

THE LOST PAGES OF THE GOSPEL

By Denis Sokolov

This book is a philosophical and artistic work created after a heartfelt analysis of the Holy Gospels that form parts of the New Testament of the Bible and which have been preserved as part of our Sacred Teachings. The first part of this book is a play, which contains the fundamental thoughts and utterances of Jesus, including over 100 direct quotations, in its text. This has helped the author to more fully and systematically set forth the basic teachings of Christ in a more accessible manner. The second part of the book discusses the common roots of various religious philosophies. The book will be interesting both for those who are acquainting themselves for the very first time with the texts of the Bible, and also as for those who have tried to read those texts, but have encountered various difficulties in understanding them.

God is always with us, and He tries again and again at all times to convey the words of His Truth through those who have matured to the level of evangelists. This is the best revelation of the Gospel which I have ever had occasion to read. Thanks to the unique work of this author, which allows us to have an a clear and bright picture of the main thoughts and utterances of Christ, Christ and his words have resounded to us once more for the very first time as a living, complete, and, most of all, accessible and understandable Teaching.

Khachik Manaselyan.

Each age needs its own spirituality distinct from the spirituality and values of other ages. This is why prophets continue to emerge. A prophet is none other than a person capable of conveying the higher Truth in a language which people will understand.

Osho Rajneesh

PREFACE

The world is sick with a deadly disease, and two thousand years ago the world was offered the needed medicine for it. Unfortunately, all this time people have only pretended to take it, but have not really done so. And therefore the disease continues to grow ever more severe, until today it threatens to become so dire that it will pass the point of no return. And if humanity is condemned to die, then it will die in shame, like a warrior killed on the battlefield without even having drawn his sword – out of sheer cowardice.

This book is based on analysis of the Old and New Testaments, as well as of other sources and materials that tell the story of the life of Jesus, including Gnostic writings such as the Gospel of Thomas. The greatest thoughts and utterances of Christ, often scattered without any particular order in different sources, are here for the first time gathered together, unified and presented in consequential and logical order. In the course of a short drama, one hundred and twenty six quotations from the most famous texts of the New Testament are here presented. This has permitted the author, using the form of a short drama which is easy to understand, to set forth fully and in complete detail the fundamental ideas of Christ and the quintessence of His Teachings.

Buddha, Jesus, Mahavira, Socrates, Kabir, Lao-Tse... The rulers of the world have all bowed their heads before these figures, in whose presence even the greatest potentates have felt themselves worthless. But do we really know who these teachers in fact were? Do we understand what it was they were trying to teach us?

Unfortunately, for some reason, people are always much more interested in authors who came close to the Higher Truth, but were unable to achieve it in the end. Good literature doubtless deserves our attention, yet even the best works of the most famous poets and writers are only colored illustrations of the Book of Books, “the Book of Wisdom” which yet remains locked away from us behind seven seals. It is rare that in our daily lives we remember the names of those who first and truly understood its meaning, and even rarer that we try to understand what it was that they were saying to us.

Have we ever wondered why it is that the Bible, which is the most famous book in the world, remains at the same time the most mysterious and misunderstood work in the world? Could it be that there are powers that are interested in our not understanding?

Jesus said that if you know the Truth, you will reign over life and death (Gospel of Thomas, 1) , and therefore will obtain true freedom. Perhaps this is the real reason why the keys to the knowledge He imparted have been zealously kept hidden for centuries. (Thomas, 39). But to continue living like this is at the very least unreasonable. These days it is particularly necessary that we open that long-locked door, and therefore the chance has finally appeared.

I bow my head humbly before the spark of God that lives within each of us.

THE LOST PAGES OF THE GOSPELS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Jesus	First Jerusalemite
The Apostles:	Second Jerusalemite
James the Elder (son of Zebedee)	King Herod
John	Herodias (his wife)
Peter	Ahaz, Herod's counselor
Andrew	Servants
Thomas	
Matthew	
Philip	
Bartholomew	
James the Younger (son of Alphaeus)	
Thaddeus	
Simon	
Judas	

The Holy Spirit, Enlightenment, Nirvana, Samadhi... What meaning is hidden in these great names? Names by themselves are unable to unlock the mysteries of the far-beyond. But attain, and then ye shall know!

Act One

Eleven apostles are eating a meal together with Jesus. On a cloth spread beneath a tree is a basket containing wine, bread, eggs, onions, and water. Jesus says the Lord's Prayer:

JESUS

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.**

After this manner pray ye to our Father in heaven, and no other prayers shall ye need.¹

PHILIP

But are they not closer to God who spend hours and hours in most earnest prayers? Will just one prayer really be enough for them?

JESUS

Those of you who pray more than the others, are those who are the least faithful amongst you.¹ Because you yourselves do not understand what it is you believe -- as if you were beggars, unable to do anything more than beg that your wishes be granted! Why do you wheedle favors from God? Do you think He made a mistake in giving you the conditions you have? Do you wish to teach Him how to correct His errors? In this case, the God you believe in is unreasonable. Why then do you even call him God at all? Why do you believe in Him? Why do you pray to Him? **Ye worship ye know not what.**² And there is little truth in what you believe.

¹ Matthew 6: 9-13.

² John 4: 22

But I say unto you, that it is worse to be hypocritical than not to believe at all. For as you deny God, you shall in the end come to Him, just as wherever you walk upon the Earth, you will come at last to the ocean. But if your faith is weak, you shall go nowhere, but be instead buffeted from side to side. And so you shall be like a stagnant mere or charred log, and never be like the clear water or pure flame.

PHILIP

How then is it that you want us to pray? For we all saw how when you had **made a scourge out of small cords, in your rage you drove the moneychangers out of the temple.**

JESUS

Make not my Father's house a place of merchandise!³ Do not let the hypocrites trade in the name of the Heavenly Father! Whom do you go to listen to in the temple? And whom do we respect in that sanctuary the most? The scribes? The Pharisees? The high priests? **All that ever came before me are sheep and robbers**⁴ – and worse! For it is not your bread and gold that they steal, but your very lives! **Their words and faces seem pious and godfearing, and they draw nigh unto us with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.**⁵ **And they are like well polished graves, that seem beautiful on the outside, but inside are the bones of the dead, and rot and decay.**⁶ **But woe unto them, the hypocrites, scribes, and Pharisees, for they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for they neither go in themselves, neither suffer they them that are entering to go in.**⁷ **Nay, they love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi! But do not call them Rabbi.**⁸ **Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.**⁹ **And for ages they have taken the keys of knowledge and hidden them,**¹⁰ replacing them with half-truths, dressed as the Truth, and therefore far more dangerous and frightful even than lies.

SIMON

But you have said: **“I will destroy this temple that is made with mere hands, and within three days will build another made without hands”**¹¹ – to great consternation, **since forty and six years was this temple in building.**¹²

JESUS

So verily I have spoken, and now I desire the same.

SIMON

Forgive me for pestering you with questions, but is just three days not too short time for the building of a New Temple?

³ John 2: 15-16.

⁴ John 10:8

⁵ Matthew 15: 7-8

⁶ Mathew 23: 25

⁷ Matthew 23: 13

⁸ Matthew 23: 6-8

⁹ Matthew 15: 14

¹⁰ Thomas 39

¹¹ Mark 14: 58

¹² John 2: 20

JOHN

O, Simon, Simon! **Your Teacher spoke of the temple of His Body,**¹² of the temple of his soul.

JESUS

(placing his hand on John's shoulder)

Indeed, John! You are the youngest of us, therefore your eyes see further and your ears hear keener than others at times.

(to Simon)

This temple has been built since this age began, and closed to the uninitiated, yet in three days I have promised to open everyone's eyes, so that all could behold it.

Oh, my brothers, many obstacles you will face on your path to the Kingdom of Heaven! **For the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.**¹³ but you must be bold and take the first step. After the first step, follows the second, and each step that comes after shall be lighter and swifter than its forebear. **For the Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.**¹⁴ And the Word of God, spread through Me to you, shall become that leaven. And may all hearken unto it as have ears. **And take heed therefore how you hear: for whosoever has, to him shall be given: and whosoever has not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seems to have.**¹⁵ And having chosen the road that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven, firmly of heart and mind must you stay on your path. **For no man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.**¹⁶

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. The doors of Heaven will open and our Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those that ask for it.¹⁷

And do not ask our Heavenly Father for false treasures or earthly pleasures as sinners are want to do, but instead ask one thing: that **He straighten the paths leading to His Kingdom, so that before death you might see the Kingdom of God come with power.**¹⁸

For if you do not seek God in life you will not see Him after.

PETER

But what is God? How can you see and hear Him?

¹³ Matthew 11: 12

¹⁴ Luke 13: 20-21

¹⁵ Luke 8: 18

¹⁶ Luke 9: 62

¹⁷ Luke 11: 9-13

¹⁸ Mark 9:1

JESUS

He is not far from every one of us but you should not think that you will find Him by descriptions or portrayals, or imagine that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device.¹⁹ For otherwise you will change the truth of God into a lie, and will have worshiped images and serve the creature and not its Creator.²⁰ For the most High dwells not in temples made with hands. As the prophet says, Heaven is my throne, and Earth is my footstool.²¹ Nor is God worshipped with men's hands, as if he needed anything, seeing as He gives everything to all life and breath to all things.²²

PETER

But if He is only present and yet ineffable as you describe, how is it possible for human beings to see Him?

JESUS

No man has seen God at any time.²³ But for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.²⁴ But try not to see God, but godliness, the godliness in which He reveals Himself to all that live, the godliness that permeates the firmament.

Is not the beauty of the Rose divine? Does not God look at you from the eyes of a young child?

(Smiles indulgently)

Must I really point out to you all the places where one must seek for Him? **For believe me, the hour comes when neither in this one place nor in Jerusalem shall you worship God in spirit and truth.**²⁵ There will be no need for temples made by hands in order to speak to Him, for the house of the Almighty comprises all of heaven and earth **21** and the stars and all you too as well, so, as it is written, **my house shall be called the home of prayer.**²⁶ The best prayer in my home will be the song of the blessed heart, the song of love and gratefulness in harmonious choir with all that lives.

Believe me: to be a human being on this Earth is a great gift of the Creator. Only human beings have been given the gift of consciousness to value their own actions, and have the great opportunity to choose their own paths. For there are many doors, but He holds the keys to all of them. But there is no other living creature in the universe endowed with mankind's choices, and thus mankind's responsibilities. **For unto whomsoever much is given, much shall be required, and to whom much is promised, more shall be demanded.**²⁷

PHILIP

But should we really not even pray for the salvation of our souls?

¹⁹ Acts 17: 27-29

²⁰ Romans 1:25

²¹ Acts 7: 48-49

²² Acts 17: 24-25

²³ John 1: 18

²⁴ Romans 1: 20

²⁵ John 4: 21

²⁶ Mark 11: 17

²⁷ Luke 12: 48

JESUS

And what exactly do you call “the soul”? For what “soul” do you wish to pray? Do you even know what your real soul is? Is it for this false mask of yourself that you wear because you think wearing it makes it easier to live that you are praying? Or do you just wear this mask because you are so used to it by now that through force of habit it has become part of your skin, and you cannot remove it anymore without great pain?

You are murdering your true soul without even noticing it, for when it is really present, then the true evil and baseness of the false mask are self-evident. But your soul, long left humiliated and half dead by you has been hiding within you shyly, and lets its voice be heard nonetheless. Therefore there are really two persons living within you, and that is why you are torn in half, and **you will know no peace, and shall not enter the Kingdom of God until you make two into one, until your outer self becomes just like your true self, and until your lost soul is reborn.**²⁸

So verily I say unto you: **whosoever shall seek to save his mask shall lose his soul, but whosoever shall lose his mask shall save his soul.**²⁹ And if the flesh came into being because of the spirit, that is a marvel, but if the spirit came into being because of the flesh, that is a marvel of marvels.³⁰

And the manner in which you pray for your soul is completely senseless. For no one else will save your soul if you will not care for it yourself. And no one will bring you the Kingdom of Heaven unless you go and seek it out yourself.

JAMES

But where, then, tell us, should we go and seek it out? And what is it? For we have left our homes and our loved ones in search of the Kingdom of Heaven and we are ready to go to the ends of the earth to find it!

JESUS

The Kingdom of Heaven is always here, but you do not know how to go in.³¹ Yet if you would know what that is, ask the nursing babies, who do not yet know how to speak. And if you can hear their answer, then you will know.³² May those who have ears hear me now: if those who lead you say to you, “Look, the Kingdom of Heaven is in the sky,” then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, “It is in the sea,” then the fish will precede you. So do not believe them, and do not follow them.³³

JAMES

But if the Kingdom of Heaven is not in the heavens, then why do you call the Almighty our Heavenly Father?

²⁸ Thomas, 22

²⁹ Luke, 17: 33

³⁰ Thomas, 29.

³¹ Thomas, 3.

³² Thomas, 22

³³ Thomas, 3.

JESUS

The heaven of which I speak is both without you and within you, and the Kingdom of God is within this heaven and none other. 31 And you need not go far in seeking it, “neither shall they say: Lo, here! Or lo, there! For behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”³⁴

And you yourselves do not know what treasures within you are hidden, and thus you live like paupers. But I am amazed what great wealth is hidden within this poverty.³⁵

And take heed, for if the Lord knocks at your door, He knocks at the same time from without and within. 31 And if you wish to make way for Him, remove your door from its hinges and cast it aside. May the divine light within each person blaze forth and merge with the light of God, and, becoming one, illumine all the world, so that everyone who enters and leaves will see its light.³⁶

MATTHEW

Rabbi, when you speak, I want to listen and listen. Allow us to always be with you, no matter where your path takes you, and wherever your final home shall be.

JESUS

The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.³⁷ All the earth is his home. And woe unto him, who sets metes and bounds by the earth and divides the peoples. For there are no boundaries in heaven, and there should be none on earth. And verily I say unto you that all such division is just a cause of hatred and strife, whether such division be by borders, or by language, or by faith -- it is all one. **And if that division is within a man, then he will be filled with darkness, and he will know no peace.**³⁸

THADDEUS

Teacher, I have been yearning to ask you for a long time, what is the miraculous force you use to heal the sick and drive the evil spirits from them?

JESUS

The healthy spirit is made healthy by the body itself. And the healthy soul heals the soul itself. And if your breath be clean, then you can breathe life into others. And the opposite is true: if your spirit is unclean, you may infect and endanger others. And all that live upon the earth and all that fly in the heavens above are touched by what is within you.

(Notices the apostles whispering amongst each other confusedly)

To help you understand I'll say it this way. Once on a summer's day, you cut down a little twig in order to make a pipe from it. A young girl chasing a butterfly stepped on that twig and scratched her leg and was bleeding. She sought out help from a nearby house so that they might bind her wound and stop the bleeding.

³⁴ Luke 17: 21

³⁵ Thomas, 29.

³⁶ Thomas, 24

³⁷ Matthew 8: 20

³⁸ Thomas, 61

And in that house dwelt a young blacksmith, and he loved her at once. And soon that young girl's tears turned into laughter. And from their love a child was born to the world. And unto that child nine children were born, and each of those nine children had nine children, and then each of those nine children each had nine more children and then those nine children each had nine more children. And by the fifth generation more than half a million children more than their forebears were born. And one amongst them was a prophet who filled the land with light. And one amongst them was born a tyrant who brought blood and tears to the land. And what was the beginning of all this? It has all has been long since forgotten.

THADDEUS

The twig?

JESUS

The twig...Or perhaps the wind that brought the seed, from which the twig grew? Or the sun, which warmed and nourished the seed, or the rain, that watered it or you, who cut it to make a pipe. Or your mother who bore you, or your grandmother, who was mother to your father? Or was it the butterfly after whom the girl had been chasing? And now consider--if the least little thing like this can work such immense change upon all creation, how much more vast is the power that is already within you?

From the twig you have cut down, and from the fallen leaf you have in the palm of your hand, or from your having given an unknown passerby the gift of your smile, the very history of the entire world may be changed forever. **For all that is alive and dead is invisibly connected, and each thing separately is part of the other.**³⁹ And all things in truth live in bliss and harmony, and no one can take away that bliss, because there is no real reason for that bliss: life itself is its own reason.

Has anyone ever seen an unhappy apple blossom? Even if it is torn off by a storm from its branch, it blooms and brings forth fruit, to its joy, and to the joy of those that eat of it!

Who has ever seen a River depressed? Even covered with ice its waters flow and flow, undeterred in their steady stream.

And who has ever heard the Nightingale singing a sad song? It knows no sad songs.

Only man has doomed himself to suffering, for he has blinded his eyes and stopped up his ears, and cut himself off from creation, and made of a living heaven for himself nothing but hell.

Today I break bread with you, and drink wine, but tomorrow a great miracle shall come to pass: this bread will become my flesh, and this wine will become my blood. And so I say unto you: **take, eat: this is my body, and take, drink all of you, for this is my blood.**⁴⁰ And so it is for each and all of us, for we are all brothers fed on the same bread, and so our flesh and blood are all one.

³⁹ Thomas, 77.

⁴⁰ Matthew 26: 26-28.

Together we are all one body, and each of us is one of the limbs.⁴¹ And the master knows that if the least little part of our bodies, even the smallest finger, aches, then the entire body aches. The finger itself cannot know this, for it is lacking in reason.

You are all limbs, and all parts of one whole, and you are not lacking in reason, and yet reason you cannot. For if you could reason, you would never harm your neighbors, but instead would love and care for them.

All of us are bound by unknown forces unto one whole. This is why the heart feels such bliss and health in doing kindness to another, for in reality when you do a kindness to another you are doing kindness to yourself. Therefore I say unto you: plunge not your sword into another if you would not bleed yourself. When you understand this in your heart, then your heart shall begin to beat differently, and the Kingdom of Heaven will draw nigh unto you. And new great marvels will your eyes then discern. And false treasures that you have once prized you shall no longer see.

For Judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see: and that they which see might be made blind.⁴²

And I say unto you, with whatever eyes you look at this world, so do you fashion it. **The light of the body is the eye; therefore when the eye is pure, then your whole body is also full of light.**⁴³ **And all around you shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle does give you light.**⁴⁴

And it really isn't dark at all. It is only that your eyes and spirit are eclipsed. And the eyes are the windows of the soul. And if the windows in the house are blacked out, then the house is dark. Open your eyes, and where is the dark? Where has it vanished? And where was it before? Try to light up the dark, so as to really look at it, and you shall see, as you shine light on it, that it just isn't there -- and never was. For Darkness is only the absence of light. And the same darkness shall be within you, unless you let in the light of God, unless you let the light of Higher Truth shine through.

(Andrew appears)

ANDREW
(to Jesus)

Over there--

(he points)

By the road--your mother and brothers are over there.

⁴¹ Romans, 12: 5

⁴² John 9: 39

⁴³ Luke 11: 34

⁴⁴ Luke 11: 36

JESUS

Sit down, Andrew, and share a meal with your brothers.

(points to his disciples)

My mother and my brothers are these, which hear the Word of God and do it.⁴⁵

JAMES

(surprised)

Is not the name of those who bore you sacred? Did you not teach us to honor your father and mother? And were it not for your mother, you would not have been here, which would have saddened us immensely.

JESUS

Before Abraham was, I am,⁴⁶ and I am and was before my mother was born. It is only through our mother's womb that we come to this earth. And I say to you: **"When you see one who was not born of woman, then you have found your own real self, and then you shall reign over all creation."**⁴⁷

JAMES

What does it mean to be born on this earth? And who then is our real parent? Please explain to us what you meant by your words, for we wish to understand, but we cannot.

JESUS

We have but one true parent – our Heavenly Father. You can also call Him “Her”--our Heavenly Mother. For hH is one in all, and all in one.

JAMES

But if that is so, how then should we understand who our earthly father and mother are? And how should they understand who their children are?

JESUS

People are like magical birds that have been born in a chicken coop. The little chick's father and mother are also both chickens, and they sing to the chick their chickenly songs, and they boast of their most beloved chickens, and they mill and root in their chicken manure, and they cannot fly. But everyone—they themselves, and their most beloved ones, and their friends, and even their foes, -- all wish that little chick to grow up into a full-fledged chicken.

Some are afraid they will be ashamed one day. What if the little chick grows up to become a hawk or an eagle? And indeed they could have become a hawk or an eagle! But they don't, out of weakness of spirit and through letting themselves be led into temptation. They fear humiliating themselves before their children and losing their power over them. If a bird has wings and can freely fly through the sky, who then will control its flight? And who will tell it which way to fly?

⁴⁵ Luke 8: 21

⁴⁶ John 8: 58

⁴⁷ Thomas 15

The bird will choose its own course, following the direction whispered to it by its heart. And no direction could possibly be more correct, for it is through the heart that God speaks to us. Now many people in truth are afraid of their own children, when they see that their own children are free little birds, while they are naught but chickens. So they break their children's wings, and rip out their own little eaglets' feathers, and will not let them fly. And they stop up the throat of the little nightingales, and force them not to sing, but to cackle like a flock of chickens.

Some do this from good intentions. They might have even perhaps been glad to see their bird fly if it had taken off, but they fear for its life. They too might have been able to fly for themselves once, but they didn't, and so now they do not want their own little bird to fly.

And so I say to you: **do not hurry to teach your children! For God gives them to you so that they might teach you! They can teach you how to return to you what you had but lost.**⁴⁸ **And what is hidden from you shall be revealed unto the little babes.**⁴⁹

Can you really not see when you look into their eyes, that they each have something within them that one hundredfold surpasses all human treasures of wisdom and knowledge? **And their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.**⁵⁰

Woe unto you, when blindly you lock the doors of the Kingdom of God to the little babes! For the child will rise up against his parents, as it will not desire to slake its thirst with befouled water from a stagnant pond, when it can see a clear and flowing spring right by. **Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I come not to bring peace but a sword. I am come to set a son at variance against his father, the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.**⁵¹ **I am come to set fire upon the earth, and wish it were already kindled!**⁵²

Many do not understand me, as **the people have blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts,**⁵³ **but blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.**⁵⁴ I address my words unto you, but not to all men, for the bread which I share with you is poison for the fool. **For whoever does not hate his father and his mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not love his father and his mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me.**⁵⁵ For we have all come from Heaven, though our earthly father and mother truly gave us life on earth.

Those who have ears, may you hear me. For what does it profit a man to quarrel with his mother and father and brothers, if the Kingdom of God remain as far from him as ever? Until then, let him be gentle with his brothers and sisters, and may he honor his father and mother.

⁴⁸ Thomas 4

⁴⁹ Matthew 11: 25

⁵⁰ Matthew 18: 10

⁵¹ Matthew 10: 34-35

⁵² Luke 12: 49-50

⁵³ John 12: 40

⁵⁴ Matthew 13: 16.

⁵⁵ Thomas, 101

But may the time come soon, when he will not abide anymore the home of his parents, and when his bread shall not longer sate him, and his wine no longer slake his thirst.⁵⁶ When men shall wish to leave the trap into which their forebears have led them like sheep, when they will no longer tolerate their hay in their stalls, when to them it will neither savor nor bring sustenance, and they seek to break out from their pens and find their freedom. And they who do shall be called a black sheep, but verily, I say unto you:

Do not fear to wander lost, when you shall seek your way, for only the very strongest are capable of finding their way. And the sheep that has broken free from the herd shall be more beloved of the shepherd who finds it than the others, for only it shall have been able to find the true path for itself.⁵⁷

PETER

Forgive me, Rabbi, but is it meet that we compare a human being with a beast that lacks reason?

JESUS

Verily it is not meet at all. For mankind has fallen even lower than the beasts. There is no blaming the cattle for being locked in their barns, for it is men who have locked them in. But to their own shame, men have done to themselves what no other animal is capable of doing to itself, and men have locked their own selves into a prison, and have moved themselves inside of it, and thrown away the keys to their own stalls and cells.

And woe to the children who are born in such a prison. They grow up, and know no other life but the life of their fathers and forefathers, and afterwards they cannot even see how they are imprisoned, for their eyes have lost their sight from the lack of light in their place of confinement. And as they see no one else who lives in any manner differently, they think therefore, that their life is the only possible way to live. **For if your eyes have never seen the light, then you do not know that you live in darkness.**⁵⁸ And with all their strength and might, people spend their lives trying but to decorate their jails, some with expensive furnishings, or others with a pretty handmaiden. But there is no good in this whatsoever, for a prison remains a prison, and you must leave it in order to be free!

SIMON

You call us brothers and you tell us that we all have one Father. Introduce us to him.

JESUS

If you had known me, you should have known my Father also,⁵⁹ **for I and my Father are One.**⁶⁰ And you ask me why you have not yet entered into His Kingdom and cannot look upon His face. But when you shall enter and when the Holy Spirit shall be with you, then My Father will receive you just like his very own children.

⁵⁶ Thomas, 28

⁵⁷ Thomas, 107

⁵⁸ Luke, 11: 35

⁵⁹ John 8: 19

⁶⁰ John 10:30

THADDEUS

How many children does your Father have? And can He really accept everyone?

JESUS

There is no cause to fear: for in my Father's house are many mansions.⁶¹ There will be room for all who wish to enter.

But first you must know yourselves. **When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known and accepted by the Almighty, and then you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father.**⁶² And through you as through all of his creations, He does appear. 24. But Man is his chief creation. Why then do you hide the Godhead that is within yourselves? Reveal it to the world, and glorify yourselves and your Creator!

And verily I say unto you: when you shall know yourselves, Recognize what is in your sight, and that which is hidden from you will become plain to you.⁶³ But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.⁶⁴

And verily I say unto you: if you grasp not the beginning, you shall not comprehend the end. So you shall not learn who is around you, if you do not see who is within you, and if you do not know who is within you, you shall not see the beginning or the end, nor learn the secrets of our Heavenly Father.⁶⁵

And seek not to separate heaven and earth, for heaven is part of Earth, and Earth is part of heaven. Therefore seek not either to separate yourselves from earth, for you too are part of earth, and it too is part of you. 39 Therefore I say unto you: you are the beginning of all and the end of all. And when you have grasped this, then you shall see the Kingdom of Heaven. 65 Then you shall see that I am in My Father and you in me, and I in you, thus My Father is Your father also. And then you shall be, as I am,⁶⁶ his messengers on this Earth.

JUDAS

When we enter the Kingdom of heaven and attain the Holy Spirit, it is right to understand that then we shall be equal to You?

JESUS

The disciple is not above his master; but everyone that is perfect shall be as his master.⁶⁷ **And He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him.**⁶⁸

⁶¹ John 14: 2

⁶² Thomas 3

⁶³ Thomas, 5

⁶⁴ Thomas, 3

⁶⁵ Thomas, 18

⁶⁶ John 14: 20

⁶⁷ Luke 6: 40

⁶⁸ Thomas 108

JUDAS

But if that's so, then you are just like us—an ordinary man.

JESUS

(Smiling ecstatically, walks up to Judas and embraces him)

Ordinary ? That is not my name. **One into whom the Holy Spirit has breathed life, will never be ordinary. Awake, you that sleep, and see the light!**⁶⁹ For you stand at the very threshold of the Kingdom of Heaven, as at the threshold of rebirth. Your faith has succored you.

PETER

Strengthen us in our faith, oh Teacher, for we all wish to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, which is why we have followed you, forsaking all we had.

JESUS

What is faith, my brothers? I wish to give you faith in the existence of the Kingdom of God itself, so that faith might light within you a fire of unquenchable desire to seek out and find that Kingdom. For there is a great and boundless Kingdom, which only the spirit of righteousness may enter. It cannot be seen even with the eyes of an angel, nor grasped by the mind of reason, nor can you describe it with the tongues of men.⁷⁰

To believe is to taste of the unripe carrot. To confirm is to drink sweet mead.

Therefore do not only believe, but confirm within yourself, deeply seek and find all that I summon you to believe.

For if your faith will be just a crutch for cripples, there will be little sense in it. I give this crutch to the cripple not so that he can hobble lame for the rest of his life, but so that he may be cured and enter the Kingdom of God within his own lifetime. 18

But those that are healthy do not need crutches, therefore let them give their crutches to the needy. For he who has learned and confirmed the truth for sure by now has no need to believe.

PETER

Now you wish to give us faith, yet you wish to take it away as well. How should we understand your words?

JESUS

Imagine that you live in a barren wilderness, a desert in which life is impossible. Then someone comes and says to you: “there beyond the dunes you will find a fertile and flowering land, where everything is beautiful, and nobody knows grief or want.”

⁶⁹ Ephesians, 5: 14

⁷⁰ Judas, 48

But you answered “No. I do not believe you. It was just a mirage, an illusion of the desert heat that taunts us. So my father taught me, and my grandfather.”

Another felt doubtful, but did not choose to forsake his hole and his little bit of shade in his dry and barren hovel to risk traversing the barren sands of the wilderness.

A third believed, and said: “What does it profit me to stay in this wilderness anyway? Is this really existence? And his faith called him onto his new path. And he set out into the desert, and overcame all obstacles, and at last found the blossoming fertile land.

A truly happy soul always wishes to share his happiness with another. And so he went back into the desert, to the place from whence he came, so as to show the sacred way to the flowering land unto his brothers, and convince them, and give them faith, so that they might set off without doubts through the wilderness.

His brothers asked him: “And you yourself, do you believe in this land of plenty you speak of?” And in reply their ears heard his answer, though those for whom the ears were not enough could have read the answer in his eyes, which glowed with the eloquent happiness which anyone speaking any tongue could understand.

“Why should I believe what I know? For I have been there, and I have already found that flowering land of plenty, which filled my soul with joy and light. And I live in it like a guest invited to an endless feast, and I would like to see you also come as guests. And I wish to convey to you unconditionally that faith which helped me so much on my path. For he who simply knows lets go of faith with gratitude.”

Well, now do you understand better?

PETER

Yes, Master. And in this parable haven't you really been talking about yourself?

JESUS
(smiling)

What do you think? Blessed are they who can look upon the face of our heavenly Father in their lifetime. **For verily I say to you “there be some standing here that shall not taste of death till they have seen the Kingdom of God.** 18 And faith along that journey shall be their aid.

THADDEUS

We all live in **HOPE** of seeing the Kingdom of God. But please give us some commandments to help us on our difficult path which we will also walk with **FAITH**.

JESUS

Commandments are given for those of you who hear and do not understand, and see, and yet do not perceive.⁷¹ For the following of commandments can neither give life, nor bring blessing nor make a man just. For these things you need true faith, that comes from Love.⁷²

⁷¹ Matthew, 13: 14

THADDEUS

Wherefore then serves the law?⁷³

JESUS

It was added for those of little faith, in whom the Word of God does not fit, to keep them from transgressions, until they gain true understanding. ⁷³ Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. ⁷⁴

BUT I GIVE YOU JUST ONE COMMANDMENT:

LOVE!

On this commandment hang all the laws and all the prophets.⁷⁵ All the other commandments are its children, and Love is their mother. And you need not know them all by name, when they are within you, and part of you. ⁷⁶

So I say to you again “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”⁷⁷

For if you love not your neighbor as yourself, yet claim that you love the Lord thy God, you lie!

ANDREW

Please explain to us what these words mean. For if this commandment is so important, we are afraid that we do not understand it completely.

JESUS

Love your Heavenly Father as you love your own life, for it is a great gift from Him, so live with every fiber of your being and to the farthest extent of the firmament.

Love your neighbor, this means nothing more than loving every creature of God with all your heart. And that is why I say to you: **love your enemies** ⁷⁸ for from the stone which you cast at them will spark a fire which will come back to burn you. Thus, **love your enemies, and bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.** ⁷⁸

⁷² Galatians 2:16, 3: 21, 5: 4-6

⁷³ Galatians 3: 19

⁷⁴ Luke 8-10

⁷⁵ Matthew 22: 37-40

⁷⁶ Romans 13: 9-10

⁷⁷ Matthew 22: 37-39

⁷⁸ Luke 6: 27-28

Be tolerant of them, for they are blind, and therefore they need your love and compassion more than ever, more even than those who conceal their pain and tears behind smiling masks. Thus, with your love provoke in them the very love that they have allowed to grow cold in their hearts.

And remember, the one you forgive the most will love you the most,⁷⁹ and the one you forgive least shall love you least.⁸⁰ And if you love them which love you, what thanks have you? For sinners also love them that love them.⁸¹

And let true and profound love settle in your heart. Complete Love. For even if you live like the most righteous man on earth, entirely by the laws of God, though you speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have the gift of prophecy, and all knowledge, and all faith, but you have not love, and within your heart there lurks the least resentment even of the least little worm, then you are become as a sounding brass or tinkling cymbal, and it does not profit your soul⁸² and you shall not enter the Kingdom of God and you shall not be worthy to show others the path to it.

ANDREW

But how shall we distinguish that love which people sometimes call love from real LOVE? And how shall we perceive it and sense its coming?

JESUS

When in your hearts you shall feel love so profound that an adder's sting would seem sweet to you at that moment, then you shall perceive it. And then you shall have no cause for doubt, for you yourself shall become Love, when love shall fill your soul and heart with its abundance, and you shall not be able to contain your joy, and love shall flow from you in a golden stream on all and sundry. And, as the scripture has said, out of your belly shall pour forth rivers of living water.⁸³

You are all children of love, born of love, and is it not meet that you become love as well?

**AND TO BECOME LOVE MEANS TO ONE WITH GOD
AND TO BECOME GOD!**

**FOR LOVE IS GOD! AND
GOD IS LOVE!⁸⁴**

⁷⁹ Luke 7: 41-43

⁸⁰ Luke 7: 47

⁸¹ Luke 6: 32-33

⁸² Corinthians 13: 1-2

⁸³ John 7: 38

⁸⁴ 1 John 4: 16

And there is no other path to enter His Kingdom: for men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.⁸⁵

(Jesus stretches his arms out towards Heaven and pronounces triumphantly)

OH, RIGHTEOUS FATHER! I HAVE DECLARED UNTO THEM THY NAME!⁸⁶

And if Love in them be not present, then neither Thou nor I are present therein, as Thou, my Father, art in Me, and I in Thee.⁸⁷

JAMES
(terrified)

Master, did you just call man God?

JESUS

Yes! You heard me right. **To you, to whom the Word of God came, I call you gods, as it was written in the Scripture.**⁸⁸ For truly you are Gods, only your eyes are closed, and you have not yet awakened to ascend into your glory. **Therefore it is said: awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead! And may the light of the Holy Truth be with you.** 69

PETER

We become terrified, Master, when we think that we may be separated from you, and be left wandering alone in the darkness. How shall we not stray from the one true path?

JESUS

With the real teacher the path is shorter, however not many are so fortunate. But may this not deter you from your questing, for fear is always a barrier on all roads and paths. The light which is within you shall show you the true road and Love, True Love, which abides in your heart, shall open the door that you need.

Complete Love and the Holy Spirit come together, for they are one and the same. If Love is with you, then the Holy Spirit is with you, and if the Holy Spirit is with you, then your Love is Complete.

⁸⁵ Matthew 19: 23-26

⁸⁶ John 17: 25-26

⁸⁷ John 17: 21

⁸⁸ John 10: 34-35

And may the least little spark of love which is hidden in the heart of each of you burst out into bright flame, and may its fire burned away all impurities which befoul your human nature.

(He notices one of the apostles writing, walks up to him, and takes what has been written)

It is good that you have been taught how to read and write, but the Word of God's Truth must be heard with the heart. Would you really want to remember all I say word for word?

MATTHEW

Yes, Rabbi, for I wish to pass on all that you say to others with complete accuracy.

JESUS

Don't worry about this now. When you have understood yourself, and you will always be able to convey to others my truth in your own words.

And even if the pages of the Gospel shall be lost, you will be able to restore them once more with your heart

(Curtain)

ACT TWO

Scene One

(A quiet evening. The sun is setting. Jesus is alone.)

Two townsfolk bearing gifts gingerly walk up to him, speaking with shy voices).

FIRST TOWNSMAN

Greetings to you, Teacher! We welcome your words of wisdom, and rejoice that you share your Teachings with the people. And much of what you say we understand and agree with. Please accept our gifts, which we have brought to you freely from the bottom of our hearts. And if there is anything that you might need, just tell us, for our estates are large, and we will be more than happy to share with you anything we have.

JESUS

I equally accept your heartfelt gift with all my heart, as is fitting. But it wasn't just your hearts that brought you here, am I right?

FIRST TOWNSMAN

Indeed you are, Master, for we have some business to discuss with you.

JESUS

Speak! If I can help you, it will be my pleasure.

FIRST TOWNSMAN

We are educated men, and God has given us a life of prosperity. And our wives are comely, and our children well-behaved, and among the people we are respected because we do not neglect the widows and orphans. But our hearts know no peace, and we have no joy from our many labors. Tell us what we should desire or seek, in order to find blessing for our souls, and joy for our hearts?

JESUS

Indeed, a man's life consists not of things which he possesses.⁸⁹ You are careful and troubled about many things, but just one thing is needful⁹⁰ for your soul, in order that the seed of the Word of God may take root in your heart and bear fruit.

SECOND TOWNSMAN

And yet we strive to live according to the laws of God, because we are pious and God-fearing men, as all who know us can attest.

JESUS

It were better you had not been God-fearing, but God-loving. For God has loved you before. And you shall love Him with His True Love, in which there is not the least hint of fear. **For there is no fear in love. Perfect Love casts out fear, for fear is torment. Someone who fears does not love with perfect love.⁹¹**

SECOND TOWNSMAN

So what is the correct path to the Kingdom of Heaven?

JESUS

You as merchants must know the very narrow gates to the City of Jerusalem that some call the "Eye of a Needle." **It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.⁹² For though you may hear the Word of God, yet its sounds to your ears are choked by your cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and thus can bring no fruit to perfection.⁹³ But woe unto you that are rich! For you have received your consolation.⁹⁴ You have all you dreamed of. But your heart knows no joy and your soul no profit from this. Blessed are the poor and those that are covetous of what you have, for they still live in hope to obtain what you already have. But you, having already obtained everything, no longer even know what you should want and what you should hope for.**

FIRST TOWNSMAN

Yes, it is true what you say, my Teacher, for I remember how when I was poor all I could think of and dream of was prosperity. But when I was only dreaming of it, my life was happier. Tell us, if we were to give away all our wealth, will we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? And will we find bliss for our souls?

⁸⁹ Luke 12: 15

⁹⁰ Luke 10: 41-42

⁹¹ 1 John 4: 18-19

⁹² Mark 10: 25

⁹³ Luke 8: 14

⁹⁴ Luke 6: 24

JESUS

To give away what you do not need to those who are in need is a godly deed. But you cannot purchase your entry into the Kingdom of Heaven, not for any treasures. **All good deeds are the light shining without the man, but this light shall not illumine the path to the Kingdom of Heaven. But there is light within a man of light, and he lights up all the world. If he does not shine, there is darkness.** 36. And even if you bestow all your goods to feed the poor, or you give up your body to be burned, if the light of Love does not illumine your actions, it will profit you nothing.⁹⁵ For all things are plain in the sight of Heaven, therefore do not tell lies, and do not do what does not truly come from your heart.⁹⁶ Otherwise if you fast, you will give rise to sin for yourselves; and if you pray, you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits.⁹⁷

I do not reproach you for your wealth for I see that you are willing to share it with your fellow man, but I say unto you let your heart not be there where your treasure is.⁹⁸

And I say unto you, who are rich: it will be difficult for you to enter the Kingdom of God, for all your cares and possessions are like a stone wall blocking your path. But there is another side to the coin, for who but you should enter into the Kingdom? For your wealth is permitted you to understand that which others can only dream of. Your possibilities have allowed you to try and taste of all worldly delights. And therefore you have been privileged to understand as no one else has the real falsity and the vanity of these treasures.

And if you have still not understood, then go back, and with all the passion you can summon within yourselves, plunge into the whirlpool of earthly delights, and gather as many earthly treasures as you possibly can, and for as long as you can. But believe me, when you will be surrounded by all these things, you will feel yourself lost, and then you will understand that no earthly delights can either feed or still hunger in your souls. For verily I say unto you:

“If one who knows the all still feels a personal deficiency, he is completely deficient.”⁹⁹

And when you understand this, you shall not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moths and rust do corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. 98. For if you have true strength, then you shall dream not of glory nor of power, but instead will direct your gaze to the imperishable treasures, not of this Earth, but of Heaven.¹⁰⁰ And all the worldly passions and desires in which your soul was seething and boiling shall quit you, and with them shall go all the false opinions and certainties which are imprisoned you. And your soul will be empty and clean and full of light!¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ 1 Corinthians 13: 3

⁹⁶ Thomas 6

⁹⁷ Thomas, 14

⁹⁸ Matthew 6: 19-21

⁹⁹ Thomas, 67.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas, 81

¹⁰¹ Thomas, 61

SECOND TOWNSMAN

How terrifying it is for us to hear about spiritual emptiness! Yet you speak of it as if it were a good thing. Is it not, however, the same thing as being completely lacking in spirituality? How is it that a completely empty soul could be capable of giving something to its host, or to its fellows?

JESUS

Your soul will not be completely empty in the way you are now imagining. For when you have completely freed it from the junk which you have ignorantly burdened and darkened it with, then it will be filled with light.

And it is only from purity and from the light that the Holy Spirit may be born, but that light must first come into being of its own accord.¹⁰²

And to put this in earthly words and measure it with earthly measure, then you can call this emptiness “poverty of spirit,” except that it is in fact your only true wealth. This is why I say to you: **“Blessed are the poor spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**¹⁰³ **And therefore be ye wise, like serpents, and harmless as doves.**¹⁰⁴ **Seek the light within which will save you. 36.**

And if you die for your unreasonable desires in your pursuits of the vanities, only then will you be reborn for the true life, only then will you attain true freedom. For that which you call freedom now will be revealed to you as slavery. And then you will understand what godly bliss truly is. And day, miracle will be revealed to you anew, and will greet them with great joy and love. This is the true path which you are asking me about. This is the road which leads to the Kingdom of God. And may the Light of Love be your guide along the way.

SECOND TOWNSMAN

We thank you for your words of wisdom, and if you will need anything from us at all, just let us know.

(They leave their gifts, bow, and exit. ANDREW enters).

ANDREW

Forgive me, Rabbi, for disturbing you in this hour, to ask that your time and words which are so magnificent they have no price you spare to me alone. I did not dare to ask you this in front of the other disciples.

JESUS

Neither my time nor my words are mine, but instead belong to Him who has sent me. Indeed, through me you are really addressing yourself to Him-- so how could I refuse you? Speak!

ANDREW

I am not sure whether I have come to repent of my sins or to share with you my doubts, but in any case I hunger to know and understand.

¹⁰² Thomas, 50

¹⁰³ Matthew 5: 3

¹⁰⁴ Matthew 10: 16

JESUS

He who experiences no doubts is but a fool. Go ahead, don't be shy.

ANDREW

(controlling his nervousness)

Her name was Rebecca. But I called her my goddess. She swept into my life all of a sudden and nothing was ever the same again. She tore me away from all my usual cares and worldly worries. It was as if she had given me wings and summoned into the air to fly, and had lit up the entire earth with magical light, so that all its beauty and wonders, which I had never noticed before, each were now particularly visible now to me.

It was as if my eyes had opened. But these weren't my eyes, or at least, not the same eyes as before. And I began to feel, and to think, and to breathe in a different way. And even though my body still my own, it felt as if someone new was living in it. And I noticed this change with joy, my heart sank, and my whole existence was filled with rejoicing. And I was ready to share this great happiness unstintingly with everyone, as generously as possible. For I knew then that the source of my joy was inexhaustible. Within my heart I felt this force and I knew its name - Love! And I thought at the time that this joy would last forever.

But then it disappeared -- just as suddenly as it appeared. It was as if my Rebecca had died. But no, she is alive and well, and even happy. To this day she greets every dawn with a new song, and the dawns rosy tints brighten the blush of her cheeks....But it is I who am dead. Or rather, not dead, but just as I was before. I couldn't understand what had happened to our Love. I tried to call it back. I've begged it to return. But all in vain.

And what was my life like now in comparison with the one which I had just discovered? A dark dream! How much more alive am I really than those whose flesh is now withering in eternal sleep? And now I see many such people sleeping or half sleep, wandering around without light or joy in their eyes. And I pity them, but I also pity myself.

JESUS

Often beneath our grief a joy is hidden, and we do not notice it ourselves. You had the chance for a moment's to look briefly through a crack in the door of the Kingdom of God, and so, at least you have convinced yourself that it exists!

ANDREW

Yes, Teacher! But why was that door shut so quickly? And why was I not able to go inside?

JESUS

Through loving just one person it is possible for a brief period of time to see the Kingdom of God, but one can only go inside through True Love, through unselfish Love, through Love that is Perfect. True Love, like a bird, touched your heart with its wings and flew away. It made its mark, but could not stay in your heart, because your heart was not ready to give it shelter. Yet it is good, for a heart that has been so marked will always seek for what it has lost, and will know no peace until it finds it.

ANDREW

Teach me how to get that bird back. I feel that my heart is ready now to let it in.

JESUS

It is important that you now know how beautiful love is. What would you be willing to give up in order to regain that love forever?

ANDREW

Forever, did you say? Is that really possible?

JESUS

If I didn't know it was, I wouldn't say it.

ANDREW

(ecstatic)

I'm willing to give up everything! All that I have!

JESUS

That means your path to the Kingdom of God will not be long. For now you know that Love makes even a pauper a King. And Love shall show you the way.

(JUDAS enters, notices ANDREW)

JUDAS

(to ANDREW)

Oh! Here you are! There were two beautiful girls who came by and wanted to see you.

ANDREW

What for?

JUDAS

(somewhat sarcastically)

How should I know why it is that sometimes young maidens' eyes shine brighter than the full moon, and other times their breath is full of all the sweet scents of flowers, indeed, so much so that for a while your head gets dizzy? Find out for yourself, and when you do, let me know!

ANDREW

I'll just be a minute; I'll find out what they want.

(exits, as JESUS and JUDAS smile at him)

JUDAS

Greetings, Rabbi!

JESUS

I knew you were coming, and I've been waiting for you.

JUDAS

You said today that I stood on the threshold of the Kingdom of God. I wanted to ask you about that.

JESUS

Your questions bring joy to my heart, for I have been following you for a long time, I have perceived that often you ask questions to which you secretly know the answer. But there is no need to ask questions when you yourself could answer if someone else asked. And you indeed could answer.

(looks at JUDAS, who is smiling cunningly)

What are you concealing? Why don't you tell me the good news? For on the threshold of the Kingdom of God you stand—indeed you have entered it! Can you possibly doubt this?

JUDAS

(ecstatically)

No! Now I am certain: there can be no doubting the presence of the Holy Spirit once it has entered you, once you feel It in every fiber of your being. My soul is placid and full of joy, and my heart rejoices.

I feel as if I had been reborn again, and now I understand that in fact this is my main and true birth. My prior life seems to me to have been nothing but a dream, and with the words of Holy Scripture which only now I have understood, I wish to turn to everyone say:

“awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead!” 69

JESUS

I feel the same way. You have overcome the barriers on the path to the Kingdom of God faster than others, and there even those who are envious of you.

JUDAS

(dolefully)

I'm aware of it.

JESUS

But I am pleased beyond measure that you now know that there is a Kingdom of Heaven, and you even know where it is, therefore you can help others who seek it along the right path. I am also glad that **you are not afraid to argue with me,¹⁰⁵ even when others are afraid even to ask me questions.¹⁰⁶** And I am not in the least bit offended, for the paths that lead from the darkness to the Light of God may differ from person to person. For some perhaps the path suggested by you will be better, whereas for others the path which I point to will be easier. That matters not. What matters is that we all have the same goal.

¹⁰⁵ John 12: 3-5

¹⁰⁶ Luke 9: 45

Every lost sheep wanders in its own particular thicket, and therefore each has its own particular road to the Light. The Teacher can only help in the search.

I always believed in you more than in the others, and you know this yourself. That is why **I entrusted you with the bag to keep our money to buy the things that we might need and spend it in proper ways.**¹⁰⁷ And now I see that I made no mistake and my heart is full of bliss.

JUDAS

I see tears in your eyes, Teacher.

JESUS

These are tears of joy, for now I know that I am not alone. There are two of us! You have given me the happiest of my days today! **And no longer am I your teacher, nor you my student. You are my friend. For now you have entered the Kingdom of God and now we have become equals.** 66, 67. So if you want to tell me something, you could just tell me like a friend.

JUDAS

But you know what I want to tell you, just as I now know what it is of which you are silent.

JESUS

Indeed, you are right. The sons of the Heavenly Father do not need words in order to understand each other. It's a pity that others cannot listen to them, and even parables are not always capable of bringing them to reason, such that not always do they wish to believe in the words of Holy Truth.

JUDAS

What must we do to open their eyes and get through to their hearts?

JESUS

It is not an easy task. You see this for yourself. **For John the Baptist came, neither eating bread, nor drinking wine, and they said: he has the devil in him. And I came eating and drinking and they say here is a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!**¹⁰⁸ **Is this not the son of Joseph and Mary?**¹⁰⁹ **Why should we believe him? A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country and in his own house.**¹¹⁰

All await the Messiah, whose coming was foretold in the Holy Scriptures. And they are all prepared to believe only in Him. So they say.

JUDAS

But what if he comes too late, or not at all?

(JESUS comes close to JUDAS, looks him in the eyes and says emphatically)

¹⁰⁷ John 12: 6, John 13: 29

¹⁰⁸ Luke 7: 33-34

¹⁰⁹ John 6: 41-42

¹¹⁰ Matthew 13: 57

JESUS

He shall come, and very soon.

*(The expression on JUDAS' face becomes very serious.
It is plain that he understands what has been left unsaid)*

JUDAS

What are you planning?

JESUS

(smiling)

Again you ask about that which you know full well. It's time you got rid of that habit.

I will give them what they want!

Is it not said that the Messiah shall enter Jerusalem sitting on an ass and a colt the foal of an ass?¹¹¹

JUDAS

So it was spoken by the prophet. 111

JESUS

Well then, so be it, though I prefer to go on foot. But **bring me an ass,**¹¹² that is young and healthy, and does not limp.

(smiles)

A prophet should not be riding on a poor sick nag.

JUDAS

And are you prepared to die, as is written in the Scriptures?¹¹³ I will not allow the madmen to take away your life!

JESUS

Let the prophecy be fulfilled, in the name of the Holy Truth. **For I lay down my life of myself, and no man takes it from me.**¹¹⁴

JUDAS

No! You must live! Why do you think your death is more important than your words spoken by you alive?

JESUS

I have already spoken all my words, and now I wish to give them force.

¹¹¹ Matthew 21: 4-5

¹¹² Matthew 21: 1-2, John 12-14-16

¹¹³ Luke 18: 31-33

¹¹⁴ John 10: 17-18

JUDAS

Is there really no other way? No! I want to defend you!

JESUS

Thank you, my friend, but I do not need defending. For if I wanted, **do you think I could not ray now to my Father, and he would presently send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?**¹¹⁵

(Pause. JUDAS walks up to JESUS, looks at him plaintively)

JUDAS

But it is written that you shall be betrayed 113. Who then shall betray you?

*(They look each other in the eyes. There is a long pause.
JUDAS walks away dejectedly).*

JESUS

Forgive me.... Others could do it, indeed, some would even do it with joy, but only you can do it secretly. And only if it remains a complete secret, will it be possible for the Scriptures to have been completely fulfilled. For the Prophecy must be fulfilled not by the will of man, but by the will of the Almighty.

I understand how difficult this will be for you, and maybe for centuries there will be an undeserved curse upon your name. And yet **blessed are you, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company and shall reproach you, and cast your name out as evil for the Son of Man's sake.**¹¹⁶ I ask you to do this thing for me as a friend, and I know that you will not refuse me, and that is why it is twice as difficult for me to ask you to do this.

(Long pause).

JUDAS

When?

JESUS

I will give you a sign when the time comes so that no one will understand.¹¹⁷ And it is all so that the Scripture may be fulfilled: **he that he eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me. And so it must be, so that when this has come to pass, all shall believe and understand that it was I.**¹¹⁸ And that is why the signal I give you, will be a piece of bread which I will give you. 117.

(Walks up to JUDAS, puts his hand on his shoulder)

¹¹⁵ Matthew 26: 53-54

¹¹⁶ Luke 6: 22

¹¹⁷ John 13: 26-32

¹¹⁸ John 13: 18-19

I know that your sufferings will be no less than Mine, but the sacrifice you make is great. **But blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven¹¹⁹ and great shall be their reward in heaven¹²⁰ And for your sacrifice glorified in God you shall enter the Kingdom of God even before Me.** For there be two of us, but we do one deed together.

Do not be so sad, for you know by now that for one who has entered the Kingdom of God there is no death. **I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.**¹²¹

JUDAS

I will not be sad, my brother. I understand completely.

(He smiles, and wipes secret tears from his eyes).

JESUS

(embracing JUDAS)

Take care of yourself. For those of you who have found the Truth are strangers to this world. **If you were of this world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of this world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.**¹²² For he who has come to understand the world has found a corpse, where is he who has understood that it is a corpse and withdrawn and has found his true living self – of the him the world is not worthy.¹²³

And soon the time will come when everyone who kills you will think that in this he does God's service. They will do these things to you because they have known neither the Father, nor me¹²⁴ and they will be deceived by the hypocrites and false prophets. For many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ, but do not go after them.¹²⁵

CURTAIN

¹¹⁹ Matthew 5: 10

¹²⁰ Luke 6: 23

¹²¹ John 10: 17-18

¹²² John 15: 19

¹²³ Thomas, 56

¹²⁴ John 16: 2-3

¹²⁵ Luke 21: 8

SCENE TWO

(THE PALACE OF KING HEROD. HEROD STANDS ALONE BY THE WINDOW)

HEROD

(Reading aloud the words of JESUS)

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they would have not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.”¹²⁶

(PAUSE. SIGHS HEAVILY).

Why did I have to speak to him? All so that now his voice would ring in my ears and beat against my temples with my own blood?

(REPEATS GLOOMILY)

No cloak for their sin! 126.

(Groans)

All's gone dark before my eyes.

Bring me light! Now there is no cloak for their sin...126

(Collapses into a chair, closes his eyes, brings his arms to his forehead, as if trying to ward off headache pain. Opens his eyes and sees servants with candles standing in the doorway).

HEROD

What are you doing here?

SERVANT

You asked for light, your Majesty.

HEROD

(screams)

Forget the light! Have them bring me wine! I'm burning up inside! Go! Do it!

(HERODIAS enters)

Why such shouting and commotion? Why have you terrorized all the servants? What's happened?

HEROD

(furious)

I've bothered them, not you! I didn't ask you to come here. Go! Leave me alone! Everyone leave me alone!

(The servants run in with the wine).

¹²⁶ John 15: 22

SERVANT

Where should we put the wine, my Lord?

HEROD

(screaming)

Out! Out, get out!

(The servants flee in terror. AHAZ enters).

AHAZ

Everywhere in the Palace there is a terrible panic. What has enraged you, oh my great King?

HEROD

Would you prefer it if I sang or laughed madly, like an idiot at a funeral? If you have come here on business, then let's talk business. Can you tell me good news, or are you only come to add yet more venom to an already poisoned goblet?

AHAZ

You are the King, my Lord. You must judge.

HEROD

Well! Speak!

AHAZ

I think you ought to know that the body of the crucified Jesus has been kidnapped from his grave, and I suppose, has been secretly buried, but where, nobody knows.

HEROD

And so? What? Come on! Out with it!

AHAZ

And many people who have learned that his body is no longer in his grave are yelling now that he has resurrected from the dead, and that the prophecy of the Holy Scriptures has been fulfilled, and that he was the true King of the Jews, cruelly and falsely betrayed and murdered, that he truly was the Son Of God, sent to us by the Almighty Himself as our Savior. And there are among those saying this even many of those who yesterday were still screaming "crucify him!" Those same shouters today praise him to the heaven and are willing to fall on their knees before him. Now with every hour there are more and more disturbances among the people, and it seems that all are now ready to believe that he was indeed the long promised Messiah... And his mother has suddenly started to say that his conception was supposedly immaculate, through the intervention of Heaven.

HEROD

(irritated)

Did she think of this all by herself, or has someone put her up to it? Whose is the hand that secretly wishes to stab me in the back? Yes, indeed, what lovely news! And did you just stand by watching this happen?

AHAZ

I was the one who had advised you to place a guard by his grave.

HEROD

A guard? By the grave of some pretender, to waste soldiers? Hasn't he had enough "honor" already?

AHAZ

Well, now he has left us all as the ones without honor. And your enemies are even wagging their tongues and claiming that they saw him streaming up into the heavens, and how they supposedly heard him giving speeches from up there, all while wreathed in a golden halo.

HEROD

(yells)

Then rip out all those enemies' tongues and bring them to me! Are you really also empty headed the of you are able to make any decisions for your own selves?

Find his body! And with that put an end to all these fables and nonsensical rumors that the crowd has imagined. Go search all the lands, and all the waters, and offer a handsome reward to the one who finds the body! Why are you all standing here like statues, when thunder is already rolling over your heads? You want to wait for the deadliest thunderbolts to strike?

HERODIAS

Come. They are all feeble minded, but how about you? Having committed one folly, now you wish to commit another dozen? What if you do not find the body? In which bonfire shall you be pouring fresh oil?

It seems your eyes have become so blind, that you no longer even perceive how blind you are. And now most likely there's no turning back for you. As if you had never seen for yourself how terrible is the spectacle of a crowd possessed by one idea! It can sweep everything away like a whirlwind, including your throne, and even if your throne is not taken, then it will wobble painfully like a rotten tooth.

HEROD

So what is your advice?

HERODIAS

(sarcastically)

Who was the one who told me to be quiet and say nothing? I will go back to my chambers as you commanded me.

HEROD

(grabs her arm, her prevents her from leaving)

You yourself have no idea what to do. And I don't need you to tell me what an enraged mob is capable of.

HERODIAS

Fool! --

HEROD

(brusquely interrupting)

Don't you dare speak like that in the presence of others! Do not forget who I am!

HERODIAS

(pointing to Ahaz)

If you're scared what people will say, have him crucified!

(Laughs wickedly)

Go ahead! Kill everyone you're afraid of, in whose presence you feel your own worthlessness!

HEROD

Viper!

HERODIAS

The serpent is wise, and if it bites, where is the physician who can heal its sting?

HEROD

Speak then, if you know something. Do not waste my time!

HERODIAS

This is my only advice: if there is no turning back, go forward! There's no need to be wise here. If you see that the people are in a state of unrest, do not let the troubles brew. Subject everything to your own order everywhere, seize control of the ferment, become head of the movement. Then you can control the crowd, and even gain some benefit from what at first glance seemed misfortune.

HEROD

I should lead this movement?

(Laughs sarcastically)

I, who in my silence and cowardice betrayed him to crucifixion?

HERODIAS

Why? No, it doesn't have to be you. Find a puppet you can make into the head of the movement. Even him.

(pointing to Ahaz)

Ever eager to serve you.

If you want to command the people, then you have to speak its language, and pretend to be completely in agreement with whatever it says and whatever it wants.

“He who alone in a crowd has eyes
Leads it wherever his fancy lies.”

Add two or three of your own words to the speeches which the crowd is repeating, and they won't even notice the difference. And soon you will see that the mighty boulder which was threatening you, will have become nothing but soft clay in your hands, and from that clay you can sculpt and mould the people as you wish. Sometimes, in order to survive, the wolf must don sheep's clothing.

(Pause)

HEROD

(repeats her words with thoughtful malice)

Sheep's clothing. Yes indeed, perhaps that's the best costume I can put on right now.

(Pause)

AHAZ

(doubtfully)

Should I give orders for the body to be searched for?

(Herod is furious.)

He stares at his servant with bulging eyes, clenching his fists tensing his entire body)

HEROD

No-ooooooooooooo! You numbskull!

(Thunderbolts are heard pealing menacingly in the skies. HEROD raises his arm in front of his face, as if trying to defend himself. Shuddering with each new crash of thunder, all flee from the scene in terror. Thunder continues to crash and resound upon the empty stage).

CURTAIN.

REFERENCES

An annotated list of the texts quoted or used in the creation of this play:

Matthew	The Gospel according to Matthew
Mark	The Gospel according to Mark
Luke	The Gospel according to Luke
John	The Gospel according to John
Thomas	The Gospel according to Thomas (Lambdin translation.)
Judas	The Gospel according to Judas (Nag Hammadi Library)
Acts	The Acts of the Apostles
1 John	The First Epistle of John
Romans	The First Epistle to the Romans (New Testament)
1 Corinthians	The First Epistle to the Corinthians (New Testament)
Galatians	The First Epistle to the Galatians (New Testament)
Ephesians	The First Epistle to the Ephesians (New Testament)

In all references, the first number refers to the chapter number, the number after the colon refers to the verse numbers. In other words, a reference to Matthew 5: 3, refers to Chapter 5, verse 3 of The Gospel according to Matthew.

All New Testament citations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible (1611).

The Lambdin translation of the Gospel according to Thomas is taken from the Lambdin translation. The translation of the Gospel of Judas is the translation by Kasser, Meyers, and Wurst published by the National Geographic Society, Washington, 2006.

The Gospels according to Thomas and Judas contain only verse numbers.

1. Matthew 6: 9-13 ⁹ After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰ Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
2. John 4: 22 Ye worship ye know not what.
3. John 2: 15-16 ¹⁵ And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; ¹⁶ And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.
4. John 10: 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.
5. Matthew 15: 7-8 ⁷ Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, ⁸ This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
6. Matthew 23: 25 ²⁵ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.
7. Matthew 23: 13 ¹³ But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.
8. Matthew 23: 6-8 ⁶ And ye love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, ⁷ And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. ⁸ But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.
9. Matthew 15: 14 ¹⁴ Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.
10. Thomas, 39. Jesus said, "The Pharisees and the scribes have taken the keys of knowledge (gnosis) and hidden them. They themselves have not entered, nor have they allowed to enter those who wish to. You, however, be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves."
11. Mark 14: 58 ⁵⁸ We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.
12. John 2: 20 ²⁰ Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?
13. Matthew 11: 12 ¹² And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.
14. Luke 13: 20-21 ²⁰ And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? ²¹ It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.
15. Luke 8: 18 ¹⁸ Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.
16. Luke 9: 62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

17. Luke 11: 9-13 ⁹ And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. ¹⁰ For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. ¹¹ If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? ¹² Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?
18. Mark 9:1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.
19. Acts 17: 27-29 ²⁷ That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: ²⁸ For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. ²⁹ Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.
20. Romans 1: 25 ²⁵ Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.
21. Acts 7: 48-49, ⁴⁸ Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, ⁴⁹ Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?
22. Acts 17: 24-25, ²⁴ God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; ²⁵ Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;
23. John 1: 18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.
24. Romans 1: 20 ²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.
25. John 4: 21 ²¹ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.
26. Mark 11: 17 ¹⁷ And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.
27. Luke 12: 48 ⁴⁸ But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.
28. Thomas, 22 Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to his disciples, "These infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom." They said to him, "Shall we then, as children, enter the kingdom?" Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and when you fashion eyes in the place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness; then will you enter the kingdom."
29. Luke 17: 33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

30. Thomas, 29. Jesus said, "If the flesh came into being because of spirit, it is a wonder. But if spirit came into being because of the body, it is a wonder of wonders. Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty."
31. Thomas, 3. Jesus said, "If those who lead you say to you, 'See, the kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty."
32. Thomas, 22. Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to his disciples, "These infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom." They said to him, "Shall we then, as children, enter the kingdom?" Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and when you fashion eyes in the place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness; then will you enter the kingdom."
33. Thomas, 3. Jesus said, "If those who lead you say to you, 'See, the kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty."
34. Luke 17: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.
35. Thomas, 29. Jesus said, "If the flesh came into being because of spirit, it is a wonder. But if spirit came into being because of the body, it is a wonder of wonders. Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty."
36. Thomas, 24. His disciples said to him, "Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it." He said to them, "Whoever has ears, let him hear. There is light within a man of light, and he lights up the whole world. If he does not shine, he is darkness."
37. Matthew 8: 20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.
38. Thomas, 61. Jesus said, "Two will rest on a bed: the one will die, and the other will live." Salome said, "Who are you, man, that you ... have come up on my couch and eaten from my table?" Jesus said to her, "I am he who exists from the undivided. I was given some of the things of my father." "I am your disciple." "Therefore I say, if he is destroyed, he will be filled with light, but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness."
39. Thomas, 77. Jesus said, "It is I who am the light which is above them all. It is I who am the all. From me did the all come forth, and unto me did the all extend. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there."
40. Matthew 26: 26-28, ²⁶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. ²⁷ And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; ²⁸ For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

41. Romans, 12: 55 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.
42. John 9: 39, And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.
43. Luke 11: 34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.
44. Luke 11: 36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.
45. Luke 8: 21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.
46. John 8: 58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.
47. Thomas, 15. Jesus said, "When you see one who was not born of woman, prostrate yourselves on your faces and worship him. That one is your father."
48. Thomas, 4 Jesus said, "The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a small child seven days old about the place of life, and he will live. For many who are first will become last, and they will become one and the same."
49. Matthew 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.
50. Matthew 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.
51. Matthew 10: 34-35 ⁸⁴Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.⁸⁵For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.
52. Luke 12: 49-50 ⁴⁹I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?⁵⁰But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?
53. John 12: 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.
54. Matthew 13: 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.
55. Luke 14: 26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Thomas, 101. And whoever does not love his father and his mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. For not my mother, but my true mother gave me life."
56. Thomas, 28. Jesus said, "I took my place in the midst of the world, and I appeared to them in flesh. I found all of them intoxicated; I found none of them thirsty. And my soul became afflicted for the sons of men, because they are blind in their hearts and do not have sight; for empty they came into the world, and empty too they seek to leave the world. But for the moment they are intoxicated. When they shake off their wine, then they will repent."
57. Thomas, 107 Jesus said, "The kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine sheep and looked for that one until he found it. When he had gone to such trouble, he said to the sheep, 'I care for you more than the ninety-nine.'"
58. Luke 11:35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.
59. John 8: 19 Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.
60. John 10: 30 I and my Father are one.

61. John 14: 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
62. Thomas, 3, Jesus said, "If those who lead you say to you, 'See, the kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty."
63. Thomas, 5 Jesus said, "Recognize what is in your sight, and that which is hidden from you will become plain to you . For there is nothing hidden which will not become manifest."
64. Thomas, 3, Jesus said, "If those who lead you say to you, 'See, the kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty."
65. Thomas, 18, The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us how our end will be." Jesus said, "Have you discovered, then, the beginning, that you look for the end? For where the beginning is, there will the end be. Blessed is he who will take his place in the beginning; he will know the end and will not experience death."
66. John 14: 20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.
67. Luke 6: 40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.
68. Thomas, 108 Jesus said, "He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him."
69. Ephesians, 5: 14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
70. Judas, 48. "The Self-Generated said, 'Let [...] come into being [...],' and it came into being. And he created the first luminary to reign over him. He said, 'Let angels come into being to serve [him],' and myriads without number came into being. He said, '[Let] an enlightened being come into being,' and he came into being. He created the second luminary [to] reign over him, together with myriads of angels without number, to offer service. That is how he created the rest of the enlightened beings. He made them reign over them, and he created for them myriads of angels without number, to assist them.
71. Matthew: 13: 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:
72. Galatians, 2: 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Galatians 3: 21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. Galatians 5: 4-6 ⁴Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. ⁵For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. ⁶For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

73. Galatians 3: 19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.
74. Luke 8:10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.
75. Matthew 22: 37-40, ³⁷Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.³⁸This is the first and great commandment.³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.
76. Romans 13: 9-10 ⁹For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.¹⁰Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.
77. Matthew 22: 37-39 ³⁷Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.³⁸This is the first and great commandment.³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
78. Luke 6: 27-28 ²⁷But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, ²⁸Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.
79. Luke 7: 41-43 ⁴¹There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.⁴²And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?⁴³Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.
80. Luke 7: 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.
81. Luke 6: 32-33 ³²For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.³³And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.
82. Corinthians 13: 1-2 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ²And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.
83. John 7: 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
84. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.
85. Matthew 19: 23-26 ²³Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. ²⁵When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? ²⁶But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

86. John 17: 25-26 *He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?*Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.
87. John 17: 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
88. John 10: 34-35 *Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?*If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;
89. Luke 12: 15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.
90. Luke 10: 41-42 *And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: *But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.
91. 1 John 4: 18-19 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.¹⁹We love him, because he first loved us.
92. Mark 10: 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.
93. Luke 8: 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.
94. Luke 6: 24 But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.
95. 1 Corinthians 13: 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.
96. Thomas, 6 His disciples questioned him and said to him, "Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?" Jesus said, "Do not tell lies, and do not do what you hate, for all things are plain in the sight of heaven. For nothing hidden will not become manifest, and nothing covered will remain without being uncovered."
97. Thomas, 14 Jesus said to them, "If you fast, you will give rise to sin for yourselves; and if you pray, you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits. When you go into any land and walk about in the districts, if they receive you, eat what they will set before you, and heal the sick among them. For what goes into your mouth will not defile you, but that which issues from your mouth - it is that which will defile you."
98. Matthew 6: 19-21 *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
99. Thomas, 67 Jesus said, "If one who knows the all still feels a personal deficiency, he is completely deficient.
100. Thomas, 81. Jesus said, "Let him who has grown rich be king, and let him who possesses power renounce it."

101. Thomas, 61 Jesus said, "Two will rest on a bed: the one will die, and the other will live." Salome said, "Who are you, man, that you ... have come up on my couch and eaten from my table?" Jesus said to her, "I am he who exists from the undivided. I was given some of the things of my father." "I am your disciple." "Therefore I say, if he is destroyed, he will be filled with light, but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness."
102. Thomas, 50 Jesus said, "If they say to you, 'Where did you come from?', say to them, 'We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established itself and became manifest through their image.' If they say to you, 'Is it you?', say, 'We are its children, we are the elect of the living father.' If they ask you, 'What is the sign of your father in you?', say to them, 'It is movement and repose.'"
103. Matthew 5: 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
104. Matthew 10: 16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.
105. John 12: 3-5 ³Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. ⁴Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, ⁵Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?
106. Luke 9: 45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.
107. John 12: 6 ⁶This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. John 13: 29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.
108. Luke 7: 33-34 ³³For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. ³⁴The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!
109. John 6: 41-42 ⁴¹The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. ⁴²And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?
110. Matthew 13: 57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house.
111. Matthew 21: 4-5 ⁴All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, ⁵Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.
112. Matthew 21: 1-2, And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, ²Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. John 12: 14-16 ¹⁴And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, ¹⁵Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. ¹⁶These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

113. Luke 18: 31-33 ³¹Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. ³²For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: ³³And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

114. John 10: 17-18 ¹⁷Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.¹⁸No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

115. Matthew 26: 53-54 ⁵³Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

116. Luke 6: 22 Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

117. John 13: 26-32 ²⁶Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.²⁷And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. ²⁸Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. ²⁹For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. ³¹Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³²If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. ^{*}

^{*} It is completely obvious that Jesus' words here have not been accurately conveyed. In this rendering, they sound somewhat illogical. Analyzing the sense of what has been said, it could be asserted that they apply to Judas Iscariot, and that Jesus is only talking about himself at the end. Thus the phrase ought to be stated as follows: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ^{*}If God be glorified in him, then God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify Me." For here Jesus is calling Judas as well as himself the Son of Man ; in other words, he asserts, that He is already worthy of this title, and therefore it is completely appropriate to refer to Him with a capital letter. Absolutely all the negative statements about Judas Iscariot in the Gospels are made by the Disciples of Jesus, who clearly did not appreciate and understand Judas' true role and significance. (*Author's Note.*)

118. John 13: 18-19 ¹⁸I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. ¹⁹Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

119. Matthew 5: 10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

120. Luke 6: 23 ²³Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

121. John 10: 17-18 ¹⁷Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.¹⁸No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

122. John 15: 19 f ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

123. Thomas, 56. Jesus said, "Whoever has come to understand the world has found but a corpse, and whoever has found a corpse is superior to the world."

124. John 16: 2-3 ²They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. ³And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

125. Luke 21: 8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

126. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

AFTERWORD

EMBRACING THE INEFFABLE

From high school physics, we recall that light simultaneously has the qualities of material and energy, of particles and of waves at the same time. This may sound like a paradox, at least from the point of view of classical science. Indeed, that which sometimes is hard to accept for the contemporary intellectual who has graduated from an institution of higher learning would in no way surprise a thinker from ancient times. In all times and all ages, the most famous philosophers and scholars have been saying that while matter and energy appear to be different from one another, they in fact have one and the same inner substance and composition.

This, indeed, is what Newton said in the year 1704: “simple material bodies and light may be transformed from one into the other.” Modern research likewise confirms this fact. In our times, most scientists have absolutely no doubts that energy in certain circumstances is capable of transforming itself into matter, while matter in certain circumstances is capable of transforming itself into energy. Nowadays science is even quite familiar with the phenomenon of transmutation of elements: the conversion of some chemical elements and others. Scientific data also tell us that the contents of the atmosphere are in essence the constant transformation of nitrogen into oxygen and carbon dioxide. In effect, the medieval alchemists should have had every reason to believe that they would be successful in their efforts to transform lead into gold. And is not the daily conversion of food into our flesh and blood yet another form of the transformation of matter? This is precisely what Jesus was talking about, when, pointing to the bread and the goblet of wine and he said: **“this is my body..., this is my blood”** (Matthew 26: 26-28). Similar miracles happen all the time in nature, and we have become so used to them that we do not even notice them anymore.

We ought to consider the fact that one of the most fundamental laws of physics, the law of conservation of energy, reflects just a portion of the natural processes that are actually taking place in the universe. And that mere portion has long since been deserving of further research and development. Today that law still is given to us in the same way it was given to our grandfathers and grandmothers: “Energy does not arise from nothing, and it does not disappear without trace, but is only transformed from one form into another.” The time has come to change both the name and the formulation of this law of physics. It should be called not “the Law of Conservation of Energy,” but just simply “The Law of Conservation,” and it should sound more or less like this:

“Energy and matter do not arise from nothing or disappear into nothing, but either transfer from one into another, or they are transformed from one into another, either fully or partially.”

It is well known just how immense a quantity of energy may be contained in a small volume of matter; it is sufficient merely to recall a nuclear explosion. This is yet another convincing proof that all natural objects represent concentrated energy in a particular form. There can be no doubt that the reverse process also takes place, in which energy is transformed into matter. It is well known that our planet increases in volume and “gains weight” every day. The reason for this is the light energy which it consumes.

Nowadays, it is perfectly possible to make the responsible scientific statement that all matter was at some point energy, whereas energy represents “dissolved” yet formerly incarnated particles of matter. And of course light is included the definition of energy in the broadest sense of this term. In which case, it is therefore scientifically correct to say that everything in the universe truly came from Light.

Of course, by light, we need to comprehend not just the twinkling emanations from the closest lamp, but also “the great energy of the Universe,” which also includes invisible infra-red and ultra-violet emanations, as well as other forms, possibly still not yet discovered by science.

For those with unprepared minds, it is always a mystery how it was that Jesus, who was completely illiterate scientifically, at least by contemporary criteria, was able to grasp such profound truths, allowing him to assert:

“The images are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the Father. He will become manifest, but his image will remain concealed by His light.” (Thomas, 83).

In this extremely economical phrase we have an explanation of that which science has been trying to explain to us for several centuries. Jesus clearly informs us who God the Father really is in truth through (“images”). And he explains what they are composed of, and how they appear. The meaning of these few words is so profound that it would be possible to write several volumes of scientific and philosophical studies about them.

It turns out that our distant ancestors were right to believe that space is occupied by an invisible “ether” (energy) in which, like ice cubes swimming in water, objects of matter also made of this same ether float about and circulate. And, like these ice cubes, which could if heated just as easily transform and become water or steam, so any matter in general is capable of being transformed into any form of energy. And in this process we observe the living “breath” of the ever-living, ever-youthful Universe.

The birth of new stars, and the disappearance of astronomical bodies into so-called “black holes” eloquently prove the ongoing mutability of creation, of the changes between energy and matter. And such phenomena as the transmutation of matter and the transformation of energy from one form into another merely add depth to the picture.

This all creates the impression that the Universe is essentially one living organism, containing within itself all that it needs, according to a balance and composition known to It alone. For ages people have been unable to fail to wonder and the harmony and unified character of this most complicated organism.

And there is every reason to believe that such an incredibly complicated orchestra must, as it were, have its own conductor. Religion calls this conductor “God,” whereas science calls this conductor “the Laws of Science” or “the Laws of Existence.” And it is hardly surprising that in our day this question of laws has become the subject of the most serious scientific inquiries and discussions. This is what Academician T.I. Shinov had to say on the subject at the international forum “Petersburg Spring - 2002:”

“There are laws according to which matter is created from any form, whether such matter is subtle or more plain and material. And this means there is a need to know the laws pursuant to which particular type of matter is formed.”

Nowadays it is possible to speak about **certain conditions , basic requirements, and causes** for the creation of energy fields, and for the reverse process as well. In ancient Greek, all of these **conditions, requirements, and causes** could be summarized in just one word: **Logos** -- (the Word). In other words ancient Greek thinkers would have expressed their understanding of reality by saying that there was a certain **Logos**, which was the elemental foundation for the rest of creation of bodies of matter from energy and vice versa. But what is truly most interesting is the fact that this is not just what they would have said, but what indeed they did in fact say. It is easy to confirm this by glancing through classical Greek philosophy.

Indeed, the word **Logos** is a very compact concept, containing within it a good deal that is simply untranslatable. It was introduced into the Greek philosophical lexicon by Heraclitus about 2500 years ago. “**Logos**” in everyday speech could be rendered as “speech” or “word” but in fact in has another - and far more profound -- meaning. The closest real translation to this meaning is “**the Law.**” Therefore classical philosophy speaks of it as “**the Law of Being.**” In contemporary scientific circles this law is known as the “universal intelligence” or the “unified informational field.” And what it really refers to is that which in most religions is simply called God or the Creator.

And it really is not so important to know what this “**Law**” consists of or how it is applied, because it acts of and by its own accord, or, through the intervention of that intelligence which governs the Universe. Again, we need not know how it works. What matters is that it is, and that it works! The Bible is particularly apt in explaining: “**for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.**”
1 Romans 20.

As we know, all the gospels that make up the New Testament of the Bible were originally in ancient Greek. And if we were to make sense of the first lines of the Gospel of John, it would be appropriate for us to replace the true owner of the space there --in the place of the usurper who has occupied the space (for in fact the “word” is in context a completely incorrect translation of the original “**Logos.**” In point of fact the first lines of that Gospel should really be translated as follows:

In the beginning was the Law (Logos), and the Law was with God, and the Law was God...All things were made by Him, and without Him there was not any thing that was made.” (John 1: 1-3).

In other words, God is **the Law**, or, to translate this Biblical phrase more exactly into modern speech, it would sound like this:

“God is the Living Law of Living Nature.”

*By this **Law** everything in nature has been created, and there is nothing in the universe that is not subject to it.*

All the great philosophers had been saying this since the time of Plato and Heraclitus, and, perhaps even before their time. Although how our forebears had already developed such advanced scientific knowledge is something we can only speculate about. Many modern scientists form the exact same conclusions on the basis of extremely complex and involved experiments requiring technology that could only be performed in our time, and yet they have only arrived in the same place as the ancient philosophers, whose ancient truths they confirm.

And so, summarizing, we can now say that contemporary science, which has for so long and so stubbornly denied the existence of God, has to its own surprise afforded us proofs of His existence. Of course, it does not wish to trumpet its acknowledgement of the fact publicly, but as the saying goes, “the truth will out” and it’s only a matter of time.

We have now reached a revolutionary moment in history, in which science and religion can and must be united for the common good. Long ago they should have stopped staring at each other across a gulf of mutual suspicion, frustrated at their inability to prove their exclusive correctness. As Albert Einstein very aptly observed: **“science without religion is lame, but religion without science is blind.”** It is time for both to understand that they are not antipodes, but complementary ways of perceiving the world as it is. It would be difficult to overstate the value of unifying faith and science. It could lead to a qualitative new consciousness for humanity, and a quantum leap forward in human development.

We know that in order to obtain success in any undertaking in life, one must first and foremost believe in it. It is for that reason that all religions attach such significance to faith. Of course, it is possible to be simply a person of faith, and if that faith is sufficiently deep, then that is good enough. But there are few people like that nowadays. Most believers, even if they will not admit it publicly, are constantly trying to find confirmation of the truths of their religious teachings. They can find such confirmation in our days, and if a person’s faith happens to be weak, the knowledge which modern science can justly be proud of nowadays can strengthen it. **“If you think hard enough, you will inevitably be brought by science to a belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion.”** (Joseph Thompson, outstanding English physicist and Nobel Laureate). In an age of feverish technological advances, it is through science that many actually first come to faith. And yet it is important to remember that faith, as we have just seen, that is merely the **foundation of religion**, upon which must be constructed the **“Great Temple.”** It is only the beginning of the path: ahead of us lies the road to Truth (Enlightenment, Nirvana) or, in the words of Jesus Christ (to the Kingdom of God).

This road also takes time, so if you want to get to your final destination, it's pretty important you hurry up and acquire faith now. But, of course, it is not only science which can bring us to faith. There is a host of wonderful literature of all kinds: artistic, philosophical, and religious writing which can help you in this question. And yet the main thing in all of this is not to try too hard, or do too much.

In order to obtain faith, not much is needed, but for the true faith, things are a bit different. This by no means signifies that the more you know, the closer you are to the truth. On the contrary, to amass a whole host of facts in your head with the desire to get to the Truth is a rather thankless undertaking. And those who have tried it eventually come to the realization that it is absolutely impossible. Which is why in the end, Socrates came to the conclusion: "I only know that I know nothing - but the others don't even know that." A man can come to the Higher Truth with empty hands and nothing in his head at all, rather than dragging behind a heavy suitcase full of half-digested doubtful truths, all the while spouting a lot of literary, classical, and philosophical quotations right and left. And so, many of the great thinkers and intellectuals whose portraits grace the halls of public libraries were unable themselves to grasp the essence of their truth: they did not want to get rid of their suitcases. They stayed by the doorway to the truth, but they never managed to come inside. One cannot help but remember the words of Jesus:

"Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber."
(Thomas, 75).

Standing guard at her gates, the Truth bans entrance not only to those who have any baggage at all, but even to those who are clad with any kind of clothing in the least. It is for this reason that Jesus taught that "verily I say unto you, unless be converted, and are become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven." Matthew 18: 3. And also he said:

"When you disrobe without being ashamed and take up your garments and place them under your feet like little children and tread on them, then will you see the son of the living one, and you will not be afraid." Thomas, 37.

In general one must treat the words of Jesus and the Holy Scriptures with the greatest caution and reverence. It is not always easy to understand them, for they are full of profound meanings. And it is extremely dangerous to involve oneself in overly free interpretation, which can not only distort the contents of the particular teaching, but also the whole point of the teaching in its entirety. Unfortunately, in our day, there are countless examples of this.

"As above, so below." These are the teachings of Hermes Trismegistos, who in his time was revered like a living God. These teachings come not however from hi, but from beyond the furthest reaches of our memories of antiquity. They show us that our ancestors had a completely correct understanding of the unity of all creation."

“As Above, so below.” Modern science now tells us the very same thing, speaking of the unitary architecture of the entire Universe, from the least subatomic quantum particles to the most gigantic objects in the cosmos. And just as electrons revolve around the nucleus, so the planets of our solar system, including planet Earth, revolve around the Sun. In turn, the solar system itself revolves around the center of our own gigantic galaxy. And this galaxy revolves...

Indeed, all galaxies seem to be revolving around the center of yet another galaxy, and it seems that this cycle or revolutions can continue endlessly in either direction.

Here we can clearly see the existence of a Unified Law of Being. According to which all has been created, including human beings. And this is precisely what the Bible had in mind when it states in Genesis 1: 27 that God was made **“in His own image.”** These words are almost always understood incorrectly. It is for this reason that for many, their image of God is one of a righteous and wise old man, living somewhere up in the skies, whose main mission seems to be to divide the righteous from the unrighteous, with the intent of rewarding the former, and punishing the latter. And we all know that He does this only after man has left this world, in other words, after death. However, those who call themselves “the elect,” or the righteous, and who believe that their sins are not so great in comparison with their good deeds, still hope that they will receive at least a portion of their reward coming to them in heaven while they are still alive to enjoy it here on Earth and in this life.

And if this does not happen, then in the depths of their hearts, they reproach the Almighty with injustice, and are indignant, wondering why He does not reward all their sufferings and efforts at least some crumbs of encouragement. And in their prayers, they are basically beggars, trying to remind God of themselves, and wonder how it is that God, amidst all His cares, has somehow forgotten them. This is the way of the overwhelming mass of the faithful. And if they were to be completely frank to the fullest extent, then they would confess that their faith is actually quite weak, and that they actually have quite little faith that they will someday truly be “rewarded beyond the clouds” for all their earthly travails. However, though their hope is not in fact very great, still it is easier to live with it, than without it.

One would have thought that the main desire of the righteous and faithful man would be to race as quickly as possible towards the “gardens of Paradise” where the long-awaited and long-deserved rewards are supposed to be beckoning. And yet, nobody really seems to hurry there. It is well known what enormous sums and efforts the modern-day faithful spend in order to prolong their existence on this “sinful earth.” What is it that motivates people to do this? Are they afraid that their secret sins will not in the end allow them to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? Or do they actually just doubt that this kingdom really exists at all? Or could it be the words of Jesus himself, saying that the Kingdom of Heaven may actually obtained during one’s lifetime?

“There be some of them that stand here, that shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power.” Mark 9: 1

Tempting, isn’t it? And how one wishes to believe in this! And it is actually this faith, faith in one’s own potential that Jesus wished to give us. But who in fact are these “some” who “stand here” who shall be selected by God with the bliss of meeting Him during their own lifetime?

Are they truly some remarkable elite, some “elect of God” – different from all others? No! The gift of coming to God has been given to each of us, this is what all the teachers of the past have told us, trying to awaken us to a new growth of our consciousness.

Here are the words of the Holy Scripture.

“Awake, you sleeper, and be resurrected from death!”

Buddha also said the following:

“I am exactly the same as you, only I have awakened, and you have not.”

And Jesus said:

“The disciple is not above his master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.”
(Luke 6, 40).

What remarkable unanimity of spirit! Indeed, one often imagines that if somehow Jesus would have met, for example, Buddha, or Socrates, most likely they would have silently embraced one another like long-lost brothers. Silently, it is important to remark, for they would have had no reason even to speak to one another: they already knew everything and had attained the Truth. Conversation with these figures would actually only be needed by those who had yet to attain the truth, but were still only striving for it.

Unfortunately, the conversation would be difficult, for in point of fact the Truth cannot be conveyed in words. If it could, then long ago a “Textbook of True Knowledge” would have been published and any ordinary person of perspicacious intelligence would have with sufficient diligence long ago attained the Truth. But this is not what happens. The entire history of mankind and of the earth itself demonstrates that in fact words are powerless, and that with reason alone, the Truth can never be attained.

So how in fact can the Truth be ultimately obtained? And who then are these selected lucky ones, who attain it during their lifetimes?

The answer to this question is actually well known since ancient times: what is required is spiritual vision, granted to those who are highly morally evolved, and living by the laws of cosmic ethics in harmony and unity with the entire Universe. Why is it thus, and not any other way? This too, is known. The fact is that those who have attained spiritual strength have immense power, and can use it to destroy as well as to create. This is why the Divine Essence has taken care to ensure that these sciences and the holy knowledge they contained will never fall into the hands of the greedy or the selfish. Here is what the Truth says about itself:

“I come only to those who are good and holy, pure and compassionate, who live righteously, and my presence with them is for their own good. To those who are malicious or envious or greedy or deceitful I come not, I leave them to the vengeful demons, whom they have nurtured within their own souls.”

These are the words of the famous book of Hermes Trismegistos “Pomandres” (Vision). They have survived thousands of years, and to this day they ring out with the voice of truth like a hymn handed down from our distant ancestors. This is why it is obvious that all religions teach of spiritual completeness as a necessary condition for the attainment of the great secrets of creation.

So what in fact are we supposed to do if we wish to attain bliss on earth, and no longer feel ourselves to be wrong notes in the great symphony of the Universe? Here again one wishes to pay reverence to the great spiritual teachings of the Eastern religions. For, unlike Christianity, at least at first superficial glance, Eastern faiths give practical methods for the awakening of one’s spiritual consciousness, with the goal of seeing that which is hidden to the common naked eye. The chief method is one that has been verified by centuries of practice, one that can truly yield astounding results. It is called meditation.

A lot has been written about meditation, but if you read Osho’s book “*Dynamic Meditation*” then I believe you will probably need no other sources. Answering the question “what is meditation” is actually rather difficult, at least in words. Nonetheless, we will try to express what it is that meditation actually represents.

“Meditation is a great and profound silence, when our mind calms down, when thoughts go away, and you are merely present, experiencing yourself and all that surrounds you with an uncanny and hitherto never-before-experienced inner sense or inner quality.”

The discovery and development of oneself through this quality is in fact that inner self-attainment which leads to spiritual growth. One can say that it makes you discover a new way, an internal capability of understanding the world and oneself. The more one advances in this process, the more this inner capability grows and deepens, until finally one experiences what the East calls “a second birth” -- the discovery of one’s own inner essence. It is believed that this is in fact the moment of birth of immortal human consciousness (the soul). Or, to use the words of Jesus, it is that **“wonder of wonders,”** the **“spirit come into being because of the body.”** (Thomas, 29). As one comes to know oneself, one comes to know the world and all its great secrets.

“Jesus said, “Recognize what is in your sight, and that which is hidden from you will become plain to you . For there is nothing hidden which will not become manifest.” (Thomas, 5).

This is literally what Jesus urged us. But is there no inconsistency in this teaching? After all, in not a single one of the Gospels does one ever hear the least word about meditation. Many have been the seekers who due to this absence have actually abandoned the Christian faith and given their preference over to the Eastern religions. And completely in vain.

It is absolutely true that Jesus did not sit anyone down in Lotus position, or ask anyone to stare silently off into space. He certainly never pronounced the words “meditation” and, indeed, probably in that time the word itself did not even exist, at least, not in the Western lexicon. And yet in his utterances you will discern the techniques for quite similar practices as Buddha’s and, indeed, quite often.

And although these practices may have somewhat differed from the Eastern manner of meditation common at that time, most of these practices in one form or another have been passed down, certainly at least in the orthodox tradition, for centuries, along with the more classical Eastern techniques which have now become widespread in our times.

In order to meditate, it is absolutely not necessary to sit for a long time waiting for Enlightenment in any given pose without making a single sound. For many this is very tiresome anyway, and besides, not everyone has that much free time at their disposal. Jesus knew this perfectly well and therefore did not distinguish meditation from life itself.

Nowadays, along with the classical techniques of meditation, whose significance, especially for the beginner or novice is particularly important, there are a whole host of other varieties of meditative experience, in some of which expressing sound is accepted or even required – the utterance of a mantra. Others require exercise, movement, song, or dance. The style does not matter, What matters is that the mind be stilled and silent: This is the fundamental condition of the meditative experience.

The Japanese, who are long used to valuing every instant of their time, have even converted meditation into the simple act of making and drinking tea, through the practice of the “tea ceremony.” Indeed, any activity or practice, if you approach it with fundamental integrity, can become a form of meditation. Observing yourself, your actions, your thoughts and feelings are the basic rules which anyone who is meditating must follow.

We will come back later to the meditation techniques that are described in the gospels. For the moment let us however recall an important moment in the flowering of Christianity in the 14th century, when, partly as a response to the many different competing religious doctrines who did not have a practice suited to the tumultuous times, there arose in Orthodox Christianity the practice of hesychasm (from Greek Hesychia – stillness, silence, seclusion).

The practice of hesychasm is founded on a very particular understanding of the teachings of Christ. It is a refined spiritual practice which allows monks and laity alike to have a more intimate relationship with God. According to the New Testament, “No man hath seen God at any time.” (John 1: 18). However, the hesychasts assert that in fact the world is “full of the emanations of God,” and that, with constant spiritual practice, it is possible to see the invisible God through one’s spiritual vision. The key phrase for them in the Holy Scriptures are the words of Jesus that say: “the Kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17: 21).

This is why the hesychasts perceive their principal task to be spiritual contemplation and discovery within oneself of our own divine essence. They believe that, as a result of constant spiritual practice, spiritual deepening, as it were, humanity can find its inner divine essence (or soul) and be united with the other divine essences that invisibly emanate everywhere (God). They believe that every hesychast who faithfully follows the practice should eventually become like Christ. Their basis for so believing come from the following utterance of Christ:

“Everyone that becomes perfect shall be as his Master.” (Luke 6: 40).

The practice of hesychasm is reminiscent of Eastern esoteric practices and is quite similar to meditation. However, in hesychasm, the pose of the body or the position of the head, the control of the breath, and other traditional Eastern fundamentals for the practice of meditation are not so important and do not play a major role. Instead, hesychasm is a particular spiritual practice of stillness, of silent deepening of the self, and a rather unique way of praying without words. As a result of this practice, according to the hesychasts, there is a spiritual “shift” within, and a transformation of “mind” into “heart” in such a way that “the invisible becomes visible.” There are many attestations and accounts of the miraculous feats and capabilities of the hesychastic masters to effectively attain higher states of being.

Sometimes the hesychasts would repeat to themselves over and over for hours (either silently or aloud in different practices) the so-called “Jesus Prayer.” **“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”** But here, in addition to being a prayer, it was also effectively asking like an Eastern mantra, by helping to stop the workings of the “monkey mind” and thereby attain contemplative inner peace.

Although the founders of hesychastic practice as a complete spiritual discipline are believed to have been the monks St. Gregory of Sinai and St. Gregory Palama, living in Byzantium between the 13th and 14th centuries, it is also fair to say that these monks in fact generalized and applied much older practices that had already been long developed within the Eastern Church, based upon a profound and multi-faceted analysis of the Holy Scriptures.

During the Conclave of Constantinople of 1341, all the principle conceptions and techniques of hesychasm were officially approved by the Orthodox Church, and were acknowledged as the official teachings of Christ himself. Ten years later, in 1351, in a conclave of all Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities, hesychasm was also accepted as an official teaching of Russian Orthodoxy.

Hesychasm spread from the Byzantine Empire to medieval Russia and indisputably played a major role in Russia’s spiritual development between the 14th and 16th centuries. One of the most important and revered saints of the Russian Orthodox Church, St. Sergius Radonezhsky, personally experienced for himself “profound transformation arising from constant silent communication with God.” His teaching was extremely influential in developing Russia’s powerful new religious consciousness. The natural religiosity of the Russian people, which had hitherto not been guided much in any one particular direction, also found through the practice of hesychasm an understandable way of acquiring a Christian world view. This period in Russian history was notable for its phenomenal spiritual development and flowering of culture. In icon painting and architecture The new spiritual current had a significant influence on such major artistic figures such as the artists Andrei Rublev, Feofan Grek (Theophanes the Greek), Epiphanes the Wise, and many other painters, who wrote major pages in the history of Russian art and culture.

However, hesychasm as an official teaching was unable to remain the official teaching of the Russian Orthodox Church for various reasons. The hesychasts believed that anyone who attained spiritual advancement (Enlightenment) as Christ had, was effectively reunited with God. Jesus had said: **“I and my Father are one.”** (John 10: 30)

Therefore, the hesychasts were very demanding towards and critical of all higher authority, both temporal and spiritual, especially those that appeared to have strayed from the true teachings of Christ. The hesychasts believed that those who had attained authority had a duty to change profoundly, and to help others strive towards and achieve enlightenment. Naturally enough, such views were totally unwelcome to the Tsars and other representatives of worldly power autocratic authority. Furthermore, the opponents of the hesychasts were disturbed by the similarities between hesychasm and “outlandish” Eastern practices. They perceived therefore that hesychasm presented a danger to the Russian Orthodox Church, which they wanted to keep unchanging and absolute. Furthermore they wanted Orthodoxy to follow more or less along the lines indicated by the Western Christian Church. In the end, for a number of reasons, the opponents of hesychasm won, and, naturally enough, the victors enacted new official principles of the new Orthodox Christianity which has remained until this day (indeed, to this day Orthodox implies rigid, unchanging, and living according to the old ways and old rules).

However, many of the radical old traditions and teachings of the hesychasts have still survived in the Orthodox Church. Many are particularly visible in some shrines (such as Mount Athos and others). Both in Russia and in other Orthodox countries, there is a growing rebirth of interest in hesychasm and hesychastic practices.¹²⁷

It is not difficult to find confirmation for the fact that hesychasm did not arise from nowhere or out of nothing, but is indeed profoundly rooted on the direct teachings of Christ. The gospels frequently speak of and revere a so-called “great silence.”

Wishing that the word of God should spread out among the earth more swiftly, Jesus sends his seventy best disciples to various cities and villages to preach and share his teachings. He does this even though he knows that these disciples are themselves far from completely enlightened and accomplished themselves. And he wants them to continue to be able to associate with and learn from him, and he does not want the teaching process interrupted even during their separation from him. And Jesus understood that the practice of spiritual contemplation in silence most frequently and reliably takes place when the disciple is separated from the master, for then it is that the real inner spiritual awakening and deepening occurs. Jesus also knew that his disciples would have no other time for the development of this practice than the time spent away from him, while traveling. And so he sent them off, giving them instructions which might at first glance seem somewhat curious:

“Go your ways: behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip nor shoes, and salute no man along the way.” (Luke 10: 3-4).

Reading these words attentively, one could say in modern language that Jesus was teaching his students the practice of what is known as “walking meditation” (which is now one of the most popular types of meditation one can find).

¹²⁷ Materials about the hesychasts have been taken from the works of the following authors: Isaac Sirin, St. Gregory Palama, the holy Gregory of Sinai, Makarios the Egyptian, and St. Seraphim Sarovsky and others. For popular reading about modern Orthodoxy and its way of life, somewhat incorporating these concepts, see *Everyday Saints*, by Father Tikhon Shevkunov.

Jesus considered that our principal task as a human being is the discovery and development of our inner spiritual essence. And he constantly stated that the cares of the outer material world are the chief obstacle on this path:

“You are careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful.” (Luke 10: 41-42).

“Take no thought for your life, what ye eat, and what you drink, nor yet for your body, or what you will put on. Is not your life more than meat, and your body more than raiment?” (Matthew 6: 24)

“Take no thought unto the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.” (Matthew 6: 34).

All proper meditation techniques require complete seclusion from worldly problems, and this is why Jesus is really referring to when he says: **“carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes.”**

Yet another profound thought is contained in these words. For, according to a wise proverb: “the path which does not sustain the wanderer is not worth taking.”

Meditation is simply contemplation, inner reflection on reality, without the least reaction to the distractions around one, and this is why Jesus continues by saying **“and salute no man along the way.”**

These words practically always arouse a certain amount of consternation, and therefore there have been quite a variety of different interpretations of these words by various preachers. Generally speaking they are all far from the truth. Here Jesus was not urging his followers to be rude. But he was taking care to ensure that the process of meditation would not be interfered with by external causes: any kind of reactions and any contacts with others invariably demand the work of the mind, and that means that his disciples’ meditation would be interrupted, and he did not want that.

In Jesus’ understanding, life should be meditative, and therefore he says to us that on the eve of even the most important events in our life or reason can and must remain calm:

“And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto the magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.” Luke 12: 12-12.

And here again, we hear the famous words “take ye no thought.” Why is it the Jesus all the time wishes to make us so carefree and thoughtless? It is not hard to answer this question.

What does a person do who is not thinking in this moment about food or clothes or other needs, and whose reason is not being assailed by other thoughts? There is but one answer: if that person is not dead, then at the current time that person is simply blissfully present in reality. It is precisely this blissful presence which is known as meditation. In Jesus wanted that “blissful presence” to constantly accompany us, constantly revealing to us our own great possibilities.

It is crucial to understand that Jesus is not by any means asking us to walk around naked and barefoot. No, he is simply teaching us that we have to set our priorities correctly, and we should try to get rid of surplus baggage and needless costs and vanity. He tells us that time spent peacefully meditating, coming into consciousness with oneself and the reality around us is the best use of the brief time in this life that has been given to us.

But to be thoughtless by no means signifies that we should do nothing. Any meditative form of activity, any focused action that is free of inner tension, even as it brings great pleasure, may in fact be safely termed “thoughtless” activity. This is precisely the state of consciousness of “blissful presence” or meditative state he has in mind. Even prayer itself, in Jesus’ opinion, ought to be in its own way a form of meditation. He speaks out against the kind of long-winded babbling common to traditional prayer, and clearly lets us know but for true prayer words are not necessary:

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.” (Matthew 6: 7-8)

Yet nonetheless, Jesus did bequeath this one prayer:

After this manner therefore pray ye: “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” (The Lord’s Prayer, Matthew 9-13).

Let us try to understand why it is that Jesus gave us this particular prayer, the Lord’s Prayer. If we pay attention to it carefully we will notice that it essentially presents the classic preparation recommended to be practiced before each meditation. The goal of these preparations is to achieve inner focus, to relieve the mind of needless cares and to relax.

But in order for this prayer to really do us any good, it's important that we understand correctly what this prayer is talking about. If we were to translate it into modern speech, it would say more or less the following:

- ◆ We know that there is a Law, according to which all of creation has been constructed. It is this Law which is the Creator and Father of all that exists. And may He be blessed. (**“Hallowed be thy name.”**)
- ◆ We have no doubt in the great wisdom of this Law, and we want to live on this Earth in harmony with it, and with the entire Universe. (**“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”**).
- ◆ We live in the present day in the present moment (**“Give us this day our daily bread.”**)

◆ We are absolutely free, and the past does not weigh us down. We forgive those who offend us, and may those who have offended us forgive us in turn. We do not believe that in doing good deeds we have racked up debts, but on the contrary are grateful for having had the opportunity to have been good. Therefore may those whom we have not yet had a chance to respond with goodness to goodness not be offended at us. (“**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**”)

◆ We do not wish to be distracted by desires. We are calm and without cares and thoughts, because we have all that we need. (“**And lead us not into temptation**”)

◆ We wish to live an open, clean, and simple life without deceit. (**but deliver us from evil**).

This is the setup. And now we can begin our meditation. A prayer without words.

Do not put it off “until later.” Everything will be fine. You can do it!

P.S. When we get down on our knees in front of a Buddhist monk or bend our head down in front of the image of a Christian saint, we are expressing our respect, and in our body language are basically saying: “how admirable you are!” But if in fact you were to ask anyone “would you really like to be like him,” this question might cause a good deal of consternation.

Deep down in our heart of hearts do we really believe that the lives of such people as Jesus or Buddha should be examples that we should imitate? And we were not just talking about copying their way of life of an itinerant pilgrim-preacher, but we're talking about their inner means of perception. At this, in truth, we at once grow wary: Won't such a way of life get in the way of our own way of life? Will it hurt our business? Would upset our family? And so on... Could it be that this is why the idea that Jesus was the one and only son of God and that his summit of spiritual heights is utterly unattainable by us is by now so stubbornly taken root in Christianity?

It's a very convenient position; it demands hardly anything from faithful believers; just now and then we must as best we can carry out certain commandments and take some actions to repent of our sins. Are we not trying to deceive ourselves with this?

Oh Lord! “**Deliver us from evil.**”

Remember that it is hardly an accident that Jesus spoke of Love is the only true commandment. For in fact it is Love that makes man God. As a result of Love between two hearts a child is born -- a little Divinity. From there this Divinity is delivered into our hands, and it is scary to think of what we do to it, usually, as a rule, from the very best intentions.

Thanks to our ceaseless “thoughts” and “cares” our child loses its divine features. But That Which Abides is very merciful and loving and gives to each of us a chance to be reborn again as God. These are unique and very difficult birth pains, four, spiritually speaking, each of us must deliver our own rebirth. And yet for this future child within us waiting to be reborn there are two parents -- the person himself or herself and Love: Perfected Love, Complete Love, Universal Love, all-encompassing all forgiving, and allowing us to live in harmony with the entire universe. Only such Higher Love will allow us to truly know ourselves, to uncover our inner divine essence, and, having united with God, to attain immortality. In many different words, all religions essentially tell us the same thing:

“When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.” Thomas 3.

But when you come to know who you really are, then you will realize that “eternal life” is not just words.

THE PRACTICAL GOSPELS

“The path of Providence is mysterious to us because while we believe in It, we don’t believe it in Him.”

The lines of the epitaph I have chosen for this chapter are generally ascribed to the Russian poet Tyutchev. Yet it is less important that we know who said this, than that we heed what is said, because it reflects the reality of many centuries.

As we have already seen, nowadays someone can come to believe in God by many and quite various different ways. Scientific knowledge and the truly remarkable discoveries of the last few decades in no way exclude faith. However we were also saying that faith is but **“the foundation of religion”** upon which its **Great Temple** must be built. But let us try to at least lay a few bricks upon those foundations. It turns out not to be all that complicated, because we have the good fortune to be the happy possessors of a fabulous construction project which is known as **“the Teaching of Christ.”** But in order for our building project succeed we first need to believe in our own project and understand it properly.

Jesus asked us to: **“take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** (Matthew 11: 29-30).

He told us that there is no one who, having come to Him: **“that hath left house, wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the Gospel’s, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, mothers, and children and lands... And in the world to come eternal life.”**

Pay careful attention to the fact that he says **“now in this time.”** In other words during this earthly life! **“Come to me!”** So our teacher called us. Well-- what are we waiting for? Why are we crawling so slowly, and with such nervousness and reservations? Do we really believe in him in point of fact? Perhaps it is better just to stick with what we know? Does it not make more sense to hold on to what we have -- for what if in the end there are no **“hundredfold”** profits?

Well, it turns out that the profits are real. And in order to convince ourselves of this, let us turn once again to the truly Great Teaching. We will only stop at certain selected points of it, but, in practice these points are enough to make a fundamental change for the better in the life of any person, by filling his or her existence with light and joy.

1. PERCEIVING THE WORLD

“The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body is also full of light, but when thine eye is evil, thy body is also full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as one of the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.”

(Luke 11: 34-36)

With whatever eyes we look at the world, so we create it. In various interpretations, the famous philosophers and sages of all the ages have never tired of imparting this ancient truths to us. Need we even mention that by changing the way we look at reality, we also change our own selves? I think nobody will dare to argue with this.

And yet if we were to say that by changing our views and opinions, we also change the material world that surrounds us, such an assertion may indeed draw forth a massive questions and objections. Nonetheless, the great mystics have long asserted that the thought of human being are capable of changing not just him or herself, but the actual physical reality of his or her surroundings. And now numerous scientific experiments and investigations of human potential have clearly confirmed this fact. Contemporary science has made great advances. Nowadays it is convincingly proven that all material objects, including human beings themselves, are nothing more than clumps of energy concentrated in very particular ways.

In other words, everything around us is energy, and the entire world could theoretically be imagined as an enormous web of energy, in which each particular strand is infallibly woven into one marvelous whole. Have you ever noticed what happens when a fly blunders into a spider web? The fly may have gotten itself stuck at the very end of the web, and yet the spider possibly sitting at a completely opposite corner of the web immediately finds out about this. In just the same way, all the material objects of our enormous world, and all the energy and events and phenomena are directly linked between each other. It is not by chance that in the Upanishads it is written, **“when a blade of grass is plucked, the whole universe trembles.”**

Every human being is also a unique part of incredibly complex system of creation. Nothing arrives by chance upon this earth. The universe knows about your presence, and knows all about you. Remember the words of Jesus: **“but the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”** (Matthew 10:30). That Which Abides has created you, and that means He means you must be, and He is ready to care for you, granting you truly limitless possibilities for a happy life.

This is what is truly meant by the words **“God loves you.”** How do we make sure not to let go these opportunities and to take from life all of its generous gifts?

Teaching us this is in fact the main task of all the great religions, and the Gospels can confidently be called one of the greatest examples of a textbook for how to live our lives. And so **“when thine eye is single, thy whole body is also full of light, but when thine eye is evil, thy body is also full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as one of the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.”**

In other words, if your outlook is positive, then the world around you will change together with your views in a positive direction and in a positive way. In order to understand this remarkable link between perception and reality, let us look at it from the point of view of contemporary science. Any human thought turns out to be, when broken down, an energetic substance. As we have already noted, all material objects represent concentrated energy. Therefore it is safe to assume that our thoughts are also capable under certain circumstances of being concentrated and materialized. And what are those certain circumstances?

One solitary random thought coming and going in your consciousness has no particular strength. It may dissolve in the stream of energy of the Universe and disappear forever. If you think “what a nice day today is,” and then focus on something else, you may forget this thought and never remember it again. But frequently repeated thoughts to which you lend a lot of attention -- this is a completely different matter entirely. Such thoughts have a tendency to materialize. And when concentrated they acquire a particular form in our consciousness, and we already begin to term them views, judgments, opinions, or convictions. And what happens with these materialized thoughts? Where do they go? What are the consequences of this materialization?

Here it is worth pausing to discuss the structure of the most complete natural computer there is -- the human brain. As we know, our brain is composed of both consciousness and subconsciousness. Our initial focus is invariably in our consciousness, so we are already used to the fact that there thoughts may sometimes chaotically blunder about in our head even against our will, now appearing, and now disappearing. By contrast, concentrated and materialized thoughts move into our subconsciousness and there, once lodged, they occupy a firm place. You might even compare these thoughts with a new “software program” which our brain has acquired. What happens next? Naturally, the program begins to work, and materialized thoughts begin to live their own independent lines, creating their own independent reality. For a clear parable of this process, imagine the finest strand of silk in the complex web of creation. This strand has its own particular frequency of vibration. When a thought affects it vibrates and in this way begins to cause the whole system to vibrate. And so perhaps we can understand that the words of Christ which at first might seem a bit strange:

“From me did the all come forth, and unto me did the all extend. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.” (Thomas, 77). What he is saying here is that the inner makeup of the human being is intimately connected only with his own body, but in fact with any object in the Universe. So all the great mystics have believed. This is what the ancient Upanishads have to say on the subject:

“Whosoever receives all that is as nothing more than himself or herself , and perceives that all that is without is a reflection of all that is within, does not reject anything. For one who is enlightened, all that exists is nothing more than a reflection of our own inner essence.”

This is why it is extremely important to make sure that our thoughts do not form negative views, because such negative impressions in turn begin to create negative reality around a person.

With effort this task can be accomplished, and everything depends upon us ourselves. I'll give an example, the story of something that happened to me many years ago, tropical beach of the Mediterranean Sea. It was just as the tourist season was coming to an end, so there were fewer people on the beach than usual. The weather on that day was quite lovely, and my mood corresponded to the good weather. Then not far off new visitors came to the beach: two women aged about 40 or 45, and two men who were each little older. All four were fairly ordinary appearance and therefore day did not arouse any great interest in the public.

But I, too being bored and lazy back them to do the work to train my logical mind, decided to secretly follow them trying to determine whether these were married couples or just women accompanied by their boyfriends. Like all the other tourists relaxing on the beach they sprawled out on beach chairs in the shade of broad sun umbrellas. It was rather hot, and so the men, after quickly undressing, went into the water. One of them, after taking a dip several times, immediately got out of the water and lay down, towel right by the girls. The second man rather awkwardly continued to muck about in the water. Finally tiring of swimming, he lazily approached the shore. The water was still up to the level of his waist when he suddenly stopped his bathing suit, demonstratively wringing the water from it. This scene naturally attracted the attention of the others who were relaxing. Evidently everyone was interested to know how he would put on the bathing suit he had just wrung out without getting it wet again. It wasn't long before we had our answer; the man simply went out on to the beach, and as one might say demonstrated himself to the public in all his glory. He turned to face the onlookers shook out his bathing suit several times clearly not hurrying to put them on.

“A free male striptease,” someone called out sarcastically.

Personally I thought to myself: “Can you believe it? Such brazen shamelessness and lack of respect for others! It's a good thing at least it there aren't any kids around!”

My indignation grew and grew and I was just about to express my furious opinion about this. But I stopped just in time. I suddenly remembered the wise old saying: “**we do not like those whom we do not know.**” Then I remembered the words of Christ “**judge not lest ye be judged.**” And I decided to try and look at the above-described scene with different eyes. And this time, the more attentively I looked at “the male striptease artist on the beach,” the more I pitied him. In front of me stood a short old nearly bald man with the quite unhandsome face of a loser. His round potbelly, his puny shoulders, and flabby muscles made the scene even more depressing. Perhaps, I thought, he had only one part of his entire body which did not arouse revulsion: there, at least, perhaps, everything was quite all right and working just fine, and this was what he was now trying to demonstrate to the public.

“Look,” said his gaze to the others. “Do you think of such an impressive man could ever be a success with the ladies? Well now what you say?”

Clearly he wanted to tell those around him that there was something worthwhile and attractive about him too. In that moment my aggressive this taste the stranger was transformed to a benevolent and sympathetic smile. From that moment on I decided that I will always make the effort to perceive the world around me exclusively from a positive point of view.

How should we act so that our “eye be full of light” and so that our inner candle would impart a “bright shining” onto us and us all around? It is important to understand that our subconscious is like a sponge absorbs every thought of ours which becomes a conviction.

These may be our own conclusions, or it may be knowledge which we have received from sources we find competent: from books, from our parents, teachers and so on. It is precisely these views which have settled in our subconscious that create our reality around us, and formulate our own unique relationship to it.

Unlike consciousness, the subconscious cannot judge or evaluate. With equal alacrity it will accept negative and positive assertions and conclusions if positive views predominate in a person's subconscious, then that person tends to be called an optimist, whereas, if negative views predominate, then we have in front of us the typical pessimist. A surfeit of negative thoughts may cause serious physical ailments, depression, psychic disorders, and sometimes specialists are forced to undergo enormous efforts in order to remove harmful negative thoughts and convictions from a person's subconscious. Various different methods are used, and sometimes it is not possible to achieve a good result.

In these cases there may be only one effective method: “one nail drives out another.” Negative thinking may only be driven out from the subconscious by completely thorough and medically consistent positive thinking. However, it is important that the positive thoughts be weightier and stronger than the negative ones burdening the patient at the moment. The subconscious is not capable of handling two diametrically opposed points of view with the same time: one is always obliged to prevail for the other to disappear.

Here we must stress as well that views which have solidly taken root in our subconscious do not only determine our relationship with the surrounding material world, but, however paradoxical this might sound, they actually also create it. Yes -- the convictions that exist deep within us are truly capable of creating miracles. This is why it is written in the Scriptures that “**according to your faith be it unto you.**” (Matthew 9: 29). Our views and convictions literally attract us to the events in material objects that accord with them. It may be hard to believe this, but that's really how it is.

Once I was in St. Petersburg at a meeting with my readers when I met a woman who complained to me of her bitter fate. Chiefly mourned the fact that she lived together with her grown-up daughter in what was actually a not unpleasant two-bedroom apartment, but recently she had just suffered a terrible misfortune: she had been robbed, and the thieves had, as she put it, “taken everything but the kitchen sink.” Their family didn't have much money; she herself received a rather meager disability pension, while her daughter worked in a candy factory. Every summer trying to supplement the family budget, they would move to a dilapidated old hut in the country, and rent out the apartment. But this time the tenants had turned out to be very dishonest, and in moving out they had not only taken their own things, but their landlord's things.

The woman was particularly upset by the theft of a particularly fine set of furniture that had been in the living room which had been her daughter's room. She lamented that I would never have enough money to buy new furniture to replace the things that had just been lost, and now she would be forced to live in a nearly empty apartment into which she was "ashamed to invite decent people in." She also complained about the fact that her daughter was still unmarried, and that "lacking any dowry whatsoever her chances to find someone are nearly nil."

It was clearly striking to me that this woman's own thoughts had caused both of her own negative convictions: first, that she would never have any decent furniture again, and second that her daughter never would be married. So I told this woman that she needed to try and change her views. At first she reacted to my words with distrust and indeed a certain sarcasm. So then I tried a new approach.

I suggested to her that she simply humor me, and fantasize and dream about the new furniture she would've liked: just to play, to visualize, really imagine it in all of its glorious details, including color, shape, design. I asked her to imagine the sound of the cabinet doors slightly scraping when they were opened. I asked her to see her little beams of light playing on the polished surfaces of her new furniture as was the law was waking the dust off of it. In other words, I asked her to imagine to herself that she already had the new furniture. Just daydream, I told her, just imagine it. Can you agree to dream? Well, she agreed to dream, saying darkly that it was the only thing she had left.

Then I decided to make her task of visualization even more difficult. I asked her to imagine that she was looking through the doors of her imaginary fancy wardrobe. Once she saw it, I mentioned that inside of it, she should see the neatly ironed and folded male clothing belonging to her son-in-law. At this, the woman smiled sadly, but promised that OK, she would.

Sometime later reflections I bumped into this woman strolling in the Tauride Gardens of St. Petersburg with a baby carriage. I probably wouldn't even recognized this calm and collected and contented woman in that once hysterically nervous old maid who had so bitterly lamented to me of all her disasters not long ago. But the lady walked up to me first and reminded me of our conversation two years ago. At first she literally overwhelmed me with words of gratitude:

"Thank you so much! I don't know how to thank you! I had wanted to send you an e-mail, but I felt too shy, and thought 'maybe you've already forgotten me' "

"I'm very happy for you. So? What happened? Did you acquire a son-in-law?" I asked pointing in the baby carriage.

"And not only a son-in-law! I did the visualizations, saw in my daydreams everything just as you had said: how his very neatly ironed clothes were hanging in the wardrobe of beautiful antique furniture, and...well, we have it now," she said happily.

"I guess your daughter's husband earns a good living?" I inquired.

"Yes, he makes pretty good money," answered the woman, "but the wardrobe appeared even before he did."

And this is what she told me. One day, suddenly somebody rang her doorbell. When she opened the door, she saw her neighbor from upstairs. Her neighbor was a businessman, who was known in the whole building as quite a successful and wealthy person. At first he deeply apologized for the noise and temporary inconvenience which he feared the repairs he had been doing to his apartment might have caused her, and then without any further superfluous words suggested that she accept as his gift all the furniture from his living room.

The woman told me that she was completely in shock. The main reason was that in her daydreams she had always imagined a wardrobe exactly like her neighbor's furniture, because she had always liked it. And so, in doing my assignment she had imagined herself in her improvisations with furniture exactly like her neighbor's (she had seen his furniture one morning when she went up to his apartment to complain about a small leak into her kitchen).

Well, after completing the repairs to his apartment, the wealthy neighbor had decided to completely redecorate. And being a kind man, and being aware of the difficult material circumstances of his poorer neighbors, he had simply given her as a present of the furniture. Later on the woman confessed to me that in her fantasies more and more in the end she had so lived within them that she had come to believe in the reality of her visualizations, until she was simply convinced, and had no doubts whatsoever that everything would happen just as she had imagined.

Some of you may consider this story to be nothing more than a coincidence, but let us remember that Jesus himself spoke of the power of convictions (faith):

“Verily I say unto you that whosoever shall say unto this mountain be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.” (Mark 11: 23).

If at this moment you are holding this book in your hand then presumably you believe in the Teaching of Christ. In that case, do you really need other proofs? The aphorism about the mountain is probably an allegory. Although -- who knows? For indeed there are people who with their thoughts alone, nearly by using their internal energy are able to move various material objects.

In the Gospels there is one very interesting place where we are told how with the feast Jesus through the power of his thoughts transformed the water into wine. Many of us are likely to regard this still somewhat figurative lightly, assuming that in reality such things are impossible. However, recent scientific discoveries about the properties of ordinary water teach us that this story could well have actually happened.

I can describe one quite well-known incident which took place in 1956 in Southeast Asia in a secret military laboratory for the research and development of weapons of mass destruction. At a secret meeting a group of specialists was discussing the topic of creating a new frightful bacteriological weapon. Suddenly it was necessary to end the meeting early, as all the participants have to be taken to the hospital with symptoms of extreme food poisoning. Those investigating what had happened got nowhere, and were utterly mystified, because other than the water which had been in the pictures on the table, nobody at the meeting had ingested anything. But detailed analysis of the patients finally allowed for only one conclusion: the cause of the poisoning was the

ordinary tap water. The negative thoughts of the developers of these deadly weapons had powerfully affected and had been reflected on the material objects around them -- including the water, which they had drunk at the conference. Well, if it is possible through thoughts to turn water into poison, why can't water be turned into the beverage that brings cheer to life?

When speaking about the magical force of our thoughts and convictions, it is impossible not to linger on the stories related to this in the Gospels themselves, with respect to the miraculous cures and healing powers achieved by Christ. Very often he was asked the question, just how it was that he managed to achieve his miraculous cures. It seems that those who asked him were not particularly attentive, for Jesus himself had never particularly made a secret out of his method: openly stating that it was the belief that he would cure the sick that led to their being cured.

Let us remember how the Scriptures themselves described this phenomenon: **“And behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years came behind him and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: if I may touch his garment I shall be whole. But Jesus turned about, and when he saw her he said: ‘Daughter: the good comfort thy faith has made thee whole.’ (Matthew 9: 20-22). And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying and saying: Thou son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him and Jesus said unto them: ‘Believe ye that I am able to do this?’ They said to him ‘Yea, Lord.’ He touched their eyes saying it according to your faith be it unto you.’ And her eyes were opened.” (Matthew 9: 27-30).**

Unfortunately, there are also examples of the exact opposite. My mother worked in a school and told me how one of their teachers was terrified of dying of cancer. Her fear of the disease was so great that she frequently pictured herself suffering from that terrible disease. I imagine you can guess what happened to her in the end. As the popular wisdom says: “in order for something to happen, you must fear it first.”

Why this happens is not difficult to understand. Fear settles in the subconscious, and then, due to its concentration of thoughts around undesirable imaginary events ultimately causes these fears to materialize in the material plane.

In medicine there is a term “false pregnancy.” Usually such cases are observed with inexperienced young girls who believe that pregnancy is a variable consequence of their first intimate sexual contact. But even women who've already frequently given birth sometimes suffer from symptoms of false pregnancy. What is interesting about it is that all the symptoms of pregnancy appear to be present: the absence of menstruation, the morning sickness, and even swelling of the belly. There have even been cases where women were hospitalized with false pregnancy supposedly as late as the ninth month. The reasons for this phenomenon are not difficult to explain. At first the woman begins to suspect that she is pregnant. Then, as her thoughts acquire strength, they materialize, and as they cross over into the subconscious, they release the biological mechanisms which cause not only changes in behavior but even in the physiological state of the human organism. What's interesting to note about this is that the phenomenon is observed both in older women who are very anxious to conceive a child, and in the very youngest of women who are quite afraid of early pregnancy.

All the above-described stories bear eloquent witness to the power of either negative or positive concentrated thoughts to influence both the material world around us and the world of the person thinking these thoughts, by creating the effects and changes in the world that then reinforce these thoughts. The conclusion seems inevitable: one must absolutely how to think positively, which in turn will lead to positive outlook and convictions -- and positive results.

Skeptics may object: "Sure, it's easy to say, 'just think positively' but just look around at the mess this world is in! Look how much misery there is! See how many unhappy people there are! How can we possibly generate positive thoughts and emotions about that?"

In fact these are all just excuses, which more often than not are derived from our fear or lack of desire to take the necessary steps to truly change our own lives. Yes, indeed, there is much in the world which does not please us, but even sympathy and compassion for others should not become a reason for your own personal suffering. Imagine a surgeon who, out of sympathy for his patient would begin to suffer spiritual pain. If he becomes truly tortured will he be able to operate and carry out the necessary surgery with proper quality? Of course not. He must be strong enough to put these feelings aside, so he can properly do his job of curing us.

If you truly wish to help people, then it is absolutely necessary to develop your own significant spiritual and physical strength. If you wish to help others, you must first hear about your own welfare. I personally do not like all of the images of Christ with the tortured face and melancholy eyes, as if his message were all about suffering. I reject the cliché with which every wise man's portrait bears the obligatory features on his face of being utterly grief stricken.

When I see such pictures of Jesus, I wish I could grab a paintbrush and repaint his image: to portray the man "come eating and drinking, the friend of publicans and sinners." (Luke 7: 34).

It is no secret that the mysterious smile on the face of the Buddha is so attractive. In the East they have always understood that the true sign of wisdom is actually the ability to truly enjoy life. This explains many of the so-called "grotesque" images of the Chinese Buddha, in which we see him portrayed as a fat man, rollicking with belly laughter.

But is it really possible to turn a sullen and gloomy pessimist into a cheerful, bright-eyed, jolly and life-loving optimist? It turns out the answer is yes! Naturally, it takes a bit of work, since the "tearing out" of old views which make it harder for those who hold them to love, and then their replacement by new ones can be a difficult task. But it is achievable and everyone is capable of it.

And so let us boldly begin the struggle for our own happiness under the brazen slogan: "Life is beautiful!" And to ensure that we get results in our efforts, let's once more concentrate on and grasp the main point. Our own thoughts, when they are concentrated, materialize, and then become convictions, which are then further reinforced in our subconscious mind and in turn materialize and go on to form a concrete reality that corresponds with these thoughts. And so, we must learn to use this knowledge in order to achieve the goals we set for ourselves. If we proceed properly we can fundamentally change our lives for the better, and truly forge our own happiness.

But how do we manage not to allow harmful thoughts and beliefs to enter into our subconscious and make it harder for us to live? The answer is simple: by not forming these thoughts, and if they do exist by replacing them with new positive thoughts.

Let us analyze what our negative convictions create. Keep in mind that above all these are our own limiting beliefs. All too often we look at things too superficially and too narrowly. Do you remember the words of Ostap Bender, the main hero of the novels of Ilf and Petrov *The Twelve Chairs* and *The Golden Calf*? “Just because your apartment has been requisitioned, do you really believe this gives you a full understanding of life? And if the fake Chinese vase has been confiscated from you-- how much of a sacrifice is that really?” The main thing is not to get bogged down on the minor trifles of inevitable everyday disappointments. You must accept them not as a tragedy, but just as a challenge, as well as a summons to take positive action. Learn to create positive convictions and beliefs -- even if at the beginning you do not fully believe yourself. Frequently repeat your new thoughts and ideas and reinforce them through repetition in your own feelings.

There is a saying: “no matter how often you say the word honey, your mouth does not taste sweeter.” In fact, this saying is only partially true. While of course, if you will only be pronouncing the word “honey” in an emotionless monotone, without using your conscious mind, then indeed there will be no sweetness to look forward to. On the other hand, it will be quite different if you truly imagine the image of the honey in your mind, imagine and visualize a fresh aromatic golden and very appealing spoonful of honey right there in front of you! And now imagine how with bliss you take the spoon with the honey right into your mouth, how you lick it with pleasure, how it dissolves into a delightfully sweet syrup, redolent with the aroma of wild herbs and flowers... And then continue to meditate on this image further. But now let this thick stream of aromatic delight be further converted into a miraculous lake, fed on both sides by two sweet brooks brimming with honey. And as you try to hold back the stream, to just have a quick taste of it, you find that you can't, and it is as if you were in a real Eastern fairytale. You blissfully surrender and take a great big gulp and swallow... Now if you really did the exercise, can you feel how that honey went down your throat? Well there's nothing surprising in this -- honey is honey after all.

Do not be afraid to visualize even your boldest dreams and fantasies, to see them truly in your mind until you have given them the form of conviction. In this way you will not only change the quality of your life, but even your own appearance. It is now well known that our organism reacts equally to both real and imagined objects, events, and situations. In this connection it makes sense to relate an interesting experiment that was carried out on professional bodybuilders. All the participants of the experiment were divided into three groups.

The first group, which was the control group, continued to receive its normal training without change. The second group completely ceased all training, and the third group instead of training with help to visualize its training and growth of its muscles. As you might expect the first group was observed to have steady growth of its muscle mass, and the second group experienced somewhat of a decline in its strength. However the research on the third group yielded astounding results: their bodies looked as if they had been training intensively, and indeed their muscle mass had increased on average by 20% more than those in the first control group who had actually physically kept up their training.

Knowledge of how the human mind works helped Dr. Mirzakarim Norbekov to create a rather effective system for “Correcting the Human Figure.” The essence of his system is to visualize and work on your body just the way a sculptor visualizes and shapes the body he is sculpting. Look at your body as if you were creating it, cut out those parts you want to cut out, and add where you wish to add...This method is also based on working with subconscious thoughts and desires, and with sufficient persistence it achieves excellent results.

Human beings are great creators. We are capable of overcoming any obstacles and difficulties, and of making our lives exactly the way we want them to be. If we will look at our world with truly clear eyes, we will perceive that life is in truth utterly beautiful. Consider that all the negative and dark moments in life exist solely in order to lend proper contrast and emphasis to its positive moments of light. And if you take a philosophical approach towards life, you will soon confirm for yourselves, that this is indeed the case.

Therefore, make the right choice. After all, if you go out into nature on a picnic, you will most probably not choose to spread out your tablecloth in a swampy and buggy bog or a dank and muddy puddle or dirty ditch, but will instead probably pick a beautiful sunny green field where flowers are blooming. In just the same way, learn to leave behind your pessimistic outlook that life is hard and difficult and fruitless and full of danger, and abandon your limiting belief that we live in awful times etc. Instead, look at life in every way as a remarkable and captivating adventure.

Indeed, a wise man even regards death as nothing more than his most interesting voyage. So replace your negative views with positive ones. After multiple repetitions and visualizations, start to give force to your feelings about your dreams. This force may require nurturing until it is capable of driving out from your subconscious the old negative thoughts that have interfered in your ability to live to the fullest. But the main thing is to regularly do such exercises at least several minutes a day. It is predicted that the technique will be useful and effective to perform just before going to sleep. At first you may not even probably the truthfulness of your new affirmations. Very well, then just treat them as dreams, but still—keep on practicing visualizing them no matter what. If you will remain persistent, you will soon discover from your own personal experience how real it is that dreams come true, and if you truly want and can imagine something happening, then it is bound to happen.

Have you ever wondered why little children are always so cheerful and full of life? The answer is simple: they have not yet had time to create negative views in their subconscious. Just so, if you wish to prolong your own youth, the bubble you must remain young in spirit, and teach yourself once more to look at the world with the clear eyes of a child exactly as you choose to before. It is not in vain that Jesus taught us that unless we become like little children we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The great American president Franklin Delano Roosevelt was known for his exceptional capacity for work. Asked how his age he managed to do it, he replied that the reason was that he always got a good night’s sleep. Roosevelt said that every night before going to sleep, he would imagine himself as a child once more, visiting in his mind his favorite places in childhood, talking to his playmates, and then finally sliding down a big hill on an old sled. In his own words, before the sled hit the bottom of the hill he would already be asleep like a little baby.

I believe that Roosevelt was telling the truth: after all nothing quite so restores the strength is the peaceful sleep of a child.

Once a friend of mine who works as a neuro-pathologist asked me if I would be willing to speak to one of his most difficult patients with whom he was having no success and dragging her out of her severely depressed state. I agreed to do it. Olga, as the patient was called, had a whole host of other ailments in addition to her nervous condition. She looked utterly exhausted; and although she was just 54 years old she seemed to be a complete wreck at the very edge of her tether. No hope was held out for her cure. As she herself said, her only dream was a painless death as soon as possible. She felt completely alone: her husband had abandoned her, her daughter lived in another country, and her friends and relatives had so tired of her constant complaining that they turned away from. Due to her depression and illnesses, she had been forced to quit her job and she was literally living in poverty. Her complaints of suffering, of ill health, of the fickleness of men, and lack of caring and love of her friends, and in sum, of her entirely miserable living circumstances would be the sole theme of her entire conversation. No matter how hard I tried to seek out even the slightest positive views from her, none could be elicited. She just didn't have any. I suggested to her that the way out for completely hopeless situation would be through the replacement of negative convictions by positive ones. She listened to me quite attentively, as I explained the fundamental theory and practice of this method, and even gave examples, but in the end she flatly declared that none of this would work for. Her opinion was that this method might perhaps work on people whose circumstances were not in such a miserable state as hers. But for her? No way!

“I have absolutely nothing to hope for,” she said to me. “My illnesses will soon completely finish me off. The doctors are powerless to help me.”

I then suggested that she tried a method of dealing with her ailments by herself -- a very interesting method, which had been taught to me by a yogi. Now it is my pleasure to teach the same method to all of you who wish to learn it.

In your imagination you must imagine a warm and supple balloon. Next you must imagine this balloon inside of you, imagine how it is warming whatever organ of yours happens to be ill. Feel how this balloon softly moves from place to place in your body. Feel it massage and heal you. To wherever there is a problem, feel that balloon bringing a fresh flow of warm, healing, and strength --right to the area or organ that is sick. Once you notice that this balloon, having entered into and encompassed the part of your body that has the illness, has suddenly become gray, then it is the time to throw out this balloon and replace it with a new fresh one. Feel free to do this procedure up to three times in one session.

“Do you really think it could work?” My pessimist asked me this, wracked with doubt.

I answered that it would only work if she really did the work herself, repeating the affirmations that I would give her very often--often enough, at least, until she truly began to believe them on a subconscious level. And I instructed her that if she did really do the work, if she really put in the time and effort to repeat to herself every day “my health is getting better every single day,” then the effect would be guaranteed.

“All right,” she said a profound sigh, “I’ll try it, since nothing else works anyway.”

Towards the end of our long session, I was able to teach her to work on several positive affirmations. However, I was nervous about her, and feared that Olga would not really engage in the practice. And so I gave her my address and instructed her to send me a written report about her progress every month. Her first letter to me was very long indeed, and it took me quite a bit of time to decipher her nervous scrawl. But from her letter I understood that she had indeed begun to study properly. After that her letters did keep coming, but I will be honest and admit that I did not spend the time needed trying to decipher them again. And then one day about a year after we had first met I received a big thick envelope containing just two pictures. The first one was Olga, looking much happier, fresher, and younger, and seated at the wheel of what looked like a new car.

In the second one she was posed together with a mature but extremely handsome and charming looking man in front of the great pyramids of Egypt. In order to satisfy my curiosity, I now had to go back to the old letters and find out what it was that they said. I was quite delighted to find out that her regular exercises and practice of the methods that I had suggested to her had achieved a positive result: her sicknesses and her depression had disappeared, she had once more found work that she enjoyed, and she was now living a full and happy life. Indeed she now even had a boyfriend with whom she had recently taken a vacation in Egypt. I was particularly pleased to find out that Olga now was the proud owner of a new small passenger car; what pleased me the most about it was the story of how she had used the same method that I had taught her to visualize and then achieve her lifelong dream. All this bore witness to the fact that Olga was no longer the miserable and incurable patient of a neuro-pathologist, but now was a happy and decisive businesswoman. Indeed, having sold her old apartment so haunted by unhappy memories, she had not only acquired a new fully furnished contemporary studio, but also a very pleasant little Toyota. I hope that this story may stimulate even the most desperate pessimists to activity.

Begin your own personal program now for the achievement of your goals. Remember that there truly are no hopeless situations in this life. Never give up, never just throw up your hands and sink into despair. Never be envious, never compare yourself unfavorably to others. The truth is you cannot be compared to others since all of you, each and every one, are a unique individual, each created by That Which Abides, and needed by That which Abides, who wishes you nothing but good. Do not resist that limitless abundance and goodness with your doubts and your inactivity. Be certain and believe in abundance and goodness. Be certain that somewhere in a package gathering dust are lovely wrapped gifts that are meant just for you, and you will receive them if you believe you will.

In the Struggle for happiness, more often than not people just try to change their outer circumstances. But this as a general rule does not work, and does not achieve the desired results. In order to obtain the success you need, first and foremost you need to change inside, and the main thing for inner change is positive thinking. You must learn to truly feel yourself to be happy, and then you will indeed be happy.

Not in vain did the great thinker and humanist St. Thomas More declare: “If you wish to be successful, you must look as if you are already successful.” And how do we do this? Naturally you must look the part. But this is not enough.

Like an actor steeping himself or herself fully in the system of Stanislavsky, you must truly live the part, you must truly feel that you are successful person -- however, unlike the actor, you must not come out of this role. I want to illustrate this with a small excerpt from a play.

HAROLD

You know, I used to be just like you. All the time I wanted to find my happiness, but I could never do it. Sometimes it would seem to be just nearby, just grazing my fingertips, but it would always slide right through my fingers. And yet I tried and tried, stubbornly chasing after it, firmly believing that one day in the end I would absolutely find it.

VICTORIA

Well? And what happened in the end?

HAROLD

Everyone began to laugh at my fruitless efforts, and making fun of me, they would say: "So have you found your happiness yet? If you ever do, make sure you bring it to us and show us!"

VICTORIA

Well? And what happened after that?

HAROLD

I was so annoyed at them that I began to pretend that I had already found it.

VICTORIA

How did you do that?

HAROLD

I simply began to look and act as if I already had found my happiness, as if there were already so much joy in my life that I had no place even to get rid of it, so abundant was my joy.

VICTORIA

I'm not sure I quite understand.

HAROLD

Well, if you have so much of something that you don't know what to do with it, what would you do with it?

VICTORIA

I don't know... I guess I'd probably share with someone.

HAROLD

Indeed. And just so, I began to imagine myself as a very happy person, and in order to make sure that everyone else believed me, I shared everything I had, or to put it even more simply, gave of myself as much as I could, trying to make others around me happy.

VICTORIA

And what happened?

HAROLD

A miracle! In the end I myself believe that my own fantasy. If before I had only chased after happiness, asking all the time of it: "Where are you? Where are you?" it now seemed that happiness was chasing me all the time, and there was no place even for me to hide from it. Happiness is truly hunting me down, following me, and if I tried to duck away, it would follow close by, asking: "Where are you, Harold?"

VICTORIA

Amazing! But do you really think everyone can do that?

HAROLD

Absolutely anyone!

We should always remember the ancient wisdom the teachers that are mind can be our friend or enemy. Let us learn to use the great power of our subconscious, and begin to treat it as our great helper and ally in achieving all our desires. Do not postpone or procrastinate this truly great experiment, and instead begin it right from tomorrow morning.

"Awake and sing! Awake and sing! And try for once in this life not to wipe clean the smile from your opened eyes. Perhaps Success is capricious, and chooses only those who are capable of laughing themselves. Awake and sing, go to sleep and sing, sing in your dreams, awake, and sing!"

2. LOVE

“Love thy neighbor as thyself.”

(Matthew 22: 37, Mark 12:31, Luke 10: 27)

In the texts of the New Testament, Christ emphasized this commandment as being by far the most important. And if we remember this place in the Scriptures, often in our heart of hearts we reproach ourselves. Because in truth we have not really learn how to love our neighbor. And have we really thought sufficiently about these words of the Teacher? Why is it that he asked us to love our neighbors **as we love ourselves?** The answer to this question is actually quite simple: in order to really love anyone else, you must first and foremost learn how to love yourself. In other words. The more that you truly love yourself, the more you will truly be capable of love for your neighbor.

Of course, it is also essential that your love for yourself not acquire the flavor of “I am better than everyone else.”

You may object, “but who amongst us does not love themselves?”

In fact, you should not confuse ordinary concern for everyday life with love. These are quite different things. It is quite common for us to seek out in ourselves all the negative factors. More often than not we are unhappy with ourselves (our appearance, our character, our predilections, and so on). But if you do not love your inner and your outer characteristics how can you truly say that you love yourself? You must learn to love yourself not only in the narrowest meaning of this word, but in the most broad and far-reaching possible understanding of yourself as a unique and irreplaceable representative of the Creator.

Think about it for a second: there has never been and there will never be another person just like you. The Creator has created you, watches over you, and is waiting for you to develop yourself into who you truly are. If some humanoid aliens were to land here on Earth, I am utterly convinced that they would admire each and every one of the seven and a half billion human inhabitants of the planet. Moving from each human to the next, they would cry out to each other with joyous enthusiasm: “Look! Look at a single one of them is alike! How different they are from us, who were old design and assemble by just one plan. Just look at them all -- what a miracle! What a fabulous display of nature! What a variety of forms and inner structures! I imagine it must be so interesting and joyful for each of them to relate to each other! No doubts we have landed on a very happy planet!”

The poor aliens of course would have somewhat rushed to their conclusions, but surely you can agree that joy and wonder could and should be the foundation for relationships between all people on this planet. For, indeed, that is the intention and the plan of our Creator. The main reason for the fact that this original program is not working is the absence of love in the world. Of that love for others as ourselves that Jesus was talking about.

The roots of the problem lies in the fact that people have still not learned how to really love themselves, therefore as a consequence are not capable of loving others. It is not difficult to explain the relationship between these factors. For if you truly love yourself, and if you truly comprehend your own uniqueness and individuality, then it is simply impossible not to understand that all other people are also endowed with these very same characteristics as you have, therefore they too are deserving of the exact same measure of your dignity and respect and love.

I can already imagine the objections: “but there are so many scoundrels in this world! How can you possibly respect them, let alone love them?”

And in fact if we must be completely honest, then we must admit that we too are hardly angels, therefore there may be some quite serious obstacles to truly loving our own selves. Let us look more deeply at this problem.

Omar Khaiyyam, perhaps said it better than anyone:

In the glass of the world man has many a face
One is hideous foul, while another’s pure grace.

And this is truly the case: many of your positive qualities are balanced out by contrasting negative qualities. It's no wonder that is the saying goes: “from love to hate is but one step.” This is a basic law, the “Law of Unity and of the Struggle of the Polarities,” which seems, since quite ancient times to have been considered the nucleus of all dialectics. The only thing we can do is to accept our human nature just as it is. We will soon return to Unity or the unification of the polarities, but right now let us focus on the issue of their struggle. There is a great legacy we have received from our ancestors that has been preserved in an amazing sculptural ensemble which I once had the great good fortune to observe, while visiting one of the most ancient temples of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The temple complex of Angkor Wat is well known today, and is indeed considered by some to be the eighth wonder of the world. The pathway to one of the most magnificent structures at that site winds along the long road, along whose both sides there are ancient stone carvings standing: 54 Angels stand on the right, and exactly 54 Demons stand opposite on the left. These Angels and Demons are each figuratively trying to drag an enormous serpent which symbolizes life onto their side of the road. But from the momentary victory of one side or the other it appears the serpent vomits.

Legend tells that once the many faced God Vishnu whose head crowns the great wide gates of the Temple drank this serpent’s vomit, and now he ceaselessly keeps watch over the serpent, trying to ensure that the balance between the Angels and Demons is never spoiled. This sculptural composition appears to be the key to the entrance to the Temple. If a human does yet not understand the wisdom represented by these sculptures along the way, so, in the understanding of our ancestors, that human being had no business entering the Temple in the first place.

I asked a provocative question to the local tour guide showing me around:

“What would happen if we got rid of the 54 Demons?”

Our guide without the least bit of hesitation answered that in this case the Angels would split in half and would once again be pulling the serpent in different directions. And once again the energies would be equal: 27 Angels would be pulling one way and 27 New Demons would be pulling the serpent in the opposite direction. He was quite correct of course, and his words reminded me of the wise old saying:

“If you kill the Dragon, you become the Dragon yourself.”

The question of the battle of good and evil, and whether it is possible to receive pure good in distilled form, as it were, to this day is quite a heated controversy. Let us do a bit of reasoning on this theme as well. Imagine if we tried to remove from the south pole of a magnet a small portion of that south. It doesn't work! That fragment now becomes a small but complete new magnet, complete with a southern and northern pole. But although this magnet will be complete, its strength will not be very great. Just in the same way, the 27 Angels will have at least twice less strength, and so will the 27 new Demons.

We are all familiar with the famous aphorism of Christ: “whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn the other also.” (Matthew 5: 39). There is no question that what he is referring to here is nonresistance to evil. This phrase has many different meanings, but what I think Jesus really had in mind was the pointlessness and even the harm you can do by fighting with your own inner energies which you consider to be negative. Does it make sense to suppress or destroy your own energies when in the end they are nothing more than a source from which we draw our strength to live our lives? As we learned in school, and as we all know again from reading this book, energies are capable of transferring from one form into another. I have already told the small story of how my own rage transformed within just a few seconds into love and compassion when I happened to be on the beach. Jesus put this paradox into a very apt parable:

"Blessed is the lion which becomes man when consumed by man; and cursed is the man whom the lion consumes, and the lion becomes man." (Thomas, 7). Here what he was saying was that even the negative energies (the lion) are a blessing, if only you learn to govern them properly, and do not allow them to take possession of the human.

Suppression of energy does not do any good, and only causes physical and psychological trauma, but it does not help another person, and that is an established fact. What will happen to the negative energy in a person who suddenly declares war on it? According to the law of conservation, it cannot simply disappear without trace. And since a great deal of attention is being concentrated upon it in an effort to exterminate it, it will re-materialize in an absolutely unnecessary and harmful form.

I remember a scene from the film “Thieves at Law,” where one of the main characters suddenly writhes in pain from a heart attack brought about as a result of suppressing his own rage. Trying to calm down the others around him, he says: “Never mind, it's all right -- it's always this way when you wanted to kill but did not kill.”

In order not to harm your own organism, you need to find a way to allow energy to freely flow either in its initial form, or in a transformed manner, but under no circumstances must you try to suppress it or even worse annihilate it. Think of how charming an angry baby is-- how even when in range the baby's eyes sparkle. Within a few minutes, that same baby will be laughing and smiling, and will not even remember that it was upset.

I am not urging that you let all your rage out on other people; after all, we are no longer babies. But I am saying that in addition to suppression, there is a far more effective way to handle your own inner potential. Because we all have an absolutely unique capability to transform our own negative energy into positive energy. And by allowing it to flow freely, instead of causing harm, we can bring real good to ourselves and those around us.

But Jesus goes even further. He tells us that the duality of human nature is our main obstacle on our path to the Kingdom of God, and therefore suggests that we unify and harmonize all our internal contradictions, including all our masculine and feminine impulses (Yang and Yin).

"When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and when you fashion eyes in the place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness; then will you enter the kingdom." (Thomas, 22).

What is it that will truly take place if we can unify the contradictory poles of human nature: good and evil, fear and courage, selflessness and generosity, love and hatred? If all of these utterly contradictory qualities of human nature can be unified in one, we achieve the **"Great Emptiness"** acclaimed by the Buddha -- or what Jesus referred to his own words as being "poor in spirit."

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5: 3.

How many different ways the commentators have tried to make sense of these words! What do they really mean? Why is it that God is so often portrayed as having many faces? I hear it is very important to understand, that it is not only in a superficial manner that God has many faces, but that the opposite is also true -- out of all the many contradictory faces deep inside God is all one, and all of these faces are unified into just one.

And now let us try to understand what this unified image of divinity could be. A good analogy would be the rainbow. In truth, all of its many divisions and shades and colors are really different elements of its one white light. A normal ray of sunlight, divided by prismatic effect in the many different colors, is creating this unique and beautiful natural phenomena. But if we were to unify all the different colors together again, then again we will have one ray of sunlight, that is to say clear white light, which conceals within itself and the spectrum of numberless colorful forms. Human nature is just the same way, with a numberless range of different faces, which if unified together once more form pure light or "emptiness."

This is why Jesus says of a person: “if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness,” but “if he is empty, he will be filled with light.” (Thomas, 61). It is no accident that in the Eastern religions, the most holy men are known as “the enlightened ones.” Indeed, the very word Nirvana (a state of complete contentment and spiritual bliss) means that a person is no longer divided into contradictory inner polarities that tear him or her apart. And what kind of person is it who has been able to unify his or her own inner polarities and find within the “**Great Emptiness**” which in fact constitutes “**Everything**”? In the East, such a person is known as the Buddha. But in Christianity, such person has become like Christ.

In connection with this, but just look at yet another fragment from the Gospels.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like." Simon Peter said to him, "You are like a righteous angel." Matthew said to him, "You are like a wise philosopher." Thomas said to him, "Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like." Jesus said, "I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out."

And he took him and withdrew and told him three things. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?" Thomas said to them, "If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up."

(Thomas, 13).

Many even of the apostles did not understand that in describing such people like Jesus, normal earthly comparisons and epithets are simply inadequate. One cannot say that he is an angel of justice or a wise philosopher, that he is good, that he is bad, that he is kind, or that he is wicked, and so on. **He is Nothingness. He is Everything. He is an illusion. He is Higher Truth. He is All. He is God!** And he is asking us all to become just like him. I think I can guess what those three things were that Jesus said to Thomas. Probably they were something along the lines of: “only you know me.”

In one of the ancient monasteries there used to be a tradition: each and all of the novice monks who had just come to the monastery had a wooden carved tablet hung around their neck. On one side of the tablet was written “Don't believe me -- I'm a good person.” On the other side of the tablet was written “Don't believe me -- I'm a bad person.”

Whenever any novice monk said anything critical about another person, he was obligated to turn the tablet so that its inscription said: written “Don't believe me -- I'm a bad person.” On the other hand, whenever he was saying anything positive and or praising the person he was speaking to, his duty was to turn the tablet around so the message would be just the opposite. If the teaching was going well, however, one day that day would come when the novice would simply come to his teacher to return the wooden tablet.

“I don't need it anymore,” he would say, “for I am no longer either good or bad.”

Each of us has the power to decide how we should act, either by following the path of the ordinary reasonable person, transforming negative energy into positive energy, or to choose the path of the saint, and capable of completely unifying all internal polarities into one. The key is to remember and firmly know as you begin your journey that we are all created “in God’s own image” and therefore, as we said earlier, you yourselves are reflections of the many faced and many faceted world all of which form one God. And if you have truly understood the Law of Unity and the Struggle between the Polarities, then you should easily understand that you need to treat the demons within your soul as carefully and respectfully as you do your own angels. Because I wish to stress one more time, both are part of your inner energies, from which you take all your source power for life.

Remember, **“blessed is the lion which becomes man when consumed by man.”** However, you should not forget that, unless you are careful, it is also possible that the man will be consumed by a lion -- and cursed. In order to ensure that this never happens you need to become the lion tamer of your own inner wild beast. I remember once seeing a poster in India. It displayed a gray haired yogi who was surfing on a surfboard through the howling and wild ocean waves. Underneath the image were the words: “I can’t stop the waves, but I can ride them.’

We have been examining these questions so painstakingly in order that we might learn how to understand, value, and love our “inner tuning” -- the secret mechanism of the apogee of living nature -- the human being. Once we know our “instruction manual” for the proper employment of this unique invention of the Creator which is known as the teachings of Christ, each of us can obtain the most fabulous results, and “not tasting of death, enter the Kingdom of God.’

We have been speaking just now mainly about the inner components of human nature. But it is also true that people “judge a book by its cover,” and the love in initially may be founded on outward appearances and impressions. It would therefore be incorrect on our part to avoid the discussion of human appearances. It is of course true that how we look in many ways defines our own relationship to ourselves, as well as the relationships of others to ourselves.

It is well known that the fashion for the human figure and even for the human face changes quite a lot from century to century. But whatever the criteria may be over time, we can still assert with confidence that our outer attractiveness is principally drawn by our inner beauty. Our inner beauty, working together with the creative design capabilities of each person (clothing, hairdo, etc.) Are what form our individual appearance. I assure you that our natural qualities are not as important as we like to believe. Quite often it's possible to meet a woman whose face or figure is quite far from the ideal of perfection, and yet her charm and attractiveness draw other people to her like a magnet. Her self-confidence, good humor, and kindness make her the favorite in any company, and as a rule women like that never face a shortage of admiring men around them. “How ugly she is!’ Some (a few) exclaim this with envy. But “how charming she is!’ Most exclaim this with joy. And this takes place when that person lives in harmony with his or her inner world, understanding and feeling compassion for others and for oneself.

Unfortunately, very often we are more inclined to notice our own faults and flaws and failures, and prefer to focus on those, rather than the notice our own good points in our successes. It would be better if we were to revise this habit in our life. Even if your affairs at the present time are not in the shape you would like them to be in, do not indulge in self-hatred or self despair.

Do think that you have absolutely nothing to be proud of, and do not say that you have “wasted tons of time completely in vain.” In fact, if you managed to draw the right conclusions from what you've gone through, then a better way of looking at it is to say that you have acquired priceless experience -- and that's marvelous. Now you will never repeat these mistakes again. And if you do not despair or simply give up, but act with courage and optimism, you have every chance to achieve real success.

If you let you truly have limitless possibilities. That which abides, Our Creator, is giving you all that you need for a happy life. Remember, there doubtless were victories in your life, so praise yourself even for the least or seemingly most insignificant achievements.

Think of yourself and truly feel that you are successful person, worthy of love and respect. Keep thinking this and you will become convinced that this is indeed the case. Don't be shy. Go out of your way to notice all your positive qualities, and your opportunities.

For example:

I am gregarious.
I dress with good taste.
I am generous.
I help people.
I love animals.
I have many creative talents.
I am not resentful.
I am a good parent.
I am interesting to talk to.
I am kind and benevolent.
I am decisive.
I get things done always.
I am erudite.
I know a lot about art.

Tell yourself: “yes I can!” And go ahead and list for yourself everything you truly can do.

For example:

I can sign up for a sporting activity
I can become a vegetarian.
I can join a health club.
I can practice yoga.
I can travel to any country.
I can learn a foreign language.
I can master a new profession.
I can change my job.
I can start a new business.
I can repair my apartment.
I can learn to cook.

I can write an interesting short story.
I can learn to play the guitar.
I can master surfing.

Continually place positive convictions into your consciousness. Let those positive convictions be founded on similar affirmations, and in that case your love for yourself as for your neighbor will be just as Christ intended!

Every person is worthy of love and must understand this. And we must comprehend that if God created us, and if He loves us, then we simply do not have the right not to love ourselves. Otherwise, it is as if we doubt the correctness and the wisdom of our Creator.

3. RELATIONSHIPS

“All things whatsoever ye would that men would do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law, and the prophets.”

(Matthew 7: 12)

It is the Golden Rule: “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” But more often than not we treat these words of Christ as if they were simply a rule of good manners or etiquette. It makes sense and is quite logical that we should treat people in the same way with it we want them to treat us. And yet underneath the outer simplicity of this phrase of our Teacher, a profound inner message is hidden.

The quality of our relationships with each other influences our lives in the most direct way possible. What do we want from the people around us? Naturally, we want them to treat us with sincere respect and love, we try to do everything we can to make this the case -- at least in theory. Trumpeting our own virtues and carefully concealing flaws, we try to display ourselves in the very best possible light. We carefully watch our mentors. We tell stories from our life -- those stories in which we think we do look dignified or noble or virtuous. And all of this is simply in order to win over the sympathy of those around us. And undoubtedly, such behavior may even achieve a certain effect.

However, it is also true that sometimes such self promoting while hiding our true feelings about ourselves can cause irritation in other people, and may even lead to the exact opposite effect from the one desired. In order to create truly warm and friendly relationships PR is not the main thing at all. Far more important is a truly kind and benevolent attitude towards others.

When I was a student I used to rent a room in a very densely populated communal apartment. My neighbors were very friendly simple people, and I for my part was very pleased that I had found a decent and inexpensive place to live. But I was warned that there was a woman in the room in the back of the apartment right near the “backdoor exit” with whom any association should at all cost be avoided. Vera Nikitichna was her name, and the neighbors considered her to be their common misfortune. “Witch” and “devil in human form” -- these were by far not the worst things I heard said about the mysterious stranger in whose company I was living.

Naturally I was curious to see this wonder of nature for myself, but for a long time no chance presented itself. The apartment in which I was living was generally an amiable place, and usually in the evenings all the housewives would gather in the kitchen at about the same time to prepare dinner for their families while passing the time in innocent conversation.

One day I also happen to be in the kitchen at this time.

“Hmph! Hmph!” Svetlana, a young teacher, interrupted her own monologue to snort loudly. She had been the first to hear the shuffling feet in the corridor giving off the unmistakable signs of approaching danger. Everyone sighed deeply, ceased talking and lost themselves in their pots and frying pans. I turned around and finally saw the dreaded neighbor, the woman whom everyone was so afraid of, whom everyone so amiably detested (that is not too strong a word).

A gray-haired elderly woman entered the kitchen in a black satin dressing robe -- the kind which at that time was given the cleaning ladies in state enterprises. There certainly was something most dread and terrible about her aspect. Her gaze was powerful and independent. Not bothering to say hello to anyone, the old lady walked over to the communal telephone which was hanging on the wall, picked up the receiver and started to dial a number.

About a minute later I could already hear her unhappy voice. It seemed that she was talking with a friend of hers. The theme of her conversation was her woeful life: what dreadful times we were living through! What horrible people that were all around! (Indeed, her evidence of the disgusting people all around her consisted of the other inhabitants of our apartment. Suffice to say, without the slightest courtesy, loud and clear, Vera Nikitichna picked apart the many flaws of our neighbors right before their very eyes.

Svetlana in the end couldn't stand it anymore. She lowered the flame on her pot and walked out of the kitchen in a very irritated manner. Soon all the others followed her example, and the kitchen rapidly emptied. Vera finished her telephone conversation, and took a packet of very pungent cheap “Belomor” Soviet filterless rolled tobacco cigarettes (the strongest in the world), lit a cigarette, then walked past me towards the window.

“Hello, grandmother,” I said to her as softly as I could.

“Hello, grandfather,” she answered sarcastically, as she perched by the windowsill.

“No, really! Are these really even human beings? There are no people left, at least none of the kind of people there used to be!”

As she whiffed her acrid cigarette, I remembered some lines from a poem by Barkov.

The men and women all are gone;
What's left are only “people”...

As I did so, I smiled.

“Yet another humorist,” scowled the grandmother. “Is not what I'm saying absolutely correct?”

It was easy to understand why my neighbors had fled from the kitchen. Vera Nikitichna finished her cigarette and left, not before glaring at me with one final scowl. The other housewives came back to the kitchen, and soon everything was just as it had been.

The next day, I happened to be washing the teacups when the “witch” appeared again in the kitchen. Her appearance had not changed in the least since last evening; she was still wearing the same black work robe, and she was still scowling. She didn't telephone anybody, perhaps because at this time I happened to be the only person besides her in the room. She lit another cigarette and went to the open window.

“There are so many people in this apartment, yet nobody bothers to wash the windows! Ai, ai, ai! You call these people?” She looked at me and glared.

“No light comes through these windowpanes! The glass is completely blackened with dirt! But what do they care?”

Thick clouds of smoke emerged from her, as she seemed to be literally steaming with rage. Considering my previous failure in trying to make friends with our neighbor, I kept silent.

“Well? You’re the new guy here. What do you think? Isn't it ridiculously dark in here?”

She stared at me ominously, and it was clear that I would have to answer. At this I decided to try a new tactic.

“Well it certainly was rather dark in here,” I said with a serious face, “but then you entered, and then it was as if suddenly there was more light in the room!”

It was clear that my neighbor had certainly not expected such an answer.

“What on earth are you talking about?” Her tone was reproachful, until I caught a glimpse of a smile passing over her face.

“No, Vera Nikitchna, I am not joking at all! I mean it!” I continued.

“Don't be ridiculous!” The gloomy Queen of the Night was already beaming from ear to ear.

“And you know what? Smoking happens to suit you,” I continued the attack. “Indeed, those filterless pungent Belomor rolled tobacco cigarettes are just the very thing for you. Normal cigarettes would certainly not be right for you at all. Nope—you need the real deal. It's easy to see immediately that you have good taste and you know what's what!”

Grandma Vera looked at her reflection in the dirty glass of the window, and stooped over a bit to brush back her hair. From then on the conversation became quite friendly. Vera Nikitchna told me about her very complicated and yet extremely interesting life. And then she complained that her neighbors didn't like her for some reason.

I tried to convince her that this wasn't the case. I said that in fact it wasn't true that people didn't like her. Instead everybody understood that she was a woman who had suffered deeply, a woman of great emotional power, and so, not wishing to stir things up and cause pain, they were just a little bit afraid of her. As the conversation continued, I was able to observe how Vera's face literally became lighter and lighter.

The next day Svetlana was baking a very delicious pie. With great difficulty I was able to convince her to give just a small piece of her warm pie to the "old hag" whom so thoroughly detested. What followed was indescribably remarkable. I must admit, I myself had not expected anything like this amazing effect. Vera burst into tears, everyone hugged everyone else, and asked everyone else for forgiveness.

From all the kind words and warm sentiments that were expressed it actually became warmer in the room, and perhaps even in the world. I had the impression that the snow outside the window was beginning to melt. From that day on a new life began in our apartment. When Svetlana's young baby girl got sick, she no longer needed to take a full day off to take care of her girl. Vera Nikitichna was delighted to volunteer for the job of doting nanny. In greeting the New Year, the whole apartment sat down together in one big table, like one family. And you wouldn't have recognized her grandmother dressed up in a beautiful dress and with a lovely new coiffure. Her face was full of color, and the wrinkles in it had smoothed into smiles. Her eyes were beaming. In the space of just a month she looked a full ten years younger at least, and had indeed transformed into quite an attractive woman. Everyone agreed that never had this apartment known such a delightful and happy celebration of the New Year.

Ever since then, I have firmly understood, and confirmed from first-hand experience, that we all have the unique ability to help each other and make each other happy. The main thing is that in fact we practically don't have to do anything, and we also risk almost nothing. The only thing we need is good intentions.

Other people will definitely value your good intentions, but I can promise you that the benefits you will reap from the benevolence you offer others is far greater than whatever efforts it may cost you.

Why is it that sometimes our relationships with certain people are always characterized by hostility? Generally the main reason for this are our own negative views, founded on our own convictions that we are dealing with it basically bad person. And what causes such convictions? Often -- nothing more than petty quarrels, a minor irritation which sparks a conflagration of hatred. We ceased to notice the good qualities, and instead focus more attention on those qualities in the other person which we dislike. But as we focus more and more on the negative qualities, then through our own negative thoughts we materialize them. And furthermore, we create yet another new and completely unnecessary -- indeed, harmful -- new conviction, which will be very hard for us to get rid of later. And even if some time later we recognize that we were wrong, our own pride often interferes, and does not let us openly acknowledge this fact and apologize.

Yet it is not necessary to apologize in order to fix relationships. It turns out that it is quite easy to “break the ice,” to give your imagined enemy a piece of warm pie, or, perhaps just to call on the telephone and ask what the capital of Guatemala is, or when the clocks will be changed to wintertime, giving off the impression that it is urgently needed information. A wise person understands that, for all our differences, we are really all just one-- just one organism.

Not only do our energy fields intermesh, but they have a tendency to penetrate from one of us to the other. Therefore, if we do good to other people we truly do it's no less good to our own selves. There is no reason whatsoever to doubt the words of Christ: **“Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.”** (Mark 4: 24)

But it is not only our actions that influence others and their attitudes towards us. Even our own personal thoughts with respect to other people can seriously influence them. You have a real possibility of helping people not only by means of direct participation in their personal life and fate, but also by your positive wishes for them, or to put it another way, by your goodwill and benevolence.

I do hope that by now you have learned not to allow negative thoughts against yourself, and to treat yourself with love and respect. If you want others to treat you in the same way, then by all means do not allow negative opinions to influence your attitudes towards them. Even if someone has exhibited ill will or hostility towards you, try as best as you can to avoid conflict, and attempt to analyze the situation. Very often a person's aggression is caused by some inner discomfort or problems. In this case the person deserves not your retaliatory hostility, but your compassion. Try and calmly answer the person who has offended you making it clear that perhaps that person was a bit hasty. You can also try a disarming complement, saying, perhaps, how sexy a person looks when enraged. I'm certain that this will at least lighten the atmosphere. Also show interest in the other person's life and problems, and offer your help, at least with a sympathetic word or piece of good advice. If someone feels your sincere care and desire to help with whatever problems have arisen, there is no doubt that that will change that person's attitude towards you.

Help that person to feel more confidence and inner energy, and hope that person feel that whatever temporary problems have arisen are soluble. Teach that person how to transform negative thoughts into positive ones, and how to form positive views and convictions. But even this is not truly necessary. It is quite enough just not to keep resentment in your heart, to forgive, to wish someone well, to believe that your neighbor will be able to fix whatever troubles have arisen - and to sincerely desire this yourself. Even if your neighbor does not guess at your own good wishes and benevolence, there will nonetheless be a positive effect, and the conflict between the two of you will be resolved.

Any doctor can tell you that a crucial element of the healing process is when the patient believes that the medicine will actually effect a cure. However, by far not every doctor truly understands the degree to which, in order to achieve the maximum desired effect, then the doctor too must also believe in the effectiveness of the cure of the patient. It is crucial that the doctor must believe in the patient's cure and desire it. All of us know the story of the medical experiment in which the patients were given a placebo instead of the painkiller, and yet there was a significant lessening of the patient's pain.

But in one clinic they decided to make this experiment even more complicated. As in the previous experiment, the doctor gave a group of patients a placebo, all the while knowing that he was giving them a placebo. As was expected, a certain medicinal effect was observed. The same physician simultaneously was working with the second group of patients who had the same illness. For the treatment of this second group he was also given a placebo, however, the doctor was told that this was in fact the real highly effective medicine. And so, the doctor believed that this was not just a “dummy pill” but “the real thing” -- excellent medicine. The results of the experiment surpassed all expectations: the patients in the second group got remarkably more healthy than the patients in the first group. Indeed several of the patients were completely cured. Even though they took the placebo. This is highly reminiscent of the story from the Gospel of Matthew, when the apostles asked Christ why it was that they were unable to cure the sick, and Jesus answered that they had been unable to do it simply because they did not have enough faith that they would be able to do it. The faith itself was crucial to the cure.

How is it possible that when the hardheaded doctors have no other suggestions to make except in extremely complicated and dangerous operation, sometimes an illiterate old woman simply whispering prayers can “heal away” by childhood hernia? The answer is simple: she is convinced that she can help, and she wants to help. A similar instance of the power of faith and convictions can be observed when a mother sprinkling plain water on her sick baby says the ancient nursery rhyme: “like water off a goose, from my babe all ills cast loose!” And the illness disappears!

Formally, official medicine used to believe such things were nothing but superstitious foolishness. But nowadays both religion and science which are coming ever closer together are quite capable of explaining this seemingly miraculous phenomenon.

Everyone is a star and a unique personality. Every single human being is a complete world. Sometimes people do not quite understand what treasures they hide within themselves. Help them to unblock these treasures, and you yourself will be convinced of the justice of these words. It will hardly take any effort on your part, and the benefit you cause both others and yourself will be enormous. As you help others to gain strength and confidence, so you too will become more confident and stronger. Practice this and you will become convinced of it. Do not put off this experiment. Begin right now with your near and dear ones -- discover for yourself the magic of the great creative energy of loving kindness.

Here's what the well-known tele-evangelist John Biver once said during one of his lectures.

I am constantly admiring my wife. If the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, that means you're not properly watering your own lawn. But I am constantly telling my Liza: “You’re marvelous. You’re the love of my life. You’re spectacular.”

Why do I do this? First of all, because it really makes her blossom.

A woman always reflects back the love given her by her husband. And second, because it helps my own heart to constantly feel in love with her. Liza is fifty-one years old now. And recently I was in Kiev and one doctor told her: “I was certain you aren’t even forty yet.”

And she answered “That’s because my husband really loves me.”

It isn't even important if, at the beginning, when you tell people about their good qualities, you yourself do not yet fully believe in what you are saying. Believe at least that if you are able to convince someone of these good qualities, then soon these good qualities will emerge, and the true beauty and grandeur of the person will emerge from deep within, to be revealed like a sculpture to the rest of the world. And then you will understand that you were not lying at all.

When the sculptor Pygmalion was working on the image of his Galatea, all he had front of him was a formless chunk of marble. And yet he exclaimed: "God! How beautiful she is!" By some miracle the sculptor was able to perceive the enchanting image hidden within the stone, as if imprisoned. And, with love, trying not to hurt the tender body of the gorgeous captive within, he began breaking down the prison walls layer by layer until the spectacular sculpture was revealed to the world.

Just so you too must create beautiful and happy around you, and admire your creations with pride. Remember that it is creativity and art that distinguishes human beings from animals, and brings us true pleasure and joy. You are a human being! You are a great sculptor! You are the Creator! You are God!

In this chapter we have only touched on some of the aspects of the Great Teaching of the Gospels. But if you will take the time to read them for yourself thoughtfully and unhurriedly, you will constantly discover something new for yourselves. The words of Christ are like bright stars in the heavens, who magically shed light and direction on our earth path. And as it is said in the Gospels themselves: **"whosoever hears and understands these words shall not taste of death."**

So feel yourselves part of one larger whole: you are not just a lost and useless speck of dust in the middle of nowhere, but are a beloved child of the Creator, of That Which Abides, whose arms are always outstretched towards you for a joyful embrace.

A HEAVENLY FAIRY TALE

“I and my Father are One. “ (John 10: 30)

“I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” (John 14: 20)

Once upon a time, there were raindrops who used to like to collect themselves on the broad summit of an ancient cliff that hung in a steep overhang, sloping right over the waves of an eternally young and boisterous ocean. These were very intelligent raindrops, and it was no accident that they had chosen such a spot to fall and collect themselves. The thick hard stony surface of the cliff did not allow for leakage through to its depths, and therefore the raindrops, upon collecting there, could stay put for quite some time. They looked on with disdain at their neighbors who melted before their very eyes, or disappeared dribbling through the sands or the earth.

These very intelligent raindrops took pride in themselves, as they asked their neighbors: “Why did you all land in such inhospitable places?” After all, they knew perfectly well what they needed to do in order to prolong their lives. To stay put! They even had tiny little umbrellas to defend them from the rays of the sun, and tiny little atomizers with droplets of spray to keep them in full maintenance of their own moisture. However, time went on, and the wind and the sun did what they always do, and the raindrops would get smaller and smaller in size, until at last they would completely disappear.

All the raindrops were terribly afraid of death, and prayed devotedly to the rain, which had given birth to them. When it rained, they would interrupt each other, vying in audible fervor to shout out their neighbors in proof of their constancy. Many of them were truly so certain that the rain would be able to return them to the earth, that they even tried to hide the umbrellas and atomizers in cracks of the stone, hoping to use them in a further life. And there were even other raindrops who believed that after death they would go up to the heavens to a splendid palace, made up entirely of gems and precious stones, where they would be collected on a golden plate, and covered with a crystal lid, which would perpetually shield them from evaporation. They mocked those who believed in their own reincarnation as droplets or return to Earth, and said: “we, being smart, absolutely know how things truly are in this world.”

And so the raindrops quarreled, then reconciled, and eventually evaporated and died, and were replaced by new raindrops. And this process went on and on for many an age. But then, once, something remarkable took place – one raindrop rebelled!

“I am tired of spending my entire days under an umbrella. And I have no further desire to die slowly on these stones,” said this raindrop. And in front of all the others, this raindrop got up, lifted herself, and then sort of vaguely stretched, then again lifted and stretched, over and over, sort of like a caterpillar, and began to crawl over to the edge of the cliff.

The other raindrops looked on in shock.

“Where are you going?”

Calmly she answered:

“I do not want to use moisturizers and atomizers anymore – not when there is an inexhaustible ocean of water right below us!”

All the other raindrops were terribly scared to hear this, and cried out in unison, as if in one voice.

“But the ocean is so enormous – you will be swallowed up! And you will die ahead of your time!”

“No,” the raindrop disagreed. “I can hear the ocean, and I have heard that the ocean is our big brother. I have heard that it is, just like you and me, full of water. And I refuse to believe that the ocean would harm its little sister.”

“Think again, unhappy deluded raindrop! Consider what a terrible example you are setting for our youth,” her neighbors insisted. “It would have been better had you never even been born! I mean, you’re just the same as we are! What on earth is the matter with you? Reconsider, reconsider!” they pleaded

“What is it that I risk? And what could I possibly lose except my dilapidated umbrellas, and my ridiculous atomizers and my perpetual fear of death?”

With this answer, the rebellious raindrop boldly plunged herself off the edge of the cliff and fell down. At first the water of the ocean seemed to her to be rather cool and a bit salty. But soon she got used to it, and began to swim in its endless expanses with immense pleasure.

The raindrop was happy living in the ocean. She had never felt herself so well-protected and safe. And indeed, the ocean took care of her, as if she were the ocean’s own little baby. Like a kind wizard, the Ocean showed her all his remarkable wonders and revealed his great secrets. Like a tender and loving parent, the Ocean protected the little raindrop from the sun and wind, and nourished her with his own inexhaustible moisture.

The raindrop soon noticed that she had lost her prior form, and had now begun to grow and grow, rapidly increasing in size. But this did not frighten her at all; quite the contrary: it caused her a feeling of immense joy. She began to feel within herself the immense power of the ocean, which with every minute of her being was miraculously coursing right through her.

Gradually the raindrop became greater and greater, and the ocean – smaller and smaller. And one day the time came when there was not ocean left anymore. The raindrop looked around from side to side, but could no longer find her dear old friend. For a short while she even felt a sadness that she was now all alone. And so she called out:

“Ocean! Ocean! Where are you?”

“Don’t be afraid! I’m here!” answered the ocean. “I never went away at all. It’s just that you and I now are one: you too are the ocean now.”

The raindrop looked around attentively and realized that what the Ocean was telling her was true. With joyful surprise, she exclaimed

“How is it that I didn’t notice this myself?”

And for the very first time in her life she looked at the sun contentedly, and smiled.

“This means that now I do not have to be afraid of anything. And like the ocean, I will live forever. No longer will I have to be born and die. How marvelous! What a wonderful thing life is after all!”

And thinking these thoughts, she laughed out loud with a heartfelt, carefree laugh, which even caused waves to appear on the surface of the water.

“Let’s whip up a storm!” she cried out. “Let all the others hear us, and know that we exist! Let everyone find out how wonderful it is to be the Ocean!”

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