

Ariadne

Pythagoras' School in Crotone

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Table of contents

CHAPTER ONE: GIRLFRIENDS	5
CHAPTER TWO: SPEECH OF PYTHAGORAS BEFORE THE INHABITANTS OF CROTONE	8
CHAPTER THREE: LEONARDOS	16
CHAPTER FOUR: THE SLAVE	22
CHAPTER FIVE: ON POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL STATES	31
CHAPTER SIX: HEALING THE BOY	38
CHAPTER SEVEN: GIFTING THE TRUTH	45
CHAPTER EIGHT: DIANTHA'S DANCE	56
CHAPTER NINE: SENIOR AND JUNIOR DISCIPLES OF PYTHAGORAS.....	64
CHAPTER TEN: PYTHAGORAS TALKS ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL PATH	72
CHAPTER ELEVEN: MORNING MEDITATIONS	76
CHAPTER TWELVE: PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES ON THE SPIRITUAL PATH.....	83
CHAPTER THIRTEEN: ABOUT COMPETITIONS	89
CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE ARRIVAL OF HAMILCAR ...	99
CHAPTER FIFTEEN: ON ONENESS	106
CHAPTER SIXTEEN: PYTHAGORAS ON DILIGENCE AND INSPIRATION.....	109
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: LESSONS ON ELIMINATING SEPARATION FROM THE WHOLE	114

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: THE OLYMPICS 117

CHAPTER NINETEEN: IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING! 124

***“I, Pythagoras, am reopening My School on the Earth!
Here and now and with your help, My friends, —
this is the beginning!
I would like to attract the attention of the youth to the
laws of existence and to the meaning of life!
I would like to instill in people a love for Wisdom!
And a desire to glorify the beauty of the Earth!
I would like to make the law of Kindness — the founda-
tion of life for the community of people
And to open widely doors into the World of Divine
Love, Peace, and Bliss —
for those who will rush to It strongly!”***

**(Pythagoras: in “Classics of Spiritual Philosophy
and the Present”)**

Chapter One: **Girlfriends**

Ariadne took a bath. The slaves smeared her body with incenses and expensive oils and combed her luxurious hair. She was dressed in an outfit of fine expensive fabric with gold thread embroidery along the edge. She looked like the very embodiment of grace!

She came up to the silver mirror, which reflected the splendor of her body in all its glory.

One of the slaves — with a low bow — handed her a casket filled with ornaments. Out of the numerous expensive and exquisite jewelry, Ariadne took only a beautifully made diadem. She touched up her hair and fastened it with this ornament in the form of a thin golden twig with pearls.

Ariadne gestured for the slave to retire.

“What else do you need?” — she mentally said to her reflection in the mirror.

Everything in her life was an exquisite luxury: the house, decorations, the outfits...

The wealth given by her father was great. Both her father and mother now lived in Athens and did not pester her with parental care. The most beautiful and wealthy of suitors asked for her hand, and she could choose...

Her thoughts flowed smoothly, as if the dialogue with the beautiful reflection that Ariadne saw in the mirror, continued:

“What more do you want? Marriage? Children? All you have to do is simply choose one of the admirers — and this will become a reality.

“So, what is missing in your life?

“Fate has fondled you like a warm sea. So, why is there such emptiness inside you?

“Or do you need to understand — what is all this for?

“Perhaps, in one or two decades all this beauty will fade, and what will remain then? What will happen to this beautiful Ariadne?”

Ariadne dismissed the thoughts of old age and death...

Today she was waiting for her friend Ferenika, who promised to visit her.

* * *

Ferenika, a beauty with fiery reddish curly hair, as if flew into the house of Ariadne and brought into the surrounding space all the irrepressible liveliness of her nature, enthusiastic and amazed exclamations, and giggling laughter.

The girlfriends embraced each other tenderly. Exquisite treats accompanied and delighted their conversation. They discussed Ariadne’s suitors for a long time, but no one was given preference.

Ariadne sighed:

“All this is good, but my heart does not burn with love for any of them... And what’s next, marriage, birth of children, and afterwards — old age,

death?... All this — for what?! Why should beauty fade and go to the grave?! Why did it bloom?! There must be a meaning to life!” — Ariadne, at last, expressed vocally all the thoughts that clouded her morning that day.

“You argue like a *philosopher*. Have you heard this term already, signifying a sage who loves wisdom above all else? Have you ever been to his lectures? And have you heard his speeches?”

“Who are you talking about?”

“So, you have not heard of Pythagoras? He arrived here recently. And he is organizing a school for the ethical education of the youth or something like that. The speeches he gives are admired by many! And they say that he is handsome, like Apollo, and that he has the power of Zeus!

“It is said that he possesses the Divine Knowledge, received from above! Perhaps, from the Gods Themselves!

“And they say that he is called Pythagoras, because, even before his birth, Pythia, in the Delphic temple, had already prophesied to his parents the great destiny of their son!

“They also say that he became a priest in Egypt, and that he studied the magic and mathematics of the Chaldeans in Babylon. And now he has decided to disclose what he knows — openly.

“He speaks again tomorrow! You should go and listen to his speech! Moreover, many worthy men will be there too, and you can shine with your beauty!”

“And you — will you go?”

“No... I would die of boredom there! I’m not like you, and reasoning about the meaning of life

puts me to sleep. I want to live — but not talk about life's meaning!

“If youth and beauty now shine in me — I really want to enjoy it and not ponder old age and death!

“Well, it's time for me to say goodbye: my ardent admirer is already waiting for me! And today, he and I will have fun all night long until morning! I'm not ready to change this date — not even for the speech of even the best of sages! You will tell me about this Pythagoras later!

“Forgive me, friend, but I am like that! See you soon, dear!”

Chapter Two: **Speech of Pythagoras before the Inhabitants of Croton**

The next day, Ariadne decided to go to the performance of Pythagoras.

She took her place in the amphitheater. Many citizens of Croton gathered there to listen to this sage who called himself a *philosopher*; that is, a *lover of wisdom*.

She listened to various people in the crowd as they talked about Pythagoras:

“They say that he was in Egypt and was trained by the pyramid priests.”

“They say that he can talk to animals and that they listen and understand him.”

“It is said that the inhabitants of one village complained of a bear who attacked cattle. And Py-

thagoras talked to him and convinced him to eat only plant food and not meat. And, they say, the bear obeyed him and did not cause any more ruin.”

“And Pythagoras himself does not eat meat!”

“All this is fiction! Don’t believe the gossip and chatter of the market!”

“Did you hear that Apollo himself endowed him with a golden body?”

“Well, now we shall see for ourselves if his body is truly made of gold! You always believe such empty tales!”

“Yes, here he comes!”

... Pythagoras went out into the middle of the amphitheater. He moved slowly. And while He walked, the conversations ceased and *silence* fell.

This *transparent silence* embraced and filled each of the listeners.

Then, Pythagoras began to speak:

“I’m glad to welcome you again, inhabitants of Crotone!”

“In our last meeting, we talked about souls: the fact that souls come more than once, incarnating in bodies, into this world that we see. Then, each soul leaves the dense world — with the death of the shell that is its corporeal body — and, putting on a new body, is born again, years, or sometimes even centuries later.

“Perfection of the soul is the goal of all incarnations!

“Today, I would like to speak to you about *virtue*.

“Virtue creates good deeds. This is a property of souls that have a happy desire to do good, which they then implement in their lives.

“What do you think: why is virtue beautiful, and vice ugly?

“Have you noticed that if a person happily performs shameful deeds, then his or her pleasure is very fleeting? Very soon, nothing remains of such pleasure, but only disgust and boredom embrace such a person. And he or she again seeks to find some source of pleasure... This unquenchable thirst drags this one from one nonsense in life to another...

“And you should know that the consequences of shameful acts shape an appropriate fate for such a person.

“On the other hand, it is easy to see that when efforts are directed toward the accomplishment of worthy deeds, then virtue generates good both inside and around such a soul!

“The joy of the good deeds warms and ennobles the soul!

“Such efforts develop the strength of the soul!

“And the fruits of those efforts remain with the soul, forming its destiny. They form the beauty of the soul, which is not taken away from it even with the death of the body!

“At birth in a new body, all the acquired beautiful properties get new opportunities for growth and improvement.

“And so, as a result of the corresponding labor over oneself, the soul can become beautiful and similar to the Immortal Gods!¹

“According to the laws of earthly ordination, a person always gets back what he or she has given to the world.

1 Here, Pythagoras refers to the Holy Spirits.

“What does it mean: ‘given to the world’ — you ask?

“The universe is one integrated whole. Be it creatures covered with fur, reptiles, marine life, avian creatures, every fruitful grain, trees, herbs, the variety of blooming flowers, people, the mountains, the seas, or the sky, — everything is interconnected. The Great Gods unite and direct such connections in this created world.

“The universe lives according to the laws of Harmony.

“And so, gradually — beginning as grains of consciousness in the smallest creatures — souls grow in the bodies of plants and animals. And, having gained a human body, a great opportunity is revealed before the soul: a chance to transform itself into God!

“Every particle of the universe affects the Whole. And the one who does evil violates Harmony with his or her life and actions. This one does not know that he or she causes harm to oneself, when he or she harms others.

“Take, for example, the branches of a tree. They are separate, but together they make up a whole tree. In a similar way, all beings, including people, are like branches in the life of the Whole. They do not notice that they all have one Root: the one Divine Source of life of Everything. And the harm, supposedly committed only to another being, is harmful to the Whole.

“That is why the laws of the development of the Whole repay evil — with pain, and reward good — with happiness.

“In this way, gradually, the Gods direct souls to the understanding of what is love, Light, and good.

“Goodwill and deeds of righteousness and justice to all beings — this I regard as the foundation of a righteous life.

“Ethical behavior gives us freedom, although it may seem for many that this is not so.

“Unethical behavior, on the contrary, enslaves a person. Although, at first, such a person might not notice it or might not guess the consequences of his or her immoral actions. But most of those consequences are determined by the evil done to other beings.

“A person may believe that the restrictions imposed on him or her by ethical norms hamper his or her desires to live as he or she pleases. And it may even seem that non-observance of ethical rules gives freedom...

“But this is because one does not see the entire picture of the Whole, does not feel one’s inseparable connections with this universal Whole, of Which every being is a small part.

“I repeat that any harm caused to man or to another creature, brings, in return, a bad fate to the one who caused it. From this retribution, one cannot hide!

“From the Divine Omniscience, we cannot hide even our thoughts!

“It is meaningless for one to deceive oneself by covering up one’s vices with self-justification or trying to make the voice of one’s conscience inaudible!

This would be similar to turning away from an impending disaster by standing with one’s back to it

— so as not to see the approaching reckoning, believing that one is saved...

“On the contrary, it is necessary to expose one’s own vices before oneself and eradicate them! Then, problems and troubles will soon leave one’s life!

“Such healing of the soul also heals our bodies and fates. It helps us to find happiness in life!

“Rectitude, when it is observed by a person, ensures good health and a good fate of its own accord, without causing misfortunes and illnesses in the future.

“Prudent is the mind that is filled with *a desire for the good of everyone and everything*, and not just oneself!

“In the mind of every person, there are various ideals, such as, for example, how one would like to be. These ideals can be made truly beautiful! And you can try to embody them in your life!

“It sometimes happens, that a person becomes what he or she wants — only for the sake of appearance in the eyes of other people. But you can bring to harmony both the external and the internal in yourself — and this will make you honest and pure.

“Hypocrisy is a mask that hides us from other people. But it does not hide from Divine View what the person seeks to hide. And it does not make true what one seeks only to show before other people!

“It’s possible to bring all the soul’s forces in yourself into harmony!

“The one who lives in harmony with oneself and with the world, is pleasing to people and pleases the Gods!

“The one who does not know the meaning of life and one’s own goals, is like a loiterer who stands or hangs about on the road, doing nothing useful for oneself, but only blocking the way for others! So many people wander around in their lives, indulging only in pleasures for the flesh. They go from birth to death of the body, without getting much out of their lives on the Earth!

“When the soul acquires the right understanding and meaning of life, then all the energy, which was previously wasted on useless things, now gets directed towards the main purpose.

Not only actions but also the emotions and thoughts, in which a person lives, affect his or her fate.

“A stunted and fading flower does not please anyone and is not interesting to anyone. In the same way, people who are always sad, complaining about fate, condemning others, or who are frail and infirm by bodies and souls, attract to themselves — through this way of living, thinking, and feeling — troubles in their future. Instead, you can change your lives and get out of the vicious circles of despair, discontent, anguish, and suffering and get far from them!

“Being angry and using one’s strength for violence against others causes fear. There are no states of the soul more disgusting than anger and fear! The fate of such people is sad!

“But the fragrance of *beautiful qualities* of the soul spreads around! And just as a beautiful flower attracts butterflies and honey bees — beautiful souls, through the fragrance of goodness and harmony, bring success and well-being to their lives and the

lives of others! Such a state, in particular, attracts other good people.

“But in destinies, many consequences of earthly deeds can be intertwined. The consequences of atrocities, committed in the past, can overtake the soul after a considerable time. Similarly, the ‘cornucopia’ does not necessarily immediately begin to shower awards on those persons who decided to change themselves. After all, usually time passes before the soul confidently changes its present destiny — through its thoughts, emotions, and deeds.

“You can use any difficulties to improve yourself!

“One can learn to see benefit for oneself in all events and circumstances!

“Let’s take any of our achievements and defeats as lessons of wisdom!”

... Ariadne listened — and waves of golden Light touched her with tenderness, love, and peace. The meaning of Pythagoras’s words came and grew stronger.

These were not just words, but they carried the Divine Power and Knowledge!

Who is he? What kind of Gods does he worship? What does he want? Why is he so attentively heard by all these so different people?

... Meanwhile, Pythagoras continued:

“The power of a person can be used to subjugate others. But the same power can be directed towards disciplining your own desires and emotions, thoughts, and intentions.

“Kindness is the base of everything good in the soul. It directs the soul into accordance with the

principles of goodness and the desire for the good of all surrounding beings.

“Let’s try to think about it broadly!

“It is necessary to treat with love not only parents and children, wives, and husbands.

“But we must also love plants, which bring us food and give us outdoor beauty!

“And the birds, which delight our hearing, must be contained in our love!

“And let us love all of nature, which is created in such a way by the Divine Power that everything around bestows blessings on a person, when given our love!

“And the Primordial Creator Himself, the Creator of Everything, — we must train ourselves to love and honor Him too!

“This is a wise beginning for everyone who would like to start the path to goodness — right now! Everyone can accept this decision for oneself right now!

“And next time we’ll talk in more detail about how to do this. We’ll talk about the ways, possibilities, and goals of the soul’s transformation. In particular, we will refer to the meaning of human life here on the Earth.”

Chapter Three: **Leonardos**

Still impressed by what she heard, Ariadne slowly descended the steps of the amphitheater. Al-

most all the listeners had already dispersed, only a few had surrounded Pythagoras and asked questions.

A little in the distance, Ariadne saw a young man who seemed familiar to her. He had perfect complexion, thick light curly hair, some strands of which had so burned in the sun that they had turned a light golden color, and shining eyes.

Ariadne could not take her eyes off him, because there was something else surprisingly beautiful in him. It was as if he somewhat resembled Pythagoras himself, but not outwardly! He, like Pythagoras, radiated the Divine Energy — pure and radiant...

And suddenly, she remembered: he was her childhood friend from Athens, Leonardos!

Ariadne joyfully approached:

“Is it really you, Leonardos?”

“Yes, Ariadne! How glad I am to see you! You have become such a beauty!”

“I’m very glad too, Leonardos! You have changed so much! I could hardly recognize you! Are you with Pythagoras?”

“Oh yes, Ariadne! I’ve changed a lot — thanks to Him!

“Yes, I am with Him! We are constructing a school here, in which there will be training for those who aspire to Wisdom and Beauty!

“There will be temples where people can remain in silence and listen to Divine Revelations. Also, there will be houses for all the students, and an amphitheater in which we will listen to Pythagoras! There will be paths along the sea, a place for swimming, and a beautiful garden!

“Do you want to come with me? I’ll show you all this!”

“Let’s go! I was very interested while listening to His speech!”

... On the way, they talked:

“Tell me: how did you get to know Pythagoras?”

... Leonardos pondered briefly, then began the account:

“Now, even just remembering it makes me feel ashamed... There was a trial of three Athenian citizens. The speakers spoke in turns: in accusation or defense. The charge was false and the sentence was cruel. The orator who spoke in defense was inept, his statements in defense of the accused were weak and uninformed. He occasionally blushed, or occasionally turned pale in excitement, but he could not connect his thoughts into orderly evidence and clothe the truth in words...

“My friend and I used to go to such meetings to have fun and practice wit. But we never spoke publicly. We never worried about the results, there was only a false pleasure from the feeling of superiority over others — superiority in the mind and eloquence...

“And then having already ridiculed the absurdity of accusations amongst ourselves, we scornfully ridiculed the awkward defender.

“Suddenly, Pythagoras appeared us.

“He suggested that I speak in defense of the accused — to act better than the man who was so obviously defeated in the opinion of those who would now have to pass sentence.

“At first, I refused, saying that this fuss about the ridiculous charges was not serious...

“Pythagoras then answered:

‘But the fate of those three people is dependent on these words! Do you not have the courage and the intelligence to apply your eloquence to protect them?’

“... In that way, He hurt my pride. And I made a speech.

“It should be noted that my first public speech was not brilliant, but it was a great success.

“I disproved the arguments of both inept prosecutors and the absurd statements of the defender, then I illuminated the situation as I understood it. Under the rapid approval of all listeners, the accused were acquitted.

“The most unexpected thing for me was the gratitude of that unqualified defender, Theoritus, for my speech. He was not hurt at all by my kinky ridicule over his performance. He sincerely rejoiced that my speech showed the truth and saved those people from false accusations and an unfair sentence!

“Pythagoras stood nearby. And suddenly, I became painfully ashamed for all I did, flaunting my wit before people!

“My friend, with whom I mocked, did not understand me and, perplexed by the change that occurred in me, left us.

“But I embraced Theoritus as a friend.

“I can introduce you to him, if you want. His performances now far surpass mine in eloquence. He wanted to master this — and he has succeeded.

“And now I’m attracted to something quite different: the ability to master... Well, we will talk about this later.

“And later, Pythagoras invited both of us to go with Him.

“He said that He had conceived the creation of a spiritual school that included a community of like-minded people — one where wisdom and eloquence serve Truth, where justice has power, where kindness reigns in all its splendor, where evil and other vices are subject to denunciation and annihilation. For they are the greatest folly and insanity that can be inherent in people.

“... And here we are! Look how beautiful it is!”

... The place was really beautiful! There was a wonderful view of the sea, and one wanted to spread one’s wings like a bird and soar over all this natural beauty!

... Leonardos showed Ariadne the future layout of the school. He led her along the slope and the top of the hill and described with delightful words the not yet built houses, and the not yet laid out marble stairs.

Ariadne listened, smiling slightly. So far, only a small group of students worked in the distance, constructing a basin in the path of a mountain stream to form a convenient place to collect fresh water.

“And why are you the ones digging the ground, building a swimming pool, and planting a garden? Why do you carry stones and paint walls? Why do you yourselves — instead of slaves — do the work here?!”

“You are wrong, Ariadne: everyone does the work that is feasible for him or her! As for slaves,

there are none and there never will be any! It would be unethical if one person served another out of coercion, and not, instead, out of a desire to help!

“Here, there is only the greatness of those souls who strive for Purity and Light!

“And any earthly work helps them in this!

“Yes, there are among us those who, by the will of fate, were once in slavery. They were bought by Pythagoras. And many of them are much smarter, more honest, and more beautiful souls, than those who think of themselves as aristocrats!”

“Are you hinting at me?”

“Oh no! Not at all! Sorry!...”

... Suddenly, Pythagoras came out to meet them.

Ariadne, surprised, did not know what to say or how to behave...

“I salute the beautiful, by both soul and body, Ariadne! I’m glad that Leonardos spoke so well of our plans!”

... And then, Ariadne did not remember anymore whether Pythagoras was speaking or was silent. That wave of Light that she felt during Pythagoras’ performance — became the Ocean of Divine Light, Which embraced her from all sides and filled her body with bliss...

When she returned to the usual perception of the world, Pythagoras was no longer around.

“I do not remember anything, Leonardos! There was only Light — everywhere: outside and inside me! What was it?”

“The Divine part in you is ready to wake up! You — as a soul — are ready to awaken and comprehend the reality of being. And in it — the world of ob-

jects and people, and even the seas and mountains are only a small superficial part of the Great, Perfect, and Whole Creation.

“Shall I escort you home?”

“No, thank you! Now, I must comprehend all this — by myself...”

Chapter Four: **The Slave**

The next day, Ariadne was again at the performance of Pythagoras and again saw Leonardos, but only from afar. That day, they did not talk.

She went home immersed deep in thought because of what was happening to her...

She still existed as if in some kind of gentle transparent and luminous fog. Calm joy filled her.

Thoughts seemed to come up — and then dissolve again. And the soft joy did not disappear even for a moment.

What’s happening? Have I fallen in love? But, with whom: with Pythagoras? Or, with Leonardos? Or, with this beautiful Divine world of which Pythagoras speaks?

She tried to rethink what she heard: “A person can become God-Man, God!”.

“Is it too presumptuous and immodest to think so? What if the Gods punish us for such impudence?”

“But no: it’s not insolence, but the desire to become better! After all, I feel that what Pythagoras says is true!

“Many times in my childhood, I myself dreamed of becoming like a Goddess! And not only in terms of the beauty of the face and the whole body, but also to be wise and to perform magical acts of kindness!

“But those were childhood dreams... And now, everything is real! Or... does it just seem real?

“Here, Pythagoras says that the meaning of human life is to become Perfect, just like the Gods, and then to wisely help all people!...”

*** * ***

At that time, a young slave brought supper for Ariadne.

Ariadne, still as if in another world, accidentally knocked down the tray which the slave was going to put on an inlaid table with golden legs. Everything that was on the tray fell down, staining the fine outfit of Ariadne. Expensive ceramic painted cups were broken, a golden goblet clattered and rolled on the marble slabs...

The slave fell to her knees in fright:

“Forgive me, Mistress! Sorry!”

... Ariadne was not cruel or arrogant with slaves. So, the slave was not at all risk of being punished! But she shrank back as if she expected to be struck.

Ariadne had been accustomed since she was a child to believing that there were those who were obliged to serve her, performing all the necessary work, and she never paid much attention to these people... “of another sort”.

But that day, she suddenly saw that this young and beautiful girl, who was the same age as Ariadne, was now in a state of fright and confusion because of Ariadne's own mistake! She was kneeling, not knowing where to start: should she change the outfit of her mistress — or remove the debris?

... Ariadne knew almost nothing about the fate of Diantha: about what happened in her life that made her a slave... And it did not even occur to her to ask her about it!

Ariadne had recently bought her from a man who was very cruel to his slaves. Diantha repaid for this salvation with special devotion and love, which were not characteristic of other servants. But, at the same time, Diantha was always silent and closed off, as if she wanted to hide from the whole world around her.

Ariadne hurried to reassure the girl:

“Why are you so scared? It's me who's to blame: I knocked down the tray with my hand!”

... She gently lifted the girl from her knees and looked into her eyes, which were wet with tears.

“Let's go swimming in the pool!” — she suddenly suggested and led Diantha with her, like a friend.

Throwing off her clothes, Ariadne, laughing, plunged her beautiful body into the clear water and dived under, admiring the mosaic image of Neptune at the bottom of the pool.

Resurfacing, she called out to Diantha:

“Well, what about you?! Jump in quickly!”

... When they came out from the water, they were already almost friends.

... The same evening Ariadne wanted to know the life story of Diantha, but she only told Ariadne a little:

“My father was a merchant and highly educated man. He told me a lot about distant countries, taught me to read, write, and count. After the death of my mother, he began to take me with him on his distant wanderings.”

“You can read and write, but you never told me about it!... Tell me more about yourself! What happened to you?”

Diantha gloomed:

“I would not like to remember that... What for? The past is no more! And I, even though I may still look the same, am also no more! I’m nothing! I allowed myself to become a slave, I allowed myself to be mocked!

I should have killed myself, but back then I did not do it for some reason and allowed my honor to be trampled down and my purity to be desecrated! And now... nothing matters! I do not know why I'm still alive!...”

“Listen, you’re no longer a slave, Diantha! From this moment on, you are free! You can start all over again!”

... Diantha shook her head sadly:

“No... It’s impossible to erase everything that has happened in my life! I am not worthy of freedom, purity, and happiness!...”

“You should not say that! Listen: tomorrow, if you want, we’ll go to listen to Pythagoras, the Sage! Perhaps you will want to study in His School — just as I now dream!”

* * *

The next day, Ariadne announced to the rest of her slaves that they were free without any ransom! She even gave everyone money. Some of them returned to their lands, several people wished to remain in the house of Ariadne and help with the housework, since they had nowhere to go and no reason to depart.

Ariadne was filled with delight at starting to put into practice the performance of good deeds! Then, she chose one of her outfits for Diantha. When Diantha saw her reflection in the mirror, a smile even slightly touched her lips...

They went together to listen to the speech of Pythagoras.

* * *

After the speech of Pythagoras, Leonardos himself approached Ariadne and Diantha with the words: "Pythagoras said that you and your friend have something to talk about with Him."

"Wow! I was just about to ask you about this! Diantha really needs to hear the Teacher's advice! And, somehow, He already knows about this! What a miracle!"

"You have not yet seen His miracles, my dears!" — Leonardos smiled.

... When the audience dispersed, Pythagoras, Leonardos, and the ladies settled on the steps of the amphitheater for a conversation.

"Should Leonardos and I leave?" — Ariadne asked.

“No, My friends, I will not say anything that you all would not find useful to hear. Perhaps, someday, you yourselves will be able to pronounce such words for other people.”

... Pythagoras gently took Diantha by the hand and began to say:

“Today is a significant day in your destiny, Diantha! You can be reborn to a new life — a life in Love and Light! — like Aphrodite, born from the waves of the ocean!

“You can begin to learn how to lose the heavy burden of the past! You can start to create a wonderful future for yourself and for others!”

“How is this possible? I cannot change myself so quickly!...”

“Yes, a soul does not change quickly. But you must open a new life for yourself! Today, for example, you can learn how not to be upset about the past, Diantha! I, too, was once a prisoner of the Persians, and I know well what slavery is!”

“How did you know that I had been a slave until today?”

“I cannot hide my disgrace...”

“But You, great Pythagoras, were never a slave, even though You might have been, perhaps, a prisoner! But I became a slave instead of dying!... I allowed myself to be mocked and humiliated!... I permitted myself to be trampled in the mud!...”

“And now, are you going to reproach yourself for this up until your death?”

“Do you want to take your despair with you into the afterlife?”

“Do you want to make your sadness eternal?”

“Do you want to turn the beautiful life, given to you by the Creator, into self-punishment and torture for yourself?”

“Oh, no!...”

“Diantha, perhaps you could have done something worthier then. Or maybe, you could not have. But now, all that is not important! Look: you are here — at this moment — alive and listening to Me!

“The past — let it be the past! You will not live in it anymore! You should not bring sadness back to the soul with a memory of the past!

“You are free: to choose life in the past — or in the present, which you create for yourself right now!

“All that once was, is already carried away by the river of time!

“Don’t keep your thoughts and emotions in the past!

“Now — in this very minute — you can start to change yourself and your life for the better! It makes no sense to mourn failures — when you are given the opportunity to correct them!

“Feel what wonderful opportunities are opening up now before you! All is in your hands. And I’m ready to help you! Do you want this?”

“Yes, I do!”

“Then forget your dark past and do not torment yourself with the uncertainty of the future, in which you have not yet begun to see the Light!

“It’s a mistake: to see the world as gloomy, devoid of kindness and joy! You are wrong when you see yourself in this world as a victim of atrocities and of your own wrong actions! You should no longer feel worthless or fallen!”

“Can You teach me to think and see things in a different way?”

“Yes, I’ll try to reveal a little of the Truth to you and show you how things really are. This is so that, in the future, you yourself can learn and know how to live in accordance with the Truth!

“Truth is the Divine Primordial Power that controls all that exists!

“Truth is the manifestation of Love, Beauty, Harmony, Wisdom, Kindness, Caring, and Perfection!

“Truth is God!

“I’m not talking about a fictional ‘god’ from some particular cult and neither about a statue of marble on the altar to which people bring sacrifices.

“But there is a real God — the All-Creating United Power!

“He really exists!

“He is like an ocean, which unites in itself several rivers that flow into it, and which bring their waters into the boundlessness of this ocean!

“In the same way, the Primordial One unites in Himself all the truly Divine, that is, All Those Who attained the Perfection and became One with Him throughout all time, beyond measure!

“God is the Great Primordial Power, possessing the highest Wisdom and Justice!

“He created the Laws, according to which everything develops in the universe!

“All this can be cognized not as *special words* — but as the Reality, that can be seen, felt, and understood! And then, man can become an Integral Part of Him!

“Now, to begin with, feel that you are always surrounded by the Light of His Love!

“And this Light of Divine Love is near, at every second!

“This Light is everywhere! The Divine Light hugs you from the outside and is ready to fill you inside!

“But the sadness, fear, and despair, which are now inside you, do not allow the Divine Love to flow into you!

“Open in yourself the love of the soul — to meet the Love of God! And then you yourself will see this Divine Light!

“Feel this Light, too, with the hands of the spiritual heart!

“You know how to love!

“The Light of Divine Love is always ready to carry you — as if on Its Hands!

“This Light can support you, protect you from dangers, and guide your life!

“In It, you will discover the meaning of your life personally, and also the role that you can play for other beings on this theater stage of the material world!

“With regard to helping others, much help can be given by carrying love and care to them, and by revealing the steps of cognition — while your body-shell is present in the world of objects and bodies, visible to the ordinary sight.”

... Diantha felt herself as a free soul soaring in that Light Which was shown and revealed to all by Pythagoras!

“The Love of God! Such happiness!” — Diantha had long forgotten what it was like to be happy... But now, the true Power of Divine Love filled her!

Pythagoras went on to say:

“Wash yourself in this Sea of Light! Look: you — as a soul — are now free and similar to the Light! And this can be your future, if you yourself want it! You can rush to the Light and become a Divine Soul, bearing Love to others who live on the Earth!

“Live, feeling this Ocean of Love! God loves you, cherishes you, carries you with His Power, and guides you!

“You will soon learn to live this way always — if you want to and if you practice some simple rules, which we teach in our School!

“And you will be able to help others to discover that which was only slightly revealed to you today!”

Chapter Five: **On Positive and Negative Emotional States**

Ariadne and Diantha did not miss a single public appearance of Pythagoras from then on.

Moreover, they were allowed to attend the talks of Pythagoras with the selected most promising students.

... On that day, Ariadne, Diantha, Leonardos, and some other students gathered on the shore of a small bay at the foot of the hill upon which the School’s buildings were being built.

They were sitting on flat comfortable stones. This part of the coast was sheltered by rocks from side winds and winds from the land. It was like a cozy

terrace for overlooking the sea. The stones were brought and laid here by disciples. This small secluded amphitheater now served — in good weather — for Pythagoras' conversations with them.

... They sat for a while in silence, listening only to the soft splashing of small waves and the voice of seagulls.

Then, Pythagoras began to speak:

“Today, I told the people of Crotone about the role of positive emotional states, accompanying the right intentions.

“I said, among other things, that, by creating the intention and desire in ourselves — as souls — to do good deeds, we thereby call the Divine Assistance into our plans and thus multiply the success of our actions many times over. At the same time, it becomes possible to do joyfully any good deed, great or small.

“It is also important to understand that it is not truthful to do things that should serve good, while also being sad or annoyed. This is because our wrong emotions significantly reduce the effectiveness of any action!

“Now we, my friends, can talk about this in greater depth.

“Any exercise for the body and soul, any work that we do — we should do while being attuned to positive emotional states! This can be either the performance of gymnastic exercises, the study of new texts, or construction work. Meditations, too, should be performed in this way.

“It is necessary to perform even any the simplest action — with the understanding that the ener-

gy fields from our mental states are spreading from us outwards and filling the surrounding space.

“Take, for example, cooking. If it is performed in the right emotional state, it will bring much more benefit than the same action performed ‘going through the motions’ the motions or in a negative emotional state.

“In addition, food, when cooked by someone in an irritated state, becomes filled with the disharmonious energy of the one who cooked it.

“And the best, which the product can bring, will not be assimilated if a person eats in greed or is in a rush, hastily swallowing bite after bite.

“These simple examples show how, as with any other action, the right emotional state ensures success, and the wrong one prevents the proper execution of deeds.

“I’ll draw your attention to the fact that people in many ways predetermine the events around them. By acting, they create each time a kind of fragmented space in the universe surrounding them — by filling the space with their own different energies. But they usually do not know about this.

“And every thought, every emotion, every action, and even just spoken words — are parts of such a construction, made in the environment by a person for himself or herself, both for now and for the future.

“Our emotional states also significantly affect the lives of other beings.

“For this reason, everything that we do is better done fully conscious: watching our own states at every moment and regulating them.”

... Pythagoras was silent for a while, allowing the students to comprehend what had already been said. Then, he continued:

“Intentions can vary according to the quality and timing of their implementation.

“If someone creates an intention to buy butter or fruits at the market, then, most likely, it will not be a difficult intention to fulfill. However, the way in which this person performs this task — whether with joy and pleasure, or as an onerous duty — is much more important.

“It is from a variety of such situations that our everyday life is formed — and this predetermines the existence (good or bad) of our bodies and us as souls.

“In such activity of ours, there should not be excessive and unnecessary actions. Otherwise, everyday vanity will eclipse the main things that we really need to do.

“After all, a person has more significant goals!

“For example, we set for ourselves the goal of making ourselves-souls like the Gods.

“A person should not lose the main Purpose of his or her life among minor tasks. If he or she doesn't, then his or her life plans — for this day, the next month, or for years to come — will be naturally and consistently built up as steps leading to the main Purpose. In this way, gradually, the habit of *improving oneself* — leads to a more successful spiritual life for both the devotee himself or herself and many people around, who observe his or her perfecting.

“In creating a beautiful sculpture from a block of marble, a sculptor gradually removes all the superfluous material and then grinds the resulting shape.

In a similar way, we can ‘sculpt’ our lives, gradually approaching the Ideals that we have set for ourselves as our Main Purpose!

“And if we forget about the really important Goal because of the small-time matters, then we will not be able to achieve this Goal.

“One can begin every day in such a way that one’s intentions are easily fulfilled. A soul can tune itself — much like a perfectly tuned musical instrument!

“And, in the same way as a lyre can be tuned to sound in accordance with musical harmony, so, too, can a soul tune itself to the states of the Divine Light and the Creating Fire!

“If we do this, the inspiration received from the Gods will fill every hour of our lives!”

... Pythagoras paused again. A transparent silence enveloped Pythagoras and his disciples sitting on the bank.

Ariadne even thought that in the soft non-material Light she began to perceive beautiful Faces and Hands. Then she realized: the Divine Souls had approached...

Pythagoras again began to speak:

“A soul should either remain in *silence*, or *sound* in tune with the Divine Souls!

“*Silence* is very important! It allows one to harmonize the whole space which, at every moment, is covered by this soul.

“*Silence* also makes it possible for a soul to unite with the Divine.

“Here is the lyre. When it does not sound, it is as if it holds within itself all the sounds of the world in a beautiful *silence*.

“A skilled performer, by touching the strings, produces amazing melodies of great beauty.

“In the same way we, too, can — from *silence* —bring harmony and beauty to the universe, through any of our actions.

“When the intentions of the soul are illuminated by inspiration, they are realized easily!

“But if, in the days ahead, we see hard and undesirable work or insurmountable obstacles, then we will not be lucky!

“And sometimes, a person can even think that a deed is impossible altogether...

“Such thoughts and emotions impede and reduce the force that could have otherwise flowed into the implementation of the conceived task.

“But if we ‘tune’ ourselves to the joy of labor, to the power of the soul that overcomes barriers, and also to love and inspiration in the work on both ourselves-souls and earthly affairs — then, in this way, we put good fortune into our lives.

“And if our intentions do not contradict the Divine Plans they will then, necessarily, be realized!

“If we somewhere made a mistake in our plans and failed, then it should also be accepted with joy: as a lesson offered by the Gods.

“... Let joy fill the body and soul with vitality!

“But joy is not the only emotional mood that can be used. Love, peace, goodwill towards others — all this multiplies and intensifies the harmony that we bring to the world! Such thoughts and emotions of ours activate the power of the soul and give energy to achieve results!

“But we must also remember that it makes no sense to invest strength and inspiration in poorly conceived plans.

“Our intentions must be properly nurtured in *silence* and in coordination with the Divine Plans. Each of us should learn this!

“The perfection of this is when the human body becomes an *instrument* for the Divine Omnipotence, Love, and Wisdom!

“... There are two streams in the dynamics of the Creation: one flows to the Perfection, the other flows down towards degradation, decay, and death. And it is important for man to be included in the ascending flow of developing souls, and to feel that the Gods are ready to support and help.

“It is easy to feel this, for example, in one of the simplest exercises that we can perform every morning:

“Let us get up and feel that we are surrounded from every side by the wonderful universe — the Divine Creation! And let us send love to everyone and everything in It!

“Let each of us feel in ourselves the space in the spiritual heart where love is born, and let us then send this emotional state forwards.

“Let us feel that the more we pour out our love, the more we are filled with the Divine Love, Which comes as a Force that flows into our spiritual hearts from behind, from the *Depths*.

“Through this, our *giving of love*, we disappear in the River of Divine Light, Which flows through our bodies, healing and transforming them.

“In this way, we enter the world of the Divine! In It, we can live together with Divine Souls! And, *From Them*, we can further learn how to *give Love!*”

“... Let’s repeat this exercise in all directions: to the right, backwards, to the left, downwards, and upwards.

“In fulfilling this, we can really cognize how the soul, by giving pure and unselfish love, enters the space where Divine Souls dwell.

“And we can learn — through our efforts of *giving love* — to merge with the Streams of Joy of the Creator’s Tenderness, Which gently carry the Divine Love into the Creation.

“And then, we can learn to enter the Mergence with the Great Power of the Divine Light, and later — with the Creative Divine Fire!

“Then, any intention of the soul will be realized by the Power of the Creator’s Love!”

Chapter Six: **Healing the Boy**

After some time, Diantha requested permission to stay at the location of the Pythagorean School for a few days, and she was allowed to do so.

Ariadne also wanted to be allowed to stay. She herself did not want to part with the great Sage even for a minute! But Pythagoras said that it would be better if she still lived in her house and prepared it for the reception of the guests of the School, who would soon arrive. At present, only one of the houses of the School was completely built, and to place all

the guests there would be difficult. Therefore, all those who were from Crotona spent their day in the School, and at night went to their homes.

* * *

Ariadne went to her house by the usual road and, at the same time, continued to stay in the space of Light in which Pythagoras Himself lived, spoke, and taught them to dwell.

The setting sun colored the objects around with a warm golden glow, making everything so beautiful that it seemed even a little unreal.

Ariadne had seen such beautiful sunsets before, but never before had she felt such bliss from the harmony and beauty of nature!

The world seemed to have transformed completely because of the changes that — thanks to the initial lessons of Pythagoras — occurred in herself! The world now began to feel wonderful, full of joy and beauty! Life now had a purpose and meaning, and it seemed to Ariadne that happiness was splashing and spreading all around, and that she could take it with handfuls from the heart and scatter it, like seeds of love, or radiate love, as the Sun was doing now, bestowing its light on everything! There was a feeling as if wings had grown behind her back, and that all she had to do was push off from the surface of the Earth — and she could fly!

And when she thought about Pythagoras, she saw His face, consisting of Light. It was not some kind of image that you recall when thinking about someone. It was a living, moving, Holy face! His gaze

penetrated the soul and saw every emotion and thought of Ariadne...

“This is too much! This is — some kind of delusion!” And, as soon as Ariadne thought so, the face of Pythagoras disappeared from perception, as if He did not dare interfere in her life, unless she, herself, wanted this. Immediately, the world as if became gray... Or... was it just that a little cloud had obscured the sun?

“Sorry! I like it when You’re around! But this is so unusual and unexpected!...” — Ariadne said mentally. Again, the sun shone with a golden glow all around, and Ariadne was filled with Peace and Love.

* * *

The next day, Ferenika visited Ariadne again:

“Didn’t you promise to tell me about Pythagoras? Have you been listening to His speeches all these days, is that why we have not seen each other?”

“Oh yeah!”

“And what do you think of Him?”

“I do not know how to tell you... I seem to plunge into a sea of Light... And His speech sounds like music and penetrates the soul to the innermost depths! He talks about the most important things for all people!”

“Did you fall in love with Him, or what? Well, they do say that He is beautiful, like Apollo himself, who descended from Heaven! And yet, at the same time, He is already many years old, and He has visited distant countries and studied all the teachings.

And people even argue that He is endowed with the eternal life of the Gods! Is this all true or fiction?"

"Are you going to listen to me talk about Him, Ferenika, or do you prefer tell me all about Pythagoras yourself?" — asked Ariadne with a smile. — "Anyway, I know what news will keep you quiet for a while: I met my childhood friend, Leonardos, and he is one of Pythagoras' close disciples!"

"Oh! Tell me quickly: on which one of them do you have a crush? You are shining with such happiness that I cannot take my eyes off you!"

"A crush?... But this happiness is something entirely different! It is beyond this world! It carries one to the higher, Divine World! I now love this whole Creation, including flowers, trees, mountains, the sea with its emerald waves, and the hovering seagulls over the sea! I love Leonardos and his friends from the Pythagorean School! I love Pythagoras, Who has revealed to me all this incredible happiness of life and soul perfecting!"

... Ariadne began to tell Ferenika the main things that she had understood and learned in recent weeks and that had changed her whole life...

Truth be told, Ferenika was more interested in details about Ariadne's relations with Leonardos: about whether he was confessing his love for Ariadne, and about whether they were kissing already...

* * *

During this time, outside, a noise and some exclamations were coming from a crowd. Several chariots were passing by Ariadne's house. The drivers, in drunken voices, were shouting something

about victories... They rushed past with a roar. The noise of the departing chariots and the neighing of horses had almost died down...

But then, the enthusiastic screams of the crowd turned into frightened cries.

“Something has happened there, let’s go look: maybe we can help!” —Ariadne said.

She got up and walked quickly through the garden to the gate. Ferenika rushed after her, trying to prevent her friend from going:

“You said you let all your slaves go! And if it’s dangerous — who will protect us?!”

... Almost opposite to the gate, people crowded around a boy of ten or twelve years old who had been knocked down by a chariot...

He was badly injured; there were obviously many fractures. The child was unconscious.

“We’ve already sent for a doctor, but to carry the boy far in his state would not be a good idea!”

Ariadne suggested:

“Let’s carry him to my house, it is right here!”

Four men, laying the boy on a raincoat, took him to the house of Ariadne and then, having decided that nothing else depended on them, they parted.

Ferenika lamented emotionally:

“What are we going to do with him? What if the doctor will not help — and the boy dies? We do not even know who his parents are! And this rascal, who knocked the child down, did not even think of stopping!”

... Ariadne almost did not hear her friend. The question of what to do — she now addressed to Pythagoras: to that shining image of Him that she could now see.

.... Pythagoras entered the house a few minutes later. Ariadne did not dare to ask how He managed to get to that place so quickly: did the Gods lead Him in advance, or were there other ways to control space and time?

Pythagoras embraced the whole space with His gentle calm:

“What has happened here, Ariadne? Do you need My help?”

... Ariadne pointed to the couch, where the boy’s crippled body was laid:

“He was hit by a chariot...”

“Now, my friends, calm down, go to the garden or sit down here, and do not have more fear, anxiety, and thoughts about pain and death! Everything will be fine!”

Ariadne and Ferenika sat quietly in the far corner of the room.

For some time, Pythagoras healed the mutilated body of the child, restoring the broken bones to a healthy state.

When He had finished, He said, addressing Ariadne:

“He will be alive and well! And he will not become a cripple! He must sleep until tomorrow. But since you took part in his salvation, you’ll have to take a little part in his destiny, Ariadne! And I, also, will be expected to participate in his fate!”

Pythagoras gently stroked Ariadne’s hair.

“Don’t worry: all this is for the best! I am very glad that you thought about inviting Me and that you managed to call Me!”

... Then, He turned to Ferenika, who had not yet recovered from having witnessed a miracle occur before her eyes:

“I’m glad to meet you, Ferenika! You could learn to control the fire that burns in you so brightly and so passionately!

“Also, I ask you, dear little talker, not to tell anyone the details about what happened here. Otherwise, our School will become a place of pilgrimage of all the infirm. But we must heal not bodies but souls! We must teach people to create and keep harmony in their lives; for then, diseases will no longer have any place in such lives!”

* * *

The doctor came to the house of Ariadne when Pythagoras had already departed. He was sweating from the heat of the day and grumbled, cursing the weather and the child, who, after all, would die anyway!

Ariadne greeted him with the words:

“Thank you, and forgive me for having troubled you! But the boy merely fainted. People were afraid that his bones were broken, but now everything is fine! Your help is not required!”

... When the doctor heard from Ariadne that the boy had merely fainted and received several bruises, he was so furious that only a large reimbursement allowed him to calm down and reconcile himself with everything that had happened.

Chapter Seven: **Gifting the Truth**

The boy Nikos, after having been healed by Pythagoras, began to visit Ariadne's house often. Ariadne and Diantha began teaching him writing and counting.

Soon, several other children joined Nikos, with whom special time was now allocated. It was a wonderful experience of giving knowledge to other people!

Classes with adults at the School also acquired new dimensions.

The community of Pythagoras' spiritual students and like-minded people grew gradually.

Lessons and lectures were now taking place not only from Pythagoras himself, but also from his older students. Those who had already learned a lot explained to beginners the ethical commandments and rules for a harmonious life, according to the possibilities of each person. This helped many to enter a new life — the life of the Pythagorean Community.

To Ariadne, it was so great to feel like a part of the spiritual Unity of people striving to live in love, purity, and harmony with the Divine Laws of the universe!

The construction of the School buildings also continued.

Several older students had already gone to perform in front of people in other cities and villages. They talked about what they had learned from Py-

thagoras and about the School itself. Among them, there was Theoritus, a friend of Leonardos.

But after his first such speech, he returned very upset.

He sat alone by the sea. The beauty, serenity, and grandeur that surrounded him did not comfort him now.

Ariadne saw this and decided to approach.

She stood behind and allowed a soft stream of heartfelt light and love to pour through her body and spread over the vast space. The place was beyond beautiful, surrounded by light azure waves of the surf, golden sand, and sunshine! Harmony and beauty in the transparent air combined with her caress of the soul.

Theoritus felt her tender presence and turned to her. He said:

“Have you come to comfort me, beautiful Ariadne? Thank you, but I do not deserve your help and sympathy... I am not worthy of being a student of Pythagoras: I did not cope with the assignment...”

“So what happened?”

“I so wanted to tell all those people about the real Knowledge, but I myself said everything in such a way that only hostility was created in them. My words were not understood. The people hated everything that I wanted to teach them! Stones, rotten fruits, lumps of clay, and mud were thrown at me... Those people ridiculed the Truth — and I was the reason!

“Before this, I had spoken to the new students of the School, telling them about the future!... Everything had worked out so well then! And I was sure that my conversations with people who had not yet

thought about God and virtue would be just as successful.

“I told them about the need to strive not for fame, pleasure, wealth, and power in this short-term earthly life — but for the perfection of the soul! But they hardly listened to me. They were not interested in this!... And when I started talking about false beliefs, many were filled with hatred towards me for denouncing the fake “gods” and talking about the futility and criminality of those bloody sacrifices that they offer on altars.”

At that moment, Pythagoras himself approached them. He was in plain white linen clothes. His movements were smooth. And his gaze was filled with such an understanding that it immediately became clear that there was no need to tell him about what had happened, he already knew everything! His calmness and benevolence were special: as if a huge, invisible, but quite tangible field of Transparent Peace surrounded his body and those who were nearby. He filled the space around him with himself.

Pythagoras said:

“Do not be upset, Theoritus, tell all our friends today about what happened. These mistakes of yours will help everyone to be more careful when speaking to people. And it will be of great benefit to everyone! Let this become the topic of our common conversation today!

“Understand how important this is and, without shame, tell about everything that happened!”

“Yes, today I clearly understood that when speaking in front of people, it is necessary to remember not only about all this beautiful and perfect Knowledge and talk about it — but to see, feel, and

understand all those who listen. And if I feel their thoughts, then I can talk to them about what is good, in a language that is understandable to them. And also, I can then know when to pass over in silence those topics that they will not understand yet. I realized that it is necessary to expand people's knowledge gradually, captivating them, and not denouncing or criticizing them."

... Pythagoras embraced Theoritus by the shoulders encouragingly:

"You understood everything correctly, my friend! Shall we?"

... Pythagoras, Theoritus, and Ariadne ascended to the *Temple of Love*, which had already been erected on the hill and where many conversations between Pythagoras and his students took place while the construction of a large amphitheater for performances was not yet completed.

It was a round, snow-white building with a colonnade all around supporting the dome. The interior of the temple was divided by four very wide double doors. In fine weather, these doors were opened and the entire interior of the temple was filled with light and a sense of spaciousness. The walls were almost imperceptible. In cold or windy weather, it was possible to close the doors and light the lamps. And then, the immaterial Expanse of Light and Silence also opened.

In this temple, one could retire for meditation or for conversations with Divine Souls. Here, initiations of new disciples often took place, and Pythagoras himself often conducted his lessons.

... When the senior students gathered, Theoritus told in detail about his journey and his unsuccessful performance in front of people.

Pythagoras added:

“Another mistake you made, my friend...

“When you denounced the ‘invented gods’, the Light of Truth that you wanted to convey to those listening to you, was darkened by your emotions of condemnation and anger. You did not notice this in yourself, considering your indignation at the ignorance and cruelty of those people to be righteous.

“The speech of an accuser is sometimes appropriate when punishing villains, but even then, there should be no hatred in it!

“You turned out to be subject to passion and did not pay attention to the fact that you had lost harmony in yourself. But any negative emotion generates a response in space — just like any positive emotion.

“Your anger at the primitive rituals and cruel ‘sacrifices’ offended them. You expected to evoke compassion for innocent animals, whose blood stains the altars, but we must understand that any indignation only evokes indignation in response. As a result, you failed to arouse sympathy and understanding in those people — when you could have instead awoken the righteousness in them.

“And the people who listened to you perceived all this as hatred and contempt for themselves and for everything that they still believe and worship. They took this as a condemnation of their beliefs, which they used to honor as righteous.

“But they don’t know anything else yet!... And the knowledge, about which you were trying to tell

them about, usually does not immediately penetrate the minds and souls of others through the use of spoken words. Knowledge comes gradually — starting with trust, and then through personal experience.

“You have observed many times, Theoritus, that it is possible to control the mood of the listeners, directing their delights, desires, or hatred in a certain direction to achieve a desired result. But we should not suppress the will of people, even for good purposes! It is necessary to gradually awaken conscience, kindness, and justice in souls! But you — unconsciously and very carelessly — evoked brute emotions in them. And those emotions were then directed back to you, in return. Through this, your mistakes were pointed out to you.

“Sadly, it’s much easier to excite a crowd through strong brute emotions, such as emotions of fear, anger, or a desire for material gain. It is like pushing a stone off a mountain, and, by its fall, it causes a collapse. Speakers sometimes manipulate people with such deception, calling on them to join military campaigns, promising rich rewards, or speaking about the need for a preemptive strike in order to avoid bloodshed on their territory...

“How shameful it is to use this skill to convince others of such things — I don’t need to explain this to you!

“It is necessary to gradually raise the listeners to the perception of truly wise and righteous Knowledge. It is similar to building a temple: stone by stone and step by step.

“But you have to be especially discerning talking about matters of faith. Yes, this is not easy: to change the views of people, to awaken the ability to

think and discern, to kindle love and striving for Truth in souls, and to do all this without violence against minds and souls.

“It is not right to give unreasonable people the entire completeness of Knowledge about the Divine World Order, all at once.

“If a person already possesses strength, but has not yet acquired the ability to understand, then criticism of what this person believes in will only evoke hatred in him or her, which can result in aggressive actions and malicious emotions! Such a person will begin to take revenge on ‘the one who has offended their gods’... And this will complicate their fates and can lead to sad events.

“If the faith of a naive person in his or her ‘deity’, even if fictitious, is based on the emotion of love, then, cruelly denouncing, criticizing, and ridiculing what they worship, can destroy the love in them and cause unnecessary pain.

“That is why we should tell people about the Highest Truths that they cannot perceive in their entirety very carefully!

“Let's remember the rule: ‘Do not violate the Harmony of the Whole!’

“By forcibly pushing a person to go to the Light, we only cause resistance in him or her. And, instead of striving for love, he or she will begin to spend energy on opposing the Truth.

“That's how many very important things were said today thanks to Theoritus!

“Let us thank him! After all, to be able to sincerely and openly tell about our mistakes and failures is a huge victory on the spiritual Path!

“But I must continue so that everyone, not just Theoritus, understands that failures should not stop us. On the contrary, they can make us wiser!

“No matter how difficult it is to tell people about the Truth, we must still do it! It is important! For this we study, for this our School will exist for centuries! We will do this even when we are no longer here in material bodies, when by the Radiance of Us, as Divine Souls, we guide Our followers!

“There were civilizations on this planet before... Some of them developed, while others degraded when the conceit and lust for power of the rulers prevailed over modesty and goodwill! And then the peoples, subject to them, were mired in ignorance for many centuries.

“In Egypt, I saw a lot of evidence of the achievements of a civilization in Atlantis and read some records about the reasons for its death. And the conclusion was clear to me.

“We must strive to create a life for the entire human community, based on the Divine Laws of Harmony, Peace, and Prosperity!

“There are simple concepts of goodness and justice that all people can understand. For example, not a single mother and not a single father want suffering, disasters, and death for their children in a bloody battle of wars... All people want happiness, peace, love, and prosperity! All people can understand that this desired situation can arise in the human community only when almost every person in the community carries virtue and harmony in himself or herself, putting all this into practice.

“And yet, the history of mankind in recent centuries is written in a bloody chronicle of victories and

defeats. It's monstrous! And people consider it... — the norm! Many are sometimes even proud of what they should instead be ashamed.

“The priests of various cults justify this with legends about how, supposedly, even the ‘gods’ are at wars among themselves... People have forgotten about where the true history has been replaced with tales of the pantheon of ‘deities’... of various dubious characteristics!

“And this was deliberately done by the rulers in order to gain power over the people! For centuries, they have attributed the ‘gods’ with vile human qualities! This is how they created false myths, calling those who had power in society as ‘gods’! And this served as an excuse for vices in human society, since, allegedly, even the ‘inhabitants of Olympus’ are not without vices...

“But all legends of this kind are just echoes of the fall of those souls who use their power to dominate others...

“This happened in Atlantis. Higher knowledge and skills were subordinated to the lower human nature and degraded to the level of black magic. And this led to a tragedy, a huge catastrophe of Atlantis itself, as well as floods and destruction throughout the planet.

“To prevent this from being repeated in the history of the Earth, it is important for us to tell people about the Laws of the universe and to preach love and virtue!

“We will gradually awaken in people the desire to live in a harmonious and creative society, based not on selfishness, or lust for power and the search for profit, but on benevolence and love!

“Is it possible? Yes, it is possible!

“Mentions that such civilizations existed before are also contained in ancient manuscripts that I saw in Egypt and Babylon. Some records are so ancient that the priests can no longer read them, for the languages and secret writing of those peoples are forgotten.

“But those who go to the Light always have the opportunity to receive Knowledge directly from the Treasury of the Spirit. Here, the Higher Knowledge is preserved and indestructible, not lost. Its Guardians and Givers are Divine Souls Who have achieved Unity in Divine, All-Embracing Consciousness. But the access to this Knowledge is acquired only as one purifies and develops oneself-soul.

“Only love and wisdom, which having grown in souls, open to the devotees every next page in this endless Treasury of the Highest Knowledge!

“This is what we will continue to devote our time to in training.

“And I would like each of us to be a model for all people in our behavior, words, and even thoughts!

“Even a small particle — by its changes — affects the Whole, the entire universe.

“Now I would like you, my friends, to feel how everything in the universe is interconnected — with each of us.

“The state of every soul, its emotions and thoughts, actions, even insignificant ones, and even just intentions to commit these actions — all this is very significant!

“And each person is responsible for the contribution that he or she makes — with his or her life

— to the development of everything in the Infinity of the Whole!

“And this happens every moment!

“It is like a melody that consists of many sounding instruments.

“And each of us can consciously bring either harmony and coherence into the Evolutionary Process — or dissonance.

“If a person achieves Mergence with the Light of the Divine World, then even the very fact of his or her life, the very state of the One Who has attained Unity, already changes space and serves as an example to people, even if such a Person does not specifically teach anyone anything.

“But the One Who has received the Knowledge and Light has a natural need to share what He or She possesses!

“When the Divine becomes One with the souls that have reached It, this amazing, blissful state of a Shining Soul powerfully affects the entire universe! And the Knowledge revealed to such Devotees is wisely bestowed by Them upon those who need it at this moment!”

... Pythagoras fell silent. Then he took the lyre — and a beautiful melody was born under the gentle touches of his fingers. The understanding came in meditation, into which everyone who listened to Pythagoras plunged.

Then the music stopped. Silence, in which there was Love and the perception of God, remained!

Chapter Eight: **Diantha's Dance**

Ariadne and Leonardos were having a conversation near the fence of cypress trees and various dense flowering bushes which covered the perimeter of the entire territory of the School. Pythagoras had told Leonardos the day before that he was expecting a new student today and asked Leonardos to meet him. "Does he always know when pure souls seek help?" — Ariadne asked.

"Yes! But today might also be a test of my discernment. After all, so many people are attracted to come here because of idle curiosity or because they have been swept away by tales of the miracles performed by Pythagoras!"

... Soon, a tall dark-haired young man approached them:

"Is the School of the great Pythagoras here?"

"Who told you about this and about Pythagoras?"

"I heard a lecture by a young man named Theoritus, and this made me want to attend this School. He was such an inimitable speaker! I had never seen this before: his speech was not accepted by the audience, they tried to drown him out with disgruntled cries, and they threw rotten fruits at him... But he continued, being absolutely sure that he was right! He told so many new things about the Gods! So, I wanted to see and hear his Teacher Pythagoras himself! Is it possible?"

“Yes, tomorrow Pythagoras will speak to the inhabitants of Croton. You should come!”

“But I don’t know anyone here! Perhaps you can tell me where it will be, and where a not too rich traveler can stay? The taverns here are probably very noisy, drinking wine there is natural. Perhaps it will be permissible to stay at the School itself? My name is Kondratos.”

“I will take you to the house of one of our friends. There, you will be provided with decent hospitality. I am very glad, Kondratos, that you have come such a long way to learn! Nowadays, not many people go on a journey with such a lofty goal!

“Someday, the words of Pythagoras will become lessons for many people! Some of them will use this knowledge only as information about numbers and measures, the laws of musical harmony, or the ‘golden ratio’ in proportions in architecture, while others will study more deeply!

“However, as of now, all of us, including Theoritus, are still only just beginning to find the words to give this knowledge to people!

“Come on, our new guest!

“Ariadne! See you tomorrow at Pythagoras’ speech!”

*** * ***

The next day, early in the morning, Ferenika came to Ariadne’s house in a confusion of thoughts and emotions:

“I need to talk to you, dear Ariadne! If I don’t, I will simply die or go crazy!”

“Of course, Ferenika! Let’s go and sit in the garden by the fountain, near the silence and beauty of flowering trees and the soft whisper of jets of water! All this will help you calm down!”

“Oh no! Now nothing can calm and comfort me! I must tell you about this!

“My Caterius — he abandoned me! Can you imagine? He will marry another! How could this even happen?

“He’s a nobody! He said that now everything is over between us! Yes, I am more pleasant to him than that woman, but he intends to marry her because she’s rich!

“Such treachery! Such baseness! He dared to betray me so despicably!

“Beautiful and lovely ladies receive flattering words of admiration from such men, and then they give themselves entirely to these ungrateful ones... But then, these men marry noble and rich ladies instead! What treachery!

“It turns out that he was only having fun with me! And he said he loved me!

“Now, perhaps, I also need to take a vow and become a Pythagorean — and no longer think about happiness in this world!”

“Ferenika, what are you talking about?! Your mind is probably very clouded by the storm of your emotions!

“Things in life is not at all the way they appear to us when we are upset or angry! You are too agitated and are thinking with resentment today!

“Do you really think that only unhappy, outwardly unattractive, offended, or poor people seek refuge for themselves on the spiritual Path?

“Quite the opposite: as a rule, the people who come to Pythagoras are those who have already achieved everything in this earthly life and are looking for the highest meaning of our existence! Recently, a sage and healer came to him, who was already many years old, he was older than Pythagoras himself. And he asked permission to become a disciple. And Pythagoras taught him so that he could initiate his students in his own country! Of course, not many people know about the Pythagorean School yet. But the time will come when people everywhere will learn about the Teachings of Pythagoras!

“Try to calm down all your indignation now, breathe deeply, look at the streams of water — and listen to me!

“Pythagoras teaches us to immediately regain self-control when a storm of destructive emotions rushes in!

“Now try to look at everything that happened as if from the outside! And you will see this as a blessing, not a reason for sadness!

“Look: after all, if your admirer married you, and then began to neglect you, it would be much worse! Would it not?

“And are you not yet tired of all these days and nights, filled only with carnal pleasures, wine, and treats? All these gratifications are so short and transient! Have you never dreamed of greater happiness? Do you really think that the highest thing for a person’s life is to enjoy everything that is possible to receive from the flesh?

“Do you want Leonardos to talk to you about some unshakable truths and the meaning of our lives? He has become very good at it! And you hardly

listen to me, being absorbed in your experiences! He will tell you about the School, about what we can learn so that life's problems do not become tragedies for us, and so that we can learn to choose higher goals for our lives!"

"Aren't you going to be jealous?"

"You make me laugh, Ferenika! Not all human relationships are based on passionate love, resentment, and jealousy! It's possible to live differently, like we do in the brotherhood of us — the Pythagoreans.

"This does not mean, of course, that there can be no love or marriage between two persons. But there are other manifestations of love! And among them, is love for the Highest, for the Divine!"

... At this time, Diantha came out of the grape entwined gallery, which was near the fountain.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Ariadne! I did not realize that you were with someone... I will come back after..."

... Ariadne stopped Diantha:

"No! You didn't interrupt our conversation! We would love to hear from you! Did you want to say something?"

"I wanted to try the dance again..."

... Ariadne turned to Ferenika:

"Diantha showed me her dance today. Would you like to see her dance for both of us? It's so beautiful!"

... Diantha, feeling a little embarrassed, addressed Ferenika:

"I have created a dance that I would like to show tomorrow to Pythagoras... The dance is a story about a soul that awakes and blooms in light and

love, just like a flower that opens itself up towards the Sun.

“There is a pond nearby where lotus seeds have been planted. These seeds were specially brought for Pythagoras from Egypt. Yesterday, the first three flowers blossomed! And a few more buds, which have not yet opened, recently appeared above the water! Yesterday, was admiring them... And it seemed to me like the story of my own life.

“From other lands, I came here and was unhappy in the darkness of the events around me... And then, thanks to Pythagoras, a miracle happened! Just like a lotus flower, I awoke to light and a real life!

“A small seed holds great power to become a flower! And you can feel like you are a seed and allow a transforming new birth to take place.

“When the life force awakens, the seed begins to germinate. It gradually reaches for the light. The sprout, overcoming the soil layer and the water column, rushes up. Then, the bud opens above the surface, and the petals reveal the even more beautiful and tender heart of the flower.

“Do you want me to dance for you?”

“Yes, we’ll watch it with pleasure! Perhaps, your dance will distract me from sad thoughts!” — Ferenika answered.

Ariadne added:

“Diantha, please, bring a lyre — and I’ll try to complement your dance with music!”

... While Diantha went to bring a musical instrument, Ferenika asked:

“Is this your ex-slave? And is she now your friend?”

... Ariadne thought for a few seconds, choosing the right words to answer her:

“You should not look down on people, nor should you obsequiously look at them from the bottom up!

“Pythagoras teaches us: you should not look down on people! It humiliates others and breeds complacency and arrogance! And one should not be subservient to others: this weakens the soul’s own forces and creates idols.

“It is wise to look at people with discernment, but this should be accompanied by love and respect.

“Try to follow this — and then you will begin to perceive life as it truly is, and not how you imagine it to be!

“For example, your Caterius: he does not want to change himself yet... Accept this fact as an inevitability — and let him go his own way!

“Look: here is Diantha! Her difficult past no longer exists now! That silent slave whom you saw before — is no more! She is so beautiful! And Pythagoras helped her to become like this!

“Now, Diantha will tell about it in her dance, without words. And you will see what happens to a soul when it strives to open like a beautiful flower! This is how inner beauty is born, blossoms, and becomes fragrant!”

... Diantha brought the lyre.

Ariadne began to play a melody softly. Sounds were born under her slender fingers. As small air bubbles rise up from the water — so the sounds of the lyre fascinated and lifted souls into the worlds of Transparent Light and Tender Harmony...

Ferenika involuntarily succumbed to the enchanting and soothing music...

... At first, Diantha knelt down, bowing her head, as if she had turned into a motionless statue, like a stone. And gradually, in this stillness, movement was born. At first, it was barely noticeable. One hand, like a sprout, slowly moved and shot up, followed by the other hand. Then, with a flexible movement, her whole body rushed up and fluttered according to the gentle sounds of the lyre... Diantha's arms, legs, and torso movements — everything merged in the magic of the dance...

She enchanted them with her grace and the story that symbolically unfolded in the dance. Like a flexible stem with a bud, swaying slightly in the water column, it grew and stretched towards the light. And then the bud broke through the water, and a flower began to bloom above the surface of the water. Delicate petals, opening, revealed the radiance of the life inside!...

The immaterial flower, consisting of a shining white-golden color, grew more and more...

Ferenika began to think that she saw that immaterial Light. But she did not try to understand why and how this happened.

Ferenika forgot about her sorrows and, when the dance ended, exclaimed:

"It was amazingly beautiful! Thank you, Diantha!"

... The girls were silent for a while.

Then, Ferenika could not resist:

"Well, where is your Leonardos, Ariadne? Once you introduce us, I will fall in love again — and again I will be joyful and happy!"

... She was already joking quite cheerfully. But behind the external gaiety, there was something new, unknown before, to which she had already decided to strive!

Chapter Nine: **Senior and Junior Disciples of Pythagoras**

Leonardos began to conduct conversations with Ferenika and Kondratos in order to, among other things, make sure that they really wanted to be students of Pythagoras.

Often, these meetings took place at Ariadne's house. After all, Leonardos had no other dwelling in Crotone, except for a room in the School of Pythagoras.

Leonardos talked and explained a lot about the ethical rules of the Pythagoreans. These rules were much stricter than the standards of kindness and righteousness for people who live ordinary worldly lives.

For Kondratos, it turned out to be very difficult to adopt a pure vegetarian diet. He tried, made efforts, but complained to Ferenika about the difficulties:

“Well, is what we eat really so important for spiritual life? So many restrictions came upon us at once!”

... Ferenika answered slightly mockingly:

“You say such nonsense, Kondratos! Is it really that hard for you? And they say that men have a stronger will than women! Will all your lofty thoughts about serving people, about the search for the Highest be broken by the desire to taste a little meat? It seems that all your ideas about a just and wonderful community of people are only the fantasies of a vain mind, and not the sincere aspirations of the soul! Does compassion for our smaller brothers and sisters not fill you with love?! Does senseless killing not disturb the soul?!”

“You judge me too harshly, and you also make fun of me! This is not at all a sign of kindness, Ferenika! It is difficult for me to instantly give up all the habits of my former life, but I try and do not at all break the prohibitions...”

... But it was impossible to say that Ferenika did not also face problems. Her resentment against her former lover still flared up in her from time to time. Her emotions were not regulated by her, and her desire to achieve the Divine Love and Wisdom was still very weak...

It sometimes happened that she became inspired by the speeches of Leonardos for a whole day or even more, but then she would again return to her old ways of thinking and reacting to events.

Ariadne also sometimes supplemented these friendly conversations with her impressions and understandings and talked about her experience of mastering the first steps of the Path.

Such a union of souls, who had not yet too confidently and strongly rushed to the Light, helped everyone greatly. To overcome the Path in a community of friends and with the wise leadership of older

comrades — this was one of the principles of the Pythagorean brotherhood. This was denoted by the word *friendship*. This concept was very deep and extensive. The possibilities of mutual assistance in uniting souls on the spiritual Path were explored and comprehensively developed by Pythagoras.

A few weeks later, another of the senior students of Pythagoras, Konstantinos, joined these meetings in the house of Ariadne.

He had been with Pythagoras for a long time. Ariadne saw him at the School many times, but they barely spoke.

He was a tall, slender, and silent young man whose inner strength and light energy attracted the attention of others. And it was embarrassing to disturb the peace that he carried in and around his body.

Ariadne treated with some trepidation and respect those students of Pythagoras who were with him even before Pythagoras arrived in their town. They — the senior students of Pythagoras — were similar to their Teacher with their calmness, benevolence, and gentle strength. They were all amazingly beautiful, and this beauty was not external, but internal. But it also manifested itself in appearance: in irresistible charm, calmness, and gentleness of movements and speeches. Among these senior students, Ariadne felt comfortable and relaxed only with Leonardos: because of their former childhood friendship and his cheerful character — he did not seem unattainable to her.

Konstantinos, on the other hand, gave her the impression of being a mysteriously beautiful person, who understood almost everything and helped Py-

thagoras in teaching the higher Truths. But when meeting and communicating closely, he turned out to be friendly and caring, without a shadow of arrogance!

Soon, not only Ariadne, but also Ferenika and Kondratos talked with him without hesitation. The breadth of his knowledge amazed his friends. And yet, he always found very simple words to explain what seemed difficult to understand.

* * *

Soon, a Spartan named Pankratos joined those who wished to become part of the Pythagorean community and who listened to the explanations of Leonardos and Konstantinos in the house of Ariadne. At his first meeting, he told his new acquaintances the amazing story of how Pythagoras appeared in his life.

Pankratos told everyone in detail about himself, about his strict upbringing according to the principles of Sparta, where strength and courage were glorified, and about his rather high position among his fellow tribesmen.

Everyone was interested in how he learned about Pythagoras. And Pankratos continued his story to the new friends:

“During one of the battles, I was seriously wounded. My health was not recovering. Lying all day almost motionless, unable even to get up, I then began to think about how to end my life, which had become humiliating and meaningless. I was always proud of my military prowess and athletic strength, but now my capabilities were not even enough to

raise my sword and end my meaningless life... It all plunged me into despair, and I asked for a quick-acting poison.

“And at this moment of extreme despair, in a dream that was very real, I saw a sage in simple white clothes. It was as if his body was composed of overflowing white-golden light! He spoke to me about the purpose of a person’s life in a body and suggested not to give up because of bodily weakness. The meaning of life — in his words — was completely different than I thought before. He spoke about the power not of the body, but of the soul, of its striving for the Light and limitless possibilities for improvement! And then the sage showed simple exercises with breathing and light energies, which were supposed to heal my body.

“Then the sage said: ‘My name is Pythagoras. When you get well, come to me to study!’

“The dream was so real that when I woke up I remembered every detail, every word.

“I decided to try to realize the possibilities and strength of the soul, about which the sage from the dream told.

“I began to do those exercises and in a month, I was able to heal my body so much that I could get up and walk.

“I continued to do the exercises and began to ask about Pythagoras from those people who might have heard at least something about him due to their hobbies, travels, trades, or other activities.

“At first, I was unable to find out anything. And only a year later, when I had already completely restored the health of my body, did I hear from one person that Pythagoras was not just a Messenger of

Gods who came to me in a dream, but a real Sage living on the Earth, who traveled to many lands and now organizes a spiritual community in Crotona.

“Of course, I then left everything and went to your city. I have already seen Pythagoras speaking at one of his discourses. Now I have no doubt that it was he who healed me, but I do not at all understand how he learned about my suffering or why he decided to help me. I would like to ask him about all this and become one of his disciples. But I was told that before becoming a student in the School, I have to learn a lot. I was offered to find the house of Ariadne of Athens. And here I am...”

* * *

The life of these future students of the School was now devoted to the study of: the sayings of Pythagoras, the foundations of the righteous behavior of the Pythagoreans, and the first simple exercises for perfecting the soul.

Every day, the students’ desire to learn and comprehend the Truth from their own experience, grew stronger and stronger. At the same time, their old ways of life seemed more and more senseless and pointless.

... On one rainy day, the disciples sat on the terrace of Ariadne’s house and listened to Konstantinos:

“People have forgotten their true nature! The opportunity to become like Gods seems to them an empty dream, and not a deed worthy of effort!

“The purification and further transformation of the soul, ascending the steps of spiritual growth —

this always requires us to make continuous efforts. Only by cultivating in ourselves aspiration, love, and willpower, can we direct ourselves to the heights of spiritual Perfection. And no achievement in this field can ever be conquered once and for all. We must work every day so as not to lose what we have achieved. Yes, it is not easy... And yet, I would not exchange this life under the leadership and guidance of Pythagoras for any other fate!

“It sometimes seems to the one who is at the beginning of the Path that the Goal is so unattainable that one will not have enough strength, not enough life, to overcome the entire Path.

“But those who sincerely desire and make efforts are invariably and regularly helped by Divine Souls! Gods give us inspiration and strength! The impossible becomes possible, and what — at first glance — seemed unreachable, becomes within reach!

“Those who, frightened by difficulties, remain in captivity of earthly temptations — they find themselves in a great loss... They give their whole lives to the power of passions and ignorance! They lose the wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth, given to each of us through birth in a body in this world! After all, it is here that souls learn and improve!

“The world for us is the way we think of it, the way we perceive and evaluate it. One and the same rainy day, such as it is now, can give valuable experience, inspiration, and delight to one person — or sadness and disappointment to another...

“We will gradually learn to transform ourselves as souls! This is possible in everything, in all areas of life, if we sincerely wish it!

“I am telling you about the possibilities that Pythagoras opened before us! Our thoughts, our emotions, and our deeds in life — all this can be adjusted in accordance with the highest task that we want to realize!

“Let us do this, realizing the enormity of the opportunities given to us by the Creator, and the greatness of the Goal that we set for ourselves!

“A simple step for starting this self-tuning is the ability to plunge into the silence of the *spiritual heart*. We have already spoken about the spiritual heart as the center of the soul, which can guide all our efforts correctly. The heart center helps us to intuitively learn to recognize right or wrong decisions.

“... Today we will talk a little about *silence*.

“This rain is extremely conducive to such a conversation. This transparent water wall — it seems to separate us from the vain world, which is as if on the other side of this curtain of rain...

“The measured whisper of rain makes it possible to tune in to the *silence* in which all the sounds of the world are manifested...

“This *silence* can become for us more perceptible than the sound of the rain... We can listen to the *silence* behind all the sounds — and then the *silence* reveals its immense expanses to us! It unfolds in us and does not allow worries to invade this space of silence...

“*Silence* immerses the mind into the peace of the loving heart...

“Right now, I am speaking, but the *silence* remains as a transparent basis for the sound of my voice...

“In its depths — the *silence* is not broken by anything... Let’s try to feel it now.

“Note: existing sounds do not interfere with our ability to be in *inner silence*...

“Only by allowing unnecessary thoughts and disturbing emotions that distort harmony, do we ourselves violate this boundless peace...

“The ocean does not fluctuate from the light play of waves on its surface...

“Let us feel that the *silence*, transparent as air, is unchanging. We can learn to stay in the clearness of this *silence*!...”

And behind the transparent curtain of rain on the terrace with white marble columns, entwined with flowering ivy, there was an amazing feeling of the thinnest endless space of universal *silence*...

Such conversation lessons were held almost every day.

Chapter Ten: **Pythagoras Talks about the Spiritual Path**

On this day, all the new students of Pythagoras gathered on the seashore.

There were not many of them yet. There were only six of those who were recently admitted to the School. But there were also all those senior students who were now mastering the ability to pass on to beginners the first steps of practical transformation of body and soul.

Ariadne thought that the lesson would be conducted by Leonardos, Konstantinos, or one of the older students. This had happened more than once.

But Pythagoras went out himself to teach this lesson. This filled everyone with reverent joy: the Teacher today will direct the souls of beginners to the Light!

Pythagoras looked at everyone with affection.

“Well, let’s get started!

“There is the first stage of cognition, at which there are people listening about the Truth. On this stage, one learns that there is an opportunity for the development and improvement of oneself-soul to approach the Divine Light. This is the initial stage of cognition, when a person listens attentively about the Truth and absorbs the foundations of understanding about the tasks of his or her life. All of you have already successfully passed this stage and aspired to purity and knowledge.

“But real students of the Divine Consciousness are practitioners who bring this knowledge into their lives every day.

“Each of our new days is like a small life, beginning in the morning and ending in the evening. We should live every day with dignity and meaning during these lives that have been given to us!

“It is important that this should not happen from time to time, in a burst of enthusiasm. Rather, the one who strives to live in accordance with the Laws of Cosmic Harmony, with the Laws of Love and Virtue in the Divine universe, must constantly make efforts!

“Let every movement and thought of a person be filled with Love!

“Divine Love fills the spaces around and within us!

“But how often do we remember this? Do we know how to notice it?

“The space has several layers-eons. Here and now, in this marvelous natural place, in the beauty of the sea, trees, flowers, and the space of air that surrounds us — right here, at this moment in time, there are worlds of different refinement and luminosity. We see with the eyes of our bodies only a very small part of what exists. What we call the physically manifested reality is really only that which we perceive with the help of our senses.

“But — as souls — we are able to study other eons. We can learn to perceive them and understand how the transformation of the soul leads us to the refined eons, where the Realized Souls, that is, Gods, dwell!

“But today, we will pay some attention to our bodies.

“The one who has not brought one’s body into harmony cannot fully feel and express the Divine Harmony!

“A body filled with coarse energies is an obstacle to the elevation of the soul!

“And a sinking into emotional coarseness usually goes unnoticed for a person.

“Human nature is very multifaceted. A soul, having come to the Earth, puts on the clothes of a body.

“And bodies usually largely correspond to the qualities inherent in souls.

“But later, going through life, a person-soul, by his or her choices and manner of behavior, changes

a lot in his or her fate — for the better or for the worse.

“The body, like a boat, glides over the waters to take us to our destination. Therefore, the body must be in good working order to carry the soul — through life in the world of matter — to the worlds of Divine Light!

“It is very important on the spiritual Path for our bodies to be clean.

“The initial conditions for achieving this purity are ethically pure nutrition, as well as purity of thoughts and emotions.

“And this is enough for a righteous life in the world, but not for entering those eons of Light in which Gods abide!

“But there are other great opportunities, and they can be opened for us!

“When we, as refined souls, enter the eon where Gods dwell, then all of Them — for us — become near, *right here!* We find ourselves among Them! Their Love and Wisdom are then next to us! And we can learn the living interaction of souls with Them!

“This, truly, is a miracle that is bestowed on a disciple who is working on refining himself or herself, as a soul!

“Now Konstantinos will show you the exercises that should be performed every morning, activating all the centers that distribute energy and the channels for it within our bodies. Come on, my friends, and remember that Divine Souls are present here and now and help all of us!”

Chapter Eleven: **Morning Meditations**

The construction of the building in which all the students were to live, was now completed.

As a result, Ariadne and her friends were now together almost all the time. And Ariadne's former house was now used to receive guests and accommodate those who, so far, were only listening about the Teachings and preparing to join the ranks of the Pythagoreans.

Almost every morning, all the students of Pythagoras met together. The sunrises were greeted either by singing hymns or by meditations given by Pythagoras. All seven main energy centers in the bodies of the participants were filled daily with Living Light, outwardly similar to the sun. Then, they connected these centers with streams of Divine Light.

Thanksgiving, joy, love, and readiness to unite oneself-soul with God's Love, Wisdom, and Power were offered to Him — the Eternal All-Powerful One in the mutual Multitude of the Perfect Ones.

* * *

One day, Ariadne and Ferenika, after the morning meditations walked along the seashore and had a conversation.

Ferenika, overwhelmed with new impressions, said to Ariadne:

“Singing hymns, meeting the sun — how beautiful it is! How it uplifts souls!

“The sounds of many voices combine and sound like a single voice! And together with it, the whole Silence of the Cosmos sounds!

“Everything becomes so clear!

“Everything is He — God the Creator, one with His Creation!

“Everything is generated by the Creator!

“Everything develops, prompted by His Power!

“Everything is absorbed by Him at the end of each cycle of life — and then is reborn by Him again!

“In every microparticle, in every primary element, His Creative Fire burns!

“His Light Waves cover us from all sides and immerse us in Great Bliss!

“These waves wash away my separation from the Whole! I become a Part of Everything too! I become a Part of this Divine Love!

“Oh! What a beauty! What Greatness!

“Ariadne, dear friend, I did not think before that such happiness could be experienced from understanding this! By experiencing this Unity, we become sublimely beautiful!

“Do you think that maybe I, too, am now a real Goddess?”

... Ariadne smiled affectionately and understandingly. Then she said:

“I must tell you something important, Ferenika.

“We all have experienced such delight many times, feeling the intense bliss that comes from each of our new stages of understanding about the Higher Being, and from each of our touches to the states of Mergence.

“But it’s worth remembering that *pride* grows easily. And sometimes there is a desire to exalt our-

selves beyond measure because of what wonderful experience we received as a gift from Divine Souls or from Pythagoras, who teach us the Divine way of life.

“It is very important to be able to differentiate between what is a Higher state, temporarily given and shown to us as an example of our *potential*, — and what is our actual natural, everyday state.

“Once, Pythagoras told us about this in detail, and I think that more than once we will touch upon the topic of refining ourselves as souls and controlling our thoughts and emotions. Almost all of us have already experienced high bliss when we, as consciousnesses, are united with the Divine. But to remain in these states all the time and to live in them — so far not everyone has completely succeeded in this, because such states have not yet become properties, or natural qualities of us as souls.”

“But how not to lose this refinement of the soul? How to keep this Unity with the Highest all the time?”

“This is exactly what we learn to do every day!

“And the first thing that helps, is to remember God and that Divine Souls are ready to help us and guide us all the time. But Their Help is not as effective if we are immersed in narcissism or in the vanity of earthly affairs, dubious desires, or hobbies. In this state of ours, Their Help remains unnoticed and not accepted by us...”

“Why does this happen? What influences this?”

“Pythagoras explained to us that our emotions, our thoughts, our environment, all the people with whom we communicate, and even food — all of this has an impact. And so, we must learn to direct our

minds and control our emotions and behavior. And, in this respect, the meditations that we learn are of great value and come to our rescue! It is through meditation that we can enter Divine Refinement and stay in these states for as long as possible.

“Have you noticed, Ferenika, how much easier it is here, at the School, next to Pythagoras and his other students, our friends, to be in elevated and inspired states? Do you remember how last week you spent only a few days in your old home — and came into a state of despondency, disappointment, and sadness?”

“Yes, it was terrible! What can we do to prevent this from happening again?”

“We must accustom ourselves to that *state of the soul* in which we perceive ourselves as vast consciousnesses filled with love, tenderness, peace, and bliss! If we forget about this *state of the soul*, then we quickly lose the positive results. But if we put our efforts towards remembering this, then these positive states become more natural, although not as quickly as we would like. Gradually, the qualities of us as souls begin to change, and such gentle refinement then becomes our natural property. When we learn to live like this, then it becomes easier for us to be always in connection with the Divine World.

“Look at Pythagoras, for example: he can sojourn among people who do not understand him and even angrily condemn him; nevertheless, his state of Oneness with the Divine is so strong that the outside world does not influence him at all. On the contrary, his peace and wisdom affect everyone who happens to be with him! The consciousness of Pythagoras is

so huge that he can help his disciples even at a great distance.”

* * *

The girls, chatting, walked leisurely along the sandy shore. A wave, which had come a little harder than the previous ones, plunged their feet into its water, which had cooled slightly during the night, — and swept away.

Ariadne and Ferenika took off their wet sandals and — in a joyful greeting — turned their eyes to the sea.

The sun flooded the space!

Seagulls soared in this light! Their calls and the flapping of their wings made the space full of joyful life!

The girls entered a small bay and decided to swim. At first, the sea water was cool, but then the freshness of the sea became tender, pleasant, and caressed their bodies from all sides.

Ariadne continued to share with Ferenika the knowledge that she had already gained while studying under Pythagoras.

“We can experience ourselves as bodies floating in this beautiful sea-environment, surrounded by the element of water. Or, we can experience ourselves as souls that are one with the sunlight, which is so blissfully poured into all this vast sea expanse above the water!

“And now, we can plunge into another Light, which we felt this morning with Pythagoras. It can be perceived both above, below, around, and inside our bodies!

“This is how the simple actions of a free soul can also teach us to be again and again in the subtlest Light!”

... They came ashore, renewed and beautiful.

Ariadne said:

“Right here on the shore, we can again feel that we are not these bodies that splashed in the waves and are now drying up under the rays of the sun. Instead, let us feel that we are free consciousnesses! And let us connect with the Divine Light — and be love! And — let us radiate love!

“Do you remember the Images of those Divine Souls Who surrounded us this morning? They rose like waves from the Ocean of Light, but They had faces and hands. And They showed Their attention to us. They were living, moving Divine Images — you saw it yourself!

“And now try to recreate yourself-soul, consisting of light and love, — just like They were, but using your own personal appearance instead!

“Let there be only the refined, vast, and loving spiritual heart with gentle hands that are able to caress, touching everything! Create a face with a smile on its lips and joy in its eyes! Create a cascade of hair that flows like a transparent waterfall almost to your toes! And radiate sunshine and Light!”

... And it was so beautiful: two naked girls' bodies stood on the shore at the water's edge — and they, as consciousnesses, consisting of Light, much larger than their material bodies, easily glided over the sea expanse. And their Light resembled the radiance of the sun!

After this meditation, they continued their conversation:

“Remember this state of consciousness, Ferenika! Now you understand the difference between the statement in your mind: ‘I have become like a goddess’ — and that skill of the soul, which we still have to master, gain a foothold, and learn to live.

“We will try more than once to realize ourselves as souls that are big, refined, free from our bodies, and full of love!

“All this is just the very beginning. Right now, we are just gradually mastering the ability to be souls that are able to cognize and create with the energy of our love!

“First, we learn to perceive such a state of us as consciousnesses — when Pythagoras and other Divine Souls show us this.

“Then, we learn to be like that — ourselves, without outside help. And Gods, like wise parents, watch our first independent steps.

“After that, we will train in the ability to completely dissolve ourselves in the Universal Divine Unity!

“And for this, we still have a lot to learn and master! For now, let us try to remember the best states of consciousness that we know — and use them as standards for ourselves, learning to achieve them over and over again, learning to live in them!”

Chapter Twelve: Problems and Difficulties on the Spiritual Path

A few years passed...

The measured and pure life of the disciples of Pythagoras attracted many new followers. And many were accepted into the School.

The examples on how to follow the precepts of Pythagoras in everyday life were admired even by those who had not yet decided to follow his recommendations in their lives.

But there were also a few adherents who, over time, became uninterested in the intensive life of making constant efforts to transform themselves. Pythagoras — sometimes gently, sometimes harshly — removed such disciples from further studies and initiations into the depths of the Teachings. After all, further cognition becomes impossible when one's lofty aspirations die away and the Holy Contact with the Highest becomes lost. It happens when one begins to perceive all of this as... commonplace! This was often accompanied by a surge of worldly desires and aspirations.

In such cases, Pythagoras usually gave the student a task of serving people in something useful to the cause of the School, but which required a fuller immersion into daily, worldly life, where such desires could be reasonably satisfied. Such a student continued to feel part of the School. The rare hours set aside for spiritual practices and meditations became so precious to him or her that it then became possi-

ble to consolidate the already-achieved progress of the soul and avoid a strong reversal, resulting in much less degradation. The process of sharing the knowledge that one has obtained and serving others with the skills that one has acquired is very useful for the soul. Then what is really understood and assimilated on the spiritual Path is consolidated, and the everything unnecessary withers away as if it has not taken root...

When Ariadne started noticing that the aspirations of her friend Ferenika were fading, she began to worry about her. It was as if Ferenika had lost the joy of life, and spiritual practices no longer delighted her, often being seen as a tedious daily obligation... And the world of various amusements and pleasures had again become more attractive to Ferenika than the joy of learning new things about the Divine World.

Ariadne wanted to talk to her and tell her about the moments of her own life that helped her in such difficult times. After all, God inevitably tests everyone who walks the spiritual Path. Such tests must be passed in order to move forward!

Ariadne was looking for the right moment to talk. But things turned out differently: Ferenika herself came to talk about her problem. She turned to Ariadne, as in the old days, seeking support and comfort. She complained:

“Tell me: have I grown old? Have I become less beautiful? They no longer cast admiring glances at me, the way they used to, when I saw that a man was ready to give his life for a night with me! I no longer have admirers!”

“Why do you need all this among the disciples of Pythagoras?”

“Just go to the market — and you’ll see a lot of passionate looks... Is that what you want?”

“No, not really... But I want to be liked, to be admired! And when I try to flirt a little, I get condescending glances in return... Is my charm... gone?”

“Yesterday, Leonardos even gave me a reprimand, as if I were not his equal, but his pupil! He spoke about the difference between the grace of a female, which attracts a male only by outer appearance, — and the sublime inner beauty that unites body and soul in harmony and inspires poets and artists... I cried almost all night — and came to you...”

“I can’t do anything in meditation now... I feel sorry for myself, I’m depressed by what I did in the past, and I don’t know how to go on. Maybe I should not even try to meditate if I am no longer good at it. After all, my time are spent either admiring myself, or dreaming of personal happiness, or feeling sad because of my failures... And the Divine states are so far away now, as if all previous experiences of rapture with the Divine Light had never even happened! It is as if it was all just a beautiful dream...”

“It always helps me — during such difficulties — to start as if from the very beginning: with the simple exercises that Pythagoras showed us. For example, ‘golden rain’! Remind yourself how wonderfully it cleanses the body, thoughts, and energies of the soul! The most elementary exercises suddenly become so miraculous.”

... Then Ariadne spoke in such a way that there was a change in the entire space surrounding their bodies. She did not just recite the words of spiritual practice, but created, as a consciousness, the movements of the Streams of Light.

“Remind yourself, Ferenika, how it fills us with joy! Feel that there is a cloud of pure golden Light above us that is ready to pour down with a golden rain! We want to accept this Light in ourselves to purify the body and the soul! We raise our hands, putting our palms under the golden streams of Light! The Light — like water — washes our bodies from outside, and we fill our bodies with It — like hollow vessels!

“And afterwards, the Light becomes more and more refined, like a golden mist. We inhale it... It permeates our bodies from within... Our bodies become light, weightless...

“In our spiritual hearts, a Source of Love and Light is kindled like the sun. And then we ourselves radiate this Light-Love in all directions!”

... Ferenika accepted the meditation, tears of happiness came to her eyes... She hugged Ariadne:

“Thank you, sweet friend! When I am with you, everything is easy and joyful! But it is becoming harder and harder to force myself to do these exercises... It seems that I am... untalented!

“Here, at the School, everyone is so highly skilled. Some are talented in music, others in poetry, still others in sculpture or painting. There are those who prefer mathematics... But I am not talented in anything!.. I lack interest in abstract forms of pyramids and tetrahedrons, mathematical formulas bore me, and the muses of art have not endowed me with gifts... What can I do?”

“But it is also possible to be simply contemplative and appreciative of beauty!”

“But I have always wanted to be the best! Before, it was my outer beauty... However, now I have lost that too...”

“That’s not true at all, Ferenika! You are beautiful, even more beautiful than before. But that’s when you don’t feel sad or sorry for yourself. Remind yourself how you felt like a Goddess — free from the flesh, from thoughts and emotions oppressing the soul! Think of yourself as that! After all, that is the real you!

“You experience happiness and joy when you give them to others, not when you want them only for yourself!

“If we keep harmony in our thoughts, emotions, and deeds — then we bring love and peace into the universe! We can become Parts of the Highest Light, small Rays of the United Light, when we carry love for the material world in us, as souls!

“The developed soul is like a musical instrument which sounds in harmony with the Divine Cosmic Sound!

“You are tired. And you need to readjust yourself — from the very beginning. Try to do it the way Pythagoras taught us.”

... Ariadne felt sad that she had not been able to help her friend completely. So, the next day, she decided to ask Pythagoras for help.

... Pythagoras, as usual, already knew both of Ariadne’s arrival and of her questions. He was waiting for her. His entire majestic and calm appearance made a special impression on Ariadne.

Pythagoras waited to speak, during which time, Ariadne’s anxiety for her friend became re-

placed by peace and an expansion of the soul. Now everything could be perceived differently: wisely!

Pythagoras looked at Ariadne tenderly and invited her to sit down on a marble bench in an ivy-covered gallery open to the sea. He spoke, not expecting Ariadne to ask a question:

“Yes, Ferenika has some problems right now. But we’ll wait a little while. There are going to be many guests in your house soon. Let Ferenika help you with the reception of everyone we can’t accommodate at the School’s facilities. I hope it will do her good and that she will blossom again. Perhaps, she will meet there someone with whom she will be happy in family life, and this will solve many of her problems.

“Not everyone is able to travel the whole Path in one earthly life. The necessity of pausing to assimilate everything that the soul has learned on the Great Path, should not be considered a misfortune.

“Too much spiritual knowledge can become a burden that the soul cannot bear any more. It is necessary to allow one to fix oneself on the level one has already achieved — steadily and firmly, so that the knowledge is not only heard, but has entered into full awareness and into the life of the soul. We need to be able to allow such a pause, to anchor what we have learned. Sometimes it is necessary for a long time, sometimes — until the end of life in one’s body.

“It is better for a person to live with inspiration in ordinary worldly life than a yearning, by compulsion, by obligation to observe the rules of ascetic life. If spiritual efforts are no longer desirable, if satiety has set in — then one must surely pause!

“In this case, the right aspiration can be maintained in the soul for many subsequent earthly lives, which are necessary for development in all the beauty and grandeur of the wonderful qualities of this soul!”

Chapter Thirteen: **About Competitions**

The next Olympics, in a four-year cycle, was approaching. These sporting events in Elis on the Peloponnese peninsula were becoming increasingly popular among the Greeks. The number of sports was growing both in variety and number of participant athletes.

This time, Pythagoras also allowed some of his disciples to prepare to take part in these festivities. Of course, this was not done simply for winners to achieve glory, but in order to make people more familiar with the philosophy of the Pythagoreans. These festivities included more than just sports, they also included many speeches and public discussions on a wide variety of topics — for the entertainment of a large public.

Some of Pythagoras' disciples were invited to come to the School from other Greek cities where they now lived and worked. This was done so that all those who were going to take part in the Olympic contests could train together.

Not all the disciples of Pythagoras lived at the School all the time. For various reasons, some of them came only for a while and then returned to the

places where they lived and continued to practice the knowledge received from Pythagoras.

Ariadne asked Ferenika to help with the reception of guests. Such a change of scenery was good for Ferenika. Her irrepressible energy boiled over again and found an outlet in the simple matters of taking care of the new arrivals and arranging everything necessary in the house. It was as if Ferenika was reborn by the simple words of gratitude from the guests who had arrived and by their enthusiastic looks.

And the arrival of Hamilcar was also anticipated!

The students of the School were looking forward to this; after all, many in the Pythagorean community had already heard at least something about the story of the first disciple of Pythagoras. News from Hamilcar about life in his little branch of the School in the city of Carthage came regularly. Yes, so far, he did not have many students, but he was up to the task, preserving and teaching the higher knowledge. Some of Hamilcar's messages were even read aloud among the older students of the School, who also planned to create such oases of wisdom and purity in the future. Hamilcar's experience was very useful to them.

Ariadne, as the hostess of a large house for receiving guests, was certainly happy about the opportunity to care for her new friends. It is important to note that the disciples of Pythagoras, who had never even met before, immediately treated one another as the closest and dearest friends. Both in the house of Ariadne and in the School, there was a stately atmosphere of celebration!

There was also talk about the forthcoming competitions. Pythagoras was asked questions, and he willingly answered his now very numerous listeners.

Usually, people gathered for such conversations in the open amphitheater, which had already been built. Due to the correct location and precise geometry of the structure, the acoustics were amazing! Everyone could hear every word, even if it was spoken quietly! All the speeches of Pythagoras were perceived as an immersion into the great Source of Knowledge and Inspiration. Each of his talks, even if they were devoted to mundane tasks, such as those related to the forthcoming competitions of athletes in the Olympics, elevated his listeners to the expanded state of refined consciences. These talks connected all the tasks of the moment with the understanding of the Totality of the entire Creation.

... Everyone gathered and sat on the marble steps. A special silence fell, preparing souls for listening and understanding. Then, Pythagoras came in. His beautiful appearance, simple white clothes, regularity and smoothness of his movements, and the timbre of his voice — all of this immersed the disciples into a state in which they could listen as souls submerged into the huge consciousness of Divine Pythagoras, which embraced everyone invisibly.

One of the young students, who was about to compete in running and wrestling, asked:

“Tell us, Pythagoras: What is the right attitude toward glory, and should we strive to be the best, to be victorious?”

“The vain seek only glory, the proud seek only victory and are crushed by defeat. Both are obstacles

on the spiritual Path. But you who have seen, even for a short time, the highest Glory of Those Souls Who have reached Godlikeness and now know about the true purpose of life of every soul on the Earth, should treat with calmness both victories and defeats.

“Let’s talk about this in more detail.

“The desire for superiority, for victory over others, is to some extent inherent in human nature. This is a manifestation of the natural laws of development of all creatures. A similar struggle for leadership can be seen in the life of different animal species. Sometimes, we can observe males fighting for the right to possess females. This is how the strongest of them gain an advantage and produce healthier and more survivable offspring.

“Likewise, humans strive to be the best — for the sake of superiority over others. This is not a bad thing when it leads to development of the best qualities, when it is achieved by fair means, when it does not involve violence, and when it does not grossly violate rectitude.

“We ourselves would rather buy from a good potter or weaver, or choose the biggest and ripest fruits from a merchant. People are more likely to listen to a skilled musician and admire a good dancer.

“In fields such as the arts, the pursuit of superiority and excellence often accompany one another. And it is very important that we learn to distinguish between the two! The Path to Perfection allows for the simultaneous existence of many unique and varied manifestations, each of which delights! Here, for example, is the beauty of a wildflower — and of a garden rose. Each of these flowers is perfect in its

own way and there is no need to compare them. Likewise, the unique beauty and gradual development of one soul on its path to the Highest Perfection does not detract from or need to compete with the beauty and development of another.

“Yes, soon we will be celebrating the winners of the Olympic Games.

“To win in such a contest, one has to combine the strength of the body and the strength of the soul.

“Such achievements are made up of innate ability, diligence, will, determination, focus, inspiration, and strength. And sporting events develop these qualities in a person, and not only the desire to win.

“But let us remember that striving to be leaders and to be all-around superior, can cause serious harm to others. This happens when a desire to dominate others and a desire to win at any price provokes the development of greed, envy, and hatred, and can lead to very mean deeds. This desire for superiority over others harms souls.

“Here is something else I would like to call your attention to: striving to the Highest Perfection on the spiritual Path should never degenerate into rivalry, into striving for first place, into measuring one’s successes by the success or failure of others! This leads to arrogance which can become a serious hindrance on the Path!

“One should not enjoy even feelings of self-satisfaction about one’s superiority in mastering sciences, or enjoy boasting about one’s knowledge or skills, or enjoy telling others stories about how one was chosen to master difficult meditations...

“Neither should any of us feel that we are superior to people who have not yet touched spiritual knowledge and have not chosen truly wise goals in their lives. It is very important to understand that everything has its time, as well as that there are stages of maturation of souls repeatedly incarnated in bodies, and their progress cannot be equal and rapid.

“I have heard such words from those who claim to know everything and boast of their knowledge: ‘They are fools, plebs, and do not understand what we know, what is obvious and so natural to a man of reason!’ I wouldn’t want my students to have such thoughts!

“Imagine what any of us looks like from the point of view of God, Who is omnipotent and possesses the totality of all Knowledge, to which we are only gaining access... Don’t you think that He might consider us fools? But no, He teaches us — with the greatest Love and Patience! And He gives us a measure of knowledge. He does not offer us that burden of knowledge which our minds cannot yet bear. This is an example of how we, too, should behave in our interactions with people whom we can only, as yet, share just a portion of our own insights.

“Also, I would like to remind you that even if the contribution of a young soul, who is just beginning its path of development and service, is not great — this contribution is still very valuable! It is always a Joy in the subtlest worlds! This is like the happiness of a father and a mother watching the first independent steps, the first smiles, or the first words of their child.

“Undeveloped persons often laugh at that which exists beyond their comprehension. Therefore, when participating in discussions at the Olympics, do not strive to give people more knowledge than they are prepared to receive! Instead, be in everything, winning or conceding, examples worthy of imitation and respect!”

... Diantha asked Pythagoras a question:

“Why aren’t women allowed to compete or even watch?”

“I hope that someday this injustice will be abolished! And I am firmly convinced that in the future the beautiful feminine will delight spectators not only in marble statues, but also in sports competitions!

“And today, dear beauties, we ourselves will start this! All who wish to do so may take part in a training run. Let there be joy and freedom for beauty, and for harmony! I will come to watch!”

... One of the newly arrived guests asked:

“Tell us, Pythagoras, what do you think: are the Olympic Games generally good? After all, they develop the very desire to be the best! Is this good?”

“I think they are good. Otherwise, we wouldn’t be preparing to take part. The mere rule of stopping all internecine wars for the duration of the Olympic Games is worth noting as a spiritual achievement of the human community.

“The beauty of naked and harmoniously developed bodies always arouses admiration. Multitudes gather to behold the celebration of the beauty and power of the body, in which there is the initial manifestations of the beauty and power of the soul.

“I praise inner beauty, considering the beauty of the soul immeasurably more valuable than outer beauty. We are now learning to unite the beauty, harmony and strength of the body — with the harmony and strength of the purified soul.

“The body is born, matures, grows old, and dies.

“The soul grows, blossoms, and gains wisdom and experience. It takes all this with it.

“What the body has acquired is temporary and perishable. What the soul has learned and gained is everlasting!

“By training the body, athletes achieve great success in lifting weights, in running fast, in throwing the discus. Such exercises multiply bodily strength. But in this process, a person’s mental qualities are also transformed, and the will and strength of the soul are increased.

“In the same way that one trains the muscles of the body, one can also train the mind in meditation.

“Enormous possibilities then unfold before the soul! Through such training, one can cultivate beauty, refinement, strength of the soul, the ability to see in non-material worlds, and the ability to hear the advice of the Divine Teachers!

“Willpower is a great instrument! But the intentions of the soul must be properly defined and aimed. They have to be in harmony with beautiful goals and the Divine Will!

“Only then will a person be given the Higher Power for the realization of necessary things. Such a Power comes from the Great Ocean of Wisdom, Power, and Universal Love. This Power merges with the

will and power of the developed soul and serves only for the good of the Whole!”

... The listeners were in silence for a long time after the end of this talk. Pythagoras filled the space with a special state of Tranquility from which no one wanted to leave.

Later, after Pythagoras’ talk, while the participants of the race were getting ready, Ariadne came up to Konstantinos and asked:

“Konstantinos, are you planning to take part in the race?”

“No, let it be entertainment for our young people. I’m waiting for Hamilcar to arrive. He promised that after the Olympics he would give me a vessel to travel to the Euxine Sea and to explore those places — for the sake of creating a branch of the School, similar to the one Hamilcar himself created. My time has come!

“In Carthage, they build very sturdy vessels for long sea voyages. Hamilcar sails here in two vessels, both of which will be used to travel to Elis on the island of Peloponnesus for the participants in the Olympics. And afterwards, one of the vessels will be at my disposal, and Hamilcar and his disciples will return on the other.”

“Are you going away for good?”

“Yes, perhaps, I am. I agree that it is hard right now to imagine how to create everything in foreign lands, and how to live every day without seeing the Master... Of course, we will be able to communicate as souls without bodies, but this... — is a bit different.

“I don’t know how my path will turn out according to the Higher Will.

“By the way, see: Hamilcar, after so many years, now has the happiness of seeing Pythagoras again!”

“Who will go with you?”

“We have not discussed this yet... No one else in our group is ready to part with Pythagoras: they still have time to learn from personal communication with him...”

“But are you ready?”

“I hope so! I accepted the task, and I understand that it is important to carry it out right now.

“Those who have received initiation into the Highest Degree are no longer guided in life by even their purest desires; instead, they fulfill their duty before God and people. Pythagoras said that what we manage to create now will have significance and bear fruit in future ages. The places where we create branches of the School will become spiritual oases in difficult future eras of Earth’s history. But I cannot see that far into the future...”

“And I shouldn’t try to see the future, but to create it!”

“Is Hamilcar planning to compete?”

“It is possible that he is carrying a quadriga for the chariot race. He is not a Greek, so he cannot compete in running or wrestling. But he could take part in the chariot race. For this, the quadriga must belong to a Greek; and so, it would be enough for him to name the owner as one of ours whose Greek origin is unquestionable.

“He even might choose not to compete himself. I understand that the Olympics now is only a pretext for his arrival, and his tasks are quite different.”

Chapter Fourteen: **The Arrival of Hamilcar**

The arrival of Hamilcar turned into a celebration for all the students of the School.

First, both Pythagoras himself and everyone who wished to attend went out to the sea and watched the approach of the two vessels that were carrying the guests.

The guests who came ashore were solemnly welcomed!

... Hamilcar and his disciples stopped at Ariadne's house. It was a very pleasant surprise for her: after all, many assumed that for the duration of his visit he would be only next to Pythagoras. But it was decided so jointly by Pythagoras and Hamilcar. Perhaps the reason for this was that it provided a convenient location to house all the guests, or maybe — there were some other important reasons for this that Ariadne had not guessed yet.

The four white horses that arrived with Hamilcar were greeted by an experienced groom who lived in Ariadne's house. The groom had once been a slave, and then, after gaining his freedom, remained living in the house because he had nowhere else to go.

Ariadne, from the very beginning of the preparations for the Olympics, carefully and attentively watched the arrival of each guest. And sometimes she even looked for that candidate who could capture Ferenska's heart.

And so it happened! Along with Hamilcar's disciples, came a sculptor from Crete, who dreamed of seeing

Pythagoras and making a sculptural group depicting the sage surrounded by his disciples. Hamilcar, of course, had already inspired him with the Pythagorean Teachings. And Nev, which was the sculptor's name, had already become a follower and admirer of Pythagoras *in absentia* before he arrived in Croton. When Nev saw Ferenika, he asked her to pose for him.

And now the model and sculptor spent almost all their free time together.

The energies of blossoming love and bliss, reverence for wisdom and harmony, perception of joy and beauty — hovered in the space. These were many times amplified by the multitude of Pythagorean souls who also felt spiritually uplifted by everything that was happening in the School!

Every day, everyone gathered and listened to Pythagoras' speeches. The older disciples held talks and meditations for everyone who wished to attend.

... After Hamilcar's arrival, Ariadne was under such a strong and special impression of the guest that when she was with Hamilcar, she did not understand what was happening to her.

She even wondered: "Have I really fallen in love? It's as if I've returned to those long-gone days when Ferenika and I used to have girlish dreams about our first suitors..."

Ariadne had long since stopped looking at people as men or women, not judging them by their outward beauty and speeches — but trying to see the souls, their underlying states.

And it was precisely this that made Hamilcar have such a strong impression on her. In his presence, a special radiance of the soul and a feeling of freedom

of flight and irrepressible happiness flashed in her! Never before had she seen in an incarnate man such a combination of strength and tenderness at the same time.

Hamilcar's task on this visit to the School was to initiate students, who were ready for it, into the initial stage of developing the power of the soul, as well as to talk about cognizing the possibilities of interaction between bodily power and Divine Power. He showed exercises that activate the energies of the body and soul, allowing one to find the ways in which the two contact and interpenetrate one another. And this makes it possible to control one's own body in a special way. And later, when one's body has been properly prepared through such exercises, one can then conduct the Divine Power through one's body.

For many, it seemed at first to be the ability to control matter. But Hamilcar explained that it's really about controlling the soul-self.

He said that such Power could be manifested not only in controlling one's own body, such as in sports, but also in poetry, music, dance, or in receiving Revelations.

Many explanations were given to caution students about such power. Specifically, they were warned not to allow power to become a trap for the soul, and to make sure not to lose love and purity when developing the power of the soul.

Not all the disciples of Pythagoras participated in the practical lessons of Hamilcar, but only those recommended by Pythagoras himself. Whereas, all who wished to do so could take part in the discussions and ask questions.

Hamilcar was listened to with great attention.

He spoke much about his life and his spiritual experiences:

“Before we talk about the techniques of mastering the power of the soul, I would like to tell you a little of my life story.

“I was once a priest. At that time, I dreamed of power, of the possibilities of creating miracles, of miraculously fulfilling my desires, and of suppressing the will of others. And I studied it diligently. I sought all possible knowledge about the power of consciousness and lived with the conviction that only those who possessed such power could succeed. This was the only goal of my efforts.

“It was a trap: I became addicted to my own thirst for power over events and people — through the help of magical knowledge. At that time, it seemed to me that therein lay freedom from destiny, freedom from the tyranny of other people with greater earthly power.

“What would have become of me if I had not met Pythagoras?!

“I see clearly now what a catastrophe for the soul it would have been to move in this direction: in acquiring a personal power that was not refined!

“For I, without true purpose, was learning magic and was proud of both my bodily strength and my even greater strength of soul energy, which knew almost no tenderness or refinement...

“At that time, I lived with a sense of feeling chosen. My ambition knew no bounds! In my dreams, I wanted to become like the Gods, but I had no idea what it meant to be God!

“For so many people, having power means being able to do whatever one wants.

“But permissiveness is not Freedom at all! And one cannot win happiness in life through personal power, no matter how great it is! It took me a long time to understand this...

“... What should we, the disciples of Pythagoras, search for, when mastering the knowledge of the Power?

“In my opinion, it is wisdom and love. After all, it is love that gives one the wisdom to understand the possibilities of jointly using one’s personal power and the Divine Power that is conducted through the body and soul!

“This is very important when a person decides to invite God into his or her life — and to live and improve further, feeling oneself as a part of the beautiful Divine Whole! Then gradually the Guidance from God comes and begins to be perceived more and more clearly!

“... The soul learns to distinguish between what is good and what is evil only through the course of many long and difficult births, sufferings, deaths, and recompenses for former deeds... All this is not a punishment from God! They are lessons that lead to the growth of a wholesome, true humanity! Only when one connects one’s life to the Divine Guidance does one realize this!

“At some point, I made a request to God, to the Divine All-Consciousness, for Guidance, for aid in directing the development of me, as a soul. It was then that everything began to change and even fall apart in my life at that time. The first thing that happened was that I became quite displeasing to the head priest of the temple where I served, because he saw me as a strong rival to take his place.

“And then there was the war, the captivity...

“Through this complete collapse of my former goals and the former me — God brought me to Pythagoras and gave me the opportunity to learn and perceive the Truth in its true Purity!

“Pythagoras is unique as a spiritual guide! He simultaneously possesses a depth of knowledge in many different branches of being. In one man, is combined the profound Knowledge of each direction of the sciences and arts. Pythagoras synthesized these into the creation of a single Teaching about the universe!

“Usually, for Sages who achieved Enlightenment, there is Perfection in one area only.

“And, probably, none of us will ever be able to embrace — even in the future — such a broad spectrum of knowledge as that which Pythagoras shows us!

“Personally, I have never had a deep inclination for geometry or astronomy. Yes, I was fascinated by Pythagoras’ stories of the cosmos, the structure of the planets and of the smallest particles of the universe! Meditations and cognition of the laws of the non-material worlds and their influence on the visible world have always been closer to me. And also — transformation of bodily energies for conducting the Divine Force into this world. And Pythagoras, seeing the disposition and abilities of every soul, helps us to concentrate and direct the most valuable qualities of the soul towards achieving the Main thing: Mergence with the Divine! This is the Main Goal! The achievement of this Goal is also facilitated by service to the good of all beings with the help of the knowledge and skills that we acquire.

“Many now accuse us of keeping secret the methods of spiritual work on the higher levels and of not shar-

ing spiritual practices with all those who wish to learn. Some even call our School a place for teaching only the elite.

“But let’s look at the truth of the matter! Who needs higher practices? Why do we need the techniques of working with the power of consciousness?”

“There is a sad tradition of mankind: all wonderful discoveries and achievements are used not only for the benefit of evolution, but also for harm. Almost anything that can serve progress can also be used by individuals for evil.

“And spiritual knowledge has even greater potential for this than material knowledge. One does not even need to be near a certain person in order to harm him or her. It is also possible to influence the course of various situations without being visible to the participants of these situations. How attractive this is to those people who strive by all means for power and enjoy inflicting pain and illness on others!

“This is why Pythagoras is so careful in selecting students for the higher levels of learning!

“That is why we devote so much time to ethical perfecting.

“And each of us should think more than once about the responsibility in possessing knowledge and the opportunities to manifest power. We must remember this and be able to control ourselves at all times.

“...Tomorrow, we will begin a study of some exercises that will help us both in this control and in learning to feel the space and the beings within it as clearly as we are accustomed to feeling ourselves. We will begin precisely with the techniques of dissolving into silence and purity, with the techniques of perceiving the Whole from a state of consciousness that has

become love! After all, the fullness of Mergence is possible only in perfect love!”

Chapter Fifteen: **On Oneness**

Hamilcar spoke with Ariadne in the evening:

“It would be good for the horses not to stagnate long in the stables. Would it be possible for me to give them a warm-up before dawn, without disturbing the townsfolk or the housekeepers? If needed, we can let the stableman know.”

“Of course, we can easily arrange it! Can I go too? I’ve never ridden a quadriga before...”

“Yes, Ariadne, we’ll go together!”

... They left three hours before sunrise.

Ariadne’s house was situated very well for such walks. They had built it on the outskirts of Croton, far from the bustling streets and busy districts. Aside from a wide street that bordered the house on only part of the vast garden, the house was completely free from contacts with civilization. And walking onto that one street immediately provided a vast view of the sea.

At first, the horses walked at a measured pace. Hamilcar skillfully restrained their urge to gallop. When the town buildings disappeared from view, Hamilcar allowed these beautiful animals to gallop as fast as they could go or wished to go.

A sense of spaciousness and freedom gripped Ariadne!

The full moon illuminated the road well. And this, together with the starry sky above them, made it feel as if they were flying through a boundless transparent starry ocean that filled all the space around them.

The horses raced, and Hamilcar stood almost motionless in the chariot. With barely perceptible body movements, he easily compensated for the jolts and maintained a stable balance.

Ariadne could not do that. She stood on the chariot in front of him and held onto the handrail. She felt as if behind her she had a wall to lean on. It was Hamilcar's powerful body. And from it, there was a sense of safety and peace.

Soon, after having loosened the excessive tension in her body and the abundant delight at the beauty of what was happening, she connected — as a consciousness — with the state of Hamilcar.

The vastness of the starry sky was ahead of them, above them, and on all sides. The warm air hugged their bodies gently, making them feel almost weightless.

This amazing sensation was perceived as a kind of magic, allowing them to be in several worlds at once.

The entire cosmos — the entire living, moving, beautiful, and vast created world — was perceived by them from the stillness of the Great Calm of the Creator. Moving at great speeds and feeling one with this Divine Stillness, all sense of time disappeared...

Then Hamilcar stopped the horses and helped Ariadne down to the ground. They walked side by side with their bodies, while, as consciousnesses, they remained in a state of unity... There was no

need to speak: they understood one another without words and were completely merged with one another.

Those states of Deep Quiet that Ariadne had managed before to enter for a short time in meditations, suddenly became her very Essence — the Essence that is the only Foundation of everything... It was as if Ariadne disappeared, and the infinity of Living Love-Calm filled everything with Itself, including her and Hamilcar's bodies, the rare trees along the road, the silvered grasses in the moonlight, the distant hills, the vast sea clearly visible in the moonlight, and the infinity of the starry ocean...

This understanding and feeling of universal Harmony, of the Oneness of all things, was beyond description...

... They stood on a high steep bank. The gentle waves of the surf rustled softly below.

From where they stood, they were surrounded by beautiful expanses over the sea and land...

And everywhere, there was the great *Transparent Peace*, in Which everything exists, and from Which everything is created by the Living Divine Power.

The Eternity, Infinity, and Beauty of the Creator became the only tangible world...

... Ariadne returned to the perception of the world of the Creation. She looked at Hamilcar with gratitude for this Gift!

She felt the non-material Presence of Pythagoras and of many Others Who gave her this spiritual experience — the experience of living in the Unity of the Whole.

And then, as silently as they came, they just as silently returned to the house.

It was time to greet the dawn with the students of the School. Ahead of them, lay a day filled with the lessons of Pythagoras, Hamilcar, and the older students of the School...

Chapter Sixteen: **Pythagoras on Diligence and Inspiration**

Usually, Ariadne, Hamilcar, and all the students who lived in Ariadne's house would go to the School building before sunrise.

Together, they would greet the sunrise.

Then, after breakfast, there would be talks by Pythagoras, and then classes would continue in groups.

On this day, Pythagoras also spoke to the students.

Kondratos asked:

"I was asked a question yesterday: what is boredom and why can it arise? And I found it difficult to answer. Tell us about this, Pythagoras!"

"Well, let's try to figure it out!

"Have you ever met anyone who seeks only entertainment and pleasure as a remedy for boredom?"

"What is boredom? It is the emptiness in the spiritual heart and the hunger of the small human mind that has forgotten about the Divine, about the fact that man is but a tiny particle of the Great Whole!"

“An undeveloped mind is just like a stomach — when it is empty — it needs food. Such a mind needs to be constantly occupied with something. Otherwise, the emptiness inside begins to be unbearable. This emptiness has to be filled with God.

“In the depths of the soul, there is a place for the Divine in the multidimensionality of human nature. There, the Oneness with the Primordial must be cognized. This Unity then carries over to all other aspects of one’s life!

“The skill of calming the mind and directing it to the Creator of all things comes after long practice. The only exceptions are those souls who learned it in past earthly lives and who, therefore, find it easy to remember the bliss of a quiet mind and the immersion into love and dissolution.

“When the mind is immersed in a spiritual heart filled with love, the soul is raised to life with God.

“In the meantime, while the mind is still undeveloped and prone to wandering, it can be developed by useful insights and concentration exercises rather than by idle entertainment that requires no effort on its part.”

... Leonardos asked:

“Tell us about inspiration: why is it that sometimes we are seized by the rapture, the bliss of creativity, but there are days when we don’t experience inspiration. What to do in these cases?”

“Here we come to another important topic.

“Let’s talk about inspiration, and about diligence, about the need for spiritual efforts and also about the ability to relax and dissolve, and about sur-

rendering ourselves to the Will and Wisdom of the Primordial.

“How should we work and live for God?

“For this, we need both diligence and inspiration.

“We have already talked a lot about inspiration, and you all know how easy it is to do everything when the energy of Divine Inspiration lights up our work. Everything becomes sublime and beautiful!

“But what should we do when we cannot achieve this state?

“First, we must not let ourselves idly daydream about the sublime!

“Let’s talk a little bit about hard work, my friends!

“A great help in the development and growth of spiritual abilities is diligence!

“It is a very important quality — the ability to work with love!

“I am not talking about forced labor, when work is performed under compulsion, but about labor performed with conscious, joyful, and pure energy of the soul!

“It is important to cultivate a love of labor! This is when one performs any work with love, in a state of love.

“It would seem that it is so simple...

“But it often happens that the most capable students turn out to be lazy, while those who are less capable achieve wonderful results through hard work!

“It is difficult for Divine Souls to teach those who wallow in laziness, which such people some-

times consider as the freedom to do whatever they want...

“But freedom is not a life of idleness!

“When a person who is able to work hard acquires both the Goal to become One with God and the freedom of will to reach Him, his or her diligence yields visible successes.

“One cannot ‘rest on the laurels’ of one’s past achievements for a long time! One needs new achievements!

“Meditations are also work: the work on one-self-soul. With the help of exercises for the development of the consciousness we learn gradually to enter the Unity with the Divine. It is the contact with It that allows one to experience what is usually called inspiration.

“This can also lead to feeling the Divine Energy — as if it were one’s own.

“A body accustomed to laziness accustoms both the mind and soul to laziness. This is how the lower can negatively affect the higher in man.

“But there is also the opposite effect: when the soul intensively perfects itself, it encourages both the mind and body to be diligent as well.

“We can become parts of the Stream of Grace, Rays of the *One Light*, when we bear in ourselves-souls Love and Beauty for people, for the entire world!

“But we should remember that the Gods give us knowledge according to our rationality.

“A mind that is uneducated and that has not been developed through various exercises cannot draw Wisdom from the Universal Divine Knowledge!

“A body untrained in dance cannot transmit through movements all the beauty and grace of the Divine Light as It flows through the body. So also, an undeveloped mind perceives only fragments of the Totality. It cannot immediately grasp the depths of cognition!

“Another important quality that we can cultivate in ourselves, which goes hand in hand with diligence, is patience.

“It happens that people are often inspired by good intentions, but abandon their efforts before the results are noticeable even to themselves.

“Look: we sowed flower seeds here along the stone-lined steps to the sea. But it took a while before the flowers bloomed. While there were no sprouts, we could think that our work was in vain. But today, we can see the result!

“It is the same with spiritual efforts: we gradually master the life in Oneness with the Whole.

“It is important for us to remember the Main Goal in life. And we should not allow ourselves to focus solely on achieving temporary successes and victories, beautiful skills, or even certain abilities, which for many people are so desirable.

“The ability to preach eloquently, the ability to create and play wondrous music, enchanting listeners, or any other mastered creative display — is also not an end in itself.

“And by the way, I note that we should not exalt ourselves above other people if we have acquired skills that others do not possess.

“We do all this so that — in the end — we can become similar to the Gods, Who live in the most subtle state of the multidimensional universe! We,

too, must try to become Divine Souls, Whose entire work is in helping those who walk the Path and in using Divine Creativity to help with the development and perfection of many souls.

“If a person becomes a Conduit of Divine Love, Wisdom, and Power — it changes many things in the world around him or her.

“To learn to use one’s soul power wisely, one must gain control over one’s desires, emotions, and thoughts, and master dissolution of oneself as separate from the Whole.

“Now it’s time for the classes that Hamilcar, Leonardos, and Konstantinos will conduct today.”

Chapter Seventeen: **Lessons on Eliminating** **Separation from the Whole**

Around Hamilcar, those disciples gathered for whom the time had come for continued initiation into the stage of *power development*.

Hamilcar said:

“We are going to work today on acquiring skills in dissolving the self-soul into the subtlest eons.

“It is important for us to stop feeling separate from the Whole.

“It is important to understand that this separation from the Divine and from the whole universe is created by ourselves. Our thoughts and emotions, as well as our perception through the help of the organs

of sight, hearing, smell, and touch create a vector from the center — outwards, from ourselves — to everything that ‘is not me’.

“We will try to change the direction of this vector and look from the Whole — into that tiny particle of It that is the body of each of us.

“In order to make this easy, we have already trained ourselves many times as souls and have become much more expansive through the techniques of giving love, calm, harmony, and peace — to everyone and everything around us.

“Today — to begin with — we will divide ourselves into pairs and look at each other as if we have exchanged bodies. We will see ourselves through the eyes of a friend from his or her body.

“This exercise, which may seem simple at first glance, also helps us to better understand the ethics of relationships between people! Let’s appreciate how useful it is to see ourselves through the eyes of others!

“Everyone can perceive how the person across from me is looking at my body. We can experience ourselves as that other person. It is an interesting experience.

“But this exercise should be performed only with those friends of ours who are prepared for this.”

Everyone practiced the exercise in pairs for a while.

Then Hamilcar continued:

“When the Divine Souls become Friends to us — clearly visible and perceptible — it is then possible to fill Their Appearances with ourselves, as souls, and to see everything around us and ourselves through Their Eyes. This allows us to perceive Their

Guidance in our lives many times more clearly. We all have already tried to practice this, and this skill will help us in the future.

“Now, let’s continue the preparatory practices.”

The disciples, at Hamilcar’s request, formed a circle:

“Now we will take turns going into the center of the circle and looking at our bodies from the body of each person who is now forming the circle. First, you can look from one body, then from several bodies, and then from all of them at the same time.”

All the students practiced this task, taking turns staying in the center of the circle.

Then they, together with Hamilcar, went up to the temple. This small circular building with its snow-white columns and dome and its base of marble steps was situated on top of a steep high hill, at the most elevated point in the School grounds. Inside the temple, the sky seemed to hug it from all sides.

It was a special place where the presence of Divine Souls was always very clearly manifested.

“Here the Divine Teachers will help us to master what we have already practiced today. Here with us today are Thoth the Atlantean, Ptahhotep, Imhotep, Isis, and Khem...”

Hamilcar listed the names, and their Appearances became visible in the Light for a time. And then They again dissolved into the love-saturated surrounding space. A special silence was felt by all of them.

“Now, from a space of the subtlest Light, we can look at this temple and our bodies in it. Our Teachers will help us in this if we merge with Them.

“And from the vastness of the shining Light — we can look from all sides at the island in the world of matter where our bodies are situated... Let the vector of our attention be directed from outside — to the center, just as in our previous exercise. Let the dissolution take place. And try to feel that so far unfamiliar state, in which we do not exist as separate parts but have disappeared in mergence with these Divine Souls. It looks as a sea of Living Light around.

“Let us register that now there is only the Divine Sea of Light on all sides of our bodies, and we — as souls — are dissolved in this Light, united with It. We can feel the contours of our bodies on all sides or fill the vastness of the space of the worlds of immaterial Light — as much as we can. We can even fill the shells of our bodies with this state of Oneness.

“Let us remember well this state of us as souls, in which the universal Divine Oneness covers everything and we are dissolved in this Light!

“After mastering this, we can learn to act in Mergence with the Primordial.”

Chapter Eighteen: **The Olympics**

The preparations were over, and it was time for the contestants to leave for the Olympics.

The sculptor Nev, though he was only a candidate for the School, also went with the Pythagoreans to the Olympics to make sketches for his future creations.

The send-off was very stately. Many Crotonians also came to the wharf to see the vessels leaving for Elis and to wish the contestants success. Solemn speeches and music could be heard.

... After the departure of all the competitors, Ariadne and Ferenika found themselves in a kind of pause. The many cares for the guests, which had long occupied all their time, were now over.

* * *

The wait for the return of the Olympic participants was long.

Traditionally, the Olympic events were preceded by long ceremonies, a registration of all the athletes, a performance of oaths that they had to take, and a choosing of judges.

And after the competitions, there was a series of festivities, awards, presentations, and speeches.

... The students who remained in the School had ample time to take stock of their own learning. Such recapitulation was one of the rules of life recommended by Pythagoras. He taught that it was necessary to reconsider everything that had been done or not done and to set new tasks for oneself. Such actions filled the life of the Pythagoreans with awareness. This also allowed them to see the progress of their own development and to see clearly what should be changed and improved in themselves.

The Pythagoreans' understanding that everything that happens in their lives takes place before the Divine Consciousness, and that everything in their lives is known to God — taught them to take responsibility for their thoughts and deeds.

It was recommended to perform this kind of reviewing both before going to bed each day and after the passage of longer periods of time, which made it easier to mark the already passed stages of the soul's development. Such a review — together with God — of what one has already achieved in spiritual development and works of service, and trying to understand how to act correctly in one's upcoming tasks, became one of the habits for harmonious and pure living. And then, gradually, God — as a constant Witness of everything that happens in one's life — would become the Main Component in living a life with an awareness of Oneness with the Whole.

... Recently, much had changed in the lives of Ariadne and Ferenika. Some of this was important, and the friends discussed it among themselves. Despite the fact that they were very different in character and in their progress in the spiritual life, these conversations over the years helped both of them to understand what was happening to them.

A trusting conversation, a welcoming look from someone close to them — this aspect of friendship between students at the School was considered very helpful.

But idle chatter, which people were sometimes prone to, was certainly not welcome.

Ferenika shared her plans with Ariadne:

“Nev and I want to be a family. So, now I probably won't be able to do so much spiritual practice... Do you think Pythagoras will be unhappy with this decision of mine?”

“I suppose he would approve of your choice. You'll be able to help Nev to master what you already know — and that will help in his spiritual advance-

ment as well as yours. And whether your spiritual life will become more intense or whether everything will be let go — that depends only on you!”

“What about you and Hamilcar? I see that there is something between you too, am I right?”

“I don’t know yet, Ferenika... I’ve hardly talked with him about it. Nevertheless, everything that happens between us is real and can be felt in the Divine Space. And our bodies do not even need to be side by side to continue to feel and give our love to one another... True, he told me that he would be glad if I went with him to Carthage. But perhaps this is where I will be more needed by the School. I know that I have been a good wife and mother in many past lives, and, as a soul, I do not need to experience family life again. But love is so magical and multifaceted! And with Hamilcar... — what we experience is always united with the Love of the Divine into One Indivisible Whole... I cannot put it into words!...

“Pythagoras told me yesterday that he would let me go with Hamilcar if I myself wished it. It is still difficult for me to make a choice and to understand: what in this is my personal emotions only and what is God’s Will? But if I go, I will leave the house to you. And all the duties of receiving guests will then be yours and Nev’s. Do you agree?”

“Yes. But how I’ll miss you, my friend!”

... Ariadne and Ferenika embraced.

* * *

The return of the Olympians was even more stately and joyful than the send-off. Almost all the people of Croton, not just the Pythagoreans, wel-

comed the Olympians. The winners of the games were honored as great heroes!

In the School, all the participants — both the winners and non-winners — were greeted with equal joy!

For the disciples of Pythagoras, the main result of the Olympics was not in winning some of the contests but in the fact that the knowledge of the School would spread far and wide throughout many cities of Greece. And also that this day — together with the participants of the competitions — new candidates for the School arrived and were filled with a desire to become part of the Pythagorean Brotherhood.

The main goal of the trip to the Olympics was to bring to people the spiritual knowledge of the School and, therefore, the winners were all those who made an effort to do so.

The speeches of Pythagoras' students were very interesting to the participants and spectators of the Olympic Games! And examples of the behavior of the Pythagoreans in different situations were so sublime that many people had a desire to learn more about Pythagoras and about his School.

Fifteen candidates for discipleship made up their minds and arrived now in Croton. Here, they were all interviewed by Pythagoras, and many of them were accepted into the School!

Among those accepted, was the sculptor Nev.

He told Ariadne and Ferenika in detail about everything he had witnessed at the Olympic Games.

One of the most talked about events of the competition was what Hamilcar did. He was the clear leader in the quadriga race, and only shortly before

the finish, he held back the horses and let a young man who was eager to win, win. This young man of noble birth was not only a charioteer, but also the owner of a chariot. And he dreamed of winning.

This young man could easily have been the best of all the others in the race — and only Hamilcar was confidently ahead of him. This young man had not failed to notice Hamilcar's actions. He was so shocked by his action, by his willingness to give another the glory of being the winner, that he talked a lot with Hamilcar and with other Pythagoreans after the race. And now, this young man was among those who had come with the desire of becoming disciples of Pythagoras. And he was accepted!

Nev was also delighted by a remarkable episode when a young Pythagorean named Eskendir won the wrestling competition. This slender young man, quite frail in appearance, was the winner in all competitions with other athletes who had strongly pumped muscles and large bodies. In fact, the young man was so frail in appearance that the officials tried to dissuade him from competing, but he, nevertheless, emerged victorious and showed a strength of spirit and body that far surpassed the bodily strength of the others.

Nev also showed his drawings, told of the other kinds of contests, and recounted in detail many of the speeches he had heard.

* * *

The time for the return home of all those who did not live in Croton was approaching. Konstantinos

was also leaving — for the sake of establishing a new branch of the School.

... Ariadne and Hamilcar walked along the seashore. Azure waves caressed the shore. Seagulls soared over the expanse. Flowering trees filled the air with a gentle fragrance.

Hamilcar said:

“Things are not as simple there in Carthage, as they are here in Croton... The Phoenicians do not like the Greeks and oppose the Greek influence by all means. The local religious beliefs there are much more violent than the cults of worship here in the Greek polities. The council of elders, which owns both the city and the country, does not like what we are doing in our little branch. The situation is the opposite of that here in Croton, where the authorities are quite loyal to the School and support Pythagoras in many ways. They even sometimes follow his advice.

“The priests of Baal Hammon also dislike me and take every opportunity to hinder the spread of the purity of the true Knowledge. We are surrounded there by a very hostile environment and even the danger of open attack persists. You should think carefully before you decide to leave.

“Many of my disciples, on the contrary, want to stay here, in Croton, and continue their studies under Pythagoras himself. Therefore, those few of us who will be returning, will have to start there almost from the beginning ...”

... Ariadne looked up and met Hamilcar’s gaze:

“So you and God will need my help there! This gives me the determination to come with you!”

Chapter Nineteen: **It's Only the Beginning!**

It was time for Hamilcar and Konstantinos to leave along with the few Pythagoreans who had volunteered to be their companions in the new lands.

Ariadne, with Pythagoras' blessing, planned to go with Hamilcar to help him.

The two vessels were ready and awaiting departure.

Pythagoras gave some parting words:

“You, my disciples, are my continuation! You bring people the Divine Knowledge and show the Divine Love!

“A beautiful future is open to you! All of us: both those who go to distant lands and those who stay here — we create this future right now! Our thoughts, emotions, states of us as souls, and our intentions are shaping that future!

“Yes, right now we cannot immediately change the worldview of many people. We can only influence some of those who are listening, learning, understanding, and practicing.

“We are only helping specific souls now on their Path to the Light, on their Path of knowledge and development!

“And yet, we are doing much more than it may seem at first glance. We are laying the foundation of spirituality for many centuries, for many generations!

“When there is confidence in the Divine Knowledge and at the same time complete humility of the personal *i* before the Will of the Whole, then our

actions become successful in any world of the universe — because then the Divine Whole lives and works through us!

“Remember: the guiding thread which leads from the mazes of earthly lives — to Freedom, to Light, to Divine Knowledge, to the Creator — is love! It is the soul living in the state of harmony and love which is capable of feeling the direction of its movement towards God and then clearly perceiving the Divine Guidance. For Divine Consciousness is Love. And a person-soul is drawn, like to a magnet, by his or her love in the right direction — to find Unity with the Divine Will, with the Divine Whole!

“Know: our School will exist for centuries and for millennia!

“Even souls who only once had just a little contact with the Pure Source of Love and Wisdom — will certainly yearn to experience it again! Being born in new bodies, they will remember much — and continue their striving to Perfection, to Mergence with the Divine Whole! They will remember the ethics of relations with the surrounding world and with the beings in it. And again, they will bring Knowledge and Beauty to people!

“Many of you will come to the Earth in bodies again many times — to bring this Knowledge to new generations of humanity!

“And others of us will help people even without being embodied. This is because there will remain a firm connection with us, which helps souls to perceive our hints — as illuminations, inspirations, or understandings!

“Many of my students — together with me — will help in this way!

“We all will bring Divine Wisdom and Love to the people of the Earth!

“Each of you can become a Light bringing this Love and Knowledge to humanity!”

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Pythagoras’ young disciple Theano became his wife and the mother of his children. All of them became disciples and successors of Pythagoras.

Many people who learned the Teachings of Pythagoras on ethics, wisdom, beauty, harmony, achievements in different kinds of art, and wide knowledge in sciences also felt a desire to become disciples..

And many souls — thanks to Pythagoras — found the great Intention to attain the Divine Worlds, to merge with the Infinite Whole — the Primordial Source of the entire Creation! They, among others, were born again on the Earth centuries later and recalled — as insights — that Wisdom which they had learned from Pythagoras.

This continues even now!

Those who cognize the Spiritual Heritage of the Pythagoras’ School — will always give Wisdom, Love, Harmony, and Beauty to the people of the Earth!