

**Kayr**

**About the Path and  
Travelers**

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Many lives I had to live to overcome the entire Path. And not everything in them was smooth. But both achievements and mistakes taught the main thing: through them, I managed to achieve the fullness of Mergence with the Creator — and this is the greatest Victory! It is called Nirvana, the fullness of Enlightenment or Self-Realization.

However, the development of even Divine Souls continues endlessly. All of Us continue to improve Ourselves even now.

How? What do I mean?

What I would like to explain now — comes not just from what I learned in the past, when I was incarnated and followed the spiritual path, trying more than just once to travel it completely. But it also comes from the knowledge that I have learned even now. After all, I continue to collect experience and wisdom, participating in the lives and work of promising embodied disciples of God.

Many other Great Spiritual Masters also take part in this work. They are Those Who have reached the cognition of the One Creator of the entire universe. Their Perfection, Their experience and Their knowledge are the basis of what I would like to tell all people of the Earth.

Much of what I describe now — was cognized by Me in My own incarnations. And much comes from what I am currently watching and cognizing.

**I believe that it is very useful for travelers on the Great Path of Merging with the *United We* — to know all of this.**

**I am very pleased with the opportunity to share My knowledge! It is much easier to overcome the Path when a traveler already knows what he or she will encounter on it! After all, all the obstacles, which they encounter on the Path, are similar, and the ways of overcoming them are also similar.**

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## How to Take Our Lives into Our Own Hands

*“Every intention is blind when there is no knowledge.  
All knowledge is vain when there is no work.  
All work is fruitless when there is no love!”*

From “The Prophet” by Khalil Gibran

There once were two young men who were living in a poor village. They were friends. Their sad, almost beggarly existence among similar unhappy inhabitants, did not make them happy.

The soil in that area was not fertile. And moreover — year after year — droughts ruined almost all the crops. Many people died due to diseases and hunger. And some men began to engage in robbery in order to feed their families.

But our young men were raised by their parents in good faith and did not want to cause harm to other people.

However, this depressing existence in poverty, without hope of change for the better, was oppressing.

Their parents had already died, and so they did not even have any elderly to take care of, which could have given meaning to their lives. And they did not hurry to start their own families, seeing poverty and a sad existence around.

One day, one of them said to the other: “Living like this, our entire lives will pass by... And nothing will change in it, if we ourselves do not begin to act! After all, what we spend our efforts and time on, depends on us!”

... And they decided to go on a journey to seek happiness and a better life.

\* \* \*

They walked for a long time. The settlements that they met on the road — although slightly richer than their own — were not very different from it. Our young men wanted to find a place where they could really become happy.

They reached a big city. Noise, bustle, vast wealth of some people — and the poverty of others existed here in close relation to each other.

The young men found employment — and they received money, which even seemed like a large sum to them. But it had to be quickly spent on housing and food — and it was necessary to earn money again and again through hard labor.

And there was no more happiness in their lives here than there was in their poor native village.

But now they had no time to be bored: they were always worried about how to make money, or how to spend less of it, or how not to be cheated or robbed.

And they saw so much cheating and deceit! And even they, themselves, were cheated and lied to on more than one occasion... Fortunately, their wealth was not great, so their losses were not great either.

... One day, they witnessed the death of a young man: a fight broke out in the market due to some deception — and it cost the life of one of the contenders...

Looking at the body of someone who had died while still being so young, caused the young men to think that the same thing could happen to them at any moment. After all, death does not necessarily occur in old age. And therefore, it is not at all guaranteed that they will have enough time to realize all of their desires.

They understood that this life of theirs in the big city did not make them any happier. In fact, it only made them... fussier.

... We have already discussed that our young men were raised in piety and good faith. They offered regular prayers to God and followed other religious rules and regulations, which were instilled in them from childhood. And now they began to think among themselves:

“Maybe we are asking God for the wrong things?

“Maybe we do not understand what He wants — both from us and from all people?

“Why are the prayers of most people left unfilled?

**“Why is there so much injustice and ugliness, if God is Justice and Beauty?**

**“Why are there so many sick, unhappy people?**

**“Why do some people bathe in luxury, while others drag themselves into a beggarly existence?**

**“Why does injustice reign everywhere, even among judges in courts, where only the pure truth should triumph?**

**“Why, for some, does death occur at a young age, while others live to a feeble old age?**

**“And what is really worth wanting and achieving in life?”**

**They began to ask their questions to people who seemed smart to them. They turned to various gray-haired old men, asking what they had learned in their long years in this land: about the meaning of human life, about the purpose of good and evil, about the causes of inequality between people in material prosperity, in health or illness, in luck or failures.**

**But those old men could not explain all of this to them. They said only that, in all of this, there is the Will of God...**

**... But one day, they were advised to go to a wise Master, who, most likely, would be able to answer all their questions.**

**\* \* \***

**They reached that place late at night and asked to spend the night in the Master’s house, where many of his disciples lived.**

**They were allowed to spend the night.**

... They very much liked everything about this place: the cleanliness, the friendly smiles of the disciples, and the fact that they were sheltered without demands for payment! And the calm and benevolent Master was perceived by them as the height of perfection!

“How lucky we are! It’s as if we are living in paradise! This place is where life is actually worth living! We will stay here and become disciples of this Master!” — they said to each other.

The next morning, after a meal, they asked the Master some of their questions: about the misfortunes and injustices of this world, and about the meaning of a person’s life...

The Master answered them:

“The body belongs to the ‘desert’ of this world. People here often spend their lives in pursuit of the mirage of wealth and glory, in the thirst for power and pleasure...

“But, in the end, a human soul, leaving this ‘desert’, cannot take even a handful of sand with him or her — no matter how much material wealth was accumulated in the world of matter!

“Only *how* a person has transformed him/herself-soul, and that, which he or she has learned, as well as that, which he or she has mastered, — will remain with him or her in the ‘other world’.

“The lives of people on the Earth — with their ups and downs — are only at first glance full of injustice. But the destinies of people depend on so many facts and are intertwined into intricate patterns throughout many lives.

**“How the fate of each person is formed — is a long story. But the main principle is simple: ‘You always reap in your destiny the fruits of what you sowed and nurtured!’**

**“The fruits of some actions return to the person quickly, while others may take a very long time to ‘ripen’. Sometimes this happens only in the next incarnation of the soul into a new body.**

**“Every time when the life in the body ends and a soul leaves it — a soul does not disappear and does not die. The life of a soul does not end with the death of the body, but continues in the non-material world — until the time for a new birth into a body comes.**

**“And the true meaning of the life of a soul on the Earth is not to pursue the mirages of the material world, but to follow the Path to God, Who is the One Lord of all worlds. This Path consists in gaining knowledge and in mastering other aspects of perfection.**

**“The soul is able to learn and master a lot of knowledge and skills.**

**“There are certain qualities of a soul, which are useful in both worlds: the material and the immaterial. These are, above all, love, tenderness, care, forgiveness, gratitude, and the willingness to learn.**

**“All these useful qualities can be developed in ourselves. Namely, each of us is in this world so that we may improve ourselves as souls.**

**“There are also those qualities that should be eradicated in ourselves. Because both in life on the material plane, and in life without bodies — these vices of the soul will bring nothing but troubles. These qualities are anger, irritability, violence, envy, re-**

sentment, desire to take something that belongs to someone else, gluttony, deceit, lack of will, laziness, pride, and other manifestations of egocentrism. There are also smaller vices: for example, the non-observance of esthetic norms of behavior.

“And one, who aspires to become better before the Face of God, can try to eliminate in oneself all those qualities of the soul that prevent this one from approaching God!

“Let us understand that the events that surround us and into which we are involved or which we create ourselves, can serve our main purpose: through them, we can learn from God.

“Yes, a person can make the right choice in choosing the purpose and direction of his or her life — and take his or her own development and destiny into his or her own hands.

“After all, to what purpose man plans, — to there the forces of the soul flow. And the more he or she strives for that goal, the faster the progress.

“Life only for the sake of entertainment and the satisfaction of whims — can seem simple and pleasant... But its result — if one’s whole lifetime was wasted on trifles — will be complete ruin...

“Each of the days of life on the Earth is a treasure, received from God! And you should not live without using it for developing yourself and for helping other souls to improve!

“Let us try to see the whole Path: from a small human soul — to the Divine Soul, living in Unity with the Creator!

“To get closer to God, it is necessary, namely, to advance consciously on this Path!

**“The Path is opened before those who choose God and the service to Him as the purpose and meaning of their lives.**

**“But, in order to be ready to begin the Path, one must first understand very much. In particular, it is necessary to develop in oneself the ability to distinguish between good — and evil, and between what is necessary — and what is useless in life.**

**“And we must become sufficiently confident in the correctness of the choices that we have made.**

**“In order to follow this Path, it is not necessary to ‘renounce the world’ and live in a monastery or in a solitary cell. After all, the more experience a soul acquires, the better!”**

**... The young men listened to the Master’s response and were amazed at the opportunities opened before them. They asked permission to stay in order to learn from Him.**

**The Master said that He would allow them to stay for a while so that He may determine whether they really want and are ready to follow the *Path of the Heart* and whether their intention is firm. And at the end of the trial period, He will say whether they may stay at His house and strive to become His disciples.**

## **On the Commandments of God and the Purification of Souls**

**During the first days of the young men’s life in the Master’s house, He would often tell them about**

the difference between the rules of behavior invented by people — and the ethical Commandments of God:

“You asked me questions about the injustice and suffering in this world. And today we will begin to search together for the answers to them.”

“Do you yourself not know the answers?” — the young men were surprised by the words of the Master.

“I did not say that. But I would like you to make your own efforts to understand them, to deeply think over them yourselves. And for this, it is not enough just to listen to Me and believe My words.

“Have you ever thought about the existence of those rules of behavior, which have been commanded specifically by God?

“These rules exist, and they are the same for all peoples on the Earth.

“There are also some rules that were invented only by people. Such rules can be very different from one country or religious tradition — to another.

“God’s Commandments have been pronounced many times for people, being expressed in different words. You probably heard about them at least partially. We will talk more than once about these Commandments, but, briefly, the main ones can be formulated as follows:

“Love God — the Creator of all that exists!

“Love your neighbors!

“Do unto others, as you would like them to do unto you!

“Love all beings — the creatures of God!

“Be grateful!

“Do good! Do not do evil!

“Do not kill!

**“Do not steal!**

**“Do not lie!**

**“Do not covet!**

**“Do not envy!**

**“Do not be angry!**

**“Do not be jealous!**

**“Do not cause harm — as far as possible — to other creatures!**

**“These ethical Commandments of God, intended for all people, were repeatedly brought to Earth by Divine Messengers. Most of the religious Teachings began this way. But gradually, after the departure of the Messiahs and prophets, the Teachings became inverted into the dogmas of some priests. The meaning of the Commandments was distorted.**

**“Moreover, sets of rituals and rules did not at all come from God, but from those priests... The prerequisites that were invented by them allowed the priests to receive income for performing rituals. And even terrible religious wars arose more than once — because the rules of worshipping God, invented by different groups of priests, were different. And this allowed certain rulers to ‘justify’ themselves when seizing other country’s lands and wealth.**

**“Such a distortion by people of the Divine Laws, according to which everything in the universe should develop, leads to a very deplorable formation of destinies for individuals as well as for entire human communities.**

**“It should be noted that the performance of certain rituals can be useful for beginners in religion. There are rituals that calm the mind. There is also a benefit from the fact that, by performing rituals, one**

learns to overcome fatigue, laziness, concern with the earthly, and always remember God.

“In your own cases, for example, such rituals helped you not only to avoid becoming robbers, as some people from your village did, but it also prompted you to seek the Truth.”

“How do you know about this, Master? Can you see the past of any person?”

“It’s not difficult: God always opens the necessary knowledge before us!

“But now let us not be distracted from the topic. Believe only that what now seems surprising to you — will be very simple, when you yourselves learn this!

“This is similar to how a person, who does not know anything about the ability to read and write words with the help of letters, will think that such a skill is a miracle! But the one, who can read, does not consider this as something surprising!

“Now we must also think about the following: why do people in most religious traditions, even knowing the ethical Commandments, not execute them? Why do people not live as God has commanded them?

“This happens, first of all, because the rules of behavior, created and prescribed by the priests, are very much at variance with truly virtuous behavior!

“There are also other reasons why the commandments of God are not fulfilled by many people. Even those, who would like to live righteously, do not always succeed. They cannot feel heart love to their neighbors, cannot resist the emotions of resentment or anger, condemnation or jealousy — even if they want to! They do not know *how* to defeat bad habits

and emotions in themselves — and therefore they consider their sinfulness... natural and inevitable! And there is an opinion that ethical purity is only for special persons: Saints and prophets; and that it's not a rule for the life of everyone.

“... Souls come to the Earth many times... Over the course of a long and difficult series of lives, they learn love and kindness, how to fall in love with each other, how to raise children, and how to take care of the destinies of the inhabitants of their country or of all humanity. They make a lot of mistakes that make their lives filled with suffering and disappointment...

“But there are ways to purify and transform the soul, which can help that person, who wants to begin the spiritual Path.

“Throughout the history of existence of mankind on the Earth, there were certain devotees, who — with God's help — created methods that can quickly teach others to control their emotions and — as a result — live in heart love.

“You have always aspired to be righteous before the Face of God — and this is very commendable! But, in order to truly experience what is love for Him and what is the happiness of a life with such love, — it is necessary to purify the soul and body, and to open the spiritual heart. Only then can one stand before God and not be ashamed!

“... The first and primary way to begin purification of the soul is accepting and executing the ethical rules that are commanded by God.

“But, in addition to the understanding and acceptance of these rules, you can do simple exercises that will help in purifying the bodily energies and in opening the center of heart love.”

The Master suggested going out onto the terrace, from which a beautiful view of nature and the surrounding area could be seen. Everything was filled with gentle morning light, as if even the smallest particles of air carried the energy of the rising sun!

The Master continued:

“There is a very simple initial method of purification for the energies of the body and for the state of the soul.

“In many religious traditions, it is customary to perform ablutions. Yes, it is very useful to do this every morning!

“But it is possible to wash the body and soul in the same way with the Divine Light, Which is similar to the morning sunlight.

“All space is permeated by this Divine Light! If you have not yet learned to see Him, you can ask God to help in this.

“Let us now cup our hands and feel that they become filled with shining Light, Which pours into them like water! And, with the help of the hands of the soul, connected with the hands of the body, you can wash your face with this Light.

“Then the movements of the hands of the soul can become wider. And this Light, pouring from above, can be taken again and again by the palms and poured on the body: from the head — to the soles of the feet. Let streams flow gently, washing the body and soul!

“We can also stand under the waterfall of this Light, so that we are washed and ready to live and work for God on this day.

**“You can also raise your hands up, catch this Light in the palm of your hands, then ask Him to flow through all the cells of the body and fill all the corners of the soul — so that no dirt and darkness remain!**

**“While doing this, we are filled with gratitude and love for God — for the bliss that He gives!**

**“Find the place in the body where this bliss is born: it is about where everyone feels the center of himself or herself during an inhalation.**

**“Next, let us try to give away love, peace, gratitude, and tranquility from these centers — to all beings: the children of God who are around us. At first, let us embrace with love and peace those who are nearby, and then — let us send the waves of love and peace to all beings, further and further!**

**“In the beginning, it is helpful to use the hands of the body when sending such waves of love. But later — gradually — it will be possible to learn to perform these exercises, acting only with the hands of the soul, which will become larger, stronger, and more tender!**

**“Such exercises are easy to perform, but this does not make them less important or less useful on the spiritual Path. Just do not be lazy in performing them every day.”**

**“And what: do we now have to do these exercises instead of the morning prayers?”**

**“You don’t have to do anything! I only suggest that you master these exercises. And if you want to continue to habitually address God, uttering the standard words, then your personal choice should be made independently.**

**“When you can talk with God directly — then you can ask this question to Him yourselves!”**

**“Talking with God?! Is it possible for ordinary people? Only the great Messiahs and prophets could speak with God!”**

**“Ask those who live in this house! And at the same time, let them help you to master these new morning exercises,” — the Master replied with a smile.**

**... The exercises were simple and surprisingly enjoyable! The young men mastered them with ease! The feelings of joy and purity in the soul, which could be felt after each of such exercises, stayed with them for a long time!**

**And when the older disciples showed and explained to them how best to do all this, the young men were amazed that all this can be learned so easily! And that meant that it was possible to maybe master even more! Perhaps they, too, could even learn to hear and directly understand God! For this, we should transform ourselves as souls — and live a life as wonderful as the life lived by the disciples of the Master in this house!**

## **On Desires and Happiness**

**One day, a guest came to the Master’s house for advice. He was a distinguished and rich man. He brought gourmet treats. And a festive table was set for everyone who lived in the house.**

**That day, an abundance of delicacies, which were brought by the guest, were served alongside**

the typical simple yet delicious foods of the Master's house.

The guest knew that both the Master and his disciples were strict vegetarians, and therefore the treats that he brought were appropriate.

Our young men from poor families, who only recently began to live in the Master's house, were so amazed by these luxurious treats that they could not stop eating, barely listening to what the Master was saying.

They had never before seen such an abundance, having previously lived in poverty all their lives.

And they ate as much as they could! The food was so delicious! And, in fact, no one was paying attention to how much the two of them were eating! And no payment was required for them to eat the treats!

The rest of the disciples and the guest were more engaged in the conversation than in the meal.

In the conversation, the Master, glancing several times at the beginners, hinted that excessive food can be damaging, even if it is clean and nutritious. But the young men were so fascinated by the treats, which they had never before seen, that they missed these words and continued to focus on the delicious delicacies.

The Master spoke with the guest and the disciples about whether the satisfaction of earthly desires brings happiness, saying:

“Earthly desires control the lives of many people for a long time.

“Yes, there are natural needs: such as, for example, the desire to eat; and such needs must be sat-

isfied. But living only to satisfy our own selfish desires — does not bring happiness!

“If a person experiences joy only from getting the pleasure of something material — then he or she easily gets used to this way of life. For example, the habit of having fun with wine drinking can lead to drunkenness. A person wants more and more joy — and, as he or she gets used to it, this person must then use more and more spirits to get the same effect. This also happens with other substances that temporarily change the state of consciousness. And, if a person begins to want to receive more and more pleasure in this way, then he or she becomes a prisoner or even a slave to these desires. Such a person can no longer resist drinking, smoking, gluttony, or other ways of appeasing oneself.

“And people have invented so many different ways of receiving pleasure from material things! This concerns more than just food made from the bodies of killed animals, or the stupefying and mind-destroying things that can be either drunk, smoked, or taken in other ways.

“Some other objects that are passionately desired are: jewelry made of gold and precious stones, palaces, boats, and lands... And, wanting more and more of such things for oneself always leads to sad outcomes.

“And this never leads to true happiness! Such things give only a brief moment of satisfaction... — and then a new desire seizes the soul!

“True joy can be born only from love, directed *from* the spiritual heart — *outwards*: to other beings! It comes from the presence of God in the spiritual heart!”

**“But, if a person is not yet ready to renounce the material world, what is to be done?” — the guest asked the Master.**

**“That’s exactly what we are talking about.**

**“Pleasures from delicious food and drink, from a clean and beautiful home, or from harmonious sexual relations — are not harmful at all. They are even beneficial, if moderation and harmony are observed.**

**“Such satisfaction is incomparably better than poverty and a constant feeling of dissatisfaction because of it!**

**“There is also nothing wrong with having and carrying out useful desires and intentions. But all of such goals and desires should be pure and directed to one’s benefit, or to the benefit of other beings.**

**“And, if the implementation of such intentions brings good and joy not to oneself, but to other people — then this makes a person even more happy!”**

**... Looking carefully at his guest, the Master continued:**

**“There is nothing destructive or sad, if man, for example, has inherited huge treasures or power. But it necessary to distribute what has been received — in a way that is reasonable and that benefits not just oneself but many others as well.**

**“After all, everything that we own here is temporary. It is given to us to improve ourselves and to help others.**

**“It is not easy to use wealth wisely; it is a skill that is learned.**

**“Would you like me to tell you, friends, about the parable of the ‘lucky man’”**

**... Everyone, in anticipation, eagerly asked the Master to begin.**

**“Once upon a time, there was a man who always and in everything was lucky!**

**“If he played cards or dice, he always won. If there was a disaster, he alone remained unharmed, while people around him received wounds and injuries. And everything that he ever wanted was always very quickly implemented!**

**“For a long time, this man rejoiced at his luck and thanked God for His patronage.**

**“But one day, he thought about those who lost when he won, about those who were injured when he was left unharmed, and about those who were near and yet could not find what they wanted...**

**“Good luck continued to fall on him, as if from a cornucopia, but now it no longer pleased him the same way as before.**

**‘Maybe my luck can be used for more meaningful ends than just winning cards or dice, or achieving fame and success for any of my whims?’ — he thought.**

**“And the man decided to change his life!**

**“He went to the ruler of that country and said:**

**‘Apparently, I was born under a lucky star! I’m lucky in everything!**

**‘Great ruler, give me any difficult task — and I’ll try to fulfill it!**

**‘After all, it’s not fair that this luck of mine should give benefit only to me, and not to all those who are worthy!’**

**“... And he began to serve the good of the ruler and of the whole country — according to how the ruler and his associates understood it.**

**“For a while, the ‘lucky man’ was happy that he had found a worthwhile use for his life.**

**“But then he began to see and hear that winning in the war for one country — brings misfortunes to the people of another, or that, because of his luck and success in the affairs of the state, some people get benefit — while others suffer from disaster and misfortune...**

**‘Does God, Who has created and loves all beings, actually want what I do? For what purpose has He given me luck?’ — he thought...**

**“And then the ‘lucky man’ left the civil service and decided to find a Sage who could explain to him: how best to spend the rest of his life?**

**“Many people tried to stop him, saying: ‘Are you really not happy with your excellent position in society and are you tired of your luck? It is said that people should not look for something better — when they already have something good! How could you even want anything more, when everything desirable is already given to you so easily?’**

**“But the man decided to continue searching for the meaning of his life.**

**“He walked from one teacher to another — until he found a True Teacher.**

**“The ‘lucky man’ asked Him:**

**‘Why is my life full of luck, but the more I get, the less satisfying is what I achieve? Perhaps my life has a different purpose; after all, there has to be reason why luck has ceased to satisfy me.’**

**‘You were righteous in your past life and did a lot of good then. Now you are reaping the fruits of those good deeds. That’s where your luck comes from!**

**‘And, from a certain point in time in your current life, you wanted to share your luck and happi-**

ness with other people. And so, for this reason, success did not leave you!’

‘But what was it for?’

Perhaps this happened in order to make you start thinking about the purpose of your life.

‘There is the true happiness, which is called Nirvana, Liberation, or Enlightenment. This happiness consists in obtaining the Unity with the Divine Consciousness. When you achieve this, your help to others will then become wise.’

“The ‘lucky man’ decided to test his luck on the Path to the Divine — and stayed with the Teacher.”

“And what happened to that man? Did he attain the Perfection?” — the guest asked the Master.

“He studied — and became a real Teacher himself!

“The One Who has cognized the Highest Happiness, always seeks to give it to others!

“But, a story like this one does not happen often, unfortunately. Usually, it is only illnesses and other misfortunes that make people think about how they should change their lives...”

\* \* \*

At night — because of the excess food — the two young men had stomachaches...

One of them said to the other:

“How could the Master not have foreseen this and warned us?! He ought to be ashamed!”

His friend answered:

**“We ourselves are to blame... We should not have devoured the food so greedily! Besides, during lunch, the Master said that everything should be observed in moderation, including food.”**

**“But he did not tell us that!”**

**“How do you know that he wasn’t actually trying to warn us, specifically?”**

**... The next morning, they were pale and could not eat anything.**

**The Master gave them a drink of a decoction made from medicinal plants.**

**He did not scold them, but said:**

**“It’s not enough just to hear useful advice! But it is necessary to apply it in practice in your life!**

**“Do you know about the great Chinese Sage Lao Tse? He said: ‘Excessiveness in anything causes troubles!’”**

**“No...”**

**“In that case, I think you should read some of the books in our library.**

**“In continuation of yesterday’s conversation about desires, we should realize that the most useful desires are the desires to know and act.”**

**The Master asked one of the disciples to take the young men to the library. One of the rooms in the Master’s house was reserved for this. Books and manuscripts in different languages were stored on shelves there in a special order.**

**Seeing such a huge number of books, the young men were upset, saying:**

**“Even if we spent our whole lives, it still would not be enough time to read and understand all of this! And then there will not be any time left to actually put these Teachings into practice!”**

**“You do not have to read everything. But there are some books that every person must know, if he or she wants to cognize the Truth. It is important to have knowledge about the different religious directions and to study the best books that set forth the Teachings of God. And it is actually very useful that the Teachings were set out in different books — in different words.**

**“It is also necessary to know a little about the human body itself: about its internal organs, and about what diseases are and how they should be treated.**

**“Today you will have a very successful day for starting such training! Because of your upset digestive system, you will not have enough strength to practice meditation.”**

**“How do you know what happened to us?”**

**“It’s very easy to see from your pained appearances. And today I have prepared for you, at the request of Master, a decoction, which is good and quick to help in such cases.**

**“But do not worry too much about what happened: after all, the experience of mistakes teaches us just as much as the advice of other people. The main thing is to try to avoid repeating mistakes twice!”**

# On Doubts and How to Choose a Master

One day, the Master invited the young men to go on a mission to a neighboring city to give his friend some books and manuscripts.

“This walk will be very useful for you,” — the Master said.

... While looking for the home of Master’s friend, they started asking some locals for some directions to find the house.

One man they met told them how to find it.

Many people in those places considered the friend of their Master to be a great sage.

The man who showed them where to look for the house, also knew him, but did not share the same respect for the spiritual Masters.

He asked the young men some questions:

“So, you also decided to join the spiritual life? How naive! I want to warn you: you’re wasting your time!

“Once, when I was young, I too indulged myself in such dreams... I dreamed of achieving the spiritual Perfection, I believed that I would cognize the Highest...

“After all, who, in their youth, does not also burn with such exalted desires and aspirations? Who, in such times, is not also seized by dreams of the great ‘Straight Path’?

“Back then, I even found a mentor. We meditated year after year. It seemed that with just a little

more time and effort the desired Enlightenment would be achieved... But alas...

“And time went by! Meditations then ceased to please us, and they became just a routine part of an everyday life in which nothing changed day after day, year after year... Everything was the same in that monastery as it was in the world: just hard work, which, moreover, brought neither progress, nor satisfaction!

“But, with age, I grew wiser: I realized that in pursuing these unattainable aspirations I almost wasted my whole life in vain!

“And that mentor and his disciples — up to this day — are still searching for the ‘Highest’ with every moment of their lives! They continue their monastic life in the hope of some kind of ‘Enlightenment’, depriving themselves of pleasure and any entertainment!

“I realized that I was missing out on *real life*, by following these empty dreams of the unreal and the beyond...

“These tales of spirituality are only a consolation for those who have not been able to achieve anything in life! In this way, they build illusions about the ‘spiritual Path’ and say that this is the meaning of life...”

“But what about God? What about love for God? Did your mentor not teach you this?” — the young men asked in surprise.

“It’s all just words!

“And who told you that people, who call themselves spiritual Masters, are right? Who? They themselves? And look: there are so many of such ‘Masters’, each of whom teaches that only he is right! And

every one of them disagrees with the others, because they only consider their own teachings to be absolutely true!

“And why have you, you naive men, decided that you should devote your lives to God? What for?”

“Look: some preachers say that God Himself wants people to come closer to Him through worship and veneration, while others teach meditation and say that only in this way can souls become perfect, some others speak about cognition of God, others, on the contrary, say that God can not be cognized and that people should only offer sacrifices to God and pray for His mercy... And there are even those who teach that you need only to believe that we are already perfect — and this will be the Perfection!

“And which of them is right? Who actually knows what God really wants from people? These teachers?... Or maybe God wants a very different thing? Maybe He just wants us to live here and enjoy life?”

“And do you believe in such ‘Masters’? Live as long as I have lived — and you’ll find out what really has a price!”

“But what about the Great Teachers Who have attained Enlightenment?”

“It is they, themselves, who claim to have achieved this! And who told you that this is true? What can they — these unfortunate ones — say when their whole lives have been wasted? And those, who worship them, also invent fairy tales about their teacher’s miracles: because it is customary to worship something ‘holy’!

“Listen to my advice: live and enjoy life, while you are still young and healthy! Stop wasting time on

nonsense and serving those who declare themselves ‘cognizant!’”

... The young men became confused... Doubts entered into their minds...

“Yes, our Master speaks beautiful and lofty words that seem fair and true. But how can we know, whether the Path that he talks about is true? What if we have not found a real Master? And what if all our efforts on the spiritual Path are not true and will not bring good results? And what if suddenly our Master himself is mistaken and leads us all to a dead end?

“How to verify that we are not mistaken? How can we know that our Master knows the Path to cognition of the Divine Consciousness? He does not demonstrate miracles that could prove His Divinity, but only speaks words that seem wise to us. We have not even listened to the other Masters yet, and we have not compared his words to what the others teach...”

... Being thus immersed in doubts, they talked until they came to the right house.

\* \* \*

The friend of their Master joyfully met the young men who were still in doubt and confusion.

He invited them to wash and rest after their long journey, and he himself began to prepare the meal.

When the host and his guests were seated at the table, the young men ventured to ask their questions.

“Tell us, did you study only from one Master or did you listen to the speeches of different mentors?” — they asked.

**“Oh! I had to see many of them in this life! I tried to learn from different preachers!”**

**“And how did you choose the right Master?”**

**“I did not choose a Master; I chose God,” — he answered after pausing for a while.**

**“In my wanderings, I always observed people who worshiped God in different ways, who performed rituals, or who practiced various methods of immersion in meditation...**

**“I looked at the crowds of admirers who grabbed onto every word of their mentor, admiring him, only to then hear of another guru — and flee to practice other methods of achieving Enlightenment, which supposedly would make them Perfect...**

**“I watched their faces. I watched the light in the eyes of the meditators, the worshipers — and of those who taught them. I looked at how the words of the mentors and their students corresponded to how they lived, spoke, kept silent, and acted in their lives.**

**“These observations taught me a lot. They made me realize that the main Teacher for everyone is God! He is ready to help anyone who sincerely aspires to Him. And He helps in accordance with the sincerity of a particular person and his or her willingness to comprehend every new step of the Path.**

**“I became convinced that only heart love allows one to gradually develop the ability to feel the Guidance of God.**

**“It is God Who helps the person, who has rushed to Him, to find that which corresponds to the *readiness of a particular soul*. God teaches us to doubt and choose, to learn from our mistakes and failures, to love and show our loyalty, to follow worthy mentors and to leave those who mix Truth with**

falsehood, or those who only seek to make a profit on their followers!

“For example, now you are full of doubts as to whether your Master is good. You want to hear from me the confirmation that you made the right choice in learning from Him, and not from the others.”

“Yes... But how did you know this?”

“It’s not difficult to understand other people.

“But my opinion will not make your choice right or wrong. Your choice is your decision based on your life experience! And, therefore, it is this experience that you need!

“Look here: there is a variety of food in front of you. Now you will eat what you like, that is, what you choose. From this food, you will receive energy for life — both for bodies and souls. This food will *become you*.

“It is the same case with spiritual food: it is transformed by the person who uses it. To one person — it brings benefits aplenty, to others — less so, and to some — it is even harmful. It depends on what we choose to absorb from spiritual knowledge — and make into our own knowledge. It also depends on the ability of each soul to carry out what one desires, and on one’s diligence in mastering what has been received. Everyone chooses what he or she deems suitable and desirable.

“Learn not to mindlessly accept the advice and teachings of others!

“And even these words of mine should not be taken without due consideration! Learn to distinguish between what is good and what is not! Even your doubts will help with this!

**“Do not follow even the most famous Master — just out of imitation of the crowd of his students!**

**“Gradually, gaining experience, each person learns to distinguish between what is useful and what is harmful when following the path of development that he or she has chosen...”**

**“You speak so wisely! Why do not you have students?”**

**“When my advice can be useful to people, God leads them to me, just as He has led you.**

**“But I do not consider myself to be someone who has the right to tell others how to live. In my life, I have seen too many of those who, by their violence and their way of forcing others to be ‘righteous’, pushed people away from the Truth. And also, I saw many who self-confidently preached lies in place of truth. Words about Truth are often so closely intertwined with misunderstandings and lies — that it is not easy to sort out which one is which!**

**“A certain wise mentor once suggested that spiritual seekers be like ants, who only can choose sugar from a mixture of sugar and sand.**

**“I myself follow what I feel in my heart to be the Truth, and I try to understand the guidance of God in everything. Over the years, I have learned this.**

**“I’ve seen a lot of mentors. It’s impossible to follow many of them. This is similar to how it is not possible for a person to sail across the sea on several boats at once, even if they are sailing to the same place. One who cannot choose between different spiritual paths, trying one of the numerous practices after another, does nothing more than develop one’s discernment.**

**“Anyone, who seeks a spiritual Master, should make this choice as if they were choosing a captain, to whom one is ready to trust in everything. A boat cannot make a successful journey, if the sailors do not follow the commands of the captain and are not obedient to his leadership!**

**“To choose that captain, who will lead the boat to the desired goal without getting lost on the way, without getting stranded, and without crashing — it is not easy. But with the team of such an ‘ark’ — it is easier to achieve the desired goal.**

**“It is also important to remember that a Master, Who has reached the Goal, does not at all make His disciples Enlightened. He only indicates the methods for reaching Perfection.**

**“In the material world, if a certain boat has reached the opposite shore, then it means that everyone, who was on it, has also *arrived*.**

**“But, in the spiritual world, things are different. Usually, a great Master only manages to take a few disciples ‘with Him’. And the rest receive help only on a certain part of their personal path of development. But, in future births in bodies, they will have more opportunities. They can then very successfully continue and complete their evolution, or even gradually become Masters, who help others, themselves.**

**“Personally, I am not ready to entrust my spiritual progress to another man. I myself build my ‘boat’... Perhaps someday, I will want to recruit my own team... But, for the time being, I’m not ready to take responsibility for the fates of other seekers.**

**“Today, you brought me some new books from your Master, and this for me is a great joy! I will read them with pleasure, and they will give me an oppor-**

tunity to explore and build my own Path to the Goal, and to comprehend the Divine Consciousness, Which is One, despite the differences in names and religious teachings. But I do not call upon anyone to follow me and to do the same as I do.”

“Have you ever regretted that — instead of worldly pleasures — you have chosen the life of a spiritual ascetic?”

“There are people, for whom, what you call worldly joys, are the apex of their dreams. Such people do not yet need to master in-depth meditations. It is appropriate for them to live according to the laws of kindness, listening to their conscience, rejoicing in everything beautiful in life, and striving to bring feasible help to surrounding people and other beings. It is better, if such a person is just a baker who likes to bake bread, or a potter who enjoys his work — than to be an unfortunate imitator of those who have dedicated themselves to the spiritual life, serving God!

“If the monastic life for the sake of the comprehension of God does not bring joy and satisfaction, then this means that the road that you have chosen is not yours, or that you have entered it prematurely!

“It is much more joyful for God to look at those who are happy from their feasible help to people and other beings in everything good — than to look at those who spend their lives in fanatical sermons or bitter prayers!

“But those who are already overcome by spiritual thirst, are striving for something else! I myself have never regretted my choice. But this does not mean that you will not regret your choice too.

“Think for yourselves: do you need God? Do you want to live for Him, and not just as a momentary

urge, but for your entire life until your last breath? Do you want to master what is needed in order to feel and understand Him always?

“If such knowledge is not dear to you, if you do not burn with love for Him, — then you do not need to continue trying to learn this!”

“Oh no! We very much like the practices that we are learning! We really feel that there is a Living God — and it’s so wonderful! We want to cognize Him, to draw near to Him!”

“Then why do you have so many doubts?”

“Apparently, we got infected with them by talking with one gentleman when we were searching for your house. We were overwhelmed by doubts, not about having to go through the spiritual Path, but in wondering if we were travelling It correctly... We are still so inexperienced. After all, we have only recently started to learn!”

“I think I know who you are talking about. His story is very sad but not uncommon. His self greatly grew and strengthened, he ceased to feel love and God’s Presence in his life. He did not want to see in himself those problems and vices that were intensifying in him! And so, he began to struggle, with all his strength, to prove to himself and others that everything around him was wrong! And now, he is disappointed with everything in life and tries to find for himself at least some excuses and consolations. That’s why he condemns everyone and tries to forget himself in momentary pleasures! Unhappy, offended by the whole world, he now preaches that there is no sense to work on the transformation of the soul!

“But also appreciate how much good the meeting with this person and his speeches have brought

**you! Due to it, you have started thinking about many very important things!**

**“In the same way, everything that comes into your lives, according to the Will of God, can be used for your progress, purification, and for the development of your knowledge of this entire vast world and of the other souls developing in it!”**

**\* \* \***

**The young men returned to the house of their Master in a joyful mood after the conversation with His friend.**

**One of them said:**

**“Look: God has confirmed the rightness of our choice!**

**“And our Master — He foresaw all this! Do you remember, what He told us? He already knew in advance how useful this journey would be for us! Do you remember how He said that those, who have attained Enlightenment, do not necessarily have to demonstrate their Divine Abilities to other people? And the older disciples of our Master more than once mysteriously smiled when they talked about His skills! Now I understand that He does not demonstrate His Divine Abilities just to attract disciples and bring up faith in them! He teaches us all — the love for God and the ability to perceive the Divine Guidance. He teaches us to think on our own, and not blindly believe Him or anyone else.”**

**“Yes, how wonderful it is! And this friend of His, whom we were visiting, also learns from our Master, although he does not live with Him! If such a person, who is already so wise, looks for advice and instruc-**

tions from God through the books of our Master, then how lucky we are that we are close to Him and can learn from Him every day!

## On the Value of Time

A year had passed since the young men started living in the Master's house.

A typical day there was carried out as follows:

They got up at dawn. After hygienic procedures and a light breakfast, they then spent time on spiritual work. Sometimes this work included lessons from the Master or from one of the older disciples. For the remainder of the morning, the disciples would then practice on their own, repeating the tasks which had previously been received from the Master.

In the afternoon, they usually worked in the garden, or read and rewrote books.

Some of the disciples, who had come to the Master from other countries, would translate the texts into their native languages.

Our young men, at first, liked this life in the Master's house very much. They were filled with rapture from the first touches of Divine Love, Which they could sense from the simple initial exercises for opening the spiritual hearts.

... In the beginning, they followed everything with inspiration! But then... they started to become lazy.

After all, people quickly get used to good things... And sometimes it happens that the good

things in life... become ordinary — and then people stop appreciating them.

When all the other disciples went to their rooms to perform daily meditations, our young men sometimes preferred to sleep. And no one scolded them for it or checked up on how they were performing the exercises!

And sometimes, one of them would boast about imaginary achievements in meditations, in order to show the others how successful he is!...

When everyone worked in the garden or in the kitchen, it sometimes happened that this work did not seem “spiritual enough” to them. And so, they often only pretended that they tried but got tired, and, if possible, they avoided this work. To them, such “dirty work” was not needed for “spiritual ascetics”!...

They took it *for granted* that they had nutritious food and shelter. And, they forgot about gratitude...

The Master watched them sadly, but did not hurry to admonish them. After all, he understood that the good that is done under duress is unlikely to benefit the soul!

The Master sometimes washed the dishes himself after a common meal or undertook to feed and dig the vegetable beds when the young men pretended to be very busy with more important matters...

The Master was waiting for the right moment to explain how sad is the fate of those who stopped in their spiritual development due to laziness and narcissism and of those who ceased to make efforts to transform themselves into souls that shine with love.

And, after all, if a person does not perform the normal good tasks of everyday life or performs them

with unwillingness and disgust, then what spiritual work is there to be talked about?

The young men were sometimes embarrassed by the Master's disapproving glances, but did not rush to look *inside themselves* for the cause of His discontent.

Boredom began to appear in their lives from the satiety with their well-being and from the extinction of their love...

\* \* \*

On a certain day, when the young men were especially lazy, an old man came to the Master's house.

He walked hunched over, heavily moving his legs, as if the heavy burden of his many years and of life's problems and disappointments, weighed him down to the ground.

This man had not achieved much in life and, what he managed to find, became just a load of new worries, which did not bring him happiness.

Looking at this man, one of the Master's disciples said to the young men:

"Yes, usually only when one's life is almost over, do many people start to think about the fact that they did not live it the way that they should have. But, by then, it's already too late... Today, this old man has come to our Master for advice and help, but what can one do when death is already 'knocking at the door'? Try to see how sad this is — and rejoice that you still have strength and time!"

... And the Master spoke with this old man for a long time, and when the guest left after the conversa-

tion, his eyes were shining with hope. Even his gait became easier, and he straightened up, as if he had managed to lose that load, which had been bending him down to the ground — to that same ground in which his body was soon to rest...

“Tell us, what did You tell that old man?” — the disciples asked the Master, being surprised by the change that happened in the visitor.

The Master invited everyone who was interested in this conversation to discuss this topic:

“Despondency is often inherent in old age. In old age, a person cannot console oneself with hopes for the future, because this ‘future’ has already come close, and it has already been predetermined by the way this person has led his or her life. And people usually do not know what awaits them after the death of their bodies; and this frightens them.

“In old age, a person can no longer console oneself with dreams: ‘I will have time to accomplish this later, I will make it, I will reach it!’. And, to make matter worse, usually diseases and bodily infirmities are also present...”

“We thought that such a person could no longer be helped. But You — as if resurrected the youth and hope in him! What did You say to him, Master?”

“The fear of the unknowability of posthumous existence makes many people — young and even old — try to not think about the inevitability of the death of the body. When the death of the body occurs to someone else whom they know, then people try to drive away the thought that death also awaits their own bodies. ‘It will not happen to me soon!’ They try so to console themselves.

“And, having lost all hope for the future, people begin to indulge themselves in regrets about the past, blaming themselves and others for ‘everything being so bad’...

“Sadness and despondency are the best ways to vainly squander even the little time that remains, thereby losing even the last of one’s strength in negative emotions...

“For every person — young or old — the following principle should be relevant: there is no spare time in life, there is no time for idleness, laziness, and meaningless vain cares!

“The death of the body does not always come in late old age. Therefore, every day should be ‘precious’, filled with joy from the spiritual transformation of oneself and from the good deeds that one has done for others.

“Such deeds can be small and simple, at first glance. And they do not always have to be meditations. If a deed that helps people is done with love, then this is already a great blessing for the favorable formation of one’s fate! In such cases, such a person also creates a space of love, peace, joy, and harmony around himself or herself. All surrounding beings feel this, even if they do not understand the reason why they feel good! And all the fruits of the work of such a person carry particles of the energy of love inside of themselves. They can be likened to the fruits of plants, saturated with sunlight!

“There are always *feasible opportunities* to transform oneself-soul.

“That’s what I tried to tell that old man. I also told him that beyond the threshold of the death of the body — a soul does not die; and that righteous inten-

tions and the desire not to harm anyone and to do only good deeds — even in the last days of one's life — change one's posthumous existence and one's fate in the next earthly life.

“We have had many conversations together about the formation of destinies.

“And here, we should understand that the conscious aspiration to God, to Good, and Light — even at the end of one's life — can be very significant, helping a person to gain an understanding of how to build his or her life now!

“You can always start living in the ‘present moment’ and try to use every moment of life productively, regardless of how many of such moments are ahead: whether many or few.

“It is important for each of us: to do the best that we can — right now! We should do this with joy and full dedication, investing love and soul power in the creation of harmony, peace, beauty, purity, kindness, and wisdom!

“This is appropriate in large cases and even in those which appear to be the smallest, at first glance! Even with our emotions — which are the states of us as souls — we create what we give to this world, to all beings around. We create and give away either a space of joy and harmony — or anguish, discontentment with everything, condemnation, and jealousy...

“And it always depends on us!

“And all of this is always known to God!

“Have you ever paid attention to the fact that senility, depression, laziness, lack of will, and other manifestations of extinction can start even before the matter of our bodies grow old?

**“Sometimes, even at a very early age, there is a halt in the development of a soul. After having completed one’s studies at school, having created a family, having gained a certain ‘position in society’, or having imagined oneself as a ‘successful spiritual ascetic’ — people very often cease to develop themselves intensively, they lose purpose in life and live only ‘by inertia’... This is the beginning of old-age.**

**“When the speed of the development of the soul fades away — then the body also grows old before its due time.**

**“There are also opposite examples, in which the intensity of spiritual life does not stop even when the time of death of the body has come. There were scientists and physicians who, even as their bodies were dying, monitored what was happening, and tried to give this experience to other people.**

**“It is worthy before God: to share one’s wisdom and love with others! If life is lived this way, then old age and the death of the body do not make one afraid!**

**“It makes sense to accumulate precisely these treasures of the soul that cannot be destroyed by death! Because *then*, a human soul becomes composed of these qualities — Love, Wisdom, Purity, and Power!”**

**... That evening, the young men came to the Master and with repentance told of everything that they had understood about their vices that day.**

**“Forgive us!**

**“It seems that we quickly got used to the good things here and stopped appreciating what we get from You!**

**“How easily we forgot about the joy of labor for the sake of others!**

**“How inconspicuously the usual execution of exercises was deprived of emotions of love for God!**

**“How imperceptibly to ourselves, we began to perform meditations only in order... to be proud of our skills!**

**“We will try to improve!”**

**“Yes, it’s good that you understood this yourselves, without waiting for My reproaches or the ‘blows of fate’, with which God reminds us of the value of incarnate life and of the importance of heart love, without which even the most ‘prosperous life’ is empty and has not much meaning... For, in such cases, even the most correct techniques of meditation are not useful, but only nurture egocentrism and self-conceit!”**

## **The Sculptor**

**One day, a famous sculptor, whose works were admired by many, came to visit the Master.**

**He told the Master:**

**“You probably do not remember me. We met only once, when I was still a teenager. But your words have changed my entire life. And I remember that conversation of ours verbatim.**

**“I consider myself to be your pupil, and I dream of learning from you in the future. It was you who taught me the basics of mastery in my work, even though I later learned from many sculptors.**

**“And the sculptor showed the Master a fragment of a vessel — a small shard:**

**‘I’ve kept this thing ever since!’**

**“But I’ve never taught anyone how to sculpt,” — the Master said with a kind smile.**

**... Then the sculptor told the Master and His interested disciples, who had gathered around, a story from his life:**

**“Since childhood, I’ve longed for God. During the great religious holidays in the region where I lived, people would bring their gifts to the temples. We lived very poorly, but I, a child, wanted to do something for God too!**

**“And so, I brought a cup to the temple, which I had made out of clay by myself. This creation of mine was very imperfect. But I tried so hard! I tried to put all my love for God into my work! I wanted nothing more than for my gift to also be pleasant to Him!...**

**“Back then, I still did not understand that God does not need material gifts! And I dreamed that my cup would be accepted by the minister of the temple.**

**“But that minister refused to accept my gift. Moreover, he ridiculed me, saying:**

**‘Do not insult the temple and God with your pathetic offering! Do you really think that this worthless creation might be interesting to anyone? You insulted God and us, the clergymen, with such a ‘gift’! Do you really think that God could like this?’**

**“And with these words, he threw the cup onto the floor, shattering it into pieces, and then he angrily began to trample them with his feet.**

**‘Get that garbage out of here!’ — he shouted at me.**

“... I collected the fragments and walked away...

“It felt like he had trampled all my love, and had trampled me as a soul, destroying all the best in me...

“I walked with my head down and could not hold back my tears...

“All the people in the square in front of the temple were busy having fun... But it seemed to me that I was banished, punished, and forever deprived of hope... As if the tender sprout of everything good in me was rudely and cruelly broken...

“Suddenly you appeared nearby, Master. You told me then:

“Don’t be sad! Of all the gifts that were brought to the temple today, your cup was most liked by the Divine Teacher, to Whom this temple is dedicated! And He poured Light into it — and drank from it. And He also offered Those, Who know the essence of truly Holy Gifts, to drink from it too.”

“How do you know this?” — I asked.

“You answered:

‘I was there, and I saw it. And I also drank from your cup.’

“How is this possible? That cup was broken into small pieces?!”

“In the non-material worlds, where the Light and Compassion reign supreme, it is impossible to destroy that which has been created with love. Even imperfect verses and prayer songs can be heard there, if they are uttered with a pure heart filled with reverence and love.

“For God, what is most important, is the state of the soul in which the gift is created. After all, there

are no material objects in that world! Only non-material images can be manifested there in the Light — on the approaches to the *Depths*, in which there is no division into names and forms.

“But, if someone wants other embodied people to be happy from using the beauty of human creations, then it makes sense to master the corresponding direction of art. The more perfect is what was done, the more joy and benefit it will bring to people!

“God is the Supreme Perfect Consciousness. He consists of a Multitude of Souls, Who have reached the corresponding level of Perfection — and therefore have merged in the Oneness with Him.

“And the entire Creation exists just to give people and other beings the opportunity to improve themselves and to learn the Perfection.”

“... Oh, how important it was for me to hear this! It was like a life-giving balm that healed a wounded soul!

“We walked around the market for a long time, looking at the beautiful qualities in the creations of the artisans and talking about beauty and harmony in objects and in souls.

“You told me then that my cup was beautiful precisely because of the love with which I did it, but that its appearance was far from perfect.

“However, there is an opportunity to also make the material aspect beautiful. It must be done so that harmony and grace delight the eyes and so that the love, with which the thing has been made, nourishes souls.

“We then approached the market square, and you bought some delicious pies.

**“Oh! I will remember all of this forever: Your wisdom, Your kindness, and even the taste of those pies...**

**“You then said:**

**‘The woman, who baked this food, did it with love. She used both good flour and fine apples for the filling, and her ability to bake on a fire was equally good. It tasted wonderful! And in this food, there is good for both the body and the soul. After all, the particles of the love energy of that woman also filled us, when we ate her products.**

**‘But her love alone would not have been enough for us if, for example, the apples were not tasty, or if the flour was rancid, or if the pies were raw or burnt. Right?**

**‘So, even in the seemingly simple ability of cooking food, there is room for perfecting this art. Similarly, in any work that brings good to others, you can strive to achieve more and more excellent results. In this case, the creator of each work should consider it in a multifaceted way, looking at it from different angles.**

**‘By serving other people with one’s own work, helping them in everything good, one perfects oneself — as a soul.**

**‘Then, this perfection can be continued with the help of special meditative techniques, but you will find out about this later.**

**‘Yes, it’s good when people are surrounded by beautiful things, when they have nutritious food, and when clothes and homes are clean and beautiful!**

**‘But, most important, are the beauty and perfection of souls! It is our main work for God, which we can do every single day of our lives!**

‘Each of our actions can bring harmony, beauty, kindness, love, and peace to the world! They can be done with both words and deeds, and even with kind thoughts and emotions. Through this, souls become more perfect and help others, who live around, to also improve.

‘Look how beautiful these flowers, birds, grasses, and trees are! These are perfect creations of God!

‘But... here is a trunk of a living tree that was mutilated by an axe... And here is a bouquet of flowers that was thrown to the ground... These flowers died before their time — instead of producing seeds and giving life to other beings as beautiful as they are...

‘... It makes sense to improve ourselves in everything good, in all that we do, and in everything that we give to the world, including to all the kind beings around us.

‘Through this, we ourselves — as souls — also become more and more perfect — thereby approaching the Perfection of our Creator!

‘Any work that is done for the good of people and other kind creatures can help both ourselves and others in the development of the beauty and perfection of the soul!

‘Namely, this is the main task for which we all are on the Earth!

‘After life here, in the material world, — we pass on to a life without our bodies, which are left behind. There, as if being naked — before God — of all outer covers, we give a summary of who we were during the time of our schooling in this *school* of life here!’

“... Ever since that day, I have striven to fulfill what I heard from You, — in my life. This has allowed me to work with great inspiration! I have also tried to teach my young students the same.

“But I remembered that You did not tell me everything else that time. So, now I again ask You to teach me how to approach the Divine Perfection!”

“Well, I’ll be happy to help you to take the next steps on your Path!” — the Master answered joyfully.

## On Disputes

The two young men, trained by the Master, at first usually had a similar opinion about everything that they heard from Him and read.

But gradually, as their outlooks expanded in the process of acquiring new knowledge and developing independence in thinking, they sometimes began to disagree with others in their opinions and assessments of events or written material.

And it began to happen that their disagreements in opinions began to grow into heated debates, which sometimes ended in resentments. Usually, the friends would make peace with each other not long after, but such situations were repeated again and again... Once, they turned to the Master with a request that He judge which of them was right in the next heated debate.

The Master answered them in an unexpected way:

**“Did you know that excessively insisting on your opinion in a conversation is a manifestation of the vice of violence?”**

**“Committing violence on the thoughts of another person, by forcing others to think in the same way as oneself, is one of the very negative manifestations of egocentrism!**

**“Have you ever thought about this?”**

**The young men were silent in embarrassment. They had never before evaluated their verbal arguments from this perspective.**

**The Master continued:**

**“We should only express a point of view that is different from our interlocutor’s, when we are in a state of love and respect for that person. And we should also understand that our interlocutor *has the right* to disagree with our opinion.**

**“If we truly want to be like-minded in the *main* principles that unite us, it is very important to learn not to invest the power of negative emotions in such insignificant disputes.**

**“We should insist on our correctness only in exceptional cases! But you have acquired the habit of arguing on insignificant problems and topics.**

**“Only in those cases where the mistakes of your friend can seriously harm himself or other people, is it necessary to show firmness in the statement of your position. This confidence in the correctness of such words and actions will be confirmed by the approval of God, which you will learn to feel.**

**“If you acquire the habit of arguing over trifles, then, when it comes to really important matters, your opinion will not be heard or taken into account. The**

habit of always objecting to one's interlocutor is very bad!

"The reluctance to listen to another's point of view, as well as an attitude of thinking of one's opponent as an enemy or a fool, for thinking differently than oneself, shows the extreme degree of one's egocentrism!

"Develop a habit of self-observation and self-control!

"Sometimes the desire to object to one's interlocutor is manifested not in words, but in an accumulating mental and emotional objection. This accumulation of negativity inevitably leads to future situations of conflict. Take note of your own similar shortcomings!"

"But what should I do if I really do not agree with him?" — one of the young men asked.

"God gave people free will! This includes the freedom to think and evaluate what is happening — in accordance with one's own level of development. Everyone possesses this freedom of will, and it should be respected!

"The only time that it makes sense to stop or correct a friend, is when you believe that the thoughts of your interlocutor could be harmful and dangerous to others. But all this should be done while feeling emotions of peace, love, and respect!

"If you cannot respect and love those people, with whom there are protracted conflicts, — then it makes sense to stop communicating with such people. And, even in this case, there should be no contempt, disgust, or hatred. In such cases, people simply separate and then get in their lives new les-

sons from God — according to what new paths they choose to take.

“Violence in the field of thinking is very interesting and should be deeply understood and studied.

“It is also important to develop in oneself such skills as: the ability to admit one’s own error, the ability to ‘surrender’, to permit the ‘clever self’ to be defeated, and to recognize oneself as being wrong. We must also learn to look at the problem or situation through the eyes of the interlocutor, in order to understand how he or she thinks. It is also important to be able to calmly and reasonably express your opinion. This is what you need to learn during such discussions. All of this develops the ability to think independently and to understand others in a non-superficial way.

“To be able to do this is useful not only for zealots who have risen on the spiritual path; this is also important for a harmonious life together in families or in other small or large communities of people.

“And, even in the relationships between states, this would be very useful and could be named as a wise policy. It is a pity, however, that politicians and diplomats usually use the ability of understanding other’s trains of thought and of recognizing the far-reaching motives of their interlocutors — only to deceive opponents and to assert their ‘victorious superiority’ over... their allies.

“Very often, bloody wars between peoples are due to the ambitions and disputes of politicians who do not want to see the situation beyond the point of view of one or several persons. They do not take into account the possible disastrous consequences for the many remaining people. Such politicians also do

not think about the great gravity of the karmic consequences that they bring into their own fates in their present and future incarnations.

“We must understand that if some people are large consciousnesses and have great willpower, then their thinking and convictions significantly influence small souls. Such leaders easily begin to control the thinking of crowds, using their brute strength to subordinate and paralyze the weak thinking and critical evaluation skills of other people.

“It’s sad to see when such leaders use their power to subordinate the thinking of other people — for their own material gain or fame...

“The same situation can be observed in relation to some religious leaders.

“That is why on the spiritual Path it is so important to learn to monitor and suppress one’s desire to subordinate the thinking of other people, even in insignificant manifestations.”

“Why, Master, did You not immediately forbid us to argue with each other?”

“One should develop in oneself the ability to think, to understand others, and to have one’s own point of view. And one should not blindly obey the opinion of others, even of those who have influence and authority. I’m not happy if my students just blindly follow everything that I say or everything that they read in my books. I don’t want them to feel forced to do things that they don’t agree with, out of fear of being among those of whom I am not satisfied.

“Now I hope that you have seen the situation from multiple points of view. And I hope that you will not be compelled by obedience to act faithfully, but that you will be able to develop in yourselves the

qualities of love, care, and wisdom while mastering the abilities to think, speak, and listen independently.”

## On the Ups and Downs

One disciple was very sad because of the fact that recently he wasn't advancing in meditations. He himself could not understand why it was happening. Some of the other students advised him to turn to the Master for help and advice.

The Master invited all those who wished to listen to join their conversation.

He said:

“Why are you so upset? Tell us — and then we'll try to see the reasons for your difficulties. And this conversation will be useful for others as well.”

“Lately, I haven't been able to any of things that used to be very easy for me to do! Until recently, all the meditations were so wonderful! But now, everything that I do is so weak and bad... Have I really lost the ability to feel God forever? And even in my body, there are now signs of diseases! But we had been cleaning the energies of our bodies for so many years! How can this be? Why is this happening to me?”

... The Master looked affectionately at the disciple and replied:

“Yes, this often happens in our lives... And, it is even a fact of life: that successes and failures alternate...”

“To begin with, I will tell you a story:

**“One day, a wrestler, whose nickname was *In-vincible*, turned to me for help. For many years, he performed in a lot of competitions, and no one could defeat him. But, one day, at a very significant tournament, he was defeated by a young contender. And, to make matters worse, his body had received some injuries, and so he could not immediately prove to everyone in the upcoming battle that he was the best...**

**“He was in complete despair because he considered the situation to be a terrible shame for himself... In the past, everyone glorified and admired him! But now, suddenly, everyone turned away from him and began to extol the new champion...**

**“And so, he came to me for advice, because he did not know how to survive this event and how to live on.**

**“Let us consider why this had happened to him.**

**“When a person feels oneself to be the best and is surrounded by the enthusiasm and applause of the public — then it becomes very easy for such a person to be prone to self-admiration!**

**“Even if worldly glory and success are really deserved, it happens that such people lose the understanding that behind all phenomena in the world of matter is the Supreme Divine Power.**

**“But most people, who live in the ordinary worldly life, do not even think that all these honors and glories can easily be replaced by oblivion, or the ‘disgrace of failures’, which painfully breaks the inflated self-esteem...**

**“Very often, it is precisely for this reason that failures happen in people’s fates: so that love, kind-**

ness, humility, the strength for overcoming difficulties, and the wisdom for understanding our mistakes can increase in souls.

“Failures and all the hardships of life, which are called by people as *troubles*, can be used to help souls...

“The wrestler, who came to me for advice, managed to understand that the time had now come for him to make some changes and to turn the soul’s gaze towards spiritual accomplishments, instead of battling in the arena of worldly battles...”

... The disciple asked:

“But all my aspirations and wishes have been directed to God! Why do I have the same fate? I feel like a loser, a worthless and incapable student!... Why is this? How can I overcome all these difficulties?”

“If a person has embarked on the spiritual Path — this does not mean that, from now on, God will save him or her from all difficulties and troubles in life.

“Let’s understand that a disciple on the spiritual Path must learn to treat his or her own achievements and failures — in a different way. It is important to understand that such stages in the lives of spiritual hermits are normal! No one can become perfect at once, at the very moment that one desires this!

“In the life of every spiritual seeker, there are necessary stages when, after the ups and successes, a difficult segment of the Path comes. This is a necessary test of the strength achieved. It is also time for a new accumulation of forces in order to get the momentum needed to make it to new heights.

**“We must also be vigilant about our own mistakes, which may become the reasons for our declines. For example, there may have been some negative emotions that were admitted and not noticed, such as: longing, anxiety, resentment, or anger. Or, when one was still at the peak of success, one may have become filled with self-content and self-admiration, started boasting, or had a contemptuous-patronizing attitude towards others.**

**“You probably think that you already have defeated all this negativity in yourself. But, what has already been cleansed from the soul, is only the most superficial layers of vices.**

**“Yes, you will never reply with an angry tirade against another person, even if he or she offends you. Yes, you will not panic if you are told that you have lost some material wealth. Yes, you will not brag to your friends about your accomplishments — in order to be praised...**

**“But there could be a connivance of false emotions for only a very short time or in weakly expressed forms.**

**“For example, your feelings of sadness because of failures and despair from your own ‘worthlessness’ are precisely the vicious egocentric emotions!**

**“And egocentric emotional states make it even more complicated to get out of this difficult stage of your life.**

**“You should pay attention to all this right now, in order to eliminate those things in yourself, which have become noticeable against the background of this decline!**

**“It must also be understood that when this happens, pathogenic energies can then seize the weakened sites in the body — and then there is a deterioration in health, due to which it is even more difficult to maintain the previous achievements...”**

**“In such cases, you need to pay attention to those areas in the body that are most vulnerable. In this way, God shows us what we have not yet noticed and solved in ourselves.**

**“The easiest way to heal and restore in such cases is to start from the very beginning of the Path and repeat everything that has already been done.**

**“If you have committed an ethical error, then you need to repent and cleanse the energies in the body and in the ‘cocoon’, using all the methods that you know.**

**“And, by again and again returning ourselves — as souls — to a state of peace and love, we learn to live in unity with God, and strengthen ourselves in this state!**

**“Remember that, after taking one mountain pass, you, the traveler, may need to go down — and then again climb up another pass. And the path there may be even steeper and more difficult.**

**“And also, it is sometimes necessary to stop for a while, in order to gain strength to overcome the new height.”**

**[To be continued...]**