop of knowledge which the disciple possesses.

During the moments of the disciple's spiritual concentration every disciple understands perfectly the big distance between both consciousnesses and the unreachable reference point of his Teacher. But having received the news from the messenger, he often tries to correct those places where he would like to see himself absolutely differently.

If it is necessary that he would know that his karma with those whom he loves and respects is finished, and if he's told about it, anyway he will explain persistently that his karma is old, that he is connected with eternal threads, as if the old karma had some advantage or value. All old karmas which really are important and valuable by something will always be felt only like a shining happiness and will never cause any mental diseases.

The people who are searching for the path of liberation don't expect anything for their spirituality from those for whom they serve sincerely, and they turn their karmic debt into work next to them. That's why they get overtired, irritated, they run to have a rest and so on. When they receive a news, an instruction or a task from the messenger they don't have enough strength to set heroically to the new action indicated to them, they are waiting for something to mature within themselves, while actually they are examining the news brought by the messenger. Often the work of the entire incarnation is lost, the indicated task, not undertaken instantly remains unfulfilled, and the karma with which he had to liberate his old debtor closes stronger than the snail's shell.

Besides those difficulties that arise in all the paths of discipleship, the path of clairvoyance has several peculiarities which aren't characteristic for other rays. Even before the least expressed clairvoyant when the disciple is only the channel who passes his Teacher's speech, three Earthly crosses of superstitions and false views arise:

1. The disciple's own fear. If this fear isn't overcome till the end, that is, if the disciple's loyalty hasn't poured out along his entire path till the end, then he is afraid that he can mislead somebody.
2. The disciple's courage. If his courage isn't poured together with his Teacher's courage till the end, then it will be neither courage nor compassion, but only a tear shedding and sentimentality. And the disciple is able neither to see clearly nor to hear that what his Teacher tells him due to this tear shedding, because compassion of the ray of clairvoyance which is based on courage is always calm and often even strict.
3. The vision which his Teacher gives to the disciple burns down his possibilities to communicate with the vulgar forms of communication. The disciple is destined for solitude, because he cannot go to the vulgar surroundings by holding his Teacher's hand, while his encountered lower middle classes consider him to be proud and insensitive man.

These three crosses of the initial path of clairvoyance become heavier also from the gap by comprehending the most ordinary daily things. Everybody who comes to the disciple is living with his personal feelings: "My house", "My family", "My work and my achievements" and so on. The disciple is praying only for one thing: "Tear to pieces the conditionality of apprehensions in my consciousness, which prevent me from communicating with spirit and fire. Take the oppressing screens of conditional love off my physical eyes and lead me to the power of spirit where the living Love burns down the whole possibility of tears and suffering."

Losing touch between the clairvoyant-disciple and the concepts of his surroundings falls on his path with the fourth cross, but only till that moment until he reaches an absolute loyalty. After his loyalty unites with his Teacher, the disciple's path becomes easy, simple and joyous.

Clairvoyance as the main work of your day doesn't exist along your path, but it is operating as reading of people's thoughts. The greater your purity, honour and calm will be, the clearer the spiritual development of your encountered person for your inner sight will be.

The advancement of disciples through the stages of spiritual growth doesn't depend at all on the powers of the higher consciousness which develop or hide within them. Such disciples in whom there wouldn't be a possibility to open for the powers of higher consciousness doesn't exist. Every kernel of the spirit who possesses the attraction to the fire of the Light also possesses the power of awakening within himself, to be precise, he possesses strength to wake up.

But also here, as down all the paths of liberation, fear is standing on the way. Man who has lived his entire life of searching in superstitions, in most cases shuts the door to knowledge himself. He is afraid of striving for some new stages of his development "without his Teacher". He is reading in books about yoga that he may damage his health and brain without precise instructions. But he forgets that until that time when he can reach some knowledge which give a possibility to open powers within himself, he will have to clean, put himself in order and to tune at least his physical conductor, and only then to start thinking about harmony of his entire organism with the spiritual flows, about such harmony that would help him to achieve the first stage of self-discipline – self-control.

Everything in discipleship is based on the first rules of self-education: restraint and tact. When the external breeding is achieved, irritation overcome and when vigilant control of yourself has

already taken root, only then a possibility appears to get into the range of vision of your Teacher. The flame stops twinkling and it may be noticed.

Vigilant control of yourself turns all the concepts of “my” into an easy apprehension of your modest place in the universe. And the higher man rises, the clearer he can see how distant the path is, how difficult it is to walk it down, and how little it is achieved.

Only from this moment on the cleaning of the man’s organism begins, which always brings him to his Teacher.

The fears that he will become “obsessed” from yoga exercises, - that’s only stupid fairy-tales of old women about kites and about the spirits that help or trouble them. If man has already tried his strength in black magic along his path, for which he also had neither tenacity nor self-control, then he will be ill with mental diseases during some of his incarnations. And nobody is able to liberate him from the law of the universe – the law of cause and effect.

You need to take a good look at your encounters down your path of clairvoyance, more than in any other of the paths. That person who is walking down this path, whenever his clairvoyance would awaken, however poorly he would control it, he always enters that circle of encounters in which his life passes on to the next ring of fire. The colour of the fire ring of every man – that’s the result of his activity of ages. Here again the same law of cause and effect cuts down not only the small shrubs of man’s errors before him, but also roots out the big stumps from the fallen down trees of sin, doubts, treasons and vulgarity.

The fear of superstitiously understood “prohibitions”, as well as the constant address to authorities stop the development of the man’s spirit. Namely they become that deadlock in which the man’s searching ends and his “searching” begins.

In most cases the man’s habit to reconsider his encountered people, their words, their circumstances and not actions impedes him. When man encounters another person’s actions, he awakens himself effective emotions within himself. But when he puts only another person’s mental power from one place to another, then he is living only with that part of his organism in which his mind’s emotions prevail.

The disciple’s mind protects him neither from exhaustion of his nervous system, nor from tiredness, nor from senile dementia. Man’s mind tires out the organism cells, because physical organism is able to live only by being in creative harmony with the spirit and heart cells. Then he is really living.

The man’s opening, the secret of clairvoyance – that’s Love, Spirit, Wisdom which are poured into his organism through kundalini. They are poured in differently, in different ways and depending on it, man’s sight, hearing and other talents open up. But the path of the man’s opening is always the same: the matter of the invisible Spirit becomes visible for man’s brain.

The path is simple, the actions are easy. But the chastity of the man’s thought, as the result of the Light within him, comes to those who were searching not for joy for himself, but for loyalty for his Teacher...”

The record ended. I didn’t want to turn another page. Everything what I read was exceptionally deep and sacred. I looked at Eta who was sleeping next to me, and my thoughts strayed to the past centuries. Now it seemed to me that for the first time I understood what it meant to act. I was surprised how inactive I was, how much time I was spending uselessly, how much of my time was flying without any use.

Eta woke up and listened attentively to something. Also I lent an attentive ear to the silence, but I could hear only a light rustle of palms.

All of a sudden Eta jumped up, ran to the balcony by always turning around, as though by inviting me, too. I stood up and I saw Francisco coming to our balcony.

He was smiling to me and he waved me to come to him. I was happy when I saw this wonderful, radiating face. I forgot about the whole sadness of the earth, it seemed to me that heaven itself was smiling to me and inviting me...

Chapter 10

I visit the new places of the Community with Francisco in the night.

The new encounters and the new lessons

When I went downstairs, Francisco took my arm and told me.

“Let’s go, Lovushka, I want to show one part of the Community to you, which you haven’t yet seen.”

I thought that Francisco didn’t know that one night I was already walking in the park and that I saw the night life of the Community in the distant valleys and the little houses where brothers and sisters of the Community rendered help for the wandering unfortunate people. But Francisco turned to the absolutely different side and he was taking me down the path to the lake.

“It is already evening, Lovushka, and you’ve missed the supper. Here’s some fruit and bread for you. I took them for you. Our way isn’t very long, but we’ll come back only towards morning, and you won’t have time to eat. You might be surprised why I took so little and so poor food. But you see, you need to try to eat little on the way. And moreover, if man is striving for the high discipleship, he has to accustom his organism to eat in such a way that he wouldn’t feel a constant, irresistible need to eat. You don’t need to think that you can achieve spiritual perfection or psychic self-control if you cannot control your appetite and force it to submit to a certain discipline. That person who fails to arrange his working day in such a way that feeding – which is necessary for each body that is living on the Earth – would be only a part of his strict daily routine, is unable to achieve the firm and strict system with his psyche which leads him to self-control. Man who always yields to temptation to feel hunger, who is always searching for a snack, isn’t different in anything from the glutton who grows fat during the never-ending feasts. There aren’t any especial, strict rules for food in discipleship, such as the conditions of monasteries for the monks. And no abstinence in discipleship should restrict the man who is trying to enter that path in which he may meet his Teacher. It is impossible for man to find the path to his Teacher until the images are living in his consciousness: to abstain in principle, to refuse in principle. Until the thought to refuse something is swarming, he didn’t rise above those who are searching for a profit for themselves everywhere. His thoughts are still turning about himself, exactly in the same way as the thoughts of the person who is searching for a profit from everything. Such man is striving not for Eternity, but only for widening and development of his personality. Our disciples, brothers and sisters, move forward not with their heroic deeds. One moves forward only with love down the path of one’s liberation. And that person who loves doesn’t see any heroic deed when he shares his food with his close friend. He loves and he’s happy to be able to support the temporary form of his brother and to serve his Eternity. Today you will visit the house in which the people are living who were looking for the Truth during their entire lives. You will see the people who are breaking into here as passionately as those millions of believers who desire to bow to the coffin of the Lord. Be vigilant. Don’t enter the house with a condemning heart or eyes. Of course, also here you will see those whose searching was only “searching”. You will understand that they are put under that roof and that they may not be allowed to enter the Community not because somebody selected them to live in this place. The joint power united everybody of them: their doubt. They didn’t possess the power of spirit to develop their loyalty till the end. They wanted to accept one thing and to reject another one from each received news, to correct or comment something in their own way. They didn’t manage to accept a single man who used to bring the news from us to their hearts easily, simply and joyously. Everybody seemed to be light-minded, inconstant

to them, and not understanding them correctly. While they themselves didn't even notice how they were breaking the hearts of our messengers with their misunderstanding. My dear friend, now go to them with all leaves of your heart opened. Open your heart like the gates, so that the power of your joy could break their superstitious self-love. Don't understand this word as being in love with themselves. No, I used it, so that I could define their main feature: subjectivity. The man who sees the universe in a subjective way is unable to enter the Community, because he doesn't have anything to do there. The atmosphere of the Community is like the air of the high mountains for such man where he would fall sick with the mountain disease instantly."

To be continued...