

Legend of Rada and Alexey

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This legend is about the aspiration of the soul to God and about what hinders and what helps on the spiritual Path.

The heroes of this story are not fictional. Rather here is described the true story of the lives of the spiritual Devotees — Rada and Alexey, Who have attained the Divinity. The story of Their spiritual growth and Their Service to God was told by Them.

The written methods of spiritual work, representing the tradition of *hesychasm*, can be successfully used in our time.

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Part One

Chapter One: **The Exile**

The young Orthodox priest Alexey rode through a snowstorm in a sleigh towards the new place of his ministry, shielding himself from the wind and frost using a canvas which was not too suitable for this and which was once used for covering hay. Some of that hay, left in the sleigh, was very helpful, protecting Alexey from the fierce cold.

A man who had agreed to take Alexey to the village where he was to live and serve from now on, from time to time threw scattered curses against the weather and heated himself with moonshine.

The small village at the foothills of the Urals, where Alexey was being sent, felt like a place of exile to him.

... Until recently, he had been living in Moscow, which was in the very center of the events taking place in the country. There, he had been studying in the Spassky Monastery, and then in the Greco-Latin Academy of Semyon Polotsky, which was recently created on the principles of European universities. And later — he was ordained in the presence of priests who were close to the royal court... All of this promised a bright future...

... But now — everything had collapsed!

At first, his guardian educator died — an honest and wise man who was in charge of all the property affairs of Alexey. Before this, Alexey — an orphan from a noble and rich family — was free from all the fuss of managing estates.

Alexey directed all his aspirations only to spiritual things. He chose for himself the way of monastic service to God — because from childhood he had dreams and intentions only about this.

And, after the death of his guardian, without thinking twice, Alexey handed over all his property and money to the church and then took monastic vows. After all, “it is difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven”¹. And, very soon after that — everything happened: disgrace, exile...

It was painful for Alexey to remember this... He realized that the priests, who ordered the removal of his presence from Moscow, had really only cared about getting both his money, which was a considerable sum, and his lands... Each of them hastened to appropriate as much of these earthly goods as possible...

And, in addition, they disliked this young and passionate preacher, who sought to transform the spiritual life of the country...

And now, everything has collapsed: all his dreams of transforming the church life, and all his thoughts of doing good deeds to the glory of God at large, were now destroyed...

¹ Matt 19:23.

... Now he has become one of those who will never be able to change anything in the life of the church and of the country as a whole...

... And it seemed as if the bitter thoughts about his sad fate — like a gray fog — whirled in Alexey's head:

“Now I'm nobody... I'm like a snowflake in this blizzard... And what does it matter if it melts now — or freezes in a snowdrift only to await its end in spring?...”

“Maybe I should go live in some county town? To start another life? And no one will ever know: where did I disappear, or of what became me?”

“... But why? There is no reason for this!... The soul did not seek such things! After all, by deep aspiration, I chose the monastic path!”

“Or, perhaps, God needs my bitter fate for some reason?”

“How many questions! And no answers!...”

From time to time Alexey mentally returned to the last weeks of his metropolitan life, remembering the fiery speeches he spoke before many of his friends and mentors. It seemed to him that his words ignited other people's love for God and the desire to transform the spiritual life across the country. Alexey was sure that he knew how it could and should be done! He had that thought that if only those, who rule the life of the church, could hear his speeches, they would then tell the king about this — and everything would change...

And, eventually, they did hear...

... He recalled the last conversation with the one who announced to him his expulsion from Moscow. He remembered the mocking look on the speak-

er's face, and the arrogant tone of one who considered himself a "winner" in this life, always knowing on which side to stand in the intrigues of the courtiers — for him both to self-interestedly survive and advance...

"Now you'll go," — he said, — "to get liberation from your heretical thoughts and repent! The elder Nicholas also tried to reform everyone, he wanted 'to expel traders from the temples'... But nothing happened! He now realizes his folly! Not even a single word in a year is heard from him now..."

"But what's wrong with non-covetousness, isn't that what Jesus commanded?"

"So? It's not like we worry about our own wealth! But about the richness of the church! And you — blame us! And it's — a sin!"

... Alexey really did find himself having condemning thoughts, because he often saw the rich decor of the dwelling of the speaker, and saw him eating food during fasts in great abundance: "with the blessing to do this and in order to correct the body's weakness". Only, what kind of infirmity is it? His abdomen is round, and his cheeks are glossy with fat...

"Am I condemning others? Was I offended?"

... "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who offend you and persecute you!"²

Alexey tried to go into prayer.

The wind died down, the snowfall was over, everything began to sparkle in the light of the sun that had struggled out from behind the clouds.

² Matt 5:44-45.

The place became filled with the snowy beauty and silence!

... The driver stopped the sleigh:

“There’s no more road, walk on foot!”

“How can there be no more road?”

“No, there isn’t one! In the summer, there is a path here, but now there isn’t one — so go!”

“But, where is the village?”

“And there is no village! All the people have long been relocated to the iron-ore plant. There are only a few houses left. Those, who are unfit for work in the mines and smelting furnaces, are the only ones who live out their days here.”

... The driver waved his hand towards the crooked and blackened huts that were visible in the distance.

Then he turned to the other side and pointed out the direction in which Alexey was to go:

“Do you see the cross over the treetops? Go to it! There is a skete³ at that place. And the elder Nicholas lives there.”

... Alexey took the bag with his modest belongings, put it on his back and walked in the direction of that cross.

³ In general, the skete is called the living place of the monk(s), distant from the large settlements of people. Such living places were common in the Orthodox tradition.

Chapter Two: **Elder Nicholas**

Alexey walked knee-deep and, at times, waist-deep in the snow. He barely reached the hermitage. It was already dark.

He knocked on the door of a small hut where the light of a candle could be seen in a tiny window:

“Come in! It’s open!”

... Alexey entered, crossed himself before the only icon in the front corner and bowed.

... He knew only little about the elder Nicholas; namely, that he was from the tradition of the Non-Money-Grubbers, and that for his public utterances, which called for the ethical purity of the servants of the church and for simplicity in life and decor, — he was exiled here many years ago.

Then the elder took a vow of silence for ten years — and kept it.

Through that — the attitude towards him changed, and people began to speak very much about his holiness.

Alexey was forcibly sent to him in order to help the elder around the house. And — for training Alexey to live in silence.

... Alexey looked around. In the dim light of the candle, the interior looked small and almost empty. A table, a chair, a wide bench... There was not even a bed.

He looked with attention at the elder Nicholas — and suddenly... calmed down! So much kindness, affection, and peace were in the eyes of the elder! Alexey was embraced and filled with this gentle calm!

And the despair due to the sorrow of his present fate, which squeezed him like a vise and was weighing him to the ground — suddenly let Alexey go.

... The elder Nicholas was tall. It was evident that in the past his body was very powerful. But the years did not break the soul or bend his back!

A gray beard framed his face, which was filled with kindness. Each wrinkle on his face was like a shining ray of love.

Silence and kindness enlivened the space around his body.

... In the evening, they had a talk:

“And why did they send you here, sonny?”

“For freethinking...”

“Understood.”

“Have you lived here alone for a long time?”

“For a long time... — yes. But I’m not the only one here! I live with God!”

* * *

In this way, a new era began in Alexey’s life.

Gradually, Alexey told the elder Nicholas everything about himself: about how he grew up and was raised, how he chose the spiritual Path as the only right way for him.

Since childhood, Alexey had not only a zeal for prayers, but he aspired to cognition of God. He read a lot, and had learned Latin and Greek. And in these languages, he read the spiritual books in their original form.

However, even those books only encouraged his further search: they did not give answers to his questions, of which he had more and more...

He told his dreams about striving to reach those states of the soul that the closest disciples of Jesus had found: to hear the Voice of God, to see God's Light, to fully understand the Will of God!

Alexey said that he was reproached for his pride and for his witty remarks, which were "from the devil"! They offered him to repent and live "like others".

Alexey then repented a lot, carefully examining himself-soul.

But he could not live without seeking Truth, and he did not want and could not live "like others".

Alexey spoke a lot about his understanding of Christian life. He, at first, diligently studied the writings of the first Christian communities. And how different was the life of the first Christians in those communities — from that which now is led by people who call themselves Christians!

He was trying to understand: why is everything so hard and gloomy in the organization of the present spiritual life in the Russian state?! And, is it possible to change something? And, how to change it?

Elder Nicholas listened to him in silence, allowing Alexey to let out everything that had ripened in him...

Alexey also spoke about what caused him to be here: that his suggestions on transforming life in the church resulted in him being sent away from Moscow — so as not to disturb people's minds with

his ideas, and so as not to start new troubles in the church life!

... He told all of this to the elder Nicholas. He also revealed his bitter thoughts and torments about his present ignorance on how and why to live further?

* * *

Elder Nicholas spoke rarely. They ate in silence and spent time in prayers and in simple usual matters, which were necessary for life.

Alexey did his best to devote as much time as possible to prayers. But there was not for him that quiet joy, with which the elder Nicholas was always replete.

And little by little, he began to ask questions about faith, about prayers, and about understanding monastic life.

Every one of such conversations with the elder Nicholas was an invaluable form of help which opened for Alexey a new vision of his own life before God.

And the elder Nicholas not only consoled Alexey, but could also shame him:

“Strong pride, sonny, is still in you! Many monks consider monastic seclusion in a hermitage — as a great happiness! And you — call it an exile! Spiritual seekers search for it! God sent such a gift into your fate! And you — are grumbling!”

“But it’s not about myself...”

“If it were not for yourself, you would not be grumbling at fate!

“If you live here now, is God less near to you here than He was in Moscow?

“You yourself — namely, voluntarily — accepted monasticism! And such a hermitage — you must esteem with joy! Through that — many prophets and hermits had found the holiness!

“You are not thankful for God’s Help and His Care about you! You do not see them!

“Understand this, sonny:

“Humility — heals the soul! Humility — soothes thoughts!

“While in the mind, chaos reigns, and thoughts seem to struggle among themselves for capturing your emotions and desires — hesychia, inner silence, — is like an unattainable shore!

“But into the calm of the spiritual heart, onto the other side of vanity and prideful thoughts — only the path of humility and the heart love leads!

“Humility — cleans the soul, fasting — heals the body!

“And efforts in affairs — both earthly and spiritual — strengthen the will of man!

“Very much depends on personal aspiration: all that, which happens to man, will either go to the benefit of the soul — or to the detriment of it!

“Here — look: it happens that people suffer from hunger, they even get sick. But when one strictly observes a fast due to one’s own free will and for God, — something else happens: purification and health for both the body and the soul!

“And despondency — worse than any disease — destroys a person’s life, like rust, it eats away the soul!

“Soon the world’s fuss will leave you — and your heart will be filled with warmth! But you, for this, must leave the vanity of thoughts!”

“But how?”

“On God, not on your own problems and sorrows, you must direct your thoughts!

“That is the first small step!

“If thoughts are directed to God, then from God help comes!

“Through that — cleansing of the mind occurs!

“Whenever you start thinking about your own sorrows or about the problems of the world — you must reject them and learn to think about God!

“And then — you will learn how to fill the soul with love and gratitude to God for everything!

“The ability to voluntarily subordinate yourself to the Will of God — this is the freedom that is obtained in the monastic life!

“There are deeds which are done for the body. And there are the labors of the soul.

“And these labors are not idle, they are not vain fervent thoughts about something sublime!

“We live before God!

“Before Him — in every moment — everything that happens in us is opened!

“And it is possible to live rightly — under any external conditions! Our sins result not because of what is happening around us, but namely from our own vices that are inside!

“For example, it is quite possible to not allow, in yourself, sinful thoughts, empty talk, melancholy, and idleness!

“Prayers do not help in this — when only the words are said over and over again. A prayer should

be a living one! And it comes to life — in the spiritual heart, right here!”

... Elder Nicholas touched Alexey’s chest with his hand — so that for a brief time Alexey’s breath was caught. And Alexey saw with his inner gaze in his chest — light and space! But he could not maintain this state...

The elder continued:

“It may be that if you only pronounce the name *Jesus* in the silence of the spiritual heart — it will be more than all prayers!

“Learn to pray — in your heart! As if your mouth is located in the chest! And — as if a candle in the spiritual heart is lit! Let every word sound from the heart! Then, the warmth in the heart will appear soon, the grace of God will begin to be felt, and the presence of Him will become visible!”

Chapter Three: **A Soul Is Healed In Humility**

Time passed, and the ordinary life of Alexey did not seem to have anything meaningful... Day after day passed...

Alexey got used to it, but he still craved for more in the feat of monastic life.

Once, he asked the elder:

“Why do we not see Jesus? Why cannot we hear His words?”

“We apparently do not deserve it yet... When it’s necessary, the Lord says that He will be heard by the deaf too!

“Jesus said: ‘if two gather in My Name, then I am among them’. You do not believe Jesus? Do you not believe that He is now with us here? And — that He hears every word?”

“I believe, but...”

“Your faith is weak so far!... You must work on yourself-soul! And the result — belongs to God!”

“What is needed for hands to not fall and continue the efforts?”

“Faith, hope, love!

“It is important to understand that it is not a rank in the hierarchy of the church that we must try to get... But rather — from God — we must strive to get the rank of purity and become closer to Him!

“And when that time will come — that depends on His Grace!”

“What do you think: why has God placed us here?”

“I don’t know why... But if we obey the Will of the Lord, then maybe we’ll find out about it!”

“But, how to know it, if we do not hear the Voice of God? And how to pray — to receive an answer?”

“God understands everything, and He hears and sees! Don’t be afraid to tell Him! You, by our usual words, can tell Him about your love for Him!

“Prayers that we now repeat were once said by someone for the first time — from the heart... And then those prayers were written down and are now repeated...”

“The main thing is that words should come from the heart!

“Pray for all people!...”

“But, do these prayers really help them?”

“It was not for nothing you were exiled here!... You surely would embarrass all minds with your questions! Faith in you is not enough, there are many doubts!...”

“Let’s go watering the garden, otherwise you will grumble in winter that God did not send us food!”

*** * ***

Alexey was overcome by longing for God. He was now eager — through zealous and persistent prayers — to reach sublime states. Work on the household — he considered as an annoying hindrance.

But he had to work a lot on the farm. All their survival was dependent on their simple work.

Alexey was not used to rural work. He lived from childhood in a rich house, surrounded by servants who performed all the simple economic work. He was not lazy, and he was always ready to work with zeal. But for him, the work was — in studying, in reading books, in prayers, and not digging ground and chopping wood...

And here — he needed to spend so much time and effort on “dirty” work, and could not be in an elevated state to pronounce prayers!

And this was very saddening for Alexey. But, the more he was sad, the more orders elder Nicholas gave him. Even the repair of the temple, which was dilapidated, he started, although people had not entered it at all for a long time...

Alexey did not grumble, tried in everything, obeyed the elder, but he was often subject to discouragement...

Unable to withstand, one day he asked the question:

“How can we approach God, if we dig the earth like peasants, if we, like carpenters, repair the temple?...”

The elder Nicholas answered with a soft smile:

“They say that Jesus also was trained in carpentry...”

After a pause, he added:

“God can be felt not only by preaching from the pulpit the words of God to parishioners. You can feel Him — when digging a garden, if being with Him in your heart!

“You can fulfill any other work in this way as well!

“Understand: self-pity is destructive!... You seem to tie yourself to the sin of despondency! From self-pity — you lose strength, and you cannot feel the joy of God! But those forces could be sent both to love for God, and the righteous deeds of work!

“I went through it, myself, once...”

“Do you want me to tell you how God taught me humility?”

... Alexey happily nodded. They sat down on the bench, which was recently repaired. The elder began to speak — and in his eyes the sparkle of mirth lighted up, which Alexey did not often see in him:

“Monastic obedience can teach a lot!

“It teaches how to humble pride and fulfill the will of another person. It can be done with a help of, for example, an elder — instead of one’s own will.

“The one who has learned this, having obtained subdued pride and subordinated mind, can take God’s Will — in exchange for one’s own will!

“If the elder is holy or, at least, reasonable, then great is the benefit!

“If the mentor is not wise, but only tyrannizes the novice, flaunting his authority, — even in these conditions obedience can teach a lot.”

... Elder Nicholas smiled thinking of his memories:

“There was such a test, given to me from the Lord, through which I began to obtain humility.

“My instructor edified me and gave me assignments that contradicted the common sense! He was the first, to whom I was assigned as a monk to serve his needs.

“At that time, I had just come to the monastery, and everything was new for me. And I did not read the books of the wise much yet...

“And my ‘mentor’, like a man who has lost his mind, sprinkled his spittle in anger at me, often attacked me with shouts, or even beat me if I tried to say a word of disagreement... He made me do completely senseless work...

“At first, I was all burned with outrage... But what to do — I did not know... Not to obey — I was afraid, because I could be exiled for that from the monastery. And such exile seemed to me more terrible than death, because I thought that by this I would be exiled forever also from God.

“And I could not understand why I should try my life to fulfill work that wasn’t necessary for anyone, spending time and effort in it — instead of bringing benefit to the brethren and the monastery, or spending that time in prayer...

“I did that work by overcoming the indignation of the mind and the fatigue of the flesh...

“Now it’s ridiculous for me to recall... But then — it was hard!

“Telling you this story, I do not mean that — in humility — it’s necessary to do stupid jobs! Because, by adhering to the foolish tasks created according to the will of some religious leaders, who order to obey them, — a lot of evil in this world is committed. Being able to distinguish this — is necessary! Otherwise, there are those who ‘have left their will’, fanatics, who can kill ‘for faith’, who burn others in bonfires... And in that they see their spiritual feats...

“You do not have such insanity, but you are lacking humility!

“It took me a long time to understand all of this...

“Later on — a wise elder appeared in the monastery who freed me from that tutor. Then I began to learn to feel heat in the heart, to immerse the mind into the heart. He taught me how to aspire to God by soul and thoughts, how — in our humility — God can change everything that comes into our lives. Because, if God sees humility, not pride, — then the Grace of God is revealed!⁴

“But in monastic life, even when the elder is intelligent, it is not always that the novice gets pleas-

⁴ James 4:6 (note from the corrector).

ure by what happens... When you prevail over reluctance and restraint in work on the household, then the work will give you joy! And prayer will be to help, will fill with strength!”

... For sure! The more Alexey understood the instructions of his elder, the easier everything became. Sometimes — it was as if his heart was singing when he was sawing and planning boards for church repair, or when he was mowing hay, digging the vegetable garden, chopping wood...

And prayers sometimes became different. All the words were similar, but they — like a song of the soul to God — were exalted! And — as if God was near! Truly, not always it turned out, but more often the Presence of invisible God enveloped him with Love and Peace!

Increasingly, the prayer in the heart — as if became alive!

One winter frosty day, the ringing silence filled the space — and Alexey saw the Shining Light!

What a miracle it was!

The silence became filled with the Presence of Living God! This could not be doubted!

But this did not last long. And again, Alexey could not return to this state, no matter how hard he tried.

Alexey told the elder about that.

And the elder Nicholas answered him in reply:

“The Holy Spirit’s wonderful touches — change us, but not immediately and forever...

“For me — it needed ten years of work to experience this. And for you — not even two years have passed. Such stillness and warmth of heart has been cognized!

“And thank the Lord for this Grace!

“A grateful soul easily is in a humble state!

“But for a proud person — humility is difficult to master!

“Thank God for everything! Through that — salvation from pride will come! And humility will be more easily mastered!”

Chapter Four: **Old Believers**

Once in the hermitage, a woman came with three small children. Emaciated, with eyes full of despair and fear, she could hardly stand on her feet in fatigue. She held in her hands one of the babies, tied to her chest with a kerchief. Two other children — a boy and a girl 6-7 years old, themselves clung to her clothes.

Before the elder Nicholas, she fell to her knees, told the children to do the same. They obediently stood next to the mother. The first baby cried feebly, as if already desperate to cry for something. The woman gave this baby to her daughter. The girl habitually took the baby and, rocking, began to say: “Take it easy, calm down, be quiet...”.

The woman raised her eyes full of fear to the elder and said:

“Baptize us into your faith! Save us! Our confessor, father Kalistrat, will burn everyone, and if he does not, the strelets⁵ will burn everyone instead.

⁵ Note from the translator: A streltsy (plural: strelets) is a unit of Russian guardsmen from the 16th to early 18th centuries, armed with firearms.

Save the children: they are innocent!... I am not a learned speaker... We are of the old faith, that of Christ and the Apostles... Forgive me if I say it incorrectly... The servants of anti-Christianities came to burn us — as heretics... And our confessor Kalistrat said, that he himself will burn us with his prayers, so that we would not run anymore, but rather run immediately — to the Lord in Heaven... And I went down, not for myself, but for the children: they are still small!...”

“Where is your home?”

“Up the river... A half day’s journey from here — out of there we ran...”

The elder suddenly rose abruptly. He came up to Alexey. His voice had changed from the inner tension:

“Do you understand what is happening?”

“Yes...”

“So, run! Stop the madmen! Run there with all your strength! Christ is with you!”

... The elder blessed Alexey.

While leaving, Alexey again heard the calm and tender voice of the elder:

“And you should wait, dear, catch your breath, get up from your knees! You have nothing to fear, you will be saved!”

* * *

Alexey ran off-road. Branches lashed his face, his feet stuck to the sand, and later to the marshy soil. The wet underside of his monastic clothes hindered him, clung to the branches, and got tangled in his legs...

Alexey stopped to catch his breath and tied the underside of his cassock with a rope. But his breath could not be recovered. It seemed that everything was burning inside of him and bursting outward with a hoarse wheezing, and his heart was beating somewhere in his larynx...

He ran again with the last of his strength...

He prayed to Jesus — and ran..., ran..., ran...

... And then he saw a huge column of black smoke behind the turn of the river. The singing of prayers came to Alexey with the gusts of wind. Then, all this grew into screams of horror and pain... The glow of the flares rose up to the sky... After that — the screams began to subside...

Alexey ran out of the corner and realized that he was too late...

Far away, on the hill, the log-house was burning down, in which, apparently, everyone was already dead....

The strelets, leaving the village of the Old Believers, set fire to the remaining buildings... Everything was enveloped with smoke...

Alexey fell to his knees and prayed.

Desperation, fatigue, unbearable pain from all this horror!

“Jesus, why do You allow this? How to change all this?”

Alexey climbed the hill.

He stared at the hot ashes for a long time, where the people had been burned alive:

“Who set them on fire? Did their confessor burn alive the women..., the little children...? Or did the strelets-punishers — set them on fire in execution of the decree? What difference does it make —

who?... Some people, believers in Jesus, were doomed to martyrdom by others who were believers in Jesus too... How is this possible?!”

... Alexey returned to the hermitage when it was already dark. He was staggering with fatigue. From the emptiness of the inner, it was as if he has blinded by the soul... Emptiness and darkness inside... How to live? How to pray?

“I did not have time...,” — he whispered it in a barely audible voice, and maybe there were no words at all, but only his lips, cracked in blood, moved.

But the elder Nicholas understood everything.

He did not try to console him. Instead, he said with a caress in his voice:

“Wash yourself! Pour over water from the bucket, put on clean clothes! Pray and go to sleep!”

Alexey listened.

He poured a bucket of water on his body... It was as if the water burned his body with cold. But after that, it seemed to be easier... Then he put on clean clothes...

He could no longer pray, nor sleep...

Alexey again went to the elder Nicholas, who was sitting in the courtyard near a small fire. In the only common cell where they usually slept, the woman and her children, whom the elder had probably already baptized today, were sleeping.

Alexey sat down beside him.

They were silent for a long time.

Alexey looked at the flames and thought about those who died in the bonfire today...

He tried to imagine himself in their place: “Would I be afraid of death for faith — or not? How to

know that — until the hour of death has approached, and I passed this test myself — before God?”

Then, all the same, he could not stand it and started to say:

“I knew before that the Old Believers were baptized forcibly, and that from their settlements they were driven out, and that they could be executed by those who accuse them of heresy... But, like that...”

“You, sonny, do not blame yourself, because you did not have time. There is no fear in the death of bodies... Souls are immortal! It’s scary only for those who doom others to death!

“How many martyrs for the faith in Christ — had accepted death!... Now, we are worshiping their holiness!...

“And whether one crosses oneself with two fingers or three fingers — that’s a worldly concern, I suppose.

“You did not live at that time, when all were crossing themselves with two fingers. And I — did that as well...

“This schism has brought to people terrible misfortunes! And many more misfortunes will be brought upon by the foolishness and cruelty of human beings, in which God’s Will is interpreted in their own way.”

“And God — why does He allow this?”

“I do not know... Maybe God hopes that people, to whom freedom of will is granted, will become wiser... And — that He did not send His Son Jesus to the Earth in vain! Perhaps, the Teaching of Jesus — that people are brothers and sisters to each other, and that they can live in love for the Heavenly Father and their neighbors — was not given to people for no

reason... Perhaps, God is waiting for people, seeing such horrors, to fulfill this Teaching of Jesus...

“Okay, let’s stop talking about this!

“A lot of blood was spilled and much more will be shed!...”

“So, should we do something about this?!”

“Many have been executed among those who tried...

“And I tried, and you, likewise, also tried...

“Strelets — they perform the decree of princess Sophia. They are not just looking for villages of Old Believers in uninhabited forests for no particular reason!...

“You better think about what papers we should write for Efimia with the children, so that they will not be victimized more...”

* * *

The next morning, the elder Nicholas filled Alexey’s shoulder bag with all sorts of provisions. Alexey even watched with some anxiety seeing how much their own bins were being emptied, then he as if “stopped himself”, and turned away the sinful thoughts and rejoiced at the generosity of elder Nicholas, who did not think about himself and his needs at all...

The elder ordered Alexey to accompany Efimia and the children to the village and to help settle them in some empty house.

There were many such houses there, because people were moved from there to work in mines where iron and copper were mined.

While they were going, Efimia said that she was a widow, that their confessor Kalistrat ordered her husband to be flogged for his disobedience. And they whipped him to death...

She told it calmly, mundanely, without tears.

She explained that in their community all lived in fear.

She told afterward that in another community — her own — where she lived until her marriage, this was not the case. All those with faith “escaped”, it was friendly and well between people... And here, at Calistrat, in the community, everyone was afraid. They were afraid of the “antichrist”, “the end of the world”, the persecutors for the faith, and also to be in the disgrace of the confessor...

And when she was left without her husband, who was called “the devil’s servant”, it had become a terrible life for her and her children. She suffered from this fear so much that she decided to run.

And then the strelets came, they read some paper. It turned out that for them, wherever you look, death is inevitable... So, she decided to change her faith and through this save her children.

Then she began to ask about the new faith with caution:

“Will the Lord forgive me for changing the faith of my fathers and grandfathers? Will He have mercy on the children?”

... Alexey reassured her as best he could.

... In the village, he helped her to choose the evacuated house which was strongest...

Then he said to the people, who came out to see what was happening here, that, by God’s Grace, now a widow with children will live here. He said that

they would help each other in a Christian way. Then he began to speak more words about Jesus, about His commandments of kindness... He recalled how he used to utter the fiery speeches...

All listened to him in silence... But suddenly, he had seen their looks... — empty and incomprehensible... And he stopped...

He asked them if they needed anything from him.

He wrote two petitions for those who appealed to him for help...

... Going back, he thought about the people living in this village: beggars, illiterate, and there is no place for God in them!... They want only to survive, to pay taxes, and to not die of hunger!... Is such a life necessary?

“Help me to understand, Jesus, how can I help them?” — with this request, Alexey went deep in prayer and walked faster to the hermitage.

There, like the light of a candle in front of an icon, the soul of the elder Nicholas shined smoothly and calmly all around. Beside him, it was easier for Alexey to endure all life’s trials, as if a little corner of the “promised land” was created around the elder by his calmness and the depth of his unshakable faith in any trials.

Chapter Five: **On Indestructible Faith and Destructible Faith**

Alexey thought a lot about what he had seen and learned lately. He thought about the schism in the church, about the multiple divergences in beliefs even among those who were now called “schismatics”, about how the decrees on “eradicating heresies” are written and how they are interpreted and even more terribly hardened by the people who are endowed with the power to execute them, about the weak-willed and thoughtless obedience of some people and about the incomprehensible cruelty of others...

He thought about a person’s willingness to accept death for his or her faith...

He also thought about how the ongoing persecutions could be stopped: “Is only one faith necessary for all? Is it possible for there to be no hostility and intolerance in the faith among people? And what is faith in general?”

Once Alexey asked the elder Nicholas:

“Why is there so much hostility between people, so much hatred due to faith?”

“And what is faith in general?”

“Faith is a great power! This power grows out from the mind — into the soul.

“One who has strong faith — it’s easy for such man to live! It is — like a small leaf on a tree branch feeling the same as the whole tree!

“Faith is the power that holds this leaf together with the twig and with the tree itself. And if faith is

weak, then this man is like a leaf which was separated from a branch and is driven by the wind: to one disastrous place it will be brought, then to another...

“Our monastic happiness is simple: we must always live by the soul — with the Lord! The soul joins with God — through deep faith and pure love!

“And God’s Love is the wonderful Power that feeds the soul and as if knits it with the Creator!

“The human body is like a leaf on that Tree of God.

“Time is given to this little leaf-body to blossom, turn green, turn yellow, and perish... And the soul — remains inseparable from God, if it has become filled with love for the Lord during its life, if it has grown fast to God! And if the soul has not grown fast to the Lord — then it, as well as the body, is perishable like how a fallen leaf may perish...

“And what benefit the tree had from that leaf — it is no longer your concern.

“At your hour you were born, at your hour you will accept death! And God will judge by merit: are you worthy of the Heavenly Kingdom — or not...”

“And how to know: what is good for God — and what is not?”

“It is namely the secret of the heart prayer! When you feel God in your heart — then you understand His Will! That’s why joy comes — when you obey Him! You yourself have already experienced this many times...

“And if you have conceived something incorrectly — then it will be felt like a sky that is darkly clouded. You will also feel as if it is not joyful — it means that the Lord does not want what you have planned!

“He is above all of us: including, above one’s life and above all our destinies!”

“And does this mean that nothing depends on the person in his or her own destiny? Can’t one change anything, can’t one help anyone else? Has one just to believe, to love — and that’s all? So — like a plant — only both to live and to die?”

“How does it ‘not depend’? It does depend! To abase pride in oneself, to eradicate vices, not to sin due to weakness of will, not to give way to one’s own wrong desires, to master the heart love and how to apprehend the Will of God! All this depends on a person only! And it is befitting to live in this way — such that everything is only for God! And the rest — He will rule!

“Joyful is such a life with God, when by His Will you live!

“Joy happens when God is in your spiritual heart! This is already more than just faith...

“When God’s Love overfills the soul, then you are not separated from God: He is with you and you are with Him! And your life — belongs to Him completely!

“Let everything be with us — according to His Will! And, in such a case, nothing is sad, everything is joyful, if you understand that everything comes from Him! And it is inappropriate for us to resist His Will!”

“And how do we always know that we understand His Will correctly and that we are not mistaken? Just look at how many interpretations people have come up with for every word of Scripture! How much evil is done — ostensibly for God!...”

“You, Alexey, should not worry too much about this!... You — feel by the heart! You already know — how! So — you will always feel the Truth of God with your heart even when your understanding is unable to do so!

“Faith and love for God allow one to not fear the death of the body. And — to worthily pass all the tests that happen in life. They also allow one to do the good that is in one’s power and to not have sorrow for that which you are not able to change.

“And more importantly — always remember about the hour of death. Man should understand that everyone — in his or her own hour — will give answer before the Lord.

“Life is of great value! This is the truth!

“And often a worldly man thinks that nothing is beyond the life of the body... But a spiritual person knows the reason to give bodily life for the sake of saving the soul. And many people did it!⁶

“There is a special state of the human soul, in which faith is so strong and deep, in which faith and love have so transformed the soul — that one does not fear for oneself anymore.

“To transcend the conventional dogmas and experience the Living God — that’s what’s most important in the indestructible faith! It is only possible to feel this — in the spiritual heart! Then the soul will not doubt that God exists and that God is Love, as Jesus taught!

“And then you can stop ‘being afraid for yourself’: fretting for the life of your body.

⁶ Luke 9:24 (note of the corrector).

“You can stop being afraid for what people will think and say about you... — be it fame, shame, condemnation of the crowd... Those, in whom pride is strong, are afraid of shame and reproach! Words of praise — are pleasant to our pride! And reproaches — cause it pain...

“All of this is feared for one who has one’s own main thoughts and concerns — about oneself! But the soul, strengthened by faith and love for God, is no longer afraid of this!

“There is a belief in which a person blooms so fully to God, so much accepts God’s Will — that he or she is not concerned anymore about himself or herself!

“Jesus Himself died on the cross by a death which was meant for the atrocities of criminals. For us — He accepted it! So that — we could see the possible Great Power of the Soul! For — His words to be remembered! For — us to know that there is no death for the soul, but beyond this threshold — the Heavenly Kingdom will admit the worthy ones!

“And — with joy, Christians were ready to accept a martyr’s death — to follow the Lord!

“So faith can convert any suffering — into purification and transformation of the soul. That’s the power of faith!”

“But why are torture and suffering — the end of which cannot be seen — necessary?”

“... I do not know... For some reason, in a sinful world, it does not happen otherwise... It is evident that, through this, we receive cleansing from sins, and take our eyes off this material world — to look to Heaven and try — in humility — to get an understanding of the Wisdom of God...”

... After a pause, the elder Nicholas added, as if answering the thoughts that had not been expressed aloud by Alexey:

“... Yes, you are right, Alexey, in your thinking that most people believe in stupid things... Living in a blind and fanatical faith, at times, they commit terrible crimes... And, by what they call their ‘faith’, they justify their atrocities...”

“Not to the Heavenly Father, the faith of such people is directed, not to Jesus, — but to *ostensibly* ‘saving’ rules and ceremonies ...

“Faith that results from fear — makes man a mindless slave, a blind instrument of those who instill this fear!

“But faith that grows out of love for God — brings a person closer to the Lord!

“So, it turns out that troubles come because the faith of most people originates from fear. They think that, if the wrong ritual is performed, then death awaits them...”

“Worse still, many people think that to execute those, who are of another faith, is a feat for which sins are forgiven...”

“And there are those, who stimulate this folly in low-minded people and, through that, strengthen their power over the riches of the world, over the vast lands. This is a terrible crime, the greatest sin!

“And it is not only among the Orthodox that such misfortunes multiply... For, the Latins in their countries initiated the inquisition...”

“A weak soul is afraid to ‘burn forever in hell’ for ‘not believing so’! And, therefore, it is easy for these villains to command those who are overwhelmed by fears and prejudices!

“Such broken faith sometimes ruins all of one’s life, turning it into despair and meaninglessness. One was believing, and believing — and then suddenly this one is told that it was untrue how he or she has believed, and that his or her faith was wrong and that he or she has to believe in a new way... — and so, faith is broken...

“And people cling to at least some ‘saving’, in their opinion, ‘correct’ faith...

“Weak souls and scanty minds feel lost, if what they believed in is suddenly called ‘heresy’, delusion, crime. It turns out that such a person is facing an unbearable choice: he or she does not know whom to believe now?! It is because the faith of such a person was not deep. And such a person wants more quickly to follow another leader, to switch faith to a new one, to start believing in ‘salvation’ *by new rituals*...

“Faith is easily broken if there is no love for God and no depth of understanding!

“And the Essence of indestructible faith — this is God Himself! With such faith — nothing is scary!”

Chapter Six: **Robbers**

Once a year, in the summer, Alexey went to the town, where salt was traded. This town on the way to Siberia originated near a salt deposit, and therefore it had a commercial development.

Here, Alexey bought that little which — in his common life with the elder Nicholas — was necessary. Also, he sent letters, which the elder ordered, and supplications from other people of the village if

there were any to send. For these few days in the town, he stayed with the local sexton or the voivode⁷. He made papers for the various people who had come to him with their problems, and for that he had a stock of ink and paper. Due to this, he also had a little money — for the shared needs of him and the elder: such as the aforementioned salt, so that mushrooms and vegetables could be preserved for the winter.

But this summer, it was not possible to do it.

It was already late autumn, when Alexey, having completed all the economic affairs in the hermitage, went to the town. Everything went well there.

Alexey was returning in a joyous mood. There was a good feeling inside his heart because of the feeling that a small benefit had been given to people by his advice and help, even though it was not much. It was from the deeds and his words to the people with whom he had conversations.

The weather was clear, the first frost took hold of the roads that had been sodden from the rains, and it was easy to walk.

The sun — as if in a farewell caress — stroked by its rays the last golden leaves on the birches...

... In those day, robbery on the roads was not surprising.

People fled to the forests from penal servitude, from conscription, from monasteries based off the cruel foundations of the “new faith” or fanaticism of the “old faith”, from both the brutality of landowners and the new mining factory owners. They found shel-

⁷ Note from the corrector: A “voivode” is an Eastern European title for the principal commander of a military force.

ter in the taiga distances, but some of them got into gangs and looked for livelihood on the roads of trade.

* * *

Four robbers attacked Alexey.

The robbers were angry because Alexey had nothing that they could steal... A bit of salt and paper — that was all. They began to brutally beat him, taking out their malice to the whole world and for their broken and hopeless life...

Then they threw the body of Alexey, beaten almost to death, in the ravine...

“It would be necessary to kill him! He will report us, an investigation will be done!” — the leader of the bandits said.

“Relax! There are many other places that they have to patrol! And I do not want to take the sin of killing on myself!” — replied a broad-shouldered, grim-looking robber, the tallest and strongest of the attackers.

“Are you righteous? Do you want to stay clean? It will not work!” — the leader spat angrily.

He held out the ax to the broad-shouldered man:

“Do it!”

... Alexey calmly and clearly realized that here it is — the hour of death.

He was not afraid of death. He even somehow was delighted that now it will all end and he, perhaps, will see Jesus, he will know everything that he did not know, but would like to know, he would understand what has not yet been understood...

Speaking to the robbers, he said words of forgiveness for the pain and death that they cause.

Alexey began to say prayers for the forgiveness of these sinners for their ignorance, for what they are doing. Understanding that now his prayer for these erring ones is something small that he can do, added calmness. Words about the enlightenment and salvation of the souls of sinners who have lost the ability to love in the spiritual darkness, flowed from the depths of his being. He turned to Jesus, Who was, probably, the One Who knows how to help them, these unhappy ones...

The robber, standing with the ax in hand, listened in surprise, then dropped the ax:

“I cannot... You kill this blessed one...”

“What? Are you being pulled back to ‘schismatics’? Where was your ‘faith’ when you came to me? Look, maybe his God will save him — for being a monk and ‘pincher’⁸ who does not cross with a double-finger? Or maybe He will not save him? Well? Should we test this? In my hands now — is his life!”

... The leader approached, took the ax, wanted to swing and... suddenly his eyes met a clear, as if radiant and surprisingly calm, look of Alexey.

He was surprised and could not finish him off either...

The three accomplices silently looked on at what was happening.

The leader asked Alexey:

⁸ “Old Believers” used this abusive nickname for the Orthodox believers of “new faith”, which crossed themselves with a *pinch*, i.e. with three fingers.

**“If you are so brave, will you join our gang?
Then I’ll save your life! I need courageous people!”**

“No, not for that is life given...”

“Do you know what for?”

**“Right now — ‘in the world beyond’ — maybe
I’ll find out...”**

**... The leader spat and swore..., but did not kill
him.**

**Alexey, bleeding, was left to die slowly in the
ravine...**

**He crawled up to the road and went into a co-
ma.**

*** * ***

**Unexpectedly, indescribable and blissful peace
embraced Alexey. The sensation of the body with its
pain disappeared...**

**Alexey saw in the wavering flame of candles
the Face of Jesus on the icon. This Face suddenly
began to come to life. Jesus smiled to Alexey and
held out His Hands to him! Alexey reached out to
Him, but could not touch Him... As if a transparent
wall was separating them...**

**He saw the movements of Jesus’ moving lips:
“I’m waiting for you, My son, but not now: you still
need to cognize and do a lot!”**

**... Alexey heard or just understood these
words... Jesus was watching — and the soul was
filled with the Love of Jesus! Alexey knew that this
Love of Jesus is the Most Important!**

Then he did not see or feel anything...

* * *

The elder Nicholas left the hermitage for the first time in fifteen years.

He went to that hut in the village, where a lame old man had the only horse in the whole district. He asked him to harness it:

“I’ll go to search for Alexey: trouble was done to him! Harness it, for Christ’s sake!”

... The grim owner of the horse harnessed his skinny mare to the cart without objection. He himself went with the elder.

... They found Alexey. The first snowstorm had already powdered the road with snow.

They found him — still alive. With difficulty they lifted his body and put it into the cart.

“He does not have much longer,” — the lame old man shook his head gloomily... But he took off his quilted jacket and covered Alexey.

They started on the way back.

The elder Nicholas was silent. The head of Alexey rested on his lap. He carefully held his body: the cart shook violently on the frozen potholes.

Alexey’s deathly pale face was surprisingly calm and beautiful... The streaks of coagulated blood from the light-brown strands seemed to adorn the face...

Before the elder Nicholas, the Face of Jesus appeared with His Eyes penetrating into the depths of the soul. The elder Nicholas looked into Jesus’ Eyes and prayed: “May everything be according to Your Will, oh Lord!”

* * *

Alexey survived, but recovered slowly.

The elder Nicholas took care of him, like a small child. He fed Alexey with a spoon.

For a long time the elder stood before the icon, and tears glistened in his bright eyes...

Sometimes he would sit next to him, and they would talk.

Alexey remembered that time as one of rest and happiness, despite the slow recovery of bodily health.

He almost did not feel the body, and the soul rejoiced because he was granted to see Jesus!

He told the elder:

“Maybe it’s just a vision, an illusion of the disease... But as I recall it — the heart is filled with happiness!”

“It’s not my place to judge about this... Here — Jesus saved your life, revealed Himself — and, therefore, there is a good reason for that... He is aware of it, but us sinners are not...”

“And that you saw Jesus — save this memory in your heart. And do not talk about it to people in vain...”

“Tests, including the infirmities of the flesh, are often given to us for the uplifting and strengthening of the soul!

“And to see your own death so closely — this is a great gift from God!

“It’s good to summarize the results of the past and entrust the future to the Lord!”

Chapter Seven: **Life without the Elder Nicholas**

The life of Alexey passed in prayers and simple work.

Long winter, wonderful spring, short summer, autumn, after which the severe winter came again... Again and again, it was necessary to find in oneself more and more of God's Light and less and less to be sad about the imperfections of this world.

Gradually, Alexey's life was filled more and more with the Presence of God!

The elder Nicholas became very weak in body...

Sometimes, he asked for Alexey's help to rise from bed and kneel before the icon. And, it at times happened, that he did not get up at all to pray.

He became — as if transparent, as if the soul did not hold on in the body anymore, but has moved to a completely different world.

A bright smile was on the lips of the elder all the time, as if he already saw his abode of paradise...

So, quietly, with a smile on his lips — he departed from this life.

... It was as if Alexey had been orphaned without the elder Nicholas.

He could hardly get used to the total loneliness.

While the elder Nicholas was there — everything was easier!

The elder guided the routine of their entire life. And there was a feeling that with each passing day,

they were approaching the Heavenly Kingdom by souls.

But in solitude — Alexey did not work even to maintain the normality of prayers before God and regularity in life.

Sometimes he was flushed with a burning love for God, life was filled with a sense of the Presence of God nearby! And it seemed that with just a little bit more — all the unknown secrets will be revealed to him!...

But then again came the feeling that he is missing the main thing which he must do, and that he is wasting his strength, and that good and love on the Earth does not increase from his spiritual labors, and that no warmth and light come to the children of God!

Alexey undertook stricter fasts, all his life became more ascetic. He exhausted the body with hunger and unceasing prayers, eager to comprehend the World of God.

Thoughts about the meaning of his own life, about the purpose of being here on the Earth — filled Alexey again and again with dissatisfaction for the lonely ways of monastic life.

After all, he did not want to “save” himself alone when he accepted the monastic path! He dreamed of dedicating his life for God and for people!

He read the Gospels again and again, trying to apply to his life what Jesus told His disciples.

And Alexey decided to start helping those who lived in the surrounding villages.

Before, he also wanted to do this, but the elder Nicholas dissuaded him saying: “Do not force people to live by your faith, to have faith according to your

thoughts! Everyone is responsible for oneself before God!”

Now Alexey decided not to instruct the lives of people with his spiritual preaching, but simply to help in what they needed, since: “whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did to Me” (Matt 25:40).

And he began to help widows, the elderly and infirm in their hard life. He repaired leaking roofs, cleaned the wells, chopped firewood, wrote petitions...

He himself defined this as his monastic obedience. And it was more joyful for him due to the joy and surprise of those people who did not expect help from anyone — either God or people.

Chapter Eight: **Healing the Boy**

One day, Timothy, the older son of the woman Efimia, whom the elder Nicholas baptized once, fell seriously ill.

The child was in a coma. The body was blazing with a fever, which did not subside for over one day.

The daughter of Efimia, Dunyasha, helped around the house and took care of everything, and Efimia herself seemed to have broken... She resigned herself to the death of her son and only blamed herself for her sins and lamented quietly, kneeling before the icon.

But Alexey resolutely fought for the life of the child...

He brought honey, ordered to infuse herbs, which the elder Nicholas dried and taught him to cook for various ailments.

Alexey himself prayed tirelessly and tried to let through his hands that Light of God which he felt in the spiritual heart...

Sometimes it seemed to him that only his hands retained life in the body of the child... But miraculous healing by prayer did not happen...

Alexey saw the Divine Light and felt the Presence of God more than ever! He tried to pull all of his strength into prayers... But the boy continued to rave... He wheezed and gasped in coughing spells, moaned slightly, then fell into an even deeper coma, and it seemed that now the soul will part with the exhausted body...

The boy's life seemed to be held back by the efforts that Alexey applied, but all the time there was a feeling that a little more — and it would end...

Alexey continued to pray — intensely, with the last of his strength. He almost did not expect a miracle, but stubbornly persisted:

“Jesus! What am I doing wrong? Here — I see Your Light and I know that You are Omnipresent and Omnipotent, Caring and Gracious! Why do You not heal the boy? If the reason is my pride, in which I desired to be equal with Your apostles in the great skills — then punish me for it but not the child! For my imperfection — do not punish him! Or is my faith weak? But the child is not guilty — for my imperfections! Why do You not allow Your Power to heal him? Your Omnipotence knows no bounds!”

Alexey reproached himself when he diverted from the standard prayers — to a free speech to Je-

sus. Then he prayed again and again, then tried to direct his bold appeals to the Heavenly Father, tried to recall all the Saints, whose prayers, as they say, were miraculously healing... The Presence of God was so strong and bright!... It seemed to grow, getting closer... But the miracle did not happen...

Suddenly there was a knock at the door.

Dunyasha, the sister of the sick boy, opened it without even asking “Who?”.

A surprisingly beautiful young woman stood on the threshold.

It seemed to Alexey that a Shining Light came from the stranger. Or was it simply that the fresh frosty wind burst into the hot air of the hut through the doorway — and the sunshine flashed around the newcomer?...

The stranger bowed to the owners with an earthly bow, touching the floor with the tips of her fingers.

Alexey thought she tensed for a moment, seeing his monastic clothes...

Then she spoke quietly with a soft heart voice:

“My name is Rada, I’m a healer. I’ll cure the boy.”

... Alexey, staggering with fatigue, rose from his knees, giving way to the patient’s bed.

Rada came. She took off her street clothes and remained in a light-brown shirt with red embroidery on her collar and on her sleeves; the attire was intercepted at her thin waist with a woven cloth. Her thick brown hair was braided into a braid below the waist. Eyes — gray-blue, calm and affectionate. Only for a moment, Alexey met her gaze, and remembered the smallest details of her beautiful face.

Rada approached the patient, put her hands on his chest and on the head. She stood there for several minutes, her body seemed to be frozen.

Alexey saw the Divine Light: the bright Shining of the White-Golden Light filled everything. This Light streamed through Rada's body and filled the body of the sick boy.

Alexey went out into the inner porch and sat down on the bench... The immaterial Light was everywhere around and did not stop shining. Alexey seemed to have fallen into this Light. Everything disappeared from his perception — in the Peace and Bliss of Light... He knew that everything now would be alright...

Alexey woke up because Dunyasha was tugging at his sleeve:

“Timothy has recovered! Very, very healthy! Look, look! God helped! You treated him, then Rada cured all! Mama does not cry anymore! Just look!”

... On the bed, Timothy sat smiling. Efimia wanted to spoon-feed him soup, but he began to eat without any help... The woman was wiping away tears of gratitude.

“And where is the healer, where is Rada?” — asked Alexey.

“She left in the evening. As the fever of Timothy went down — she made off... She said that she had cured him. We were afraid that in the morning it could be bad again, but he is completely healthy! She said that he would be healthy! A Miracle of the Lord was created!”

The mother of the boy, Efimia, crossed herself and passionately whispered prayers.

Alexey himself also knelt before the icon and thanked God for the revealed miracle.

* * *

Then he walked slowly to the hermitage and was still thinking about the one called Rada, about the one who easily healed the dying child — like Jesus and His apostles:

“So — this is possible! Who is she? Where is she from? Who taught her this? Is it possible to learn this as well?”

Part Two

Chapter One: **Childhood of Rada**

Radomir embraced His little daughter, kissed her, stroked her light-brown hair, and sat her on his horse. Rada looked at her father in bewilderment.

“How you have grown! You will become a beauty!” — Radomir thought. But, in a calm voice, he said something quite different:

“Hurry to your grandfather! Tell him that I ask everyone to leave! To leave — quickly! He knows what to do!”

“And you?”

“Gallop, my daughter! Gallop — as fast as possible! Gallop!”

... Radomir whistled in a special way — and the horse rushed off.

Rada again turned around and saw that her father confidently and slowly went to where the cries could be heard.

He walked, and above him there was a huge dome of the Divine Light-Fire, Which seemed to protect from disaster both Rada and all people of the community...

He walked to the place where death waited for his body. He knew this. Little Rada did not know this yet but felt that everything around her suddenly became not as it should be — in the world of love and harmony, light and joy, in which she had lived and grown in up to this day...

She has remembered her father in this way: calm, strong, and connected with the Divine Fire, with the Power of God — he went to death so that his young disciples would not perish in the terrible tortures, and for all people of their community to escape the impending danger.

Only later, when Rada became older, she learned the details. Radomir went by himself to that settlement, where an armed detachment, led by a voivode and a bishop, had already entered, having been sent there to “sort out”: who preaches “heresy” here and “stirs up” people...

They threatened them with torture — so that the people would give out the one who had taught them. But Radomir went to the executioners himself — so that no one was killed or injured and so that His community managed to leave these places unseen, without being tracked down. He did this — at the cost of his own life.

Rada’s grandfather, Blagoslav, the doyen of the community, had managed in a matter of hours to

gather all the people and lead them from death, hiding in the hard-to-reach forests of the vast Russian land. They went very far from the places where Rada was born and grew up.

At that time, Rada was only eight years old.

* * *

For as long as Rada could remember, she had always felt her father to be the most important person in her childhood. Rada's mother died shortly after Rada was born. Radomir — with all His care and love — immediately became for Rada both a tender mother and a caring, wise, and strong father.

He gradually opened for Rada the knowledge of the whole world with all its harmony and beauty. His strong, gentle, and reliable hands were always nearby, ready to support her at any moment!

Radomir himself taught his daughter everything from infancy: to walk, talk, think, look at the world through the eyes of the soul, and to seek the very answers to the questions that she had. He taught Rada to be brave and dexterous, as he would teach a son, whom His beloved wife did not manage to give birth to. He taught Rada also what mothers usually teach their daughters. And Rada — loved to take care of her father, trying her best to be a skillful and smart hostess in their house.

Radomir was the only son of the head of the community — doyen Blagoslav.

Their community was not usual. They lived as how people used to live in Russia before the advent of Orthodoxy — in the many clans and communities which had been established. For many centuries —

and from generation to generation — the people of their community tried to preserve their ancient traditions and knowledge.

But it was not easy to live like this. Such communities no longer existed, and if they did exist, Blagoslav and his community's members did not know about them. And for the beliefs that were now called "pagan", communities could be expelled from their places of settlement and, even worse, they could be punished with torture and death as "heretics". Therefore, they lived in the remotest forests. And the peace of the families was always guarded by strong warriors. They observed the surroundings from tall trees or circled the district on horseback. And, in the case of "unexpected guests", they were ready to take them away from the settlement or warn everyone in time about the danger.

Radomir sometimes took Rada with him on such patrols. Rada especially loved their "important days".

By that time, she had already learned how to ride on a horse and walk or sit in a hiding place so quietly that no one would notice.

Radomir taught his daughter to notice everything that a person can learn from the forest: the tracks of beasts and birds, their voices, and signs of different behavior of forest inhabitants. Radomir taught her how to not disturb the inhabitants of the forest, how to gain their trust. And — how, by observing their behavior, to find out much about what is happening around.

And when they looked afar from high hills or stayed to spend the night on special platforms on the tops of huge trees, from which was visible many kil-

ometers, — it seemed to Rada that the whole Earth was revealing its vast expanses and its magical secrets.

Rada especially loved one of these pines. From its top, all the surrounding trees seemed like green waves, and one could also see — flooded meadows and a river's floodplain with a bizarre riverbed pattern.

* * *

Once, they stayed on the peak of this pine for a whole summer night. The weather was clear, almost windless. The stars shone, it seemed, especially brightly. The rising moon incredibly and beautifully illuminated the tops of trees. In the moonlight, the river was magically silvered with mist.

Radomir spread out his cloak onto the floor of the wooden lookout on the top of the pine and wrapped Rada up, protecting her from the cold of the night:

“Sleep, my daughter! In the morning, I'll wake you up early, and we'll meet the sun!”

... But Rada could not fall asleep. She was lying on her back admiring the starry glow. She was filled with rapture and reverence. Quietly, she took Radomir's hand:

“Dad, who has created all this — all this beauty?”

“God!”

“But how?”

“By His Love and Power! He has put the Particles of Himself, of His Living Energies, into every-

thing that exists. By densifying them to various degrees, He created everything.

“At first, He thought up all this, and then He gave it as if a push to ensure — for everything here appeared, lived, developed, and improved according to His Plan. In everything that He has created, there are Particles of His Love and Infinite Power!”

“He must be so big and strong, if He could do this!”

“God many times created such beautiful worlds! And then — from every such world — Great Souls returned back into Him: the Creator-Father. These Souls grew to Their Majesty in those worlds. They poured into Him, like this river flows into the sea. In the vastness of the ocean, the river and the sea become *one*.”

... Rada recalled how they once went to look at the sea. It was the northern sea — and there was a calm river which became *one* with the sea in this place... At that time, Rada did not think at all about how the waters of the river and the sea merge. She only admired the splendor of the space and the soaring gulls...

And now, her father helped her to recall what was imprinted by the soul at that time — namely, how strong and vivid was that majestic Beauty.

Radomir continued:

“Just as the river becomes the sea, so all Great Souls become *One* with God-the-Creator. We can call Them Gods. After the connection with the Creator — They can create by the Common Force, creating beautiful worlds and carrying out other deeds of the Divine — both large and not so large.

“And every person can try to become such a Representative of God, Who is visible like a huge Divine Sun.”

“And, will you become the Divine Sun?”

“I’ll try!”

“And me — too?”

“Only if you will want this. Man is bestowed by God with the right to choose how he or she should live.

“I already told you that every being has a Particle of the Divine Energies. This Particle can be grown by a person to the Greatness. And such a person can begin to learn everything that God can do.”

“And where is such a Particle of God in me?”

“Here, in the spiritual heart, where love is born. You can yourself begin to learn how to feel it. This is a special center, in which man can see, hear God, and feel His Love.”

“Yes, I remember how you explained this! And now here is so much of this Love: in me and everywhere around!”

“The greatest Power in the universe is the Power of Love! By this Power, everything is built.”

“But how?”

“By the same way as you are doing things. For example, you yourself first come up with the idea of something, and then you invest love and strength of soul and body — in order to implement this deed. God does same thing. And it turns out that you can already start learning everything from God. But, the only difference is that God knows and can do much more than us!”

... Radomir explained everything by these simple words, and also helped Rada with the state of the

Himself as a Soul to begin understanding and learning the Mysteries of the universe.

... And in the morning, they met the dawn. Above the expanse, which was covered with tender and golden-pink morning mist that was boundless like the sea, — the sun rose! It was the Greatness of Beauty and Silence!

... All this, together with the memory of her father's words about the *Divine Sun*, was so significant for Rada!

And Radomir — in that *Silence* — then said only a few words about how in the spiritual heart of man love can shine like the rising sun, which caresses all the living with its rays.

* * *

In this way, Rada grew up and studied.

Much more was told by Radomir to His daughter about God-the-Creator and about the living Mother Earth — the home for all the living children of God who live on her! All this knowledge was woven into the life of Rada — and this did not seem to her... as something strange and unusual.

About His “adult” affairs, to which Radomir sometimes left for a long time, he did not tell to little Rada.

And the deeds, conceived by him, were not carried out simply. He taught the people of other villages — the knowledge about God, which had gradually faded on the Earth against the background of severe religious repressions.

Some of those disciples of Radomir eventually became members in their spiritual community, which lived according to the Divine Laws.

At that time, not far from their community, some Old Believers, running from a massacre, stopped by a camp. They were left without a priest, who had betrayed them. They themselves did not accept the “new faith”, and they wanted to remain *faithful to God*, as they themselves understood it. They decided to hide in the woods, but they did not know how to live spiritually further.

The doyen Blagoslav did not want to immediately take those people into his community, but he allowed Radomir to help them by teaching them.

“If you will teach them adequately, then let’s see what fate God will prepare for them.”

... But everything did not go according to plan. It was not possible to rescue Radomir’s disciples, and he did not manage to teach them much. And the community itself — lost its place of habitation, and now they went to the east farther and farther from any settlements, towns, and villages...

They went — already without Radomir...

* * *

The road was hard. They took only the most necessary things...

No carts. The horses were led onwards, having been loaded as much as possible. They threaded their way through the thickets.

The doyen Blagoslav did not show how hard it was for him. He guided the people firmly, with his own strength and will, directing both the progress

and the entire life of the community, which set out on this wandering.

In his memory, this was not the first time... But it had never been as hard as it was now ...

He did not hesitate long, choosing between taking people away — or trying to collect all the men of the community, to try to save his only son... But that choice created a sore wound in the soul that did not close up... He clearly understood that they could not resist the army — and all would perish. He took the only right decision... And now they were walking, walking, and walking...

... Rada asked grandfather about her father:

“Will papa catch up with us soon?”

... Grandfather embraced her, looked into her eyes, and said quietly:

“You’re already grown up, my beloved Rada! You must understand: your dad will not catch up with us! He is already before us there, where souls without bodies live, where your mother lives. He is there now... Now only you and I remain in this world out of all those of our family!”

... So, that was the end of Rada’s carefree childhood...

Chapter Two: **Is There Really Death?**

The death of his only son imposed a heavy imprint upon doyen Blagoslav. And not only for him alone, but for the whole life of the community. Blago-

slav no longer even thought about helping outsiders. He ordered everyone to not go close to the villages!

They lived even more secretly than before, hiding in remote forests far from settlements and roadways.

Blagoslav himself became more than just strict. For disobedience — he was ready to expel a person from the community, without even feeling pity for the guilty person. People were afraid of having to live alone, without the community. Therefore, now they did not object to the doyen, even in small matters...

The spiritual life of the community also seemed to decline — because of this fear, which, like rust, imperceptibly grew in these souls...

It seemed that everything was consensual... But the concern about how to survive, how to hide from persecution — became the main concern in their lives...

People obeyed Blagoslav implicitly in all matters that related to the life of the community. They were afraid of his rigor, they did not dare to object, even if they did not agree in some way with him.

But only Rada treated the severity of her grandfather easier, as if it did not concern her. She could disobey, she could be punished for her own little self-will. But there was no fear in her at all! She loved grandfather and understood his pain about Radomir...

* * *

Rada now saw her father Radomir often: she admired His Luminous Appearance, and felt, as be-

fore, His Hands consisting of the Power of the Light and of the Great Love — stretched out to her... They could protect her, and they were ready at any time to support, embrace, and guide her...

The first time, when she saw Radomir so, was very soon after the death of His body.

That time, Blagoslav stopped the people for the night's rest during a heavy rain — in a large cave, which had been dug by someone in the past in a steep.

It was late at night. Everyone had already gone to sleep, tired of the day's march.

Rada awoke and noticed how her grandfather went out alone. She went after him to see what was happening. She stopped at the exit of the cave and saw through the rain the sorrowful figure of her grandfather near the river. He stood under the cold streams of rain and cried.

Rada was already able to perceive and understand *souls*. And she always felt her grandfather very clearly... Now she knew that there, beside the bubbling stream, he stood and wept for his deceased son, exposing his face to the rain from which the cold streams washed away his burning tears... And he asked God for help in their hard journey to unknown lands...

Rada wanted to go to comfort her grandfather.

But she suddenly saw Radomir — so clearly that she rushed to hug Him. But her hands passed through His shining non-material Appearance.

Radomir said affectionately:

“You must hug Me with hands not of the body, but of the soul! Do you remember how I taught you this?”

Rada stood still in such familiar tenderness of her father's embrace... Though now, these were His Hands consisting not of flesh but of the Divine Light!

“So, are You not dead?”

“I had to leave My body that time, My dear daughter. But I am and will always be with you!”

“But grandfather — why does he cry so much? I'll tell him that You are here!”

“Wait a bit: I'll tell him Myself!...”

... From that time on, Rada was always able to talk with Radomir, to ask advice, to tell about sorrows, difficulties, and about her joys and discoveries.

... Once, when the community had already settled at a new place, she told grandfather about it.

He shook his head sternly:

“Yes, there are souls without bodies, granddaughter! But do not get stuck in such dreams and fantasies! You have to learn to live in the visible and tangible world, instead of looking at all these kinds of visions!”

“Is papa a ‘vision’? And you can also see by the soul! Why do not you believe that I can see and hear papa?”

“Whether one believes or does not believe — here we are! I believe you! I believe! But now — I tell you to obey me in all things! Go now and weed the kitchen garden!”

... Rada no longer told anything to her grandfather about her father, but she often called Radomir and talked with Him. And it was the most reliable comfort and protection from the sorrows and difficulties in her life!

* * *

Blagoslav could also see his Son, and could talk with Him... They often spoke. But only there was no such peace and happiness in him, as in Rada.

He used to argue with his Son.

Radomir stood before him in a body made up of Light, but Blagoslav cried out to Him, as if he was reproving a disobedient person:

“Why have you died?! For those who are not of our clan-tribe, you gave up your life for strangers!”

“It’s not true: you yourself know that I did not die, but only left the body! You understand yourself that if I had not gone there Myself, you would not have had time to save people! And My disciples would have been cruelly tortured!

“You know, father, that the death of the body is not terrible — for the One Who has attained the Unity with God!”

“Maybe I know, but maybe not yet... It’s easy for You to say ‘from the other side’! And I do not know yet: have I managed to achieve?... Death — yes, I’ve already been unafraid of it for a long time, but Your leaving is a great grief for me!”

“What kind of grief is this?! Here I am, you can both hear and see Me!”

“Sometimes I can, yes... But I cannot die in peace! On whom will I leave the community? Who will take of Rada?

“It’s wrong when the children leave before their parents!” — he sighed and grumbled.

They often spoke about Rada, about her upbringing.

Blagoslav reproached his Son every time:

“You left your orphan — to whom?”

“On you, father! You must teach her now!”

“She is still small...”

“No, she’s not small! She will be a Great Soul, with the Great Power! And she must become the *Light-Bearer* for people! But for this — both her body, mind, and emotions — should grow in full harmony with God!

“You must teach Rada — really teach her! But you do everything to make the Divine abilities of the soul — forgotten!”

“Yes, I do! And I will continue to do it! It would have been better if You Yourself were nearby and teaching Your daughter! Why do you tell me now?! I do not want any trouble to come to her!”

“I do not order, father! I beg! But if you will not listen to this request — I will demand! Because this is God’s Will! And, if you do not begin to teach your granddaughter, I will not come to you anymore!”

The old man, who had become terrible for everyone in the community, with his unyielding will, wrapped his arms around his head and groaned, as if from pain.

“Good, father!” — Radomir affectionately embraced him with the Light: — “We should not trample down sprouts that are stretching towards the light! Teach Rada, and I will help too!

“You also understand, how difficult it is to explain something to an embodied soul, who has not yet understood a concept with the mind. Without you, it will not be possible to teach Rada the Great Knowledge!

“We must save the treasures of the Knowledge of the Divine — so that people will not be obligated to search for them again with hard unbearable labor!

“After all, we are saving the community not for the sake of extending the amount of time that our people will live on the Earth! But in order that the Wisdom and Clarity of the Divine Peace be revealed to those who want and are able to accommodate this!

“You yourself can see what kind of times have come... And if you do not start working on the cultivation of the young souls, who will be able to perceive the Divine Wisdom, Love, and Power in Their entirety, — then that Dawn of Light will not come on the Earth, which we are called upon to care for!

“Forgive Me, father! I know that it’s hard for you...

“But now you and then Rada — must weave your destinies in the Life of God! You can consciously begin to do — what God wants to do through you! This is not an easy Path! And this life with God is not for weak souls!

“But for both of you — it is within your power to keep the Flame of God in yourselves and to light the Divine Light in other souls!”

Chapter Three: **Lessons from Head Blagoslav.** **Harmony between People — and God**

Blagoslav began to teach Rada, but carefully and very slowly. For the time being, he protected her from the strength of the soul that was already beginning to manifest in her.

Now they talked about important things:

“Tell me, granddaughter, what is harmony?”

“That’s when people live with each other in peace. That’s when a person not only relates affectionately to another person, but always understands what is good for that person, and what is worse. This occurs when the desire of another person is seen without words, and it is joyful to fulfill such a desire! And when this is mutual, then people live in harmony. Papa taught me this.”

“And did you consider that it is necessary to live in harmony not only with other people?”

“And with whom else?”

“You can live in harmony with plants and animals. You can also always be in harmony with God!”

“About plants and animals — it’s understandable: dad showed me this, too. And about God — you explain. How can man not be in harmony with God? Is it possible?”

“It happens... When people do not get along with each other, when they see only their quarrels, their grievances — then they usually do not notice their disharmony with God, they do not even think about it at all.

“But God permeates all of His Creation with Himself and knows at every moment everything about everyone.

“If there are bad relations between people, or if different creatures, incarnated on the Earth by God, have harm done to them by people — then people violate the Divine Harmony in the Creation. Hence, too, there is no harmony among these souls and God.

“Therefore, order in oneself-soul is very important for everyone. As we put things in order in a

house, so, too, must we bring order, purity, and peace to our thoughts and emotions — so that before God, we need not be ashamed!

“And when one has love and peace in the soul, then this one transforms also the space around oneself: he or she makes it better and more beautiful — both for oneself and for those around.

“What do you think: is it right to give full will to all of one’s own emotions? If it becomes joyful and pleasant for me — I am happy, but if it becomes bad because of something — is it okay for me to be sad, angry, or irritated?”

“But how else can it be?”

“You, my granddaughter, must learn to control yourself! Do you ever remember when your father was angry, annoyed, or offended by someone?”

“No, I do not remember that.”

“So, you must learn to live like Him!

“There can be great strength in a person-soul, and it can injure others unintentionally, if one does not look attentively at how much force is put into one’s words and deeds, what feelings fill one and how one displays them.

“Look: there are ants walking on their path here, and there is a bird’s nest hidden in the grass. It’s easy to hurt them if you walk on the ground inattentively, without paying attention to your steps!

“Do you know how to look around and try not to cause harm?”

“Yes, I try not to hurt anyone.”

“It’s the same in the world of relations between souls: it is easy to inflict pain, to cause harm in vain by word or action — when you do not look at the consequences of your thoughts and words, or if you

let irritation, anger, resentment, or sadness into the soul!

“If the soul is strong, then even by thoughts and emotions, one can correct the health of another person — or, on the contrary, damage it, without even spewing out evil words in anger, but only thinking evil. And, conversely, if a person lives with love in thought and in heart, then the space around is nice for others and even becomes curative.

“And if one is always in harmony with God in the soul — then God becomes, in that space, the Main Boss for the soul.

“So, learn to observe this harmony, which was conceived by the Great Creator for His children, even in small things...”

“But how?”

“Do you remember how we met the sun at sunrise?”

“You learned to fill the spiritual heart with light, like sunlight, — and shine with sunrays in all directions.”

“Yes, I like to do that!”

“When the light of love shines in the soul and love flows around — it turns out that you are in harmony with God. And when you send love to all His children together with Him, it turns out that you are doing this together with God!

“When you feel good, it is easy to do this. And now you, when you feel like you want to be offended or angry, should recall your sunny heart and should try to look at everything from it and love everything around you. Then immediately the offense or disappointment will leave you!”

“I will try!”

... A lot of situations were given to Rada to learn how to do this, and she was not always able to do it yet.

Blagoslav taught Rada often very strictly. For faults, even small ones, he severely scolded her sometimes, for self-willfulness — he also scolded her, and demanded full obedience.

Sometimes, Rada would forget to do something, daydreaming. Or, she would disobey Blagoslav's commands in some way. For example, sometimes she would walk in the forest for too long, or swim across the river to collect herbs on the other bank... And then for a week or two, grandfather would not say a word to her, nor would he even look at her.

Rada even sometimes complained to Radomir:

“Daddy, why does grandfather lecture and reproach me? He teaches about love, but he himself does not love me at all!

“If I do something well — he rarely gives praise. And if I'm wrong or do not listen to him — he treats me like I'm a criminal... I'm still learning! But he...

“And if I make a good suggestion, then he will never do it according to my opinion...”

“And you, my daughter, do not protest over trifles, thinking: ‘I want!’ or ‘I do not want!’! You should obey! If you learn to obey grandfather, then it will be easier to learn how to understand and always obey God!”

“But sometimes I see that grandfather is not right — and then I cannot remain silent! And he is indisputable: everything has to happen his way, whether it leads to goodness or to harm...”

“What a rebel you are!

“Daughter, your grandfather — his confidence in his convictions is not without reason. He vested a great responsibility on himself — both for all the people in the community, and for you too! When you understand this, you will know this confidence in him better!

“In the meantime, do not resist the small things of his will! If it seems to you now that he is wrong about something, then obedience will temper the self in you and teach you wisdom!

“You should insist on your correctness only when you are firmly convinced that this rightness is coming from God, not from the will of your own self! You need to make sure that it is not your little personal ‘i’ that is trying to grow up by attempting to dictate to everyone around: ‘I want it like this!’, ‘I know best!’, ‘I understand it myself!’, ‘I know how to do it better than others!’...

“When the small personal ‘i’ is obedient — only then can you firmly know the Will of God!

“And more: you should discern when your rightness means something only to you — and when it is significant for many people!

“But only in the calm of the mind and in the love of the heart is the Voice of God clearly distinguishable!”

“Like Yours?”

“Yes.”

“And is it possible to make it so that this little disgusting ‘i’ is completely removed, so that it does not interfere with life, and does not generate conflicts among people?”

“Then what will remain of you? You should think about this yourself!...

“And this little ‘i’ is not always disgusting! You, in fact, are a strong and growing consciousness! Both the ability to think, and will, as well as your emotions — they compose you as a soul and enable you, by both mind and heart, to learn kindness! This small personal ‘i’ can only be permanently removed, when every part of yourself-soul is replaced by the Divine ‘I’.

“In the meantime, if you learn to see in yourself the manifestations of ‘disgustingness’, as you have already correctly noticed, then you will learn to not allow the bad part of yourself to command your life! Learn to remove evil from yourself and nurture the good!

“And you yourself should learn from your grandfather how to manage the community’s economy! He has acquired a lot of wisdom in his long life! And you should learn a lot from him, and not argue over trifles!

“And how to pickle mushrooms and when to collect honey — you do not have cause to quarrel!

“You often talk about the Great Harmony, conceived by God, and you have important conversations, but you yourself do not always live in harmony...”

“Yes, that’s true...”

“And yet, understand, daughter, he needs your love and tenderness! His severity is external: it’s hard for him!... And you could help him not only with deeds. Your love is a great support! But you, instead, — argue with him on trifles! It’s wrong!”

... After that conversation, Rada began trying very much to help Blagoslav in everything.

* * *

There were only a few children in the community, and Rada did not have many friends of the same age. Also, the children's games did not enthrall her.

She often felt the world and the people around her in a non-childlike way. She could already see and feel a lot — as a big soul.

She very much wanted to know everything about the world of the Divine! When someone among the community told about meditations — she ran there and listened. And she tried to fulfill the meditations as she herself understood them.

Then she would ask grandfather about it.

But Blagoslav usually dismissed such questions: it's too early for you to know about it!

Rada again and again now sought the Oneness with the Divine Love, from which comes the harmony between man and God. She was looking for this — including, in what she heard about meditations and God in the conversations among community members.

Once, she asked grandfather:

“Show me God!”

“Yes, here He is, look!” — Blagoslav answered, smiling humorously while waving his hand around.

But Rada realized that she did not see what grandfather saw and knew.

And she did not back down:

“Veliyar said that we can connect with the Divine Wisdom and Power — only through our ances-

tors. And that it is you who have to teach us the meditation 'the family tree', through which we could use their wisdom and power. But you — do not teach it! Are you hiding it? What meditation is it?"

"Why do you need it?! You can always talk with your father! Or — ask me! Why do you need to hear all such conversations of Veliyar?"

"He speaks beautifully... Many people listen to him..."

"I tried to imagine a tree in which all the souls, who were in our genus, were represented... And the deeper the roots of that tree, the earlier, it appears, our ancestors lived... But how to determine who was the first in the genus? That one must also have had parents... So, is there no such 'first one'? And then, it began to happen as if by itself that the deeper I looked the more it seemed that all people were united..."

"And if one includes all people on the image of this tree, and then — if one includes everything living on the Earth as well, it turns out that all human beings and all other beings are the children of God. Every person is a tiny branch on that tree of life! The tree, which I pictured, turned out so beautiful! In a single stream of the Divine Power, everything in it lived and grew! Dad looked and smiled. But He did not explain..."

"Tell me: does this mean that all people were born on the Earth according to the Divine Will? And are all beings relatives to each other? So, shouldn't everyone love each other? And why is everything around us not so? Why do we hide secludedly from all others?"

“That’s what you have thought of by yourself! And yet you ask me about it! You understand everything correctly!

“But relatives in one family do not always live in peace and calm! And yet, you want all people in the world to live in harmony!

“Look: we call God by the name *Rod**. But it is not because our kin is the only one from God. But because God is the Parent to all that exists.

“And we also call Him *Svarog* — that is, *the Creator*. All Divine Souls live in Him in Unity. But, at the same time, each such Soul can also reveal His or Her own Face, and give advice to an incarnate soul, like your Dad does, for example.

“But those, who have not achieved this Unity, — they live in other non-Divine worlds, and they will have to be born again on the Earth.

“And not all ancestral relatives of people possess wisdom and holiness. And not all of them can give wise advice...”

“And in which such worlds do they live? Tell me, grandpa!”

“Let’s stop talking about this! Later — you will understand this! Go, instead, into the garden and weed the beds!”

“Why, grandpa, do we now live like this, as if we do not have any other worries besides caring for the food for our bodies? Whenever I ask you something, you immediately invent some kind of work for me to do!”

“Well, if you do not want to do it — go for a walk! And I myself will go to the kitchen garden to weed.”

“Why are you like this, Grandpa? I’ll weed the garden!”

“Wait, granddaughter! Sit down here, let’s talk!

“Do you know, what is hunger? Not when you just want to eat, not when people do not eat food for a week or two for inner cleansing. But when the whole community is without any food in winter... You do not know this! And it’s good that you do not know!

“But I — I know...

“It was long ago, you were not even born yet... And your dad was still a child... There was a poor harvest that year... And there was also a great forest fire that destroyed many things... We barely managed to defend the village... And the barn with the stocks of grain burned down...

“And the mushrooms — also did not grow... Anything that grew in autumn — was immediately eaten by the hungry people... And they did not stock mushrooms, and did not dry herbs...

“In those days, I was not yet the head of our community. But the reserves of the common grains, which were saved from the fire, I stored for the community, and then — distributed equally...

“It’s good that you did not see the suffering in the eyes of mothers, whose children were crying and weakening from hunger... My heart was bleeding then, but I understood that if I gave more immediately, then we all would not be able to survive up to spring...

“Then, I ordered everyone to cook aspen rind and pine needles, as well as thin branches of willow...

“... Your grandmother passed away that year. She saved your father from disease and hunger, but did not survive herself, she fell ill... That’s when I understood a lot about myself, about our people... I then decided to become a healer.”

“But why did God allow this?”

“God teaches people in many different ways. Sometimes gently and quietly, and sometimes — through suffering...”

“It’s good to believe that God will always help: He will send both sustenance and luck... But if people cease to take care to that themselves — then there are bitter lessons...”

“Our leader then understood his guilt and put his hands on himself — closer to spring... And the others did not know how to live...”

“I was then elected...”

“Forgive me, grandpa, I’ll go to the kitchen garden and do everything.”

“And afterwards, can you please teach me to cure diseases? You, in fact, are able!”

“Good! I will teach you! Go!” — Blagoslav said, smiling at his granddaughter.

* * *

The grandfather of Rada was a good healer. He knew a lot about the properties of medicinal plants, and he was able to change much in the bodily energies of a patient, using the power of himself-soul. This knowledge was passed on from generation to generation and was preserved in their community for centuries.

But in the community of Blagoslav, people were sick very rarely. Usually, help was needed only for animals.

Blagoslav willingly, but not in a hurry, began to talk more to his granddaughter about medicinal plants. Together they collected herbs, dried them, and then prepared the extracts.

But he did not hurry to teach Rada the knowledge of the world of the Divine and of various other invisible worlds. And he trained her in the economy of the community and gave her, already, the responsibilities of an adult.

But, nevertheless, Rada was not satisfied with everyday life, conducted almost solely in the care of the household. She again and again sought spiritual knowledge, and sought answers to her questions:

“Grandpa, how can you recognize other people’s thoughts when they do not tell you about it themselves? Can this be learned?”

“Yes, it can. But why should you be able to do this?”

“You were talking about how to live in harmony with everyone around... If I could understand what people think about and what they want — then it will be easier for me to do good to them!”

“A human soul can feel any other soul. Plants, animals, and other people can always be felt by another soul, if that one embraces them with love and attention.

“Let’s go to that birch!”

... They approached a young slender birch tree, which grew nearby on the hillock.

“How beautiful it is! Young, slender, rustling leaves... It is a little older than you. You can embrace

it, and feel what life is like in it! Try — by the soul — to connect with the soul of the birch!”

... Rada gently embraced the white trunk. The birch swayed slightly from the light waves of the wind... The birch trunk, and branches with delicate green leaves, were joyful... There were a lot of branches, and all of them were stretching to the sky, to the sun!

... Grandfather’s voice then came to her as if from afar, even though he stood beside Rada:

“And now — feel its roots, which connect the birch with Mother Earth, which gives food and strength to the body of the birch!”

... Rada was surprised to realize that she could feel the space below the surface of the Earth. And then — it seemed, the whole planet began to be felt as the foundation, from which both Rada and the birch grew! And Rada could feel everything in the life of this birch, and she felt as if — for a while — she herself became this birch tree!

“That’s how a human soul can understand any other creature! In this way, God also can be felt and understood!

“But, to know everything about people like this — it’s not necessary: not everyone wants his or her thoughts to be revealed... Meanwhile, you should study to be friends with trees and birds, and try to understand them! And then, when it is necessary, you will always understand another human!”

... And they went back to the house.

* * *

Rada often asked her grandfather to tell her about God, about how the world is controlled by Him. She wanted to know all about it! And Blagoslav had to cede more and more to her aspirations.

So, one day at dawn they went from the settlement to the forest.

They walked for a long time and did not speak with each other.

Rada thought that grandfather would show her another special place, where they could collect medicinal plants.

They came to a small deep and transparent lake of incredible beauty. The lightly clouded sky reflected in the water.

When they approached, then — at some point — it seemed to Rada that they crossed a transparent border and entered a special magical world. Nothing around had changed outwardly. But suddenly, it was as if the transparent Light, visible only by the soul, intensified... And there arose a kind of thickening silence...

This silence pervaded everything around.

In it, everything seemed to slow down and dissolve in transparent calm...

It was enough to look at a blade of grass — and it seemed that its whole life was on the palm of the soul. Here — a butterfly flew and dropped its proboscis into a flower, enjoying the nectar. Here — a robin flew up and sat quite close to them, looked into Rada's eyes with its curious eyes, and sang. Here — a hare left the forest with a leisurely gait.

Blagoslav and Rada stood quietly, without stirring, and the hare did not notice them. It sat down for a little — and then carried on with its hare deeds...

The sun was rising higher — and dew droplets shone like little suns.

Rada had seen all of this more than once, but... not like this...

Now she suddenly realized that she herself was an integral part of this beautiful world, the same as a dewdrop, a bird, or a hare. And there was God — the Great, Infinite, and Loving One, Who has created all this, Who fills it all with His Life, His Love, Power, and Beauty!

And it could be observed and felt how His life-giving Energy flows in small blades of grass and in huge trees... Everything was pervaded by His Presence...

Rada felt how this Force filled her too! Both body and soul — everything exists only because there is He — the Creator, Parent, Father and Mother!

The *silence* was filled with the presence of the Living, Affectionate, and Infinite in size Ocean of the Universal Consciousness...

Blagoslav began to speak very quietly and slowly:

“You wanted to cognize God, granddaughter... Here — is a special place. Here, it is easy to feel God — if you try to dissolve in the space by the soul and direct your love to Him.

“And it’s not only you who wants to feel God, but also God Who wants to show Himself to you! Look, listen, remember!

“God is everywhere. But here — He is especially clear for us.

“And we need to learn to perceive Him as clearly as this — everywhere and always.

“If you will always be with God, like now, then all your life will be in harmony with Him!

“This is what we should learn to do every day of our lives. And when we learn this completely, we will become *One* with Him — like your father, and like many Others.”

... Rada was glad to see Radomir’s smiling Eyes, His gentle Hands, and then many, many other Divine Faces and Hands that permeated and supported life on the planet and its beauty.

A clear understanding came to her that God is in her, around her, and that He is present in everything and in everyone...

And He is a living, tender Love!

... Rada woke up, as if from a dream, and looked around.

It was the same beautiful lake, grass, and sunlight caressing shining drops of dew...

But that feeling of *Oneness* did not return.

Rada looked at her grandfather.

He stood motionless and, apparently, continued to perceive that World, which for a short time had been perceived by her.

... Then they slowly returned home, collecting herbs.

Rada now knew that she must learn to always feel this feeling of Unity with God. And — to live so: in God and with God in herself!

Chapter Four: **Veliyar's Departure from the Community**

Time passed. Rada grew up, and become more mature. Fourteen springs had already passed! Soon, she will be old enough to be a bride!

She was transforming from a girl — to a beautiful young lady. Like a bud which began to open its tender petals — so her beauty blossomed!

But, the situation in the community, meanwhile, was not going well. The discontent of some members of the community was accentuated by the way in which Blagoslav managed the life of everyone.

And this dissatisfaction was fanned by that same Veliyar, whose meditations Rada also listened to sometimes and whose reasoning she tried to comprehend.

He most of all showed discontent with the strict guidance of Blagoslav. He was a man who had great power: he was a great soul and had a strong body. He was skillful in many ways. People often listened to his words.

And Veliyar wanted the headman to listen to his opinions and to agree with his proposals. He wanted to strengthen his influence in the community.

He saw himself as the successor of Blagoslav after the death of Radomir.

But it did not work out for him! It was only a rivalry and a struggle with the headman for influence on the people of the community.

Situations began to happen more and more often when, contrary to Blagoslav's instructions, he

expressed his opinions only out of protest. He passionately wanted people to follow him and admire his mind. He reluctantly obeyed Blagoslav and did not humble his pride even for the sake of appearance. And more and more often, behind Blagoslav's back, he said that the headman was not right: that he did not make the right decision in such and such a case, and because of that — harm resulted, and then, again, in some other situation — Blagoslav also seemed to be mistaken... Veliyar began to say even completely evil and disgusting things: "Our old man has lost his mind completely! And he has already ceased to understand God!"

Blagoslav observed this for a long time and tolerated it, but now it was time to make a decision.

Blagoslav invited Veliyar to his house. Veliyar entered and bowed slightly. However, he did not bow with an earthly bow, but just slightly bent his back.

"Hello, Veliyar! Please, sit down at the table, and regale yourself!" — Blagoslav greeted.

... Only, there was nothing on the table! It was empty! Even the tablecloth was not laid...

"Do you mock me? No treats have been served!"

"Well then, treat yourself! Take it from the oven! Rada has prepared it!..."

"But in your house — is it appropriate for me to manage?!"

"Well, is that how you really feel? So, is it appropriate then for you to manage in the community? And to manipulate the people behind my back to cause trouble — is it right for you to do this?"

"So? It's not only your community! It is mine too!"

“The community is neither yours, nor mine... We live here together for God, but not separately, living how anyone wants. So, let the community make the choice! If the whole community will elect you, then I will listen to you... But in the meantime, it is I who should be responsible for the orders around here! You do not do right, stirring up the people!”

“But in each of us, God can speak! So, it would be appropriate that they also listened to me!”

“Yes, in each He can speak...”

“So why do you not listen to me? Why should everyone listen only to you forever? I’m fed up with living under your power!”

“I called you here so that I could listen to you, and so that you could listen to me too!

“I do not fulfill your advice, because your “i” distorts God’s thoughts — for the sake of your proud self, which requires respect from others!”

“Well, let the community decide whom to hear and obey! Tomorrow, gather everyone! I will give my speech! But let’s see: who wants your tediousness and coercions, and who needs freedom!”

Veliyar went out without saying goodbye and slammed the door...

... Rada did not hear this conversation. But she felt what was happening.

She was very sensitive to this discord in the community. And she decided to talk with Veliyar herself:

“Why do you, Veliyar, always contend against my grandfather? As if we are not one spiritual family, but people who do not know about God at all?

“There are so few of us in the community... If every one of us will live separately, will it be better?”

“You do not understand, *granddaughter!*” — Veliyar answered with malice. He looked at Rada with a sneer.

He perceived her as the small and unthinking favorite of the headman, although Rada had already matured, and learned a lot, and she tried to find the deepest meaning in everything.

Veliyar continued in a lecturing tone:

“Your grandfather rules people like a despot! He does not listen to anyone, does not trust anyone except himself!”

“But he is responsible for everyone, he cares about everyone!” — Rada tried to object.

“But, what if such care is no longer needed by the people? What if everyone has become tired of living under his commands? And what if there were others who could be responsible for everyone — would it be worse? Since I speak cleverly — why not listen to me, eh?”

“You often say the words of faith, but unkind thoughts are behind your words! If we ourselves will not live together as good friends, then all the best, for which we are trying to live together, will be lost!

“And how can we merge with God by souls, when we do not even agree with each other?”

“How did you get to be so smart? You have already learned lots of beautiful words! Maybe you, too, could talk about the ‘knowledge from time immemorial’...

“We have all already been living separately for some time now! The unity between our people is only in appearance, but we are not really united!”

“But you are the first who calls for this!”

“I call because I’m tired of dancing your grandfather’s dance! Enough! You are not afraid of him, because you’re relatives! He will scold you, but not drive you out! But the rest of us obey out of fear of him. We tremble before him! But I’m not afraid! And with me — all the brave people of the community will leave, if the people do not elect me now as the headman!”

“What’s on your mind?”

“We will do the gathering of the community tomorrow — and you’ll know tomorrow!”

... The next day Veliyar himself began to convene the community to give a speech, fearing that Blagoslav would not allow this.

The people gathered and listened to Veliyar: his calls to elect him as the headman, his accusations against Blagoslav... For all, he now openly expressed it for the first time. And his full desire to rule and manage became visible to everyone...

Blagoslav listened too. He looked at the people’s faces. And waited...

Then he came out, bowing to the earth to the people:

“For many years, I was the headman here... If you do not like it now, then you, the people, may decide! Speak your thoughts!”

... The community members spoke one by one. Many people talked about their discontent, about what is not good in the community, in their opinion... They spoke calmly, judiciously. However, everything was somehow only earthly in their speeches...

But Veliyar was not approved, the people did not want to elect him as the headman. He was told to

his face about his pride, about his desire not to live for all, but to command and control...

Veliyar was very surprised that no one wanted to support him...

He announced:

“I’ll leave with my wife from the community.

If anyone wants to leave with me, then we will make a new free community!”

On that note, it seemed, the conversations ended.

But Rada had a feeling that the most important words were not pronounced.

Blagoslav remained silent, pondering over the accusations, addressed to him, deciding: was he really wrong in something, or were these just the absurd wantings of the people?

Rada went out in front of people and asked for permission to talk.

People looked at her with surprise.

Such gatherings allowed even small children to speak. But in the memory of the community members, children and teenagers only listened, none of them gave speeches.

Rada heard her heart beating in her chest. She took a deep breath — and slowly breathed out the air, as Radomir had once taught her: to cope with excitement.

She began to speak — and was surprised how calmly and smoothly her voice sounded. The words seemed to rise from the *depths* as if by themselves.

“Do we all live in the community together — by our own will? Or did someone force us to do this?”

“Do we only want to save our lives and feed our bodies? Or do we have greater thoughts?”

Rada continued to talk. Her voice was ringing and clear. The fragile girlish body was filled with extraordinary strength, her words penetrated into the souls...

When she finished her short speech about the love for God, about His Presence here in every moment of life — then there was a special silence.

After her, blacksmith Mikula came to speak.

He was of enormous stature, of a stout physique. And even though he was over fifty already, he possessed such power that there was no one stronger in the community, even though there were strong bodies among the community members.

He lifted Rada with his huge arms, kissed her, and stroked her head with a special caress!... It was — as if in her childhood, when young Rada often went to the forge to look at the mysteriously beautiful work of Mikula...

“Yes, you have grown, our clear-headed one!

My beloved people! My dear friends! Through the words of Rada, God enlightens us! For many years, we had been living as one family... But now, we are bogged down in our own worldly affairs and desires, in grievances of empty and pretentious claims to each other — as if we are floundering in a swamp...

“It seems that we all remember about God... But the spiritual aspiration has withered in us, it has been overshadowed with worries about earthly things!

“I’m talking about myself too.

“Although I did not speak about my grievances against Blagoslav, I also had an offense against him. I asked his permission to melt the iron, saying: ‘Un-

der our feet — the ore is good!'. But he forbade this, saying: 'We will become noticeable!'

"I thought about this insult today, instead of thinking about how we should continue the spiritual life in the community: about how to approach God by the souls, about how to increase our love for God in every word and deed!

"When people are united together by spiritual aspirations, by love for God — then small personal disagreements disappear, and God's Love helps each one to cultivate the Divine in oneself and to manifest It in the world around — both in the large and the small! Then — the mutual care increases! And in any deed, beauty and inspiration are manifested!

"Everything in our lives must be for God!

"The unity in love for God of spiritually aspiring people — creates those human relationships which generate an amazing space of common life! In such a life together, it is easier for every soul to move forward! These are the best conditions for spiritual accomplishments, for the growth of souls, and for the improvement of each member of the community!

"If discords and quarrels, resentments, envy, and condemnations of each other even in small things begin, this means that God has ceased to occupy the main place in our lives!

"We all here know about God! About the steps of the Path — we have all the knowledge! But there is no desire in us to learn more! It is as if we were already at the top of the mountain, saw the Sun from there and then went back down to the valley. 'We saw

the Sun — so, this must mean that we have already cognized what was necessary...’

“But this is wrong! Only the one who has become the Source of the Divine Love, by kindling in oneself the *Sun of God* — can become the Son or the Daughter of God!

“And now, let’s take a look: how far we all are from this!

“This is something for us to think about, my beloved people!

“And, we do not have a headman better for us than Blagoslav!”

He said all of this and then bowed to Rada separately, and then separately to Blagoslav, and then to all the community members.

Blagoslav asked for forgiveness from all those whom he had offended, it had never been his wish to offend them. He also thanked them for the words now uttered.

The gathering was over. The members of the community began to disperse to their huts — with their thoughts.

As for Veliyar, everyone, apparently, had completely forgotten about him.

He, angry and annoyed with this, also left...

Chapter Five: **Conversations with Radomir**

Soon, Veliyar and his wife left the community altogether. He thought that along with him other community members would follow, but it turned out that he had expelled only himself.

These were not easy times for the people of the community.

Rada was worried about the departure of Veliyar, feeling like it was a great disaster. Although Blagoslav told her that this was a relief and one should rejoice that Veliyar walked out by his own will. This way, it was not necessary to expel him.

Rada after also talked much with Radomir. Her father praised her:

“Well done, my daughter! You spoke well before the people: you were not afraid to say words from God!”

“How can they be — from God?”

“That’s how it happened: God — through you — spoke, my daughter! And from now on, you will learn how to distinguish the Voice of God in yourself!”

“It’s possible that I did say something, and maybe I even actually did... But what was the point of it?”

“Too many things in our community have now become different...”

“For example, Veliyar and his wife have left...”

“Many people are afraid of my grandfather. They listen, but they themselves do not agree with everything, they think differently... Veliyar — he was not afraid to talk about what he thinks against grandfather, but the anger in him grew, and everything has ended in such a way that I cannot even imagine anything worse...”

“Why do you think that it has ended badly? A lot of people have understood much due to this event! And the lost sensation of always feeling the Presence of God in their lives — they have begun to

resurrect! It's not enough just to remember this, but everyone should feel God by one's heart, by the soul — and live so constantly!

“And people cannot be driven into the Divine Abode by bondage! Everyone has one's own fire in the soul! Such a fire of love can be united with the Divine Universal Fire!

“As long as personal desires are the main rulers of the soul, while self-conceit obscures the understanding of the Divine Will, — that means that such a person is not yet ready to live in Divine Unity!

“... How would you manage the community? What are your thoughts on this?”

“To manage the community — I could not... But I would like to live like You, helping people, and teaching about what I know... Grandfather used to live like that... But now...”

“But now — what? Is God not around?”

“In yourself, my daughter, you have to look for the solutions of problems! Maybe, it would be good if you always shine like a sun — in your heart! And — for all the people you would be an example for imitation in the desire to connect one's life with the Divine Life!”

“I try, but I cannot always do this...”

“Why is it that sometimes, suddenly, it becomes so empty in the soul? I sometimes think that I forgot how to be happy, how to rejoice... I do what I must, but there is no joy in it... It's like I have grown old before my time! It's as if I live in captivity! Like a birch, which is rooted to the ground and cannot escape from the place on which it grew...”

“I need You to be close!”

“But I'm always near!”

“I know this... But it’s not the same as before, when we were near each other with our bodies...”

“You helped, taught, and healed people... And I? I’m learning from my grandfather, it seems it’s necessary, but nobody needs what I now know!...”

“It would be a great joy — to help someone, even just a little bit!...”

“Do you understand? — no one needs this life of mine! And how can I change this?”

“I had thought for a while that if I would love anyone, I’d marry, and I’d give birth to children, then, at least, I would teach them...”

“Well, daughter, does no one take your hand in marriage?”

“No, many would be happy, they were delighted with me... But the heart does not love any of them... And without this — all that makes no sense...”

“Can you please ask grandfather to let me heal people in the villages?”

“I’ll try.

“And you — try to always have joy in the soul: that joy which does not come from an outside source, but is born inside of you and spreads from the spiritual heart!

“You can do it, but you do not always live so! Now you should try to cognize how this joy of yours can help everyone around you to survive in such harsh times!

“You yourself said that when you feel the Father-Svarog, there is no limit to your happiness!”

“Yes, that’s true! You’re right! But this is just not enough to enable me to live this way all the time!... When the meditation ends, in which I was in Mergence with God, — it’s as if the sun, with which I

was shining, is shielded by a cloud — and everything becomes gray and sad around...”

“You said that a birch tree cannot escape from the place where it grew up...”

“So, use that birch as an example! In that place, where God decided to put the birch, it grows, gives away all of its beauty and love and fills the air with its own breathing, this air brings health and strength to all around!

“And if no one admires it, then this does not stop the birch from giving away its beauty and love to the world of God!

“Yes, there are such difficult times of our lives, when it is difficult to find external sources of joy. And when all events are not as we would like... In such spaces of time, you can learn to very deeply connect yourself — as a soul — with God! It is necessary not only to seek for oneself peace and protection in His Love and Infinite Power, by cognizing Him — the Great, the One, the Endless. But we must begin to radiate His Love! In the gray darkness that has thickened around — you can shine like a sun, even if it is just a small one! To this sun, God gives His Power — to shine!

“Such a life with God can transform the energies of sadness — into the radiance of love or into a gentle calm-caress. Try it! If thoughts of sadness prevail — do not just hide them in yourself or drive them away, but rather transform them into love!

“Do you remember? — Grandfather taught you how to dance in the morning: how to greet the sun, how to greet the world with sunny joy! You know — how! And why do you not do it yourself every day?...”

“Begin every morning — with the sunrise dancing in the soul!

“The heart, united with the Divine Love, can shine like the Sun!

“If you have cleared within the body and soul the space for God, and if your love for God is strong and pure — then God fills your spiritual heart! Streams of the Divine Light, like streams of a fountain, can then pour through your hands! Your love and God’s Love unite in your spiritual heart — and, having been merged, they can flow, shine, and radiate!

“Grandfather taught you to meet the sunrise like this in the morning.

“But it is important that the Sun of Divine Love rises inside, in you! And not only at the dawn in the morning it can and must shine! This state must be very firmly connected with oneself-soul within the spiritual heart! Give your heart to God — so that He may shine, love, and create through you!

“Cognize that such a flow of your love, connected with God’s Love, can flow from above or below, forwards from behind, or vice versa, backwards! Learn to direct such flows! Let them stream in all directions at the same time or assemble into a directed Ray! So that — through your body and you as a soul — the Love of God may illuminate this world!

“Learn to pass such Flows through your hands! Then — it will be easy for Me to teach you further!

“Learn to live as a soul that is a huge and free from the body!

“You are used to seeing Me in a small Appearance. But look:”

Radomir showed Rada that the whole space above the surface of the Earth and below it — for huge distances — is enveloped with His Light and Love.

“Well, hug all of Me!”

Rada tried — and understood how small she still is: she could not envelop all that Light of Radomir, and could not sink to the bottom of those *Depths* that He could reveal!

“So, do you see? And you say that you are bored and sad to live, having nothing to do! When, instead, you should learn — while there is time for this!

“Learn to give to all the space around — the harmony, which, in Union with God, you are cognizing yourself! It must always be so, no matter what you do! Even if you are just traveling somewhere, or you are conversing with someone, or you are admiring the beauty of nature, or you are cooking porridge — all this can be illuminated with God’s Light that burns in you-soul!

“It is necessary to offer an opportunity for God to show for people and all beings His Love-Tenderness — through yourself, with yourself! This is how a soul gets Oneness with God!

“And then, you will be able to learn to see, hear, and help people, and prompt to them true decisions — no matter how far away they are!

“Why did you learn to feel the hands of the soul, if these hands are idle now, even though they could become all-embracing? Why did you study to see and warm all beings with the Ray of God’s Love, if now you forget to do this work? Even though the benefit of your work is not great so far, this is not an

excuse for spiritual idleness, saying: ‘I still am not able to do much!’”

“But one does not even need a body for such help! You can do it even better now!”

“But, if I can do it better, does this then mean that you should not even try to master it?”

“No, that wouldn’t be right!”

“And your hour will come, do not rush! Learn — while there is time! But do not waste it in vain!”

... Afterwards, Radomir also had a conversation with Blagoslav.

Blagoslav tried to appear unaffected in public, but what had happened in the community — was hard for him. He felt his guilt.

Radomir was easily perceived by him. He also easily understood what was going to be discussed.

Radomir started:

“Father, weaken your will by which you hold the community! This has become nothing more than an obedience to you!”

“Do you want everyone to defect like Veliyar, who wanted to live by his own free will? No! I will save the community!”

“Don’t get upset!... Do you remember how you taught me as a child — to ride a horse? You talked about how to get along in harmony with the horse:

‘If the rider weakens his will completely and allows the horse to command — it’s worthless!

‘If the horseman only imposes his will and does not feel his horse, it is also worthless: the horse wants to be not a slave, but a friend! And the one who is in slavery — will betray in a difficult moment!

‘One needs to make a horse a friend, to learn to feel it as oneself — to feel every step that it takes, every leap!

‘If the fear of a fiery obstacle or a jump from a height arises in a horse, then an able rider can preempt this fear with his will! One needs to unite the horse’s strength and one’s own strength! It is necessary to unite the will of the horse and the will of the rider!

‘Then such a horse will be a friend: it will not fail both in battle and on the road, it will bear a wounded-insensitive rider from misfortune!’”

“Look at you! You are now without a body — but you still remember!...”

“I remember, father! I remember that because you taught Me wisely! But now, feel that you turn our people into slaves...”

“But people are not dumb animals! Every man is endowed — by God! — with free will! Therefore, when people are deprived of freedom, the feelings of protest grow in them!

“Even difficult and unpleasant work can be done joyfully, if it is done by one’s own will! But, if it is done by coercion, without internal consent — then the work as if becomes slave labor!

“When the understanding of the need for a task is realized by a person, then joy accompanies him or her both in spiritual deeds and secular ones, large and small, daily and hourly!

“But in captivity, even free birds do not sing! Love dies in them! And in people — so much more so!

“And Rada can also be extinguished if you do not support her aspirations for God, if her desire to help people is always suppressed!

“Even she, though she is not afraid, but loves you, but, in fact, she also feels distress from your sternness!”

“But what is her grief?”

“Here’s an example: she sewed for you a shirt and embroidered it, but you did not even try it on!”

“But my old shirt — it still fits!...”

“Yes, it does. But your granddaughter became sad, because you were not pleased!... It is just a trifle, of course. She has long since forgotten about it. But from the little things, much in our lives is formed. She is doing all the good that she can for you, and she is trying to display love, but you — *in exchange*, take all the good from her and only draw attention to drawbacks — and scold her... She does not have enough love! She needs, at least, kind words from you!

“And people in the community have already forgotten when your smile was last seen!”

“What am I to them: a kind of buffoon?”

“No, father! But people have begun to live in fear of you! For their deeds, they wait not for God’s Opinion, but rather they are afraid of your displeasure! This is not good!”

“Yes... Everything is wrong now...”

“Fear destroys love!

“You yourself taught Me how the will of one person, fighting with the will of another person, — gradually destroys and violates the harmony in the space around.

“And you yourself explained how the combination of strength, good intentions, and united winds of love-creating — occurring simultaneously in many souls — multiplies force and energy for actions!

“You taught Me all this! And souls, united in love and work, — they become a great force! It is for this reason that people began to live in communities! And if God is the Chief in that unity — then, well, you yourself know!...

“You care about people, and about the community you live in. Through that — the giving of your love is accomplished. Through that, you yourself feel the benefit of your life in the Service for God. Understand how significant it is! Since our people do not have enough of the same thing!

“It is impossible — to only cultivate perfection for oneself, without ‘souring’, as a result, like cabbage soup, which no one has eaten for many days...

“You, father, compare others with yourself. But not everyone has as strong a love-aspiration for God as you do! God has not yet become so important to all of them that any test seems like a trifle!

“For this reason, people began to live in communities, because it is much easier to burn with love for God alongside others who are also flared up!

“If a campfire burns — then all the twigs and logs in it create a common flame. Just like this, the community should live!

“And if one makes a mess of a campfire, then one by one the twigs will only weakly smolder and die away soon. Maybe only the large logs will burn for a while, but they, too, will extinguish soon...

“Do you remember how in the past you would conduct common meditations? At that time, you

helped everyone to feel the *Unity* in the Divine Light. Do you remember how you gave each person a spiritual assignment, and not just a material one? Can you revive this tradition for the people?"

... Ever since that conversation, Blagoslav changed in many ways. He both caressed Rada often, and began to manifest less austerity with the people, he also explained now: the reasons why he decided something in a certain way and for what it is needed.

He brought back the custom of common meditations. And the love for God and the love between people — strengthened.

Once again, peace and joy returned to the community.

Chapter Six: **Meeting with Alexey**

A few more years passed.

Rada was now learning a lot from Radomir. She studied to feel the Will of God in the soul and to manifest It. She studied — the soul's work in mastering the new. She studied — to see and to feel by herself-soul the space at a great distance. She studied — how to help people in the same way that non-incarnate Divine Souls do without bodies.

Rada asked her grandfather and, with his permission, went to heal the ill in the remote villages. Blagoslav sometimes allowed his granddaughter to do it. Although he was afraid for her, he understood that, without practice, she would not be able to be sure of her new knowledge and skills.

The young healer surprised people by coming, uncalled by anyone, to the house where trouble was. And where she lived or where she came from — no one knew.

One day in late autumn, Blagoslav and Rada collected rare healing plants. They went far away from the place where the community lived. And they spent the night in the forest near the campfire.

Rada before falling asleep had sunk into a transparent silence and calm. But... in this silence, there clearly and strongly sounded a call for help from a strong and clean soul.

“Grandpa, do you hear? Someone has gotten in trouble! Maybe it is one of ours?”

“I hear... But it does not come from one of ours! So, sleep!”

“Grandpa, please, let me go to see what has happened there!”

“No! That village is too close to our community, we should not be there!”

“The fear of death should not be in the soul of a worthy person: death exists only for bodies!”

“We should not risk our lives without sense!”

“Well, grandpa! How can we not help?”

“Be silent now! God does not send difficulties and challenges to people just so that we can find solutions for them...”

“Sleep!”

... But Rada could not fall asleep. That call to God for help was so easily perceived and bright! And that soul was so bright and pure!

Rada began to look at the situation carefully with clairvoyance. She saw a sick boy and a young

man who tried to heal the child and asked for the help of God in that healing.

And Rada had an understanding that she should go and help, because God blesses this.

She called Radomir and asked for advice.

“It’s up to you, my daughter! No one has the right to decide instead of you here. But very much in your further life depends on this choice of your will.”

He said this, hugged and kissed her gently, then left.

Rada had to make this choice by herself.

She hesitated a little more... She checked: was what guided her choice here neither her personal desire to help everyone, nor the fear of disobeying her grandfather, nor the fear of compromising the secluded life of the community members — but only God’s Will? She felt that God allows her to help that soul.

And she decided!

She rose quietly, so as to not wake Blagoslav.

She whispered: “Forgive me, grandpa, if I misunderstood God, if something bad happens to me!”.

... She walked for a long time — quickly and easily, as if flying on wings. The stars shone in the sky, the moon was bright and illuminated the inconspicuous animal paths — as if the way before her spread out by itself.

And the call for help was steady, strong, and unselfish. Like a fire burning in space, not fading even for a minute. It was very easy to see the direction to go.

In the morning, when the sun had already risen brightly, Rada reached the desired village and found that house.

A teenage girl opened the door. She was not afraid of the stranger, as if she was waiting for a Divine miracle, which was about to be accomplished.

Rada saw a sick boy in the bed, and a man praying on his knees in a monk's vestment.

"Is this a mistake caused by my self-will?..."

She swept aside, like a gray shadow, the wave of fear that tried to come: "If the death of the body must be taken, then it is necessary to calmly and dignifiedly undergo it, as my father had once done!".

She looked again by the soul at that man.

There was no feeling of danger coming from him.

The Light of God in his spiritual heart burned brightly! He tried to direct the Light through his hands. But he did not quite understand how to do it. He tried to heal the boy, but it did not work out for him...

A tearful woman, standing on her knees before the icons, stood up towards Rada. There was no strength or hope in her, there was only confusion in her thoughts, depression, and a feeling of her own guilt in everything...

She was barely able to stand on her feet and was unaware of what was happening.

Rada bowed to all with an earthly bow. She said that she would cure the boy.

None of those present were surprised either at the arrival of Rada, or about how she learned about the illness of the child.

Rada felt clearly the Presence of the Divine Power in herself. Calm was in the soul from the understanding that she has the right now to pour out this Divine Power, and it is necessary for both this

monk, and this girl, and this unfortunate woman — to be the eyewitness...

Rada put her hands on the boy and asked the Divine Light to spill, washing away all the dark clots of painful energies from the child's body, restoring purity and bringing the body back to health.

... When she left, she looked again at the monk. He slept on the bench in the stoop...

A calm and happy face... The soul was dissolved in the Divine Light, Which filled all the space around. He had dissolved himself in the Light — as if it was his habit.

Rada had not seen for a long time such beauty and purity of soul!...

And his face was calm and beautiful! Soft light strands of slightly curly hair... A happy smile touched the lips of the sleeper...

... Rada went back, but she kept remembering this person. A monk, a priest — but with such purity and strength of the soul!... "I never thought before that it was possible!"

She went to Blagoslav, made her excuses, and told about everything.

Grandfather listened silently in discontent, and frowned.

But Rada still decided to ask:

"Let me talk with this man!"

"No! Forget it! Enough of your disobedience! Trouble can come from what you have already done!..."

... Rada obeyed.

She did not try to meet with him...

She was just happy that there is such a soul on the Earth — so bright and loving! And this knowledge now illuminated her life.

Rada had fallen in love.

Love dissolved in the soul unstopably: like the spring waters, like the life-giving force of the awakening of nature!

Joy and tenderness now flooded everything around, pouring out from the soul by transparent radiant streams! It was — unstopable! It was — the disclosure of the mysterious depths, in which this tenderness is kept until the spring comes to the soul in its time — and the flower of love dissolves!

Chapter Seven: **New Meeting**

Ever since the day when Alexey saw the miraculous healing accomplished through Rada, he hoped for an opportunity to meet her again and find out from her how she had acquired this skill. But no one knew anything about the mysterious healer and had never before seen her.

Over time, Alexey sometimes even began to feel that everything that had happened was only a wonderful vision, revealed by God.

He lived — as before. In his solitary predestination before God, he tried to be like the elder Nicholas and envisioned a similar future for himself...

Autumn and winter passed... And spring has come.

The snow had already disappeared altogether. Nature awakened vigorously this year.

* * *

And one day that spring, Alexey got lost in the forest.

This happened to him for the first time! He had already been living for so many years in the taiga! He always easily noticed and remembered the road! No matter how far away he went, he always knew the right direction to go, and how to get back!

But now he walked and walked, and was exhausted and could not even imagine which direction to go to now. In the evening, the presence of a nearby wolf pack became apparent. Alexey kindled a campfire. The wolves did not approach, being afraid of the fire, and then they completely disappeared.

He spent the night by the fire...

... The morning was clear, everything was shining and sparkling in the light of the rising sun!

“How stupid it will be just like this — for nothing, not for anyone — to perish among this wonderful beauty!” — Alexey thought. In this way, he calmly thought about it, without fear, without sadness.

The words of prayer flowed easily:

“God, lead me out! Show me the way — if it is Your Will!”

He had plunged himself into the inner silence — and then walked confidently and quickly in the way which, it seemed to him, God directed him to go.

* * *

Two strong young men, protecting the peace and security of the community, noticed a monk who

was heading straight to their settlement — so quickly and confidently as if he knew the way.

After consulting each other, they decided to tie him up and lead him to the headman Blagoslav to find out where he came from, what this scout was up to, and what to do with him.

With a canvas bag over his head, for him not to notice the road, Alexey was led for some time with his hands tied. He did not even have time to see those who had tied him up. They acted cohesively and dexterously, they did not beat him and did not cause him any pain. They walked in silence.

Because their steps had slowed down and because voices began to be heard around — Alexey guessed that they had come to a village.

He was removed from the bag — and saw the people around.

In front of him stood a tall, white-haired and bearded old man, who was mighty despite his old age, and who was holding a staff in his hand. Alexey, was put before this old man — who was apparently the headman of this community. It seemed like a court.

The old man looked at Alexey for a while in a special way, as if he were looking through him, then spoke to the two tall guys who were still holding Alexey by the shoulder on either side.

“What have you done? Why did you bring him here? He is not a peeper, he does not think evil! He is not even afraid! What to do with him now?”

“Forgive us, Blagoslav! We did not know what to do: he went straight to us, as if he knew the way. So, we decided to lead him to you...”

... The people, who had gathered around, were sympathetic and calm. They looked silently at what was happening and waited for the decision of the headman.

And then, suddenly, Alexey saw among the surrounding community members... that healer!

Everything flared up inside of him with great joy!

He thought: "So that's why God led me here!"

Alexey noticed that the headman could perceive everything clearly. It seemed like he could read the thoughts of other people like an open book:

"That's your monk, granddaughter!... His heart is open, and his thoughts are pure! Go to lay the table, Rada! We will all gather: to determine what to do with him."

Rada bowed to the headman, gave her glance to Alexey with caress, warmth, and encouragement. And then she went to the hut.

The majestic old man looked again at Alexey, as if piercing through him with his look:

"You will be our guest, Alex! Because God brought you here!

"My name is Blagoslav, I am the headman of this community and Rada is my granddaughter."

... A barely noticeable smile touched his lips when, at the name of Rada, joy once again stirred in Alexey — from understanding the miracle and the Providence of God!

And already addressing those who held Alexey on both sides by the shoulder, Blagoslav said:

"But untie him at least, you fools!"

... Then he went, without looking back, to the hut, confident of complete obedience of all those around.

* * *

They sat down at a long table covered with an unbleached canvas.

Many adult members of the community gathered at the table: both men and women. Rada also sat next to her grandfather when she finished serving.

The food was simple: bread, vegetables boiled with fresh herbs, sauerkraut, and salted mushrooms.

They ate in silence, without hurrying.

Afterwards, Rada brought brewed up scented herbs and honey.

After drinking, the headman spoke:

“You, Alex, probably think that you’ve fallen into a community of the Old Believers. And that we are hiding from punitive troops in order to survive and to preserve our faith. Right? Well, say out loud everything, how you think, what you have in your heart — so that everyone here knows about your thoughts!”

... Alexey remembered the ashes, remembered the dissenters burned alive, and he wanted these people not to suffer such a terrible fate.

He spoke warmly and sincerely:

“There is no difference in how to fold the fingers when making the sign of the cross! We all raise our prayers to Jesus and His Heavenly Father, in Whose Power are all our lives! There are only differences in rituals! And this is baseless! Because of

this, life is not worth both taking away and giving away!...

“I can baptize all of you according to the new rites — and then, there will be no oppressions and persecutions in your lives!

“Jesus commanded that people love one another — for all to be like brothers or sisters before Him!

“So why do we split ourselves there, where peace and faith must be clear?!”

... Blagoslav smiled:

“Did you see and hear these things yourself? Life, as it turns out, can also truly be lived in this way!...”

Then he said to Alexey:

“You have not yet understood everything about us, Alexey!... We are not Old Believers!...

“In Russia, before Christianity, people also lived, serving God!...”

“Are you Pagans?”

“Even before Christianity had come to Russia, the real knowledge about God began to be replaced...

“The sovereigns commanded the people to make idols, depicting ‘gods’, and ordered them to perform rituals in front of those idols — so that the people lived in submission and fear of disobedience.

“This is how Paganism appeared.

“Those sovereigns confirmed Paganism — instead of the Knowledge, which people had directly received from God.

“In order to validate the sovereigns ‘order’ — the people were told to sacrifice to those ‘gods’ and to the priests...

“Due to this, many people have forgotten how to see and feel the real Living God!

“Reality was replaced by idols, made of wood or cut out of stones...

“Communion with God had been forgotten...

“A few Magi preserved the memories of that Knowledge and of those great skills. But they disappeared into the forests... They began to be called sorcerers...

“You are now among such ‘sorcerers’, Alex! And now, you must make a choice: whether to renounce your faith for the sake of the Great Knowledge — or not to renounce...

“Okay, that’s enough, we have talked...

“Go in peace, friends!

“And you, Rada, make a bed for our guest for the night and answer his questions!”

Chapter Eight: **In the Community**

Rada led Alexey into a small hut.

Alexey asked:

“Why did the headman, your grandfather, tell me that I must decide whether to renounce the faith?”

“Don’t be afraid, Alexey! You do not have to utter any words of renunciation, or perform some new rituals!

“Rites of all kinds, renunciations, new baptisms... — they are all just human conventions... You yourself said that at the table! The Living Knowledge,

the Living God — does not fit in human ceremonies and rules!

“You do not have to renounce your faith in Jesus! Jesus — He actually lived on the Earth and taught the Divine Knowledge!

“But if you want to know what are the laws of the Divine life, according to which everything in all worlds has its own being and development, — then you will have to understand that the ministers of the church will consider all of this as sins and heresy, because in the church books the Teachings of Jesus Christ were not saved in its fullness!

“Yes, there is much in the Teachings of God that is not written in books!

“Even if you learn all that Jesus knew and could do, then, do you think that the *ritualists* will consider you as a saint? Do you think that they will listen to you? And if you will start to preach that every person — according to the commandments of Jesus — should learn to live so as to become Perfect, like the Heavenly Father is Perfect, — what do you think: what will they say about you then? In what will they accuse you?”

“Does this mean that you know everything that Jesus taught?” — Alexey raised a clear, radiant gaze to Rada. He now listened to the most important things for him in her words.

Rada smiled tenderly and gently:

“But not only Jesus taught about God! Many were Those Who were like Jesus! And They came to the Earth in different ages — to tell people about the Single Teachings of God!

“And there were times in Russia when very many people lived according to the Divine Laws, not

just one Divine Messenger Who spoke to people the words of God... People knew about God, heard Him, saw Him, understood Him, and learned from Him to master the skills and strengths, which God granted to each person — as an opportunity! But nowadays, most people do not even know about these opportunities...”

“Can you...? Do you know everything about how to do what Jesus knew to do?”

“No, I cannot yet do everything... But I’m studying...”

“But you healed the boy! You, in fact, healed him by the Power of God! Right?”

“Yes, Alexey. I already know it in part — to manifest His Power through this body.

“The most important thing that I am learning to do now is to live in such a way that I and the Heavenly Father, as Jesus said, become *One*. And — so that, what Jesus explained, may become the essence of the soul...”

“Tell me: what is your faith?”

“It would be wrong to tell about it only in words. It is not a faith at all, it is life itself in the union with the Divine world and with the earthly world created by God!

“You have faith in what is written in the New Testament. You have read it — and believe that all was namely so. It is because you have been taught this way: you were told that this was so — and you do believe. Much of what was written therein, in fact, was. And some things —were composed later. And the majority of it was not recorded at all...

“I, after I saw you then, decided to read everything that is written in the Bible. I read the Gospels

especially carefully. I was reading — and as if watching — as if it were existing now — everything that had happened there then. And I listened to the explanations from Jesus Himself.”

“Can you see Jesus?”

“I can... And you can also see the Light of God, see Jesus! For you, sometimes it so happens! True?”

“I do not know... I thought that those were illusions... I did not dare to believe that this was a reality...”

“You told our people about your faith — and Jesus was near! Did you feel Him yourself?”

“I did not see Him... I did not think that it could be so...”

“But my grandfather — saw. And others, who already know how, also saw. They have recognized the purity and sincerity of your words — thanks to this!

“You asked about our faith.

“For you, God is Jesus Himself, also — the Heavenly Father, also — the Kingdom of Heaven, which only after parting of the soul with the body can be cognized and gained by the soul if it deserves that...

“And for me, everything seems to be different. In everything — I see and feel the Divine Presence: both in birches and pines, and in grass blades and in flowers, and in that Power of God Which quickens all this and even the bodies — both yours, and mine, and of other creatures!

“I see this Force-Light by the soul. And I see, too, Those Who are sending this Force to this world.

There are a lot of Them! They can also be called Gods! They are like Jesus!

“Jesus taught many people! But back then almost no one understood Him, except for a few Disciples. And now — even less people understand the life of Jesus, about His Teachings.”

“And you? Do you understand everything?”

“Do not get excited, Alexey! Much that I myself know and understand, I’m ready to tell you without secret. But explanations only in words are of little importance! They would only shake your faith...”

“If you want to, I’ll teach you everything that I can.

“When you will not only hear my words, but when you learn to see and act by the free soul, — then everything will be perceived differently!

“But — you must decide: will you want that?”

“I want it! How could it be otherwise?! All my life I’ve dreamed about it! I asked Jesus for it!”

“And will you not be afraid that I will enchant you?”

“I will not be afraid! I know that God brought me here to you!

“And will you teach me to heal any illnesses miraculously, like Jesus?”

“I will teach all that I have already cognized... But only — not everyone should be healed from all diseases. Jesus, too, did not heal all the ill!

“Jesus — healed by the Power of the Heavenly Father. In order to heal so, it is necessary that it should be, as Jesus explained it: ‘The Father Who abides in Me, He does the deeds...’.

“I will teach this, as best I can.”

“Can you talk with Jesus?”

“I can...”

“Then ask Him...”

“Wait, Alexey!... If you want, then afterwards you will have conversations with God yourself! And then there will be no doubt then in the answers!

“And now you need to wash your body.”

Rada extended Alexey the white shirt embroidered on the collar and sleeves with a pattern, trousers, puttees⁹, and a woven belt:

“Here are some clean clothes for you... I hope that they will fit!

“And I will wash your vestment and dry it...”

Alexey was confused:

“It would be better if I did it myself! Please show me — where?”

“Mikula, our blacksmith, has already heated up the bathhouse, let’s go!

“And I’ll make your bed for meanwhile.”

... After the bath, Alexey, dressed in the clean clothes, accompanied by Mikula, returned to the hut, where Rada was waiting.

He wanted to ask a lot more, but the fatigue of the last few days took its toll. Alexey fell asleep in a blissful and happy sleep.

He dreamed of Rada, her eyes, her hands, her tender voice...

... In the morning he confirmed his firm desire to learn.

“That is so good!” — Rada did not hide the joy, which filled her heart, nor her happiness from what was happening!

⁹ A “puttee” is a long strip of cloth wound spirally around the leg from ankle to knee (Note from the translator).

She smiled to Alexey:

“Let’s go to Grandpa! It is necessary for him to know about your decision. But he will not immediately induct you into the community. It is necessary to think: how to arrange everything...”

* * *

Blagoslav greeted Alexey gently:

“Well, sit down, guest! I’m glad that you want to study! You are not afraid!

“And did you think about how you will live from now on?”

“I do not know yet... It’s as if the old life is over, and the new one has not started yet...”

“And why is life given to man, in general? Did you think about that, Lexey¹⁰?”

“I thought about that a lot, but I could not find an answer... It is evident that this is why I sought the answers from God, but not from people...”

“You speak well!

“Okay, we need to think about our affairs now.”

... Blagoslav explained about the difficulties that they need to resolve in order to carry out the desired plan:

“We now have to live in a cruel world, Lexey!

“Now, if, knowing about our community, you were to express your opinion on us in the confession or elsewhere, in this case, you will betray us to those who seek to eradicate all people who do not believe

¹⁰ Here, “Lexey” is being used kindly as a nickname for Alexey (Note from the translator).

as they believe, who do not glorify God, as they do... What will happen then?

“And here, in the community, to stay forever — is dangerous too... You, perhaps, will be searched for...”

“I will not betray you ever! Even if they torture me! I would rather die!”

“A person does not always know about oneself, what level of pain or fear of new tortures he or she can endure... The executioners are now inventive...”

* * *

Blagoslav, Alexey, Rada, and the community members discussed for a long time, how Alexey's training could be better arranged.

As a result, they decided that Alexey would return to his hermitage, so as not to cause even small suspicions among people in the village. About his absences, he can warn other people beforehand — so that they will not try to find him. In those days, there were monks who went to live in caves or in forest shelters — through even more ascetic life — to approach God. That's how Alexey was to explain about himself.

They also decided that Rada will teach him, without bringing him into the community without a special need. She will find a place for meetings, where it is inconspicuously possible to tell and show Alexey the most important things. And then it will be determined, how to continue to be with him in the future...

Chapter Nine: **Training from Rada**

Now the education from Rada has become the most important thing in the life of Alexey.

Everything has changed radically for him.

He had previously felt the wonderful moments of Divine Touch to the soul, but they were only brief. The desperate struggle for a new acquisition of these moments and the search for ways to approach God — have now given way to the direct sensation of His Existence! The miracle of the Presence of Living God has become the reality!

... Alexey took off his monastic vestments and left them in the hollow of a large tree, then put on the white shirt stored there, which had been embroidered by Rada. Then he walked for a long time in the forest, but the road did not seem long. It was as if wings grew behind his back!

Rada, too, filled with happiness and joy, came to their agreed place near the lake — the place where Blagoslav had once explained to Rada what it means *to live in harmony with God*.

Here now was their refuge — a shelter of branches, built from a huge fallen spruce. In the summer, such a structure was quite convenient, so as to shelter from the rain, relax, and spend the nights.

An intimacy such as the one between a husband and a wife, between Alexey and Rada was not, because Alexey even drove away such thoughts from himself, because he considered it as a sin, as a great violation of the monastic vow.

But the Love of God lit up everything in their lives and embraced those two souls, who rushed to the Creator to merge with Him in His boundless Love!

Alexey seemed to have disappeared from the world of matter and was born in another world — paradise. For him, the infinitely beautiful space of love, beauty, and the full understanding without the use of words was opening! The Great Presence of the Divine — pervaded everything! This previously hidden or only felt for a few brief moments Divine world, became every day more real and clear!

Their shelter of branches stood not on the shore by the water, where there was an open space on the sandy shallows and a grassy lawn, but a little further away, in the forest, in a place hidden from casual human views.

Every morning seemed special, new, and beautiful to them!

And every day brought them closer to the fullness of the perception of Divine Existence!

*** * ***

And on this day, in the morning, when the sun was just beginning to give the clouds a slightly golden color, they ran along the path to the lake to meet the dawn.

Rada ran so easily that she did not even run out of breath. It was as if she did not run, but flew, just slightly touching the ground with her feet.

But Alexey was out of breath after running.

It was uncustomary but always joyful for him to do whatever Rada planned.

She looked at him affectionately:

“Now — let’s bathe!”

They splashed like children in the cool, fresh water of the lake.

Then Rada lay on the surface of the water, arms spread out, with a blissful smile of happiness on her beautiful face.

Alexey was admiring her.

He was no longer embarrassed, did not look away, as had done on the first days. He no longer considered it shameful to see her naked beauty.

*** * ***

The very first conversation on this topic had been remembered by Alexey very brightly. It was as if the understanding of the moral foundations, which, since childhood had been habitual, and which had previously seemed to be unshakable, — had been turned upside down.

At that time, Rada asked:

“Will you let me not wet my shirt today, bathing?”

“Of course! I will turn my head away, and I will not look!”

... Rada thought for a few moments, as if deciding internally: was it time for an explanation? Then she took Alexey by the hand.

“Let’s sit here, we’ll talk...”

“Why do you think that you or I should be ashamed to see the bodies which God gave us?

“Why don’t you feel ashamed to see flowers that have exposed their beauty? And — trees? And — birds and other animals in their natural appearance?”

“Why did feelings of shame appear among people when being before a naked body? God created these bodies, as well as everything around! Who invented this nonsense? Even in your Bible, it is written that Adam and Eve did not know the shame of naked bodies!”

“But then there was the Fall...”

“Yes, people really did fall... But it was not as it is described in the biblical legends!

“This can happen at every moment of life of each soul! It is a choice between love and joy — and greed, violence, cunning, anger, fear, and dependency!

“To live in shame, fear, hatred, and in other vices — this, in fact, is the fall!

“But to contemplate the beautiful and natural — is not a sin at all!

“Why must we, the children of God, live in these vices and in sins, if the paradise, created by God, exists right here in us and around us? It is necessary — only to enter into it and learn to abide in it!

“Why should we follow the rules of sinful life, invented by people thoughtlessly; to be ashamed of what is not at all embarrassing, and, conversely, to consider as natural that which is vile and nasty?!”

“Now, think for yourself: most people live, considering it their inalienable right to fight for some fictitious ideas! Or — to kill other people out of vengeance or ‘in the name of faith’! Or — for the sake of something else... People kill and deceive — for power or wealth, or to avenge offenders! And they call all this normal, and often even consider such actions as their ‘exploits’, and are proud of them!

“My grandfather, however, says that wars teach some souls to be stronger, braver, to sacrifice their own lives for others... I do not know, maybe he’s right...”

“My spiritual mentor, the elder Nicholas, also spoke about this: that, apparently, people need to suffer themselves, in order to understand the pain of others and the perniciousness of hatred — for its bearers. And — to want then, with all the heart, with all the strength of the soul, to strive for God’s Love!”

“Yes, that’s true. But the choice, of how to live, depends most often on the people themselves!

“There is a lot in life that is accepted by most people to be correct... although the ability to think and love, if these functions of souls are already developed, should point to the opposite...”

“Such a life, held down by coarse emotions — turns the lives of these people into hell on the Earth!

“It is even considered that purity and sanctity for people... are impossible... And if it’s possible, then they exist in the mortification of the flesh and the prohibition of joy and bliss!

“Or, for example, it turns out that, by using this logic, all children are conceived and born in sin and vice! And ‘pure’ is only a conception, which miraculously does not involve uniting bodies!

“And almost all people now feed their bodies with dead bodies of animals — and do not see anything wrong in that! They do not see the terrible consequences of this diet, from which the souls of people more and more acquire the worst predatory qualities!

“Wild beasts-predators hunt to survive — in accordance with their nature. But people kill, first of

all, from gluttony, even though there is no vital necessity for them in this.

“I will not continue this topic!...

“Think at your leisure about all this and about many other things like that: for example, what are your ‘beliefs’ about right and wrong, which are just human ‘inventions’, which are passed down from generations to generations? And what moral principles — in your understanding — can you call the truth, which pleases God?

“I understand, Alexey, that right now, right away, it’s not easy for you to throw off the burden, introduced into you, which consists of false thoughts and habits! Everything is so turned inside out in the minds of people that it turns out that being in suffering is righteousness, and living in bliss is a sin!

“Think also: there is a great difference between life in lust and other passions that strengthens the *self* in man through his or her own desires to possess what is desired, — and, on the other hand, a life of light and purity in joy and goodness!

“An example of this can be found in food: if gluttony is unreasonable for the pleasure of the flesh — then this, indeed, is a sin that causes both the body and soul harm!

“But one can eat — in moderation — tasty and healthy food, filled with vitality of plants, created by God for human nutrition!

“The same is true in everything else.

“You can enjoy the cleanliness and health of the bodies! You can admire the beauty of nature! All this bears bliss, which brings souls closer to the state of paradise.

“Moreover, if such states become habitual to the soul, then around such a person there is a space similar to that which is called paradisiacal.

“One, who experiences and carries such bliss within and around oneself, raises a heartfelt gratitude to God for everything, — then God’s reciprocal Love, with each such thanksgiving, multiplies one’s happiness!

“Thus people in Russia lived before: simply, cleanly, joyfully! But you can live the same way now! However, you should not irritate the crowds of unreasonable people!

“I must teach you such a purity of thoughts, emotions, and bodily energies!

“Through this, a soul approaches God! And then such a person can easily communicate with God: to see and hear God!

“I’m sorry: I probably, told you too much right now...”

... Suddenly Rada smiled calmly:

“If you’re still embarrassed — then you can turn your back!”

... She calmly took off her clothes and, without turning around, entered the lake’s water.

At that time Alexey was very embarrassed, seeing the beautiful slender body of Rada.

But she, on the contrary, — filled everything around her with peace and joy!

He made an effort to undress too...

It seemed to him that the heavy layers of false prohibitions and fears were removed — along with clothing — from the soul... And the soul — was exposed before God!

This state did not leave him, and when they were already dressed, Rada returned to Alexey's training.

“Look: all the energies in the body can be made by a person — crystal clear, mobile and radiant: such as this water, sparkling in the sun's rays!”

... Rada again went to the water, took in a handful of the lake water, raised it up — and let the sunlight turn the trickles, pouring from her palms, into lively bright and joyful gold!

“Right now, the only place in your body where purity and an open space for God have already been opened — is in that place where the spiritual heart is located. All other energies in the body are as if decayed and slowed down. And there are still a lot of congestions for God's Light in your body! This can be changed by very simple actions, but not at once, of course.

“For example, let the body bathe in a stream of Divine Light that flows from above like a waterfall and can wash our bodies both outside and inside. Try it with me!”

Rada raised her hands, as if catching invisible streams with her palms.

“You, too, ask the Light of God to pour and fill our bodies! God is always nearby!

“You can — with prayer — send your message to the Holy Spirit if this is how you are accustomed to doing it.

“The main thing is that you must open yourself with love towards this Divine Light!

“Thus your own body can be healed. And then I'll teach you how to help others!”

... Alexey tried.

He saw a radiant Stream of the Living Light in Which their bodies stood. The Light poured, filling with Purity and Bliss!

Washed by this Light, Alexey experienced an unprecedented joy and strength to live, to love, and to cognize the Divine world! Even the smallest parts of the body seemed to be smiling, shining from the Touches of the Divine Purity!

Rada's voice sounded in this Light:

“And now — give that Bliss to all creatures around! Let — the river of Light, coming from your spiritual heart, as if flow more and more, farther and farther! The light of the Holy Spirit and you, as a soul, now are in the Unity! And this united Love can be given to the whole world!”

... It was amazing! Alexey stood in the Stream of Light and... flowed together with It! The Flow became wider! As if in a channel of a huge river of Light, there was a tiny body, but Alexey was not a body, he was *One* with the colossal Stream of Divine Love and Bliss!

The Flow of Love and Power from the Great Source was inexhaustible, endless, and gentle!

Alexey could not stay in this Unity for long...

But that unforgettable state was experienced by him, cognized, and imprinted!

“It's clear that John-the-Baptist baptized people like that!” — Alexey thought, giving thanks to God!

Rada, as if answering his thoughts, said quietly:

“Yes, you were baptized now in the radiant Flow of the Holy Spirit... But this is only the very beginning... The cognized states do not become natural

states by just doing them only one time! And for the energies of the body — even more time is needed for the transformation to take place... Many times this must be repeated so that both the soul and the body become like this Light forever!”

* * *

After the morning bathing and the repetition of previous exercises or the mastering of new ones — Rada and Alexey often talked.

For example:

“One’s life and food should be natural and harmonious! A long debilitating fast is not good for the body.”

“But when I fast for a long time, I feel that God becomes closer!”

“Yes, it is sometimes very good to cleanse the flesh with starvation. But the torture of the flesh is a sin!

“The energy that is received — with the help of the body — from food is needed for the life of the soul and its growth.

“Also — from both the light of the sun and the flame of a campfire, a person can receive energy. This is a matter of skill: to what extent one can retain this energy in oneself and use it.

“Plants, having transformed in themselves the energies received by them from the Sun and the Earth, make these energies suitable for human nutrition.

“One can transform in oneself those energies — into the heart love and the further growth of the soul.

“But for this, the body must be clean not only outside, but also inside.”

... Rada explained further about all the other energy centers in the human body, and also about the purpose they have and how they can be cleansed.

“There are seven centers in the human body and special channels that connect them. The spiritual heart is also such a center, the most important for the soul that is seeking the unity with God!

“But one can learn to purify the other centers as well — and direct the Divine Light, the Divine Power through them. Thus one can rid oneself of illnesses, and can help other people in this.”

“It would be wonderful to explain all this to all people! Many would understand, and they could live otherwise!...”

“But how to explain?... Almost no one wants to listen!

“My father tried to teach many...”

“Tell me about your father!...”

... Rada told Alexey a lot.

She taught him all the new techniques that allowed him to cleanse the soul and body, to see as a soul. These were not just words. But the Divine Bliss and Love filled both the soul and the body. The blissful Stream touched and filled up every cell of the body! In It — renewed by the Purity of the Flow, the bodily energies also changed. It was a new state of flesh, which, as it turned out, can be transformed and filled with the Divine Light!

Rada explained how both the soul and body can be connected with the Life of God.

She also taught how to merge with the beauty and dissolve in the silence of nature. She taught — how to cleanse the body's energies by the images of the campfire's flame, when in the evenings they made camp and sat for a long time in the radiance of the rising flames...

* * *

Once, when Alexey was engaged in a small repair of their shelter, damaged by strong gusts of wind at night, a huge bear came to them.

Alexey did not notice the beast until it was already very close.

According to the stories, he knew how dangerous it was.

Alexey grabbed one of the stakes supporting the branches of the shelter.

He shouted to Rada:

“Run away!”

But Rada, on the contrary, quickly but very calmly came up to Alexey, hugged him, obscuring him by her body. She very strongly wrapped one hand around his body, and with the other — she clasped the wrist of Alexey's hand, in which there was the stake. She pressed her cheek to his face...

Everything in him seemed to be frozen.

It was not the embrace of a woman caressing a man... It was something completely different.

Rada as if “pushed” him beyond the ordinary world — into another reality, where there is no fear, death, or pain, but only Divine Light and Love.

It seemed to Alexey that time had stopped or very much slowed down. He was... stunned by the Silence... He saw the whole world *otherwise*...

The Silence was all-embracing. All the sounds, which sometimes reached the ears, were as if superimposed on the Total Silent Essence of the universe... Everything was happening... inside this Silence...

It was the first time that he saw the world around him — by the soul. Everything in that world lived according to the Perfect Laws...

He saw a kind of power-light rising up the tree trunks; he could look at a flower and notice the movement of light inside the petals and stamens... He felt at once birds, trees, grass... All this became... a part of himself. The Bliss enveloped him... Radiant streams of energy flowed in everything: in his body, in the body of Rada, in the trees, and in the grasses... The same force-light was slowly pouring in the body of the bear...

The huge beast once more looked with some suspicion in their direction, and then, as if not noticing the two people who stood embracing just a few steps away, calmly passed very near along its bear path.

Rada for some time restrained Alexey in that marvelous state. He no longer felt himself to be separate... He was — a part of the Divine Life.

“What was that?”

“The Life...”

“This is the Life, what it should be, as it was originally conceived on the Earth by the Creator...”

“Did you make us invisible? Or do you know how to command animals?”

“No, not really...” — Rada tried to find the words: — “The bear did not feel danger from us or fear in us... We were a part of the Primordial Harmony, the World of the Harmony, which was created by the Creator.

“It’s more difficult with people. They forgot how to feel this Unity: the Unity of everything that is alive and embodied — and the Creator...”

“And forest animals, which are kept by people in captivity, too, may not understand... Bears, which are held in chains, will no longer be stopped like this either...”

“All worlds of the universe — with different states of souls in them — exist right here, now. This exists both here, where we stand, and everywhere.

“Both the dark worlds of sorrows, melancholy, hatred, fear, and also bright paradisiacal worlds of joy, and the world of the Holy Spirit, and the world of the Primordial Divine Consciousness — all of them are right here!

“When one is in this or that state of self-soul, then in front of this one, spaces of this or that layer of the universe are opened. You seem to swim into the world, which is consonant with the state of your-self-soul. As if by weight: the soul can be light — or heavy. It plunges into the worlds of heaviness and density, if its own state is such. Or — it enters the Light and the Bliss of the subtle worlds.

“Let me show it to you now in reality!”

Rada took Alexey by the hand.

He suddenly ceased to feel the world, visible with bodily eyes. And... a gray fog-like stuffy space enveloped from all sides.

“This is how the worlds of melancholy, sadness look. But they can be even worse...”

Then, quickly, as if washing off, clearing from that stuffy “fog”, they had found themselves in a space, as if flooded with sunlight.

So much joy and kindness were around!

“Let’s fill the body with this joy and purity!” — Rada proposed.

And then they plunged into the most subtle Blissful Light...

Rada let go of his hand:

“Now I have helped you to feel different worlds.

“But even before this, you had always been in them: you felt both bitter melancholy, and paradisiacal joy, and you sometimes felt the Divine Touches on those occasions when you aspired to God with all your strength and love.

“And now — you already know how to unite the soul also with the Stream of the Holy Spirit!

“You know all this! And on you always — consciously — the choice may depend: in what state you are in.

“But between such worlds of the universe, namely the soul moves, not the body.

“The states of the energies, which exist in the body, directly depend on the states of the soul, in which the person usually lives.

“There is also an inverse relationship. If the body is sick, filled with heavy, unharmonious energies, — then it is not easy, almost impossible, to tear away from it into the Divine Light.

“When the energies of the body are purified, the soul easily opens itself to the Divine Light and Love. You now know this from your own experience.

“To you now, very much in the Divine World is available, and it has become clear for you.

“All that exists comes from the world of God’s Light and Power. Here is the Source of all the Creation! Here is everything Primordially Pure! From here — everything gets the power to live, grow, and develop!

“And you can learn to feel the *Oneness with Everything* — as God does it from the Depths, permeating and supporting everything created by Him. We will study this!”

Chapter Ten: **Jesus**

Alexey has surprisingly changed for the better from the beginning of the training time — even externally. The body was filled with pure power, radiance, and the beauty of the transformed soul!

One day, Rada turned to him with the words:

“Alexey, you said you wanted to see Jesus yourself. Here — Jesus has come! He wants to talk to you!”

... The Divine Light, elusive to the ordinary senses, began to approach and grow. There could be no doubt! Everything in Alexey trembled with happiness! He knew that what was happening was true! That was the Greatest Love and the deepest Divine Calm!

Alexey almost did not breathe, being afraid to move and lose this Miracle!

Everything external seemed to disappear, as if it did not exist. He even ceased to feel the presence of Rada.

Light, like the most gentle sunlight, filled all the space around.

Alexey saw the radiant Appearance of Jesus.

Although Jesus was composed of Light, He was — real, alive!

Alexey wanted to kneel, but he could not move his body.

So he stood, and Jesus went to him.

Jesus stretched out His Hands... He touched Alexey's chest with the Palm of His Hand, then put both Hands on his head. The body of Alexey was filled with the Divine Light of Jesus. Like a jug, immersed in a lake, became as if hollow, and the Love and Tenderness of Jesus flowed into it, filling it.

Jesus embraced Alexey, and then, opening the Embrace, He stepped back a couple of steps. But the feeling that he was being hugged continued to be felt. It was because he was embraced by the Light and Love of Jesus from all sides.

Alexey then heard the voice of Jesus:

“My son, you now perceive Me! I'm glad to see you as you are now! You've learned a lot and grown up — as a soul! You have become purer, both body and soul, and you have got rid of a heap of false dogmas and patterns that have been inculcated in you since childhood. They hindered you so much! It will now be easier for Me to help you by teaching you!

“I was always with you. But now, finally, you can see and hear Me clearly.

“I bless the beginning of your new stage of training and Service to Me and the Heavenly Father!

“I will always come to you for this, when you call upon Me.”

... The visible Image of Jesus began to dissolve — and disappeared in the Light.

The Light remained and filled Alexey with ineffable Bliss!

Alexey still stood motionless. He was not ashamed of the tears of happiness that came from his eyes. His highest dream had become true! He had seen and heard Jesus! Jesus touched him with His Divine Hands! And the sensation of all this, the memory of this — had been imprinted in the soul forever!

So, this means that a personal direct communication with Jesus is an achievable Reality!

Alexey finally turned to Rada:

“How can I thank you?!”

... She was smiling happily:

“For me, the best reward is that you do it!

“To live and communicate directly in the world of the Divine Light with Those Who live and work there — I mean Divine Souls — this can soon become for you a natural skill and happiness in life!”

Chapter Eleven: **Earthly Love and Divine Love**

Everything in Alexey's life could now be fine, overflowing with happiness... Except, here was the love for Rada...

His attitude towards her was so sublime!

At first, Alexey did not even understand that this love is real, deep!

Rada was so beautiful! Thick eyelashes, clear eyes!... They sometimes turned blue, like the sky! Or sometimes — they brought others into peace and immersed them in silence...

How radiant and enthusiastic was her gaze, with which — only being near — she could embrace with kindness and calm!

Never before did Alexey think that a person could be as she! In his view, the possibility of existence of such Beauty, Purity, and Holiness could be considered only in relation to the Heavenly, Divine, invisible and unknowable world!

She gave Alexey the opportunity to more brightly and more fully perceive the Divine World!

This was the most important thing now in his life!

But... he could not help noticing what was happening with them... The occasional touch of just their fingertips, the touch of a strand of hair, or a glance into each other's eyes — were enough to make Alexey become flooded with the sea of tenderness! His love for her became immense — like the sea! It was the happiness of two souls merged in an amazing unity!

Alexey realized that a love can exist not only for God, but for Rada too. And this love cannot be extinguished, cannot be torn out of the heart!

Alexey did not know how he should behave now... He — a monk — how dare he break a vow?

Alexey decided to be taught further, but not to allow himself to think about “earthly love”. He began to avoid glances and touches... He tried to forbid himself from what could be so natural to man...

He did not tell Rada about all these experiences. But she always knew all his thoughts and emotions. And — she tried not to rush.

Rada also had fallen in love with Alexey from their first meeting. She saw and understood everything that was happening in the thoughts and emotions of her beloved. And — patiently waited.

She learned to sweep away those emotions of hers which could bring suffering from the incompleteness of their relationship.

She learned to be grateful for the happiness that fate had already given her. “I’ll see him again, I’ll embrace him with the soul, I’ll be near, I’ll help him!”

*** * ***

But internal prohibitions prevented Alexey. He did not know how to live with this...

So strong and beautiful was the fire of love for Rada that he was not free to extinguish this flame, this shining lamp in the soul!

He turned to Jesus and asked Him for help:

“My Lord, I can no longer resist what has over-filled me!

“I clearly feel that this love for Rada strengthens my Love for You! And so, why then should I try to give it up? But how can this be done? By never seeing her again? But then those Heavenly Heights will not be opened to me! I mean those Heights, which Rada teaches, and to which I aspire to rise by the soul — to draw near to You!

“Is this my weakness? Is it my sin? But... how can it be a sin — to see such radiance of souls in love?!”

... Jesus answered:

“In vain you torment both Rada and yourself! Why do you deprive her and yourself of the happiness that I am sending to you?”

“I have taken the vow of a monk, I swore an oath! How can I break it?”

“All such ‘rules’ and rites are invented by people, not by God! You know this already!”

“Yes... But I gave my vow on my own and that was my own choice! No one forced me!...”

“Love is a gift from God to man! Learning to love your neighbor, man learns to love God!

“In such intimate relations between a man and a woman, who love one another, — there is no sin! This closeness teaches the Great Tenderness and the ability to merge by souls! It is more difficult to learn the Love of God in its fullness and the Merger with the Creator — not knowing the earthly love!

“Now I, before Whom you made the monastic vow, — free you from this vow! Call Rada! I Myself will bless your union!”

There was no need to call Rada. She approached — quietly, gently — and stood beside them...

Jesus called them husband and wife.

* * *

Ecstasy of merging bodies and souls... Happiness! This had not been in their lives yet!

Such happiness could not fit in their bodies and poured out, covering the breadth of space around! It was — as if drops of sun-spray flew! And in each such drop the radiance of Divine Love burned!

It was a world of joy and happiness — simple and beautiful, just like how everything was in the Divine Creation in its pristine Purity and Harmony!

The happiness was so great both in the sky above their bodies, in the Earth beneath their feet, and in all the beauty around!

... Nothing external had changed. The sun and the sky were the same as yesterday and the day before yesterday... The same could be said of both the lake, and the sandy shore, and the twitter of birds, and the fragrance of flowers. But all this seemed to have been transformed in an incredible way!

... They bathed, and then turned their naked bodies with droplets of water on them — to the rays of the sun.

Then, Rada started spinning around in an amazing dance! It was a dance of gratitude to God for the wonderful and amazing gift that was presented to them by the Creator-Father and Jesus!

God filled all the surrounding space with His Light and Love: sunbeams, reflections on the water surface, foliage on the trees, blades of grass, flowers... And the same Light streamed in the bodies of Rada and Alexey, hugging from all sides — both her, and Alexey, and everything that was around!...

He tried to put into words what he was feeling:

“How amazing it is! And people could live like this! For this, no special conditions are needed — so that, like this, with God, one can merge in love and harmony!

“Is this paradise?”

... Rada smiled tenderly:

“Probably...”

“There is in the universe the power of *love-attraction*. Usually, people have their first contacts with this energy, when there arises between them a mutual attraction and a desire for unity, for creation of a family and birth of children.

“But, if this connection is reduced only to pleasures of the flesh, then such people impoverish themselves...”

“Everything, which is inherent to the flesh, remains in the earthly world, when souls leave it. But the developed love — remains in the eternal life of souls!

“The love between a man and a woman — can be beautiful! It was conceived so by the Creator! It teaches to merge and dissolve — just like the natural beauty as well!

“All people, living on the Earth, are given the opportunity to experience the joy of being in such states — and to develop themselves through them!

“Jesus also had a beloved... Her name was Mary Magdalene. She was His disciple.

“And Jesus never said that the love between a man and a woman is a sin!

“Lust is a vice. Lust is the desire of a human self to possess what is desired at all costs...

“Love is a *mutual giving* of happiness, bliss, tenderness, and care! By giving and accepting — a person can master the most beautiful state of the soul! This is a model of the love of the soul for God! Through it — the ability grows to understand others, and to live in mutuality and in unity...”

Alexey then saw the face of Mary Magdalene in the play of Light. Thick brown hair, brown eyes, tender hands... Jesus was also present. But now Mary was speaking. She said:

“I’m now with Jesus. Through love to Him — everything was transformed in the soul! Through that — I approached the Heavenly Father!

“Such a love does not end with the death of bodies! In the Great Ocean of God — you can be forever with Those Whom you love!

“True love between a man and a woman is beautiful and pure! It must transform human lives and bring one closer to the Perfection.

“But people have turned this most beautiful emotion, arising between souls, — by their bad thoughts and “rules” — into the “forbidden” and “sinful”...

“How many people make sins, which are created as if in secret!... And which then — like worms — gnaw in the soul... This state of eternal guilt and sinfulness becomes more and more persistent...

“Only the purification of the soul from vices makes it possible to throw off those fetters, and start the new pure life — before God!

“It happens that, when one is not really clean, — this one thinks oneself honest and righteous...

“And it also happens that people’s opinions are false about sins...

“Living both in fear or melancholy, in the struggle against other people for possessing that which is desired — very many souls forget how to feel the subtle shades of love, bliss, tenderness, and endearment! They are as if blinded and deaf, they see only darkness around! It’s as if such souls are paralyzed and cannot move under the weight of their vices and cruelty! As if by an impenetrable wall, people fenced themselves off from God! This was, what I was, before I met Jesus...

“And Jesus returned to the blinded souls the ability to see, to the deaf — the ability to hear, to the paralyzed — the ability to heal themselves and move towards the Light!

“The main awakening of the soul is the ability to love unselfishly! And many of those who have been so awakened, will then want to cognize the Heavenly Love...

“Two mutually loving human beings are like two vessels, of which the water, which was in them, was combined into *one*! Before, there were two separate vessels — and now there is a new state of souls, which already cannot fit into the previous boundaries!

“So also, the perfect Soul flows into the Creator. It’s like a small vessel which pours its waters and — through it — becomes Part of the Ocean!

“In this way, many of His Devotees poured Themselves into this Divine Ocean — as Transformed, Perfect Souls — and through that the Heavenly Kingdom multiplied.

“In this way, Jesus also once had become *One* with the Heavenly Father. And after — He came to the Earth — as the Son, Who is *One* with God-the-Father, — to remind people that this is possible, and that just for this they live on the Earth!

“In this Unity — there is a higher Happiness, which can be cognized by souls!

“The world of the Creation was created by God so that people could cognize all of this and grow and develop through this — up to the Mergence with the Divine Love!

“How We would like — to return to them the ability to live in harmony with God and with His Creation! Then — with just a little more — one could immerse oneself in the *Depths!* There — the Endless World opens, the Infinite Ocean, where there is only the Creator — *One in Multitude*, Who represents by Himself the Great Love, Wisdom, Omnipresence, and Omnipotence!

“When a soul opens for itself the life in the heart love — then the Path of growth to the State of Divinity becomes revealed before it! This is the Path to the Unity with the Divine All-Creating Power!”

Part Three

Chapter One: New House

A few days later, Rada told Alexey:

“We should go to the community today: to tell everyone that we are now — before God — husband and wife. We should tell the community, so that it is accepted. Do you agree?”

“Of course!” — he answered happily.

... Rada and Alexey went to the community settlement. In the rays of the morning sun, the forest seemed fabulously beautiful!

“We will be met, do not be surprised!”

“Be met? But how did they know?”

“I told grandfather.”

“But you did not see him! We were together the whole time!”

“You know that it’s possible to see and feel a soul from a distance. And to talk — it’s possible too. You can already talk with Jesus! And you know that I often speak with my father, Radomir. I have told my grandfather about us. And he has answered me: ‘If so, come to the congregation: it is necessary to declare your union before everyone!’”

Alexey embraced Rada, picked her up in his arms and kissed her:

“It seemed to me that I already knew everything about you, but every time I am amazed at what else you can do!”

* * *

All the community members, from young to old, went out to meet Rada and Alexey. They wished them happiness, love, and harmony with each other and with God!

Even the space in which they walked between the people, who greeted them, became something special: that is how the simple wishes of good and love, which are sincerely sent by strong souls, change the space around.

Blagoslav looked at the young couple affectionately. He spoke words that were fitting in the customs of the community.

Then he led them to the house:

“Now, this is your home!”

... There was no limit to Alexey’s surprise...

They entered the house — small but cozy, and clean.

Everything inside was decorated in a special way: the house was waiting for its new owners!

... When they were alone, Rada said:

“In the past, it was customary for the whole community to build a new house together for young people, who created families. But we do not need to build one: there are several empty houses.”

“Was it someone’s house? Did those, who lived here, die?”

“No, they did not die. It was once the house of the blacksmith, Mikula. Do you remember, how he prepared a hot bath for you?”

“And then he was presented with a special forge by the whole community: to make sure that there was almost no sound coming out of his work.

And the upper room houses the forge. Now he lives there. He does not have a family. So this house was empty. He told my grandfather that they could prepare this house for us.”

“Prepare?”

“Yes. Do you see how everything is arranged inside? They tried to bring everything, needed for us, as a gift! Here are the table, benches, different utensils, and candles — everything that is useful in the household! There are also books on the table — this is for you from grandfather!

“All the community members prepared their gifts for us — what they could: someone gave — the towel, someone else — the dishes, someone else — another kind of utensil. My grandfather — he has brought books for you: he knows that you like to read!”

Alexey was at a loss for words. He had never before experienced anything like this! People, who almost didn't even know him, did all this for him! Of course — for Rada too, but also for him. How can he thank them all now?

Rada finished her explanation:

“For many generations, we have lived as a community. It's like a large and friendly family. And the customs here are good!

“Now you will have to be accepted into the community — by the common agreement of all the members. Grandpa will decide — when.”

* * *

Later, Rada went to her grandfather's house. They embraced gently.

“At last!... You love him, I see! And he loves you! This is great! Yes... it all has happened so surprisingly!...”

“Teach him — and further!

“I myself did not expect that a person could change so quickly!”

“Yes, I love him, grandpa!

“I used to think that it was only I who taught him. But I have also learned a lot *from* him!

“He has the intention of writing a book about how to wisely structure the church in the state and about how to live righteously before God. Will you help him?”

“But who will read such a book right now? People are illiterate!... And those, who are literate, — they are ready only to make reprisals over dissents!”

“Jesus has asked him to do this.

“It is possible that this is necessary only for him: to write down and at the same time comprehend, to connect everything former with everything new, which he has learned. Or maybe, it is part of a plan for the future too... I do not know yet...”

“Alexey is not used to living for himself, for his own happiness solely! He lives his whole life — for God, and has dreams to help people! He considers it unfaithful — to use the new knowledge and understanding of how to live — only for himself. He cannot even think that happiness is only for himself! Because of this — I love him even more! And in this is the cause of the very special shining around him!”

* * *

Alexey went to the hermitage to gather the most necessary things for his new life.

He also visited the village.

After that incident with the healing of the boy, Tikhon, and all his long walks to the forest — Alexey was seen with special respect: many almost considered him to be holy. The new attitude towards him was completely different now — in comparison with what it was before, when he repaired leaky roofs or climbed into water wells to clean them!

Alexey was internally amazed at how everything seemed to be shaping up!

He also went to the house of Efimia. Everything was fine there! The youngest boy was growing up, and he was no longer sick. Dunyasha and Timothy could help their mother quite well in everything. Much has been accomplished in their lives! And Efimia herself became calmer and more joyful. She understood that God loves them, keeps them — and now lived in gratitude to Him for all of this!

Timothy and Dunyasha met Alexey — as if he was a very dear friend! Alexey was amazed: he had hardly spoken to them since that miraculous healing!

He told them that he would be going far away for a long time.

And then he came up with a way on how he could get news about life in the village. He asked the children — if there would be any need or should something important happen — that they should put a sign in the hollow of a big tree, which Timothy and him knew about on the bend of the river. Alexey gave the children two small pebbles — one dark and the

other light. If trouble or need arise, then the dark stone is to be put in the tree, and if his presence is needed for something joyful, then they should use the light stone.

For the children, such a game — secret and important — seemed to be very interesting, and they promised to perform it!

* * *

Then Alexey once again returned to the hermitage. He went to the grave of the elder Nicholas: as if saying goodbye to the past. He sat down on a hill-ock, and was quiet for a long time, remembering their life together for the many years of his apprenticeship...

Then he began mentally, as if in a confession, to tell the elder everything about his new life...

Suddenly he saw and heard the elder Nicholas:

“Why then did you come here? You now are not afraid to see Jesus! Why are you afraid of me?”

“Well, it was not expected...”

“You told me your thoughts, but did not expect to see me, right?”

“So, have you heard all the confession about my life, about my thoughts, and my dreams? Are you judging me?”

“No, my son, I have never condemned anyone, and you — least of all! No one will travel your path for you! Perhaps, it is destined for you to do that, what you dream about — for people and for God! Maybe the importance of my earthly life was, namely, so that I could prepare you for this...”

“Do not be afraid! In the heart — you will always feel the Truth from God! And the courage to live according to that Truth, has always been a gift of yours!”

... The elder Nicholas blessed Alexey, as if in the old days... Then he disappeared...

Alexey got up and went to the community.

A new life was waiting for him — and he was ready for it.

Chapter Two: **On Discernment, on the Power of a Soul, and on the Temptations of Pride**

Now Alexey had many opportunities to talk with Blagoslav. He often raised the subject of the possibility of transforming the religious life in the country.

For Alexey, these were not just conversations, but also an attempt to understand how it could be done in reality, taking into account the knowledge that he had now acquired.

Blagoslav did not avoid these conversations. On the contrary, he told what he knew about the past history of the state. And sometimes — he expressed his opinion about the current situation in Russia.

Looking at Alexey, he often seemed to recognize his son, Radomir. They were united by the desire to actively replace the darkness of spiritual ignorance — with the light of true knowledge of God, to tell people about the essence of good and evil, and about how the fate of each person is built — on this basis.

Sometimes, when Blagoslav strove to “bring the dreamer to the ground”, he saw that, on the contrary, the certainty became even stronger in Alexey that it would be possible to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Refusing to even try to influence what was happening in the country was seen by Alexey as wrong:

“Does it mean that we should live like this for years? And do nothing to help people: to stop the horror, the cruelty that many people are doing today — as if in the name of God?!”

“How did you manage, Alexey, to enter the monastic life, if you are so concerned about the worldly order and the welfare of people? You were born into the nobility, and you could have become an adviser to the king...”

“But I’m not talking about worldly prosperity,” — Alexey smiled, — “but about the righteous spiritual law for lay people and for those people, who accepted the church vows onto themselves and want to serve the Lord! Without it, no peace and prosperity can come to the state! Without the true spiritual knowledge — worldly life is so meaningless! And, under such conditions, it is impossible for there to be real order in the church!”

“So, do you want to add one more new faith to those which already exist? Do you think that all people will accept it, if you devise this?”

“But — it will not happen like this! Everything will be turned inside out — and only a new war with new ‘heresies’ will be accomplished!...”

“Look: the Bashkirs are rebelling now... They name the One God as Allah, but even up to this day

they still rely on their shamans and their ‘gods of old’!

“And how many other different nationalities live in the country, and each one — professes their own faith! Can you guess?

“Will you offer your new faith to all of them? Do you think that everyone will want to believe in your version?

“And do you think that you’ll be able to eliminate the split in the Orthodox Church by only your one book?...”

“I do not know yet what to do...”

“You say truly that it’s impossible to unite everyone by one faith: only new violence will come!...”

“But it’s possible to issue such a law so that people will know that One God is behind all beliefs! And — so that persecutions and killings because of faith are banned!

“They say that the young king is now ready to establish new orders in everything. He began to change life in the country! Maybe he could do useful things in spiritual matters as well?”

“Yes, I have heard about this!... He ordered the boyars¹¹ to shave their beards, and to wear the same kind of clothes as Latin people do — both men and women... I do not see a big meaning in this!...”

“He also ordered to build ships, he wages wars to show to the whole world the greatness and power of the country... But will it work out well, if all the neighboring states become afraid of the power of our country?... I do not think that this is good!”

¹¹ A boyar is a high-ranking member of the old aristocracy of Russia.

“That’s why it is necessary for him to be given these spiritual life reforms! It is also necessary to tell him that it is shameful for a great state to continue serf slavery, where people can be sold like livestock!”

“Well spoken! But who will listen to you? They will only kill you!...

“And you still do not have the strength to rule countries and to advise the rulers how to properly conduct matters of the state!”

“And what? — is there such a force?”

“There is... But it is used only rarely, when they use it for good...”

“It is good when God protects one from personal might, which one cannot yet comprehend and endure!

“Understand, God gives to everyone the strength to live and make good decisions — and that is good! But if one’s strength exceeds one’s understanding, then great troubles can come from that: with the person individually, and for others nearby!

“I’ll tell you a little story, and then you should think for yourself!

“There was once a very ancient time, when for the Magi, who possessed great strength and skills, it became necessary to decide: what to do so that their knowledge would not be lost in the darkness of ignorance...”

“I told you already before that some of them, the wise among them, went to the forest, and began to live secretly, and then that knowledge was passed on to the worthy righteous successors and keepers — from generation to generation...”

“But there were also those who decided to share some particles of their knowledge and skills to at least some of the outsiders. They accepted the beliefs of the new rulers ‘for appearance’s sake’ only, and tried to include scraps of their knowledge into the new rites and rules...

“Some of them possessed great strength of the soul... And where there is power — a multitude of temptations appear in using it.

“Ingenious are the temptations to the pride of man! There are many dangers, from which the purity of the perception of the Divine can be very easily lost!

“For example, some of them accepted the new faith only ‘for show’ — as if to preserve the lives of their people and their valuable knowledge... But that lie — entered into their lives!... And, that lie imperceptibly enslaved such souls even further: here — people distort the truth — as is for the benefit of the other people, there — they add a little fiction to the truth...

“Carrying on in this way — some of them became dishonest altogether...

“And they justified it by saying that they are doing it for the good of people and to save the lives of many...

“Others among them were tempted by earthly riches...

“And some even made pompousness predominant in the religious management...

“Some — wanted to win in the battles of ‘our’ people over the ‘strange’ people...

“It happens that it’s easy for souls with great power to achieve what they want... And the result is

often sad... The unclean minds of such persons distort the understanding of the Truth!

“Even the Revelations perceived from God — can start to be falsified by a selfish mind, and such a person can even ‘attach to God’ his or her own opinions...

“Usually a person, blinded by pride or vanity, does not notice this process happening to him or her. Imperceptibly so — lies and truths get entangled!... And one, who is a great and strong soul, rarely has doubts in oneself! Too sure this one is — in his or her own ‘rightness’!

“That’s how a leader among people turns out to become a person, who does not doubt that God acts through him or her... And such a person convinces everyone of this...

“From the greatly increased self and pride, one is very near to falling into rudeness, hatred, and tyranny!...

“White magic and black magic — what differences do they have? What do you think? Are the goals of white magic good, while the goals of black magic are sort of like evil? And who will distinguish the border between them? Are you starting to understand what I’m getting at?”

“Yes, but how to understand? How not to be mistaken? Should one not at all touch the knowledge about the Power of the Divine? Should one not use that knowledge?

“In Orthodoxy, this is called a temptation or seduction, that is, the machinations of the devil... And they are very afraid to succumb to such temptations! For such a soul, they consider it a perdition — with eternal burning in hell as punishment!

“Even the thought of admitting that God can be heard and seen — the priests are now afraid of... If one has developed in oneself the ability to see and hear such visions and voices — then this one is ‘from the impure one’!...

“But Jesus showed the Might of God! And He did miracles for people — for them to believe Him! And it was obvious to them that this Might is from God!”

“Yes, this was the Mission of Jesus... However, not all people had recognized Him then. There were many doubters wondering: is He from God?”

“But look: Jesus, indeed, had the Power — to avoid the death on the cross, to punish the executioners in front of all those people... What do you think: why did He not do this?”

“In fulfillment of the prophecies... And in order to show the power of love and faith...”

“And also — He showed the greatness of forgiveness to those who persecuted Him and killed His body.

“And the miracle of the Resurrection — without the death of His body — would not have been revealed!”

“Yes, that’s right! Jesus showed much to people — both Love, and Humility, and Power!

“But what is now going on with His Teachings all over the Earth?!

“There is still much that you, Alexey, have to know — in union of the soul with God! Do not rush! And then — both Wisdom and Power will prevail!

“And it can’t be yours — this power! It is God’s!

“Also — it’s not easy: to live when all the people around you are like children to you!

“For me, only our community members are like relatives! And the rest of people — I’m just now learning to love them with God’s Love. And you — as you have decided it — are: ‘The Orthodox priest of all Russia!’... I’m kidding, of course! But how much responsibility such love imposes — you still have to understand!

“You are now learning to weigh every step, every word, and every action! You have already become a not so small soul! And your every thought, emotion, decision, and action — not only leaves a little mark in the space of the universe and dissipates after. But you can already significantly influence many events and fates connected in a certain chain... Take responsibility for this! Act as if with your every word and deed you could give life! Do so, so as not to be ashamed — both before people and before God!”

Chapter Three: **The Healing of Rodion**

Soon Alexey was accepted into the community by the common consent of everyone.

He was now trying to help each of his newly acquired brothers and sisters in whatever way that he could.

One day, one of the people living in the community, Rodion, became deeply troubled.

He had come to the community only three years ago.

In the past, he was an Old Believer, a “schismatic”, who managed to escape from his executioners. He, dying in the forest from exhaustion and wounds, had been found by the community members who were patrolling the surrounding area.

He was saved from death, but only partially healed. Rodion was allowed to stay in the community, because he had nowhere else to go. But he still had not become an accepted member of the community. And his health was severely impaired and did not recover.

Alexey decided to try to help him.

This was not his first attempt in healing other people.

He had already previously tried to apply those new healing skills, which by that time had already been taught to him by Rada, when he spent part of his time in his hermitage and sometimes visited people living in the village.

Although it was only a small amount of experience, it was nevertheless successful and inspired Alexey.

So, Alexey decided to try to help. He saw suffering, both spiritual and physical, in Rodion. This was not something that Alexey could pass by indifferently!

That day, Rodion was particularly bad. He was sitting on a rock near a spring, gathering the strength to get up.

Alexey brought water to his house... He went inside and helped groaning Rodion to lie down.

Alexey asked him if there was anything else that he could help him with.

And there was so much sadness and pain in Rodion's eyes that Alexey sat next to him on the edge of the bed and began to listen to his bitter words:

"But how can I be helped?... It seems that I do not have long to live in this world! My body, after those tortures, will not be able to be healed... My end is near..."

"God does not give me a happy life in this community, although I had dreamed and hoped that I would accept this new life with this new faith, and be able to see and understand God..."

"Maybe I'm sinning because I left my old faith, what do you think?"

"Do you not doubt that maybe you also made a mistake, by rejecting the faith in which you were baptized?"

"But I did not renounce my faith! I believed in Jesus — and now I also believe in Him! And now, I do not just believe, but I see Him, I hear Him, and I try to learn the great Wisdom and Love from Him! The Advice on how to live, on how to behave — I can now ask from Him. Is this a renunciation? On the contrary, much of my knowledge has now been added to my old belief. And my faith has been strengthened! My understanding has expanded!"

"And what? Is there no doubt in you at all?"

"Of course, there is... Only I do not doubt in my faith, but only in the correctness of my understanding. And — in whether the knowledge is learned and applied correctly... Such doubts are needed to make fewer mistakes!"

"But I have no rest in the soul! Sometimes, I remember my wife, and my children who were

killed... My Pauline — decided to keep the old faith! The children who were born to us — were called ‘illegitimate’... And I remember their killers — up to this day!... And our ‘friends’... Out of fear for their own lives and the lives of their families, they betrayed me and sent me to a trial ‘as an instigator of mutiny’... I cannot forgive them!... There was not even a thought in me about a ‘mutiny’!

“I understand intellectually that all of them should be forgiven... I should forgive and forget!... But I can’t!...”

“Perhaps it would have been better if I had accepted my death back then? Of what value is this present life of mine to me?!”

“And do you often have such thoughts, Rodion?”

“Yes, often... How can I not think this way? Here everyone in the community is healthy and happy... And I — out of some kind of mercy — am allowed to live here... I’m a stranger here! Although all of them have accepted me with kindness, and they are trying to help...”

“And have you not thought that the cause is in you yourself?”

“That’s what I’m telling you about...”

“But you do not speak rightly, you do not think correctly!...”

“Rada taught me how to correctly guide thoughts and emotions when I want to heal my body or another’s body. Or — when one plans and builds a new life.

“Understand: for the sake of approaching God and serving Him — it is worthwhile to live, if God prolongs your life!

“Can you imagine if Rada were to hate her father’s killers every day and if she were to remember them every day?

“The contact of her father with her often happens, although without a body. He is happy! And she is too! From the love, which is between them, — there is always joy! And not sadness!”

“... But I do not know how to see my beloved ones, I can only mourn for them... And I cannot see Jesus... And I cannot heal my body... Though your Rada taught me that, and others also taught me...”

“That’s what I’m trying to tell you about!

“I used to say prayers when healing someone, but at the very bottom of my heart I did not believe that it would happen...”

“And Rada taught me that during healing, one needs to see and feel the bodies of oneself and of the one who is to be healed as completely healthy, as it will turn out. And then — one needs to unite the strength of the soul with the Power of God — and send it to the body, so that the recovery can become a reality!

“In this case, the faith, knowledge, and strength of the soul and God’s Providence — must unite into one! Only then the transformation and healing happen! If you still have thoughts in your mind about the impossibility of this and about the vainness of your efforts, then they stand up, like a stone wall blocking the way. How can you heal your body, if you yourself often think that it cannot happen, and that it would be better for you to die? You only briefly try sometimes to light the body with a healing Light, to rid yourself of infirmity and suffering...”

“But how else can I do this? I myself cannot even imagine myself healthy... There they all are able to heal, but they could not cure me completely... How can I do it myself?”

“Do you want me to try? Right now!”

“Do you want my body, which was crippled by torture, suddenly to be free from pain and infirmity? Even Blagoslav could not do it, and you — can?”

“God endows the person, who is ready to serve Him, with the Great Power! If you accept God’s help now without a doubt — you will be well! If He wills it.”

... A clear confidence and a certain radiant joy came from Alexey. Thus, Rodion — with surprise and trepidation — agreed.

*** * ***

It worked!

At some point, it seemed to Alexey that there was not enough strength, and the Stream of Divine Power had weakened... But Alexey put all his faith, all his love, as if sweeping away all the obstacles preventing the healing...

It was a miracle for Alexey himself, and for the one who was healed...

... Alexey left Rodion’s house, staggering from the sudden fatigue... He hardly reached his hut.

Rada had seen him and asked worriedly:

“Are you all right? What has happened to you?”

Alexey wanted to answer that everything was fine, but suddenly his eyes darkened and he fainted.

... He woke up in bed.

Rada sat next to him and her gentle fingers touched Alexey's face.

“Why did you do it?!... Do you think that here, in the community, everyone is so indifferent? Or that no one can heal, except you?”

“Be quiet, lie still! I see that you did not think so!...”

“Every disease has a reason. For any healing — its time should come...”

“Do you understand that you, on yourself, on your body, have taken everything that Rodion should have undergone for understanding and full recovering?”

“Please, do not heal me yourself now! I'll manage... If I'm the one who is to blame, then answer me...”

From the words of Alexey, Rada even had tears...

She hugged him, pressed herself gently to him, and kissed him...

“Don't be afraid for me, my dear, my beloved! Forgive me for scolding! I was very scared for you!”

“Now I will teach you how you will need to be treated. And I will only help very slightly... And about me — do not worry: it does not hurt me!”

“Do you remember how I showed you the Atmic Force, Which is perceived, as if in a deep well, filled with shining Whiteness? And I showed you then how to awaken this Light and let It into the body.”

“Then I explained how this Atmic Force helps in the meditations of Mergence with God — for It is the Reserve, Which is accumulated in man precisely for the mastery of life in the Divine world.”

“This Divine Power can be used for healing: for your own healing, and for healing others. See: I now help you a little to awaken It and to let It into the body.”

Alexey saw by the soul very clearly everything that was happening and was aware of everything.

The blissful state of dissolution in Transparency... Then — the Strong Stream of the shining Light from the special Repository began to rise up...

As if through a thick glow of transparent light — Alexey heard Rada’s voice:

“Now fill with this fluid Light every corner in your body, including your hands and feet. And it is also necessary to wash everything in the head with this Stream, so that through the body — as if through an empty shell — this Light can be poured through and can pour out behind the head.

“You now think by the soul, and therefore the Divine understanding about many things can come to you. You — just try to let it all happen...

“Feel how much God loves you! Let everything, which is separate from God inside of you, merge and dissolve completely with the Divine Light...

“If you suddenly need something — then I’m here, just call me...”

*** * ***

The next day, Blagoslav went to see the recovering Alexey.

Alexey tried to stand up to meet the guest.

Blagoslav stopped him:

“Lie still! You need to restore your strength!...”

“I’m almost healthy!... Rada gives me healing broths and helps me as if I were a small child!”

“Well, fine!”

Blagoslav involuntarily smiled affectionately, then tried to take a severe look, as if trying to hide a smile in his snow-white mustache and beard. But such a formidable look did not happen on that day, although he came as if to instruct Alexey to be more careful when he heals people.

Blagoslav was filled with some special reverent tenderness for this man, who — by the Will of God — so surprisingly had entered both his life and the life of their entire community.

Afterwards, Blagoslav looked at Alexey in a special way: not with the eyes of the body, but with clairvoyance, checking the state of the energies in Alexey’s body:

“All right, everything is fine already,” — he summed up the result.

After a pause, he added:

“You scared Rada!... And I, it must be said, was surprised!

“Understand, Alexey: you must not heal people without asking God, without analyzing their fates! You already heard about this more than once, and understood it when listening! And now — what have you done?!

“The fact that you take the pain on yourself — it’s not so bad... But the second half — well, you can damage that soul if you do this without the necessary transformation of that soul!

“It is wrong to interfere into the fates of people without God’s blessing! And when you undertake this work, then it is necessary to do it together with

God and with deep understanding and responsibility, but not just because of the desire to help the sufferer at any cost!

“The souls, which live in bodies, are very different! Some still only begin to learn thinking and understanding, others — are even completely unreasonable and even the simplest knowledge is not feasible for them yet, and it even is not necessary for them! There are only a few souls who have already accumulated strength and wisdom.”

“So, was it not for Rodion’s benefit that it was done?”

“No: it was for the good! You have managed to heal both the body and the soul!

“God turns everything around you into something good, He creates wonders through you! This is what I am now amazed by! But just do not think that it will be always this way again, if wisdom is not added to you through these events!

“And with Rodion — everything is alright! He asked about you more than once: worried that, because of him, you’re sick!...

“Yes... The power in you is no longer little!... And God helps you in a way that not everyone has experienced!

“Diseases — are not given in vain! And they are not always punishments!

“And now you have understood a lot, I hope.

“Often, people, who became great healers, became as such because of great diseases in their own bodies, from which they sought salvation. And sometimes — it is through illness — that God explains to man what is now to be realized.

“Sometimes it happens that in order to help a person, one needs to see the past lives of this soul, to understand: why his or her fate has been made as such?”

“Rada told me about the fact that souls are incarnated many times in bodies and live more than one earthly life. Only I do not know how to see this...

“And why is it not mentioned in the Bible, in the Gospels? Why is this?”

“In different earthly religions, there is usually only a partial reflection of the Truth. In some — the reincarnation of souls into new bodies is mentioned, in others — there are some right words about the Divine Consciousness, but there are no other important words. Usually, in specific religions, there is also present that which people have brought into it themselves — the rites and beliefs from their own understanding, and often — from their own self-interests. There is also that which the priests removed from their religious books — according to their understanding: as incomprehensible or unhelpful for establishing a cult.”

“And why do people not remember that they lived on the Earth before? It would be easier to repent and heal — if one knew what was sinning before...”

“Only an adult and a wise soul is able to understand and repent!

“People can recall their past lives only when they are ready for these kinds of memories. When anything from this memory is necessary to the soul, God can show fragments of those earthly lives.

“But children or souls that are still young and weak — cannot bear such knowledge!

“Imagine how life would become a nightmare for a person who is not strong enough yet as a soul, who rushed to the good — but would suddenly remember that he or she committed grave crimes in a past life... This is not endurable for the soul which has not become strong in the good! Such memories can damage the mind!

“But everything in the universe is organized by God wisely and for the good...

“Difficulties in the fate of a soul are often a remedy for the evil committed in the past. They can be manifested, for example, in diseases of the body as early as the moment of birth...

“And the memory of great achievements in past lives can also not be useful to the soul, for it can provoke both pride and vanity.

“See also that those qualities, which the person has already cultivated before in himself or herself, — they will always be in him or her!

“There is some kind of special repository for all the most valuable energy that the soul has accumulated over many lives in bodies. This shining Stream, by Which you have now healed your body, is the Treasure that God had saved for you in your many incarnations. This is the Secret Divine Subtlety in man. In India, this Energy is called Kundalini. This Force was accumulated for you — just so that you could feel yourself as One with the Divine Primordial Consciousness. You have experienced it many times in the past in brief moments — and so the soul gradually learned to be Divine! Now you can do it completely consciously! The time has come!”

And then Blagoslav told Alexey much about the possibilities of interaction with this Divine Force,

which can be learned in the future. They also talked about how to ask God concerning the causes of illnesses and look into the past of each soul — to help intelligently, wisely, and effectively.

* * *

Rodion, once again came to ask about Alexey's health — and met Blagoslav, who was leaving the hut.

Rodion said embarrassedly and guiltily:

“How is he? I did not want that... He himself suggested it...”

“Do not worry, Rodion! No one blames you!....”

“But how is it that I am well, while Alexey...?”

“It's okay, he will get better! He is already almost healed!”

“I had never before seen someone like him before... I did not even know that there are such people...”

“And now, Rodion, I also learn from Alexey... I thought a lot how to help you, and I could not understand it! But he has seen — and helped!... I speak not about bodily healing! But he has brought you back to the positive life!”

“Yes... I understand this... For me, Blagoslav, maybe, it is not fated to grow up to your wisdom and skills... But I know now what I should live for! I will try to become like Alexey! Then, maybe, he will not have cured me in vain!”

Chapter Four: **Joint Meditation**

One of the traditions of the community was to conduct joint meditations.

That day at dawn, everyone gathered in a clearing.

All of this was new for Alexey. And that's why it was especially interesting for him to participate in both it and in everything else, which Rada had told him a bit about before.

Blagoslav went out to the people in a new white shirt. With an earthly bow, he bowed to all sides of the world.

He stood for a while without a word, while a kind of *transparent silence* seemed to gather around him.

It was especially wonderful for Alexey to see how Blagoslav himself changed, when he conducted this meditation for all. From a person endowed with great personal power and a lot of knowledge, he turned for a time — into only an individual broadcasting from God. Everything personal disappeared in him, it dissolved — and a passage was opened for the Divine Words and the Flows of the non-material Light-Fire. He — by himself — opened the expanses of the Divine worlds: it was as if the gates had been opened into other layers of the universe!

Alexey was already used to those Manifestations of the Great Divine Souls, having male or female Forms, Who were the Incorporeal Participants of what was happening. Old Slavic Divine Teachers

gradually became as easily perceivable for him, as Jesus.

At first, Rada, when teaching Alexey, tried to use the familiar names for him for the Divine Manifestations, — but later, both she and Blagoslav told him a lot about the ancient Knowledge, preserved for thousands of years, and about many Divine Souls.

The understanding that the same Divine Messengers could be called differently by people of different countries and that throughout the history of the Earth there were many of such Messengers for different nations — was no longer stunning for Alexey.

... Blagoslav was beautiful, standing in front of the people and broadcasting from God!

His speech was flowing fluently! From the great *Depths*, where the Mergence occurred, the words were raised which filled the listeners with deep peace and a sense of oneness with everything. These words... — were merely just sounding with the help of the material body of Blagoslav.

The former sometimes stern old man disappeared without a trace: his face, his eyes, his whole body were now shining with a special Light, visible only to the sight of the souls, but felt by everyone, even by those who had not yet reached the fullness of clairvoyance.

He spoke from God, not from himself, and all the souls that were present, listened to him — in a special silence and with great reverence.

He was the *open passage* for the Flow of Divine Power, Love, and Wisdom.

Blagoslav smoothly led everyone into a common meditation, in which the consciousnesses of the

community members were connected with the Divine Light in the *Depths*, which was accessible to each of them.

It was as if a powerful and smooth river of Light flowed. And which everyone entered according to the level at which each one was capable. And this Stream of Light allowed those, who were already ready for more, to flow into the Ocean of Divine Unity and dissolve in It.

By performing the meditation together, the perception of each soul during the meditation was able to increase with particular strength and brightness.

Living God was evident to all, He filled their bodies, and permeated all the space around with Himself.

The passage into the Divine world, which was revealed by Blagoslav, was brightly shining in the space of the universe — and through this passage it was easy to plunge into the Divine Subtlety and Shining Light.

Even those, who were not yet very great souls, experienced the greatest Bliss from contact with the Divine Consciousness — the Majestic, All-Powerful, and Almighty — which, at the same time, is kind and gentle, called Rod Initial or Svarog in the Slavic language...

The love and unity of the Divine Souls and the souls, striving for Divinity, — were so beautiful! Through such joint meditation, everyone present could advance in one's own development, gaining the experience of being in Divinely refined states.

... When the meditation was over, the state of the great *transparent silence* of the space was preserved for a long time...

... The community members gradually left the clearing.

Alexey still tried not to lose the amazing feeling of the soul, which had thrown off the “earthly fetters”. It seemed to him now that this state was so near and dear...

He sat at the edge of the clearing, leaning his back against a tree trunk.

* * *

Suddenly, he recalled that he had experienced something similar to this unity of souls among ascetics in joint meditation before... But when?

The images surfaced as if by themselves, and Alexey became as real a participant in them as he sometimes was in dreams. But it was not a dream...

... He saw himself in one of the communities of the first Christians. It was him, but, at the same time, not quite him...

Alexey moved into another time and space; the present material world around him disappeared from his perception entirely.

The one, who Alexey now was, participated in the meeting of that Christian community.

He felt like a mature, slender man with a surprisingly clear gaze.

The congregation was being addressed by the head of the community, who was preaching the Teachings of Jesus.

The Divine Lights embraced the speaker and all of his listeners. The Light was flowing through his body. This Light filled the spiritual hearts of the listeners and helped facilitate the union of souls in the one *Heart of Christ...*

How immensely each such soul rejoiced from contact with this Great Divine Light! How much they all were filled with the happiness from the sheer sensation of the Presence of God in their bodies and everywhere around!

Alexey felt himself as a slightly different person, but, nevertheless, it was he himself...

He was there as one of those Christians who loved Jesus and who aspired to live according to His Teachings!

Everyone else was also illuminated by this inspired aspiration.

... The pictures of that time period came to life: the people, their dwellings...

They wore modest, clean clothes, and their way of life could be described as meager and poor. But it was not so at all! Their life was complete: full of food for souls and of the desire to live with Christ in every spiritual heart! It was a spiritual fulfillment which made their life so happy!

There were men, women, and children in the community, and they were all like one family to each other, although they were not physically related.

... After the speech of the head of the community, the people, in turn, repented to all the community members of their wrong thoughts or actions, which they themselves considered unworthy. Everything that they noticed as evil in themselves, was revealed so that it could be eliminated. Sometimes they

asked for forgiveness for such actions and thoughts which most people would not even consider sinful. They all tried to reach such crystal purity and honesty before God and before each other!

And everyone, who listened to the confessor, was looking inside of oneself for even little traces of the same vice that could have caused such a sin, and he or she aspired to cleanse oneself of such a possibility.

How sincerely they all loved each other! How much he loved them all! How strongly they aspired to the acquisition of life in the Kingdom of Heaven!

... And then he saw soldiers with spears and swords...

He heard the cry: "Romans!"

There was no panic. The people did not defend themselves. They were ready to die — following their beloved Christ...

But when the warriors became rude, driving everyone like a herd of cattle and tying them up, some children began to cry, and several women succumbed to fear and began to scream.

The head of the community began to speak, trying to reason with the attackers and calm his own people. And he was immediately killed.

That man, who was felt by Alexey as himself, rushed to cover with his body the lash of a whip to a woman, who was pressing a baby to her breast. He tried to say something to stop the attackers, but his body was pierced by the tip of a spear of one of the riders.

... He saw his bloody body from above... Then he lovingly thought about Jesus — and saw Jesus stretching out His Hands for an Embrace...

* * *

Alexey returned to the reality of the present day: “What was that? Was that reality? Was it really me? But how is this possible?”

Blagoslav came up to him:

“Well, now do you know how you lived in a different body before?”

“Is it possible to see the past like that?”

“Yes... You are now aware of this!”

“The ability of the human soul to comprehend and cognize — is very large. You can see your past, the past of another person, and the past of whole countries, and peoples...”

“But you do not need to get too involved in developing these abilities right now. It’s enough that you have cognized the real possibility of this. When it will be needed, God will show you everything that is necessary. Now you know this already from your own experience — and this is enough for now!”

“Always — in eternity and infinity — people should seek the One Divine Origin, the Primordial Consciousness! You should devote your efforts towards this. It is the ability to be in Unity with It, having dissolved the self-separation in It!”

Chapter Five: **The Living Earth**

One day, Rada told Alexey:

“Now I must show you the Earth!”

“What does it mean, ‘to show the Earth’? Explain!...”

Rada laughed:

“Well, not these pieces of soil that we are accustomed to feeling under our feet and which we call ‘earth’ — but, rather, the Mother Earth!... I must show you the beauty and greatness of this Earth of ours!

“My father taught me this when I was a girl. It is very important not only to understand this with the mind, but to see this with the soul!

“Get ready! We will have to climb a little higher in the mountains — and live there.”

... It was a special trip!

They walked lightly. Rada easily provided their need for food. And it was delicious and nutritious, and there was always plenty! She deftly, like a little boy, could climb a cedar and pick up cones full of nuts. Or she could collect plants with edible leaves or roots. And also — mushrooms, which as if ‘ran out to meet her’!...

“How do you find all this? It’s as if you are not even looking for it, but you know where everything has grown!”

“Of course, I know a little: such as what grows best in certain places. But, more than that, God knows: what is best for us to eat today as a meal. So, I’m collecting these *little gifts* of His!”

... Rada smiled tenderly and continued:

“But more important are His *Higher Spiritual Gifts*: which He reveals before us today!”

* * *

Over the course of many trips, gradually expanding the horizons of Alexey, Rada explained and showed him the new levels of cognition, the new lay-

ers of knowledge about the universe, in which they were walking as bodies and living as souls.

They gradually walked up the mountains, stopping at the places, which were chosen by Rada as particularly convenient for the perception of Alexey of what she told.

They again and again admired the beauty of the majestic expanses that were opening before them. And every time Alexey was filled with the feeling that his love for all this beauty and for the greatness of nature — was becoming more and more extensive!

... That morning, they got up before dawn and were walking in a light predawn fog. The forest around them had receded — and they came to a gentle ledge, which, like an island, rose over the white sea of fog.

The fog covered everything below — like a fluffy white blanket. Only some of the tops of the trees came out of it — like little islands...

And then... — the sun began to rise, coloring everything in golden-pink shades! How marvelous was the beauty of the Divine Creation!

“Try to feel and then fill with yourself-soul all the space which is seen by the eyes!

“And further — that which is not visible to the eyes!

“It is important now to see with the vision of the soul how large our Earth is, although only a small part of its surface is opened before the sight of the body!

“Look: the immensity of these spaces — is now filled with our love: the love of ourselves-souls!

“And a loving soul can easily cross the boundaries of the material world — and sail into the expanse of the Divine Light!

“Now — with a loving spiritual heart — cognize that our Mother Earth is alive! Every person is her son or daughter. And not only people, but all beings, living on its surface, are the children of both Mother Earth and God-the-Father! They — gave us the opportunity to be born and to develop here: in this wonderful and beautiful created world!

“And we are connected with the Earth in much the same way as, for example, trees.

“But trees feel this always, because their roots do not let them forget about it.

“People also have their ‘roots’. But these ‘roots’, which connect us with the Earth, can be seen only by the soul, not by the bodily eyes.

“And a person can learn to feel both them, and also — the *Heart of the Earth*, which consists, of course, of the subtlest *Divine Fire!*

“In this way, we are connected to the Earth!

“At present, only very few people understand how tightly we, who live here, are connected to our Mother Earth herself — the living and feeling great Soul!

“It only seems that every person exists by oneself... No: people have an influence on the Earth — and the Earth responds accordingly.

“In the past, very many people worshiped Mother Earth. Perhaps, that worship was naive... But its essence was true: it was love-gratitude to the Earth!

“And now — it is very important for you to realize the same thing!”

... The rising sun warmed the air, the fog gradually dissipated, and the dew evaporated.

They had breakfast, and then Rada suggested:

“Lie down here now! This is a very good place! Here it is easy to feel that we are lying on the surface of the Earth only with our bodies, and that these bodies of ours are only tiny particles of the whole Creation... And — that the love of Mother Earth is in the *Depths!*”

... Alexey lay down — and easily sank into that Light. It was so amazing: to be in the *Sea of Light*, Which was under their bodies and seemed to have no borders! And it was easy to merge with this Light!

Rada continued:

“Moreover: the Earth has, as it were, its own spiritual heart. This heart consists of the Divine Fire! It is in the center.

“You can connect with this *Heart of the Earth!* You can immerse yourself in that Shining Love of the *Heart of the Earth* by the ‘root’ that goes from the spiritual heart inside the body — into the *Depths!*

“This is a special center, the *Fire Core of the Earth!*

“It is namely through this Center *that* one can easily penetrate into the Sea of *Divine Fire* of our Creator — far beyond the Earth.

“And then — we can ascend into the world of human bodies, being in Unity with this *Divine Fire*.

“This is exactly what our Divine Teachers do. They can manifest Themselves to people, who live on the Earth, for example, in the form of not high shining Appearances, in order to be visible for the worshippers... And They can also be much larger — like

huge *Mountains of Light* Which rise over and above the Earth.

“Feel that the human soul, filled with love for God, is like a little temple. But the Earth is the great temple. And the Undying Fire in the *Heart of Mother Earth* burns in the altar of this temple!

“The *Heart of the Earth* belongs to everyone who has cognized it...

“Feel the *Heart of the Earth* — as your own heart!

“In this way, the Love of God for everything in the Creation — gradually also becomes your Love!”

... Rada for a long time let Alexey experience all this.

When everything personal, the “individual” disappeared in this Dissolution, she continued:

“And now try to rise — from those *Depths* — as the Fiery Love of God!”

... Alexey realized that he was now allowed — from the boundlessness of the Creator’s Love — to bring the Light and Love into the world of the Creation, like a Ray from the *Great Sun*.

A huge shining Appearance with Alexey’s Face and Hands, caressing all the living, rose to the sky. At the same time, His continuity with the Great Source of the Light-Fire was preserved. This was Its Ray, Which never breaks.

This Source is the Creator!

Chapter Six: **Freedom from the Body**

When Rada and Alexey were already on their way back, one more significant event happened.

They walked along the river bank, since only along the riverbed was there a slightly noticeable path.

Alexey asked:

“Why can’t I remain in that Oneness with God, which a few hours ago seemed unshakable and forever achieved?”

“Do not be upset, it’s natural! The soul is gradually overcoming its path to Divinity! For you — it is happening very quickly, you do not even realize yet, how quickly it is!”

... Suddenly, around the turn, three strangers appeared.

These three men, it seemed, were frightened that they were noticed, and this made them very aggressive.

Alexey began to think that this encounter does not bode well. For a few seconds, he tensed internally, searching for a way how he could protect Rada in the event of an attack by these people.

But Rada, on the contrary, seemed to start filling the space with a soft, gentle, and dense calm.

She took Alexey by the hand. Her calm filled Alexey with the confidence that everything would end in peace.

Rada bowed to the strangers with an earthly bow.

Alexey followed suit.

She continued to envelop the space with caress and calm.

She said a greeting:

“Peace to you, good people! Health to you and good fortune!”

... The strangers stopped in hesitation.

“And to you, then — peace too! We are miners, we got a little lost,” — one of them answered for the three.

Alexey examined these people more attentively. They looked like runaway convicts: unwashed, in tattered clothes, with traces of beatings. What they said of themselves was clearly not true...

But Rada listened calmly and benevolently to those words. Then she drew a map in the sand using a twig, showing: how the river flows, where the paths and the roads are, and where the outposts are — everything was told in detail. She also explained to them which landmarks to go to, if they wanted to be unseen.

“If you go here, and then walk for three days — you will find a hunting lodge. The people, who are there, always leave a small supply of food and clothing. And further to the north — there are places which are untrodden and wild.

“Maybe you’ll find some ores there...”

... Then she tore off some meadowsweet leaves and gave it to the one who listened most confidently, and said:

“These leaves — treat wounds, and remove inflammations. You should brew them — and drink them for three days. They can also be applied to wounds: and the wounds will then heal faster!”

“But in what do we make the decoction?”

... Rada opened their canvas bag and took out the clay pot, in which she had cooked food with Alexey, and gave it to them.

“If you put it on hot coals, but not on a hot flame, — then it will last a long time, and it will not burst!”

... They then parted ways...

The strangers disappeared from sight...

* * *

After a while, Rada said, as if apologizing:

“I was in disarray: I did not notice their approach...

“They are not robbers! They are miners! They have run from the mine. From the Demidovs’¹² or from a government factory... The labor there is worse than the hard labor of servitude. Did you notice that ore was absorbed into their skin — and that it can never be washed out? They hide themselves from everyone...

“They could have killed us, of course. These people are waiting for only evil and misfortune from everything and from all around!

“And they were almost ready to pour the power of themselves-souls — into hatred!...

“But they still did not want to enter onto the path of evil.

“So I tried — to use peace... It seems, it was successful.”

¹² The Demidovs’ were a prominent Russian noble family who made their money from metal products. (Note from the corrector of the English translation)

“Yes... You are great in this! You can understand everything about every person at first sight!”

“It’s because I’m looking with the soul together with God. Then — the other person is as if seen in all completeness, with all the bad and good that is in him or her.”

“But I can only do this sometimes: when I clearly perceive God in myself.

“But today...

“I have never had fear for my life.

“But now — I’m afraid for you! Not that I’m afraid, but that for a few moments a fear began to arise that I could not protect you. How to deal with this?”

“It’s not easy! That is why, probably, people had invented monasticism, so as not to be bound by bonds with other people. And many of the Magi in earlier times in Russia did not form families, so that personal things could not interfere with the Divine in them.

“But I would not like to give up everything that I have with you now... How long we will be together with bodies on the Earth — only God knows! But this love of ours — it is for the good! I know it! I feel it in my heart!

“And we should not be afraid for our bodies! We must do everything that depends on us to protect our beloved ones. But, if we cannot, then we must be able to accept the death of bodies: both our own and of those whom we love with our hearts.

“It is not simple! I thought about this a lot. I looked at my grandfather and saw, how sad he was about my father’s departure..., although he knew that papa was now in the world of God!

“I thought much about you and myself: how to behave, if not I, but you, that is, your body, were to be threatened by death, and I could not prevent it...

“For this reason, apparently, these people met us: so that we would talk about this...

“Yes, the freedom of the soul from a living body is possible! This is the great Freedom in the Mergence of the human soul — with God! You’ve experienced it more than once, you know this Great Glory! But it’s possible to learn living in this Unity always and to not lose it, even if danger threatens the body!

“If it is necessary, you can simply leave the body..., of course, if God will allow it, and — to enter the Unity with the Divine world forever!”

... Rada was silent for a long time, then continued:

“Now I’ll show you one exercise that my grandfather already taught me. It allows one to gradually change the state of that part of the soul, which is firmly connected with the body from birth. In this way, you can gradually remove the ‘lower human nature’, for which the fear of the body’s safety, hunger, thirst, and much more — are necessary for the body to survive in this world.

“In order not to lose the Unity with God in different situations, a person, who has already learned the Unification with the Divine world, can learn to completely subordinate the body and mind — to the unified will of the soul and the Will of God, which are in indissoluble Mergence.”

... They went out into an open space, from which the river, meadows, and the forest were seen far away...

“You are now looking at these beautiful expanses. Choose something noticeable in the distance.

“Now see how the power of attention directs the awareness of yourself-soul — through the eyes of the body. It’s like an invisible transparent part of you rushes to where you intentionally have fixed your eyes.

“And now do the opposite — send the look of the soul into those *Depths of Light*, which have been cognized by you in recent days...

“Feel: how little the body is, and how, on the other hand, the Divine world is great, unlimited, and filled with the feeling of Love and Unity! Feel the complete dissolution, the disappearance of the *isolation of oneself-soul* in the Creator of everything! Let there be only the Oneness with Him, only He!

“In Him, the eternal life is! In Him, the Freedom, Joy, and Bliss are! In Him — it becomes clear that the soul and God are *One!*

“And now many times follow the path that the soul makes when the attention is shifted back and forth between the dense world and the Divine world. In the body, a clear passage is revealed — from one world to the other. Spill over through it, not connecting with the body, but just passing through it!

“Then you can learn to ‘flow’ through all the important energy centers in the body, and in any direction in relation to the body. It cannot be accomplished immediately, but gradually...

“The vast expanse of Divine Love — is everywhere: upwards from the body, and downwards, and in all other directions!”

... It was very interesting for the perception of Alexey! He — as a soul — “floated” through the body, remaining free from it...

... Rada continued:

“Yes, you do it correctly! It’s necessary to rise from the *Depths*, without ‘condensing’, without leaving the subtlety of the Divine Love!

“Feel that, when there is no more of the ‘former you’ in the body, then God can look through your eyes and shed His Divine Love-Tenderness through the realm of your spiritual heart — into this visible world, and also — that He can pass the Light-Power through your material hands...

“It needs to be mastered! Then — it will be possible to have a body, through which God can manifest Himself in all fullness, when it is necessary to Him.

“My grandfather told me that, if one manages to learn all this, one — as a soul — can leave the body, so that the body, for example, does not feel pain... And if the body needs to die: that is, if the time has come — then you can, without pain and without fear, leave it, like unnecessary clothes, and never return to it...

“You must know that if it is necessary, I will be able to do this, and no torturers on the Earth can prevent it!

“Like this, my father left the body — and entered the Divine Unity.

“Now, I also have to teach you that! Then it will be easier to pass those tests, without which — in the life on the Earth — usually one does not live.

“Yes..., now it seems easy to me... But if I were in a prison cell or before the executioners... — I’m

not so sure if it will be... It would be nice if neither you nor I have to go through this...

“But something else is important! Behind all the hardships and sufferings of this world, there is — on the other side of the world of matter — the Great Rest, the Calm of God, His Eternal Bliss, and the Unity with the Creative Power!

“And you and I already know that!

“And yet — from such a Mergence, the Divine Co-Creation is possible. So —you will write the book, so that, through it, God can say what people need to know now!

“So — in this Great Mergence — we — as souls — can always be together, even if our bodies are separated...”

... Rada suddenly stopped, as if she saw something in the distance.

Alexey embraced her caringly and gently, as if trying to protect her from any misfortune by that new state of himself-soul that he had cognized.

“Did you see something?”

“No, it seems... I talked about a separation — and have scared myself...”

Chapter Seven: **Religious Rituals**

Alexey began the work on the book “On the Arrangement of the Religious Life of the Russian State”.

It was progressing easily. The words came as if by themselves, and the lines were smoothly falling onto the paper. Everything that he had understood

over the course of the many years of his spiritual search, was now coming to fruition.

With each passing day, the work progressed. For example, Alexey wrote down the following thoughts:

“Every human being is endowed — by God — with free will! And no one has the right to force one’s faith upon others! There should be no oppression and, even more importantly, no killing of others, who worship God in other ways — by people who have their own beliefs.

People should not be forbidden to worship and praise God as their fathers and grandfathers did, if those people desire this. Such prohibitions are as absurd as forbidding people to speak their native languages — instead of teaching them to speak in that different language, which is also understandable to others, who live side by side, and which would help in mutual understanding and agreement.

And the understanding should be universally inculcated that it is One God, the Creator of all things, Who is worshiped by all, who are sincere in their love and reverence to Him, regardless of by what name or names they call Him.

This knowledge, when cleverly preached, will gradually reduce contradictions and enmity between communities of people with different beliefs and different religious rites. It can bring peace and harmony in spiritual arrangement and in living side by side — for all people of the Russian state.

There should be a limit only on those cults that are harmful to the health and lives of people — of both the believers themselves, and of those who believe otherwise.

The killing of people or causing them other kinds of harm because of their beliefs is unacceptable! This should be stopped — so that enmity and hatred, strengthened in the memory of generations, do not multiply.

It must be understood by all people through spiritual education.

There is only one God — the Father and the Ancestor of all. This understanding, assimilated from childhood years, will facilitate the education of the new generations of people, for whom hatred to dissenters will be disgusting and unacceptable.

If at present, the people, who come from other states, are allowed to profess their own faith and serve the glory of the Russian state — then *why not share* this kind-hearted attitude with the people who were born in Russia?"

* * *

Sometimes Alexey went to Blagoslav with his questions. He asked how to make the deep knowledge clearer to many people:

"Why are there rituals in all existing religions?

"Why do these rites sometimes substitute Living God?

"Is it possible to live spiritually without ceremonies at all?"

... Blagoslav was silent for a couple of minutes before replying. Then he spoke, demonstrating that he had thought much about the harmonious arrangement of the religious life of all people:

"Rituals are not always evil... Rituals usually arise from the aspiration of Those, Who have already

attained, to convey Their understanding to those who do not yet see, hear, and sense God.

“The rites, in most cases, come from attempts to convey to the multitude of young souls the state of redirecting the attention from the dense world — to the Divine World.

“Unfortunately, the spiritual essence of such ceremonies is usually not kept for long by people...

“The rite of the *sacrament* is an example for you: if people *have communion*, that is, they took on symbolically *the Blood and Body of Christ* — that means they had become parts of *the Whole*. And therefore, after this ceremony, the *One Blood of Jesus* must be felt by everyone in themselves. Then they all must perceive themselves and each other — as *brothers and sisters in Christ*.

“In particular, one cannot raise an arm to the other person: because there is in that person *the Divine Flesh and the Holy Blood*...

“And, if in the person himself or herself there is now a *Particle of Christ*, how then can this one have sinful thoughts or do unrighteous actions?

“I want to show you through these examples how the memory of a ritual that has been performed should help one to live with God all the time!

“But for many, is it so right now? How many people understand this rite? What do you think?

“Or, here is another example: many nations worship fire, they commit all sorts of fire ceremonial acts — but they not only do not see the *Divine Fire* but even do not remember about It!

“Although, in fact, by even just contemplating for a long time the flame of an ordinary fire, one can

calm one's mind and even cleanse the body's energy a bit...

“You yourself understand how easily rituals lose their intended meaning!

“Sometimes you cannot even guess, what meaning these rituals should carry!

“Rites would not be harmful if the intentions of those, who perform them, were pure. And — if the hearts of God's worshipers were open!

“But symbols always lose their meaning very quickly...

“And always very soon there come greedy people who want to extract benefit from such rites and obtain power over others.

“Thus, those rites, which exist with a *substitution of the meaning*, arose...

“For example, instead of eradicating the ‘animality’ in themselves, people began to ‘bring to God’ bloody sacrifices, that is, innocent animals...

“And priests, who have lost God, always find ways to take advantage of the sincere worship of people — and begin to ‘accept’ those ‘victims’... They use those ‘sacrifices’ *for themselves*, saying: ‘After all, we are servants of the cult!’...

“A rite can *replace* the communion of the soul with God! Herein lies the sadness: a symbolic action with a lost meaning — displaces the purposeful transformation of the soul!

“I could give a lot of such examples... But another one is more significant...

“Man can speak with God, even when standing before an icon, if he or she means the Living God behind that symbol!

“And sometimes the Divine Souls can even adopt those visions, to which people worship — with all their hearts, but they are not ready yet for more. Those Souls answer in symbols, understandable to each such human soul, — to their appeals and prayers...

“So, for someone — the icon seems to become alive!... For another person — other images become visible by the soul. By them God wants to render help to a person in order to support the right efforts or to keep him or her from making mistakes.

“That is why people, while only just approaching the perception of the Divine World, sometimes have visions of the images, to which they worship.

“And if the aspiration of others is directed at the impersonal Aspect of the Divine, then they do not see images, but perceive immersion in the *Light* and dissolution of oneself in It.

“All this exists at the disposal of those Souls, Who — from the *subtlest worlds* — manifest to worshipers what is most tangible easily perceivable for them, in order to guide such souls along the path of cognition.”

“But there are demons, and they, too, can take different forms...”

“Yes, evil and strong souls may take different forms. They feed on people’s energies of fear or arrogance. The low attracts the low...”

“This fear of demons and devils sometimes becomes the main tool of the priests to control the crowd of blindly believing young embodied souls.”

“But people should know that infernal creatures exist...”

“Yes, they exist. And it is important to understand this.

“But the only weapon that protects human souls is the *love for God!*

“The state of pure love defends one from the beings of hell and makes the soul unattainable for their touches!

“And any intensified attention, directed to evil, and also the arising mystical fear — turn souls into ‘tasty sacrifices’ for demons and other entities, which are attracted and are nourished by the emotions of fear, hatred, or complacency...

“It is necessary for people to understand that God never wished for people the sickness and suffering, He did not devise hellish torments... People themselves create those states for themselves and for others! People doom themselves to sufferings!

“But even by suffering, God can help in cleansing the body and soul — and get rid of torment!

“It is very important to understand that God does not punish people! God wishes happiness for people! The Great Parent — like any kind earthly parents — desires only the good for His children, helps to get rid of the bad qualities in souls, and heals them from errors and vices!”

“And how to explain, where does evil come from? People used to think that it comes from Satan. And both evil and hell — they really do exist!”

“It’s as if you have not seen evil?”

“I have seen it...”

“Hell is that evil, which is carried in themselves by embodied souls and is sent from them towards other beings. Then, such souls, when they are without bodies, are the inhabitants of immaterial hell,

which is the world of darkness and suffering. They multiply this world by themselves.

“By combining the manifestations of evil in a single image, people created myths about ‘the chief of all the forces of darkness’ and called him by different names... But God has no ‘enemy’, who could be equal to Him in strength and skills, and whose intrigues allegedly seduce people and make them bad!

“There are souls that have many disgusting qualities. They are in opposition to the Divine Principles of Love, Harmony, and Beauty.

“Evil has homes and places for growth — in souls burdened with vices. Such souls can be very big — and then such carriers of hatred and anger can be called devils.

“The pleasure from causing harm to others — can be obtained by only perverted and deviant souls. They do not know about the real happiness from giving their love, from making others happy! But they immeasurably crave satisfaction only *for themselves*. It is namely this insanity, this spiritual blindness, and this raging of low passions — that are the causes of hell, in which such souls are immersing themselves by their thoughts, actions, emotions, and aspirations.

“So the souls build their destinies — both in their present life in bodies and in the life after the death of their bodies. They remain the captives of those states, in which they lived during the past life in the body.

“Then, in order to redeem themselves by understanding and transforming the evil in themselves — into goodness, the hellish souls again get the opportunity to come to the material world...

“The evil in this world is inevitable: otherwise people, who understand the perniciousness of hatred and fear, meanness and deceit, — would not strive for freedom and purity, joy and love! And the Heroes of Good would not grow!

“Try to explain all this for people — at least in part — with simple and clear words!

“The main thing is that love for the Creator and approaching Him — casts out fear! A strong faith-aspiration defeats doubts! And the life’s spiritual experience gradually turns faith — into knowledge!

“But every soul does not quickly grow up and gain wisdom.

“For example, even images and symbols from meditations can turn into just mechanically repeatable actions...

“I myself, even in our community, saw how easily it is possible: to turn the right meditation into a kind of rite, which is habitually performed by a person only because everyone around does this...

“Now, in your meditations, you can see all the stages of how a soul, before entering the Mergence with the Creator, makes efforts which bring him or her closer to the Creator.

“If one loses — behind patterned actions — that love-aspiration, reverence, and tenderness, which allow one to approach the Divine and to enter Mergence with the Primordial, — then very soon meditations can become... too similar to rituals!

“Only when people have already grown as souls, and when they love God with all their hearts — only then, will they not get off the Path, substituting the desire for Mergence with the Creator — with just ordinary actions!

“Yes... how different are the souls that live on the Earth in bodies! And there are only a few of them, who, like you, can quickly perceive all the knowledge! For this, the soul must grow up, mature, grow in wisdom, and develop in oneself the aspiration to God — as the Main Goal in life!

“Little children turn everything — into games...

“There can be also games of adult (by their bodies) people — for them, it would be useful to strengthen the memory about God and recall rectitude.

“And also there may be harmful games, perverted by priests...

“You, Alexey, have great strength of the soul. For more than just one life, you have been striving to God! You had more than just some techniques and skills that would allow you to acquire the complete purity of perception, clarity of understanding, and the fullness of Mergence with Him!

“But for the young souls, which are less ready, — all of this will be incomparably more difficult. And they cannot overcome all of this during one life, even if you tell them everything that you know now!

“Do not think that any person in a short time can be taught everything that you so easily and quickly mastered! A young embodied soul cannot quickly reject the ‘earthly’ in itself and soar to the Divine, just by simply desiring this!

“Look: this is a forest nut... If you try to remove the shell of the young nut in order to more quickly ripen it — it will not work! While the nucleolus is not ripe — the shell and the ripening fruit are still fused. Only then, when the time has come and

the nut is ripe, — can you remove the dense shell and extract the nucleolus.

“Or — if you crack an egg, which has just been laid by a bird, then there will not be a chick in it...

“And a chick cannot fly up until its wings have become fully fledged and have grown stronger!

“But the sequence of meditative techniques and even correctly understood rites can facilitate the spiritual Path and speed up the progress...

“Remember all this — to bring the help to people!”

... Alexey, carefully considering and weighing every word, continued to write down how spiritual leaders should help people.

Chapter Eight: **Parting**

Once, Blagoslav said to Alexey:

“We must leave this place. The surroundings are now uncomfortable. I have begun to feel danger. It is necessary to go to Siberia, far beyond the Ural Mountains. It will be calmer there: easier to hide...

“In the last year, I have sent three of our people to look at that region. They have found good secretive places. We will wait till winter is over here, and go in the spring...”

* * *

Soon after this conversation, Alexey visited the county town. He bought papers for his manuscript and a few other small things that the community

members had asked for their needs. He also brought with him some alarming news:

Several military detachments are moving from their places from the south. Having completed the suppression of the Bashkir popular uprising, they must now accompany the voivode and the church clerks who will seek out and register the “dissenters” throughout the district. There is such a requirement: to conduct a census of all the Old Believers in order to tax them with a double tax... The former decree, the so-called “12 Articles of Tsarevna Sophia” about how to punish “dissidents”, was abolished. Instead, new decrees were prescribed which were, sort of, softer. But all, who do not obey, — will be punished with death and other punishments. And how all of this will actually be implemented, it is not clear yet...

It is also said that they will be looking for a community here. A denunciation was written that the “heretics” have taken refuge here. This place was pointed out by some man. He heard that there was a community situated here. He had a conversation with a man and a woman from that community. And that man seduced him into “heresy”...

... Alexey told all of this to Blagoslav.

“I have found out about this... And I was not informed of the details, of course.”

... Blagoslav said with a pain in his voice:

“This is that danger which I had been feeling now for a long time...”

“Now we must leave — without waiting for spring!”

“Now we will gather the council, and you must tell everyone what you know!”

... At the council of the community, Alexey suggested:

“If our houses are found, even if they are empty, then they will seek and pursue us. I think that I will show them the place where the community of Old Believers was burned several years ago. They will believe me. Maybe then the trouble will pass...”

Blagoslav shook his head:

“It is necessary to leave anyway!... Better — now! They may not believe you...”

... At the council of the community, everyone decided to leave...

Later, Blagoslav asked Alexey:

“Will you leave with us now?”

“I think that I need to try to stop those who are looking for our community... I will try to ward off the danger from all of you: so that they do not pursue you. I will have such an opportunity. And after that — I will catch up with you...”

... He paused for a moment, then said:

“However, maybe, — quite after...”

“This madness of hatred to other faiths must be stopped! If I do not make up my mind, then I’ll regret this for my whole life!

“I’ll finish the book! There is only a little bit left! I’ll go to the new capital, and I’ll try to meet with the tsar! I will say what I think about the spiritual reforms, which are necessary! I will give him the manuscript!...”

“And then — God will decide what happens next...”

“If I’m alive, I’ll find all of you! Rada has already taught me how it’s possible to find any place on the Earth, where the beloved people are...”

“Do you bless this plan?”

... Blagoslav was silent... He was silent for a long time... He listened to God...

Then he spoke very slowly and quietly, but the words sounded somehow special, as if many of the Highest Souls in the universe listened to him:

“I myself would tell you: ‘No, come with us! You cannot correct anything in this world! Only you yourself will perish, and will make Rada unhappy!...’

“But my will must not be executed now, it’s not for me to decide!

“The possibility that you will be able to change the course of the history of the Russian state — is very little. But it’s possible...

“There are such key moments when the deeds and decisions of individuals can guide events into a new direction for centuries...

“It’s like forks in the roads of countries, even of whole civilizations...

“At such moments, very much depends on the choices and actions of specific people!

“God usually does not make decisions instead of people. Therefore, the people receive the kinds of governments, of which they are deserving.

“But sometimes the Divine Messengers change the course of Earth’s history a bit...

“You are not a Messiah: you did not master everything which we could teach you.

“And yet, from you and from what you want to try to accomplish, much can be changed in this country. And I have no right to dissuade you...

“You decide!

“What Rada and I should do is not to force you to a decision, but let you realize your choice — ac-

ording to how your heart will tell you and how you will understand God!

“I hope that you will return to us, to Rada... But I will not build illusions.

“I will await you! All of us will wait for you and try to help you to the extent that is it is possible for us to do at a distance as souls.

“If there is an opportunity to change the living conditions, in which the new generations of people, coming to the Earth, will be born and brought up, — it is worth trying!

“Just remember that each person, whether performing ordinary earthly works or even special feats, must oneself, first of all, become a Divine Soul! No matter how much you talk about it to others, nor how many books you read, nor how many manuscripts you write — the result of this life is weighed in the World of God as follows: ‘Have you already come in — or have you not entered yet?’. If It has been reached — then the Main Feat of life here on the Earth has been accomplished! Do not forget about this, trying to help all people!”

* * *

Later, Alexey spoke with Rada:

“Darling! I had thought that I would still have more time to be with you, time to learn, to become stronger, and wiser...

“I did not know that everything would end so soon!...

“Will you forgive me? Will you allow me to go? I cannot do otherwise!”

... Rada silently looked at Alexey. Her love was greater than the sadness of having to be separated by bodies... Her love was so strong that she gave the freedom to her beloved...

* * *

The community went over the Ural Mountains, to Siberia...

Blagoslav calmly and confidently led the people.

During the night, Rada sat next to him near the fire, snuggled up to her grandpa, and said quietly:

“I will have a child, a son. I know that there will be a son — the son of me and Alexey...

“I did not tell him...

“It would have been very difficult for him to cope with the choice, if he knew about that...

“Grandpa, you know how to see the future! Tell me: will he return?”

“It’s impossible now to determine this... This will depend on how the future is now being created by many people...

“And you have contributed your part: you have released him — the most beloved person!...”

“But what if I let him go to his death?”

“It may happen so... Both you and I know this... We also know that without bodies, life — for us — continues in the Light of Love of the Divine Existence...

“We also know how difficult it is sometimes to live far away from the beloved, even though we are already entering the Divine world...

“Such trials are given to us not as punishment, but to make us stronger and wiser...

“What is the meaning of life for us now? And how to sum it up? Did we, having left this world, become Particles of the World of Divine Love?

“To become One with God — one needs to learn to love as God loves! To love — with Him, from Him!

“It is necessary to let go of a small love — in order to become the Great Love! It is necessary to reach — and to become the Divine Sun, Whose rays shine to this world. And to also become — the Heart, which is merged with the Primordial!

“Our help to those, who follow, is to be poured, like the light from the Sun, at every moment of such life — both while we are in bodies, and after, when we no longer have bodies.

“And those, who turn away from darkness, receive that help — and they turn their eyes of the souls to God. They then begin to see the Light and gradually rush to the Creator — with all their being, with their whole lives!”

Chapter Nine: **Road to the Capital**

Alexey returned to the hermitage, where he had lived before with the elder Nicholas, and continued to work on the book.

To be aware of everything that will happen in the district, he asked Tikhon, the son of Efimia, to gather and tell him all the news.

Tikhon went in and, with bated breath, watched spellbound as smooth lines appeared under the pen of Alexey on paper.

When the voivode, church clerks, and troops arrived, Alexey managed to convince those who were to make the decision that the denunciation was based on old rumors: the informer just wanted, apparently, to curry favor and told about the long-gone cases... Alexey showed the place where the Old Believers' camp was burned formerly. The soldiers, exhausted by the long military campaign during the suppression of the Bashkirs' uprisings, were now glad at the opportunity of not having to hunt for heretics in the forests and swamps for many miles around.

Everything turned out all right.

Now Alexey was comfortable about the community members.

* * *

The book was easy to write. Sometimes Jesus was present in the cell, filling Alexey's heart with Himself and directing Alexey's thoughts.

Sometimes Alexey brightly felt Blagoslav, and perceived his new wise advice about having patience and caution when choosing which words to use.

And Rada... Alexey was struck by how she could almost always be calmly and affectionately nearby, filling the space with transparent tenderness.

He told her his thoughts and dreams...

Rada, even without being near with her body, continued to help in the further development of meditations on the Mergence with God.

Alexey learned how to stay as long as possible in those states when the soul, opened for God, could perceive God's Will. He studied that God's Love could easily flow through his material body — so that the intellectual process would be filled with God's Providence.

To live in the unity of the mind with God — this had previously seemed like a great miracle to Alexey, when the elder Nicholas had explained to him about this state of the soul. And now... — it was a reality! Even though he could not always live like this, he was still able to do it at least partly!

Now Dunyasha and Timothy often visited him.

Looking at the work of Alexey, they asked him to teach them to read and write.

Alexey taught them — and saw how an enthusiastic desire to learn — can quickly transform children.

Soon his work on the book was completed.

Snow began to fall, and everything frosted over... It was time to go.

* * *

At first, Alexey traveled with passing convoys carrying iron, copper, and salt. There were also cannons and rifles in the convoys... The continuing war required more and more weapons, and the new industry factories in the Urals now multiplied, and grew stronger and larger.

Endless expanses, thick forests, poor villages, dirty county towns, small churches, and rich monasteries...

Gradually the inns became more crowded.

Alexey now traveled by post-chaise, which was much faster.

He had money for the road. This was taken care of by Blagoslav. He had insisted on this and allocated to Alexey money from the community. In this, Blagoslav was, as always, reasonable and practical; he did not listen to Alexey's refusals.

* * *

Alexey recalled, as if summing up the events in his life, how everything had changed since the time when he had been expelled from Moscow.

He also recalled how, in his youth, he had dreamed that he would one day be able to accomplish what he had just decided. He smiled now, thinking of that former young dreamer...

Alexey thought about how to get an appointment with Tsar Peter, how to talk to him. He tried to recall some influential relatives or acquaintances of his late father. But this did not seem promising: it was unlikely that any of them would even recognize Alexey or that they would agree to present him to the sovereign.

People said that the king was easy to handle, that he could talk with a non-ranking carpenter or blacksmith. But that sometimes, he may be quick-tempered and angry.

It would be necessary to find out where he is in the new city under construction — so as to directly address him. There, it should be easier than in Moscow...

After thinking about such things, Alexey again confidently plunged into the Divine Light — and there

came a calm knowledge that everything is in God's Hands! Alexey then — together with God — embraced the vast expanses with a hearty love! It was as if the whole space — from the remote Siberian taiga, where Rada and all the community members were now, all the way to the new northern capital of Russia — was now contained in the spiritual heart, connected with the Love and Peace of the Divine *Depths*.

* * *

A violent blizzard began.

The driver-coachman decided to wait out the bad weather at the inn.

He went to unharness the horses.

Alexey shook off the snow, went to the house, and entered. He wanted to ask the owner for a room for the night...

But, it seemed, that the owner was busy with a new lodger...

A richly dressed, large-built man in a disheveled but new European styled jacket, without a wig customary for that attire, was shaking the innkeeper, who was faintly trying to resist.

“Do what you want to do — but find a doctor! Find one — wherever you can! Immediately!”

“Your grace! Where will I find a physician? We are in the middle of a snowstorm and a blizzard! What doctor will come? There are no doctors here! They are in the city only!... There was once just a soothsayer who healed here, but she died last year! Only the barber pulls out teeth here... But, how to treat the daughter of your grace, he hardly knows: he was never taught!...”

“She could die... Do something! Find a healer! If you will save her — I will load you with money, but if she dies — then you will suffer!”

“But what can I do?”

“Tell them to harness the horses, and send to seek a doctor!”

... He forcibly shook the owner of the inn for the last time and then let him go. The owner could barely stand up. Not knowing what to do next, he looked around fearfully.

The rich guest sat down, clasped his head in his hands and groaned. Tears welled up in his eyes.

At that time, a boy of about eight ran out from the room, he was also in a rich modern outfit. He uttered in despair:

“Dad, dad! Dasha is very bad, she’s dying! Dad, I’m afraid!...”

... The boy approached his father and stopped in hesitation.

Alexey felt that he could intervene and try to help.

He touched the rich guest on his shoulder:

“I have with me some medicinal herbs, and sometimes I helped people when there were ailments, and not just by prayers. If you permit, I’ll look at the sick one, maybe I can do something for her...”

“Yes! Yes! Now! I beg of you, save her!”

... Alexey entered the room, where, on the bed, a blond girl of about ten or slightly older was tossing in the heat and groaning...

Alexey was quite able to cope with the girl’s illness. The Light and Power of God flowed confidently through the hands of his body, purifying and restoring her health.

Her life was no longer in danger, her fever diminished, and the healed girl fell into a calm sleep.

Now Alexey's efforts were aimed at ensuring that everything that happened did not seem to be a miracle. He treated the recovering girl with infusions from the herbs collected by Rada, and talked about the important things, using simple words, which would help the soul to go through the purification that was necessary...

Soon the girl was completely healthy.

“God Himself had sent you!

“The children were asked to look at our new house in St. Petersburg! I took them with me!... If it were not for you!... Now you must come with us, I will not accept a refusal!” — the count thanked Alexey.

... Alexey agreed to go with the count and his children.

The covered wagon had comfortable seats, was upholstered inside with velvet, and had nice horses... Everything was as if happening by itself, easing the way to the capital.

On the way there, the count asked Alexey:

“Were you, father Alexey, a parish priest? And for what reason are you going to the capital?”

“No, I did not have a parish, I lived as a monk in a monastery, and learned from an elder, I was going to accept a schema¹³.

“I have thought a lot about all of this. Here is my book written about the organization of the spiritual life in the country. I would now like to present it

¹³ A higher step of monkhood in the Orthodox Church.

to Tsar Peter, so that it would be possible to implement good reforms.”

... The count offered his help in order to introduce Alexey to the tsar.

He told Alexey a lot about the mores at the court, about the innovations of Tsar Peter and about the powerful opposition to his reforms from many boyars and church ministers.

On the way, Alexey spoke with the count’s children.

The smart boy and gentle and affectionate girl were very interesting fellow travelers for Alexey.

All this led him to thoughts about how important it is for children to be educated properly.

Upon his arrival in the capital, the count hospitably offered Alexey a room in his house. He promised to arrange it so that in a short time the sovereign would receive and listen to Alexey.

Alexey was given a room.

He again plunged into the work on the manuscript, supplementing his work with a chapter on teaching children of different classes. He wrote inspirationally about the benefits that good education will bring to the prosperity of the country, if its children grew up receiving a good education and with the strength of rectitude in the souls.

Chapter Ten: **Meeting with the Tsar**

And so, Tsar Peter received Alexey:
“What kind of favor have you come to ask?”

“It is not about a favor... But, rather, about the justice and well-being of the people living in our country.”

“Do you think I’m unfair?”

“If I had thought so, would I have come to you, my lord?”

... Alexey began to talk about the need for reforms in the spiritual life, about the cruelty and rigidity of certain rules, which should be eliminated. He spoke about the importance of change, and also that people, free from these kinds of restrictions, should make up the people of the renewed state. He said that freedom of religion should be established, because One God has power over all people.

To much of what was said, Peter nodded in agreement. He especially liked what Alexey said about education, about teaching children of all classes.

But when Alexey moved in more detail to the reforms of the church organization, Peter ceased listening and stopped him:

“I have long thought that a reform is needed; a project was started by bishop Fyodor. He is an educated man, thinking sensibly. We will give him your manuscript. Soon he will return from Pskov. You will have to meet and explain everything to him.”

Peter took the manuscript, inscribed his signature, and ordered the transfer of consideration for this project to bishop Fyodor.

The conversation ended.



The count with the children had to return to Siberia.

Alexey wholeheartedly thanked him for his help and hospitality.

He now moved to a hotel and waited for the meeting with bishop Fyodor.

... But Alexey had an almost obsessive feeling that it was time for him to leave this place, and that he had already done everything possible...

“But how can I leave without bringing the matter to an end? After all, the tsar himself instructed me to tell all the details about the reform of the church to bishop Fyodor!...”¹⁴

... And around, a dark, stuffy atmosphere was getting stronger. It was similar to the time when Alexey was about to be expelled from Moscow...

... When four men armed with daggers entered the room, Alexey immediately understood everything.

The massacre was so rapid that Alexey barely even felt the pain and easily left the body.

One of the murderers said gloatingly over the bloody body:

¹⁴ A few years later, in 1721, tsar Peter-the-First carried out significant reforms in the church life. The “Spiritual Regulations” was adopted, and the Synod was created.

But almost all the changes and innovations were aimed at reducing the influence of the church and subordinating it to the state, rather than on spiritual transformation.

The preparation and implementation of these reforms were carried out by the bishop, and later the archbishop, Fyodor.

“Now these heretics have been dealt with!... One villain in Moscow was burned at the bonfire as a warning — but it did not help: in return — new ones are breeding!...

“Since the tsar is merciful to them, then we ourselves will now have to do God’s Judgement!

“They will not crush the faith! It will not work! We will destroy them all!”

... And Alexey — in the solemn Radiance of the Divine Light — was accepted into the Embrace of All the Perfect Ones!

For him, a new time began — the time of the Divine Life without a body.

Chapter Eleven: **The Departure of Blagoslav**

In the spring, the son of Rada and Alexey was born. He was named Eremey.

Blagoslav was very happy about the birth of the boy! He understood how this would help Rada! He also saw what a wise and already adult soul was sent by God into this body!

... Another year had passed.

The community settled down at a new place.

One day, Blagoslav invited Rada to have a talk.

“It’s time for me to depart! Be silent! Do not interrupt! You see — my time has come!

“Do not grieve, granddaughter! For everything has its time...

“You have seen more than once that the sunset can be as beautiful as the sunrise... Dusk, too, can be just as beautiful as the dawn!

“The ‘sunset’ of earthly human life can be beautiful too!...

“You have been a joy to me all these years, you have been a hope and a consolation in the most difficult moments of my earthly life. You gave me also the happiness to know about the bright future: the Sun of my great-grandson, your son Eremey, will rise above the Earth!

“Well, my granddaughter, you really do not need to cry!”

“I’m not crying, grandpa!” — Rada brushed aside the tear and, smiling, embraced Blagoslav.

“Well, that’s better! You know that the Sun of Svarog is inextinguishable! And it is my turn to replenish His Light with all the Light and Love that I cultivated in me.

“Go, assemble the community! There will be a farewell!”

Everyone gathered: young and old.

Blagoslav bowed to the community members with a bow to the earth. For a long time, he hugged everyone by the silence of the great soul.

Then he spoke:

“It’s time for me to say goodbye. Today, I must leave you. I must leave this body and the burden of earthly cares, and also the responsibility for the whole community.

“Forgive me if I have offended anyone, if I was unjust!

“To replace me, I propose to elect Rada. Not because she’s my granddaughter... But only because the Divine Will is always open to her without concealment! The Wisdom of God — of Rod, Svarog the Most High — is always ready to be perceived by her,

and there is no interference from her own desires or personal thoughts!

“Do you want that?”

“Or is there someone else whom you want more — to lead the community now?”

“Rada! We want it to be Rada!”

“This is great... But she cannot cope with this responsibility without your support! Her son is still small, her child still needs a lot of care!

“Will you accept her as she is? Will you help her? Next to her — strong and devoted people should stand up, only then can the community be a place of God’s Love on the Earth!”

“We will help!”

... Blagoslav bowed to everyone again, entered his hut and closed the door...

* * *

Rada tried to go into meditation as deeply as possible, so as not to interfere with her grandfather. And — by her own presence — not to hold him *here*, but to meet him *There!*

... She saw in the Light her father Radomir, and her great-grandfather, with Whom she also often spoke, Alexey, and many other acquaintances and unfamiliar Divine Teachers. Here — in the Divine world — They together joyfully greeted Blagoslav!

... She, while staying *There*, on the other side, did not hurry to talk about all of this to the community members.

Then she went out in front of people and said a few words about what she saw.

Chapter Twelve: **The Divine Heritage**

Earthly life continued...

The new spring was at its zenith... Nature awakened, filling everything around with beauty and strength.

But for Rada, this time was not easy: “How to carry on living, how to cope with the responsibility that I now have taken?”.

Little Eremey sat on the floor and caught with his hands the rays of sunlight from the window...

Suddenly, an ever-increasing Divine Light filled the space...

Rada saw in this Light the Great Magi of Russia and many Teachers Who *had come* through the other spiritual traditions.

There were a lot of Them. They were calm and beautiful — these Divine Men and Women. Some among Them were very young and others were gray-haired.

They all were here for her — for Rada!

They came to help her, and support her:

“Do not be afraid of difficulties! Do not be afraid of the responsibility! What you are taking now is your work for God! It’s Our Common Deed, Our Common Heritage! This is the result of Our labors from Our many incarnate lives! We will help and continue to teach you, so that you will be able to help others even better!”

... Rada was — in this Radiance of Love and Light — completely free and happy!

Alexey approached, and embraced her with the Divine Tenderness and Affection.

Then the Others also came up. Their Appearances began to grow, filling the space with the Great Power!

Their Divine Bodies of Light were huge, like the Mountains. The Foundations of these Mountains were in the vast *Depths*, unattainable for ordinary human vision, and the peaks had Radiant Appearances with Faces and Hands.

Rada was now standing among Them, also in a similar body made of Light. She was a little smaller, but still — one of Them!

Alongside her, were Alexey, Radomir, Blagoslav, and many other Divine Souls, Whom Rada had already known. But there were Many Whom she had never seen before. They became bigger and bigger... It was like Waves of Light, rising from the One Primordial Ocean in the vast expanses around! They were the Peace, Majesty, Tenderness, Love, and Power!

“Each of Us has Our own Work. Everyone fulfills One’s own Task, which is a part of the Divine Plan! Do you now accept your share of the Divine Labors?”

“Yes.”

“Will you not be shaken by the burdens of life in the world of matter, or from personal earthly desires, or from dangers that can threaten your body or of those whom you love?”

“I will try not to...”

“You will always live under Our Watch, in the Rays of Our Care!

“So, take the Power of the Divine Love — and carry It into the world of incarnate people!”

*** * ***

Rada’s body seemed lifeless, she herself was still *There*, in the Radiance of the Divine Light.

... Little Eremey crawled on all fours and began to try to get to her breast, which was full of milk. It was time to feed the boy.

Rada had to work hard to enter her earthly body again.

She lifted her son in her arms and put him to her breast.

Then she sang softly. And in this song, there was not even a shadow of sadness. The Joy, Light, beauty of the Earth, and Beauty of Divine Souls — all this sounded in unison. Little Eremey seemed to hover in this field of Light and Love.

She sang to her son until he fell asleep in her hands.

And — the Silence began to fall, in Which there were only God, His Peace, His Love, His Omnipotence, His Understanding, and His Wisdom... And all this was now in Her, Divine Rada!

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