CHAPTER ONE: THE CIRCUS OF MR. LURIE .....................3
CHAPTER TWO: TOM THE CLOWN .....................................7
CHAPTER THREE: AMONG THE AERIAL GYMNASTS.....14
CHAPTER FOUR: HOLIDAY OF GOOD DEEDS.......................20
CHAPTER FIVE: APPEARANCE OF FAKIR .......................28
CHAPTER SIX: KATYA AND RAM ......................................38
CHAPTER SEVEN: ABOUT LOVE FOR PEOPLE AND GOD ...............................................................................................42
CHAPTER EIGHT: PRINCIPLES OF LIFE ESTABLISHED FOR US BY GOD ..................................................................................52
CHAPTER NINE: ON PATANJALI’S COMMANDMENTS ...58
Chapter One:  
The Circus of Mr. Lurie

The director of the circus strolled leisurely through the city. There were still two days left until the first performance. He admired the colorful posters for the new program of his circus, which were adorned round on advertising stands with the words: “The circus of Mr. Lurie! Acrobats and riders! Tamers of tigers and lions! Jugglers and clowns!”

His thoughts were filled with satisfaction: “The city is large, there must be very many people here. The proceeds and multiplication in fame of one of the best circuses in Europe — all this is waiting for us here!” Such prospects amused the pride of the director, whose name was Etienne Lurie, and, in high spirits, he continued on his way.

Not too far from him, a crowd of spectators had gathered around one of the stands that had his poster on it. They were clapping enthusiastically.

Mr. Etienne was curious and came closer.

In front of the crowd, a little blond girl of about five or six years old bowed and collected coins in a basket.

“Do it again! We missed the beginning!” — several spectators, who had recently arrived, asked.

... The girl made a funny bow and an air kiss — as it was done on the playbill for the circus of Made-moiselle Sisi. And then she began to show her performance again.
The director was about to move on... But then a few movements of the little actress intrigued him to stay.

Yes, it was a real “nugget” — such natural flexibility comes once in a hundred years! The whole ridiculousness of it disappeared, the girl became the very definition of elegance and grace, and she was happy because with incredible skill she performed a few flips, did two cartwheels without stopping, and then gracefully bent backwards like a bridge. It was clear that no one had ever taught her such things; after all, the movements were not perfect. But, in fact, to perform such twisting poses, with such ease, requires years of training!

The director once again examined her from head to toe with a professional’s eye. A beautiful appearance, blond curly hair... She could easily be turned into an angel if one were to wash and properly dress her!

He was already starting to imagine the girl as a soaring angel in a white-pink dress under the dome of the circus.

When the audience dispersed and the girl looked pleased with the pennies that she had received, Mr. Etienne Lurie approached her and asked:

“Who taught you this?”

“I did myself. I saw the circus performers on the square and how they were applauded and given a lot of money. So, I too decided to make enough money to cure my mother.”

“Is your mother sick?”

... The girl became sad:

“She died this winter...”

“And with whom do you live?”
“The hostess, from whom my mother and I rented a room, allowed me to stay and live there, so that I could pay off her debt. My mother was ill for a long time and did not pay our rent...

“Don’t you have any more relatives?”
“No...”

“Do you want to perform in a real big circus? This one?” — the director pointed his finger to the poster. — “You will have a beautiful dress with sparkles and a gold hoop in your hair. And — satin shoes.”

“I want to... But only who will let me go there?”
“I myself am the director of this circus. I want to turn you into a real performer!”

The girl’s eyes expressed surprise and delight. The director himself noted the immediacy and emotionality of his new acquisition.

“Now all that remains is to complete the formalities. If the girl does not have relatives, then it will be quite easy!” — he thought.

“What’s your name?”
“Katya.”

“We’ll have to think up a real circus name for you. For example — Little Mademoiselle Kitty!”

Katya was very surprised that she might be called Mademoiselle...

And the director took Katya by the hand and went to the nearest bakery. He fed the girl with cakes and offered tea. Through this, he finally won her over to himself.

Then he talked strictly with the hostess for a long time, while Katya packed her meager belongings.
He gave the landlady a little less money than she wanted. After all, Mr. Etienne did not like to waste money, spending it on the greed of other people.

When all the preparations were completed, he stopped the coachman and, loading up all the property of Katya, which had been stored in a small pack and suitcase, sat Katya beside him and asked the man to take them to the circus of Mr. Lurie.

* * *

Then, for a while, everything that happened next seemed to Katya like a fairy tale.

Even the fat German named Franz, whose job it was to choreograph the circus numbers, — and to whom Katya was given, at first seemed nice to her.

She even liked his funny accent. He used a mix of words from different languages, including certain circus words, which were unfamiliar to Katya, for body movements, as well as commands. And when he was angry, he spoke only in German.

The word “allé” was now the main word in Katya’s life.

She was dressed up in a thin leotard and a very short gown for trainings. And the circus dressmaker took measurements and began to sew a special dress for Katya’s performances — with sparkles and small wings.

Katya perceived all this as... magical!

And she even could watch all the shows every day!

In the inaccessible to the public premises of the circus, where specially trained circus animals lived,
she stroked — with permission of the trainers — clever dogs and cats, monkeys, and horses! With admiration, she looked at the huge elephant named Tubo, and the lions and tigers!

The world of the circus was special, with its own laws and rules. Katya studied them gradually.

But the feeling that her life had suddenly turned into a fairy tale, ended very soon.

Mr. Franz forced her to do more and more exercises every day from morning to evening. Her body was constantly sore from overstrain and bruises.

She always heard his: “bad!”,”wrong!”,”smile!”,”allé!”,”allé!”,”allé!”,”allé!”...

And only very rarely did she hear: “good!”... But then a new exercise was invented at once, which was even more difficult than the one before...

And then a trapeze was added, which was raised higher and higher every time... And the fear of falling became torturous...

“If you are not a good girl, I will drive you into the streets, and there you will die of hunger!” — Franz shouted at her.

Sometimes Katya even wanted to be on the street and die, so that these endless tortures would stop.

Chapter Two: Tom the Clown

One evening, after another such angry tirade of Franz to Katya with accusations of her being incompetent and lazy and threatening to turn her out onto
the street to starve, Katya burst into tears in her small room — from the sorrow of her unhappy fate. She sobbed with her face buried in a pillow, it seemed to her that everything good in her life had ended forever, and that she would never again have joy and hope!

Suddenly, in the doorway, the head of a clown appeared, whose name was Tom. He, too, began to whimper loudly, and then, from special tubes hidden under his amusing red wig, streams of water, which depicted streams of tears, began to sprinkle out. Katya already knew that for this he was pressing a rubber bulb hidden in his pocket. But, nevertheless, she smiled through her tears. Tom cried louder and louder, and tears splashed in all directions!

“I wept harder than you! I’ve won!” — Tom said, walking into Katya’s room and sitting on a chair opposite Katya, who was crying on her bed. He added:

“Surrender!”

Katya completely stopped crying.

“What happened, Katya?” — Tom asked, and handed her a large checkered handkerchief.

Katya wiped her tears.

She told Tom about all her misfortunes.

Tom gave her some ointment from a jar and said that it would help to lessen the muscle pain and treat the bruises. Then he sat down beside her and asked:

“Do you want me to teach you how not to be afraid and how to do those things in your number that are not yet working out?”

“I’ll never be able to, I’m afraid of this trapeze! I cannot do it and I will never succeed in it!” — said Katya sadly.
“Forget such words, Katya! In the circus — they do not exist!

“Man can learn almost everything! A human’s possibilities are huge!

“For example, you can learn to control your own body — so that it does not control you! The body can whimper: ‘I do not want to, I cannot, I’m tired!...’, but you give it a command — and it obeys!

“But only, this command should be very clear and assured!

“Have you seen how Madame Matilda teaches the dogs to jump through the hoop, and stand on their hind legs? She gives them a clear command. So, you must learn to give the body similar commands!

“In this way, gradually, you will be able perform any number, no matter how complex!

“Do you want me to help you? We will train early in the morning while everyone else is still asleep.

“You want to be a real artist, right? Then — you must learn to never feel sorry for yourself, and, instead, do everything with joy! Only in this case, will the public be delighted to applaud you!

“But this is not the most important thing. Applause is only a recognition by others that you are performing well. But it happens that other people do not immediately notice what is important or beautiful. To prevent this from happening, you need to learn how to work so that you yourself can get joy from your performance!

“You see how all the artists of the circus work! What the public consider to be magic and miracles, is achieved by their daily work on every element of their number.
“When a person works hard to achieve a result, then, what seemed impossible yesterday, becomes not only possible, but only a small step that allows him or her to rise higher, to move further!

“And most importantly, if you conquer your fear of heights and pain, and learn to joyously do the things that you must do, — then you can be happy!

“But there is one small difficulty here: you cannot overcome fear once and for all...”

“And how then?”

“You can just learn to keep fear under your control. Do not allow fear to command!

“In the same way, you can learn to overcome all the other emotions that make you weak and unhappy, and make you feel like a victim of some circumstances or other people.

“I’ve tested it in my life many times. If you give up before difficulties or indulge in your weaknesses — then you never become better! And if you do not give up — you become better every day! Maybe just slightly — but still better!”

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On that day, the friendship between the clown Tom and Katya began.

Tom’s shows were always so cheerful! The whole audience would always roar with laughter and applaud enthusiastically!

And, in everyday life, Tom at was always ready to give everyone some humor and jokes that would “hit the spot”. No matter where he was or what time it was, he was as if always participating in his perfor-
mance, playing the role of a joker, entertaining everyone!

Many in the circus loved and respected him, many even were afraid of him: they were afraid to become subjects of his jokes. Even the director of the circus Mr. Lurie sometimes respected his opinion.

But with Katya — Tom was different: he was a real and kind friend, without sad irony over what is happening, and without a lot of silly masks.

On the first day of their work together, it was very difficult for Katya to wake herself up at dawn, so Tom woke her up himself.

“To get up early in the morning — it’s great! The day then becomes much longer — and you can do everything that you have planned,” — he said. — “But to be lazy and sleep for a long time means that you have to hurry afterwards — to catch up with everything. And in the bustle and haste, we can forget how to notice the most important things in life!”

... And so, every day, Tom began to teach Katya not to be afraid of heights and to perform complex movements on the trapeze, overcoming the trembling of body and soul.

... He once was a gymnast himself... It was a long time ago, before a fall and injury, which was so serious that he had to become a clown.

He knew all the details of performing gymnastic and acrobatic movements — and began to help Katya to learn them while others were still asleep.

He lowered the trapeze to such a height that Katya was not scared. He reassured her, helping her to do various movements correctly.
Then Tom — gradually — increased the height. And he also added a trampoline-grid to catch her in case she fell...

But, most importantly, Katya learned to overcome her fear, she learned to achieve beauty and clarity in the execution of all her movements! She was happy together with Tom — for every such little victory!

Tom invented some new elements into the numbers, which Katya then showed to Franz. And he, attributing to himself their discovery, included those movements in the newly-created numbers.

And the numbers really turned out to be enchanting with their beauty!

* * *

The first performance of the “soaring angel” caused a sensation among the public. Katya was seen off with thunderous applause.

The little figure of a girl in a pink dress, embroidered with sparkles and with small elegantly made transparent wings on her back, shone in the beams of the spotlights. Katya did complicated movements under the dome itself, and then she as if flew around the arena from trapeze to trapeze.

Mr. Lurie was incredibly pleased!

Tours began in many European countries. One performance after another... And between them — endless trainings...

Katya got used to it.

But, one day, she complained to Tom:
“I do not see the life that is there, beyond the walls of the circus! I almost do not see even the cities that we come to! They all seem the same, only people speak other languages…”

“You, Katya, see much more than most people living in these cities! And certainly — more than the children of some craftsmen or workers from the factory.

“But, to live like that rich, dressed up public, who applauds us... I do not know if we should dream of such a life...

“Once, I tried to live without the circus... I then earned a lot of money... I held on like this for several years. But, nevertheless, I did not manage to live this way for long — and I returned to the circus. After all, everyone here — is honest!... But there... Over there, they all also play their roles, but very many of them deceive others and often deceive themselves...”

“Is that why you became a clown, who makes people happy?”

“Yes, Katya. And people... They are always the same, no matter where you go, even though they speak different languages...”

... This conversation prompted Tom to begin to teach Katya everything that he himself knew and could teach.

At first, he simply read to her fairy tales with pictures, buying them in bookstores — they were not new, but cheap. Then he taught Katya how to read and count. He also told her, as far as he knew himself, the history of the countries to which they came. And when such an opportunity was given, they together went for a walk around the city, in which Mr. Lurie’s circus was on tour at that time.
Chapter Three: Among the Aerial Gymnasts

One day, while walking freely in the city, Tom and Katya went to the marquee of a circus-chapiteau. On a poster, which was not made in a printing house, rather simply drawn on a plywood board by an artist who was clearly not very skilled, there was an inscription that flaunted the words: “Air Acrobats of the Thibaut Dynasty”.

Tom paused at the poster for a long time…
“Do you want to see real skill?” — he suddenly asked Katya.
“Of course!”
… They bought tickets.

The show was uncomplicated. The costumes and the whole entourage were very inferior to what was in the rich and world-famous circus of Mr. Lurie.

… But, when the performance of the aerial gymnasts began, Katya understood what Tom was talking about. It was perfect execution of the most complicated elements of a number. Light, flexible bodies seemed to fly like birds in the air. Incredible coherence and accuracy of movements made the extraordinary efforts of the gymnasts seem effortless and turned the entire area under the dome into a magical space where people — as if were flying, only occasionally touching the trapezes or the hands of partners with their own hands or feet...

“Wow!” — Katya whispered euphorically.
... After the performance, when they were already going to the exit, one of the gymnasts suddenly called out:

“Tom? Is that you? It cannot be! I am so glad to see you!”

... Tom shuddered and turned around.

“Hello, Tonya!”

“Is this little one yours?” — Tonya with a caress in her eyes bent down to Katya, stroked her light golden hair. — “What a beautiful girl! And she is already so tall!”

... And, turning to Katya, she asked:

“Did you like the performance?”

“Yes!” — Katya enthusiastically said and added a few professional words describing those coups and techniques that particularly delighted her.

“Wow! So does the dynasty of Thibaut air gymnasts continue?”

“Yes!” — Tom suddenly happily answered. All the tension that he had been feeling this evening suddenly vanished. An incredibly beautiful and calm tenderness blossomed in him, which usually was hidden somewhere deep inside of him, under a lot of jesting masks.

“Will you go to your father?” — Tonya asked.

Tom shook his head:

“No, better not... It would be better if you all visited us instead, if you want to.” — Tom handed out invitations to the circus of Mr. Lurie.

Tonya frowned slightly...

“I do not know if it will be possible... You do know your father: he criticizes everyone for being untalented and he probably would not like to watch. I myself will try: I will come, if he lets me go...”
“In any case, you now know where to find me… Well… If you need my help…”
“Yes, thank you!”
… They warmly said goodbye.

* * *

Tom walked, immersed in his thoughts.
Katya pulled him by the sleeve:
“Did she say ‘father’? Did your dad perform there?”
“No, Katya, he does not perform… He is the owner of that circus. Do you remember, I said that I was an aerial gymnast? And that — I then had to leave… It happened like this…”
… Tom never forgot what happened then...
He was young, in love with Tonya, and brought her to their circus.
Then, they made a number…
His father was unhappy because — even though the girl was capable of it — it was very difficult to include someone into a number who was “not from the circus”!
… Then Tonya fell in love with Serzh, the juggler…
And then Tom got into an accident…
On that day, the old wooden suspension design under the dome broke, from which the ropes and trapezes were fastened. Tom held all the others with his body for a long time, connecting the place of the fault with his hands. Those moments, while all the gymnasts descended, seemed to him to be slow in time…
... And then he could not save himself: he had no more strength left, and he fell down. His arm muscles broke, and he also fractured his spine...

... Tom dreamed of performing again. And this dream gave him strength. He learned to walk anew, to move his hands... Overcoming the pain, he forced his body to obey...

But, when he had more or less recovered, his father said:

“You will never be able to work really well under the dome again. And you should not be a burden here to others!”

... His father did not have any pity for anyone, including himself. If their positions were reversed, he would have done the same thing with himself. Tom knew this and tried to drive away the insult, and said: “Yes, a cripple, a disabled person cannot be their companion... But I almost have recovered in just one and a half years!... I was hoping that with a little more time — I could perform!...”

His father’s words sounded like a verdict: “You will never be able to!... Do not torture yourself and us! Go away and make a new life! Go away without saying goodbye to anyone: it will be better! Do not make any sentimental scenes! Good luck to you!”

His father turned and walked away... Tom never saw him again.

By the next day, Tom had already left...

His father was always ruthless with such matters. He never compromised and did not forgive anyone who, even once, allowed oneself to deceive another, or who in some way failed or for other reasons did not meet his requirements for a real artist. He expelled those whom he considered incapable or un-
worthy, as if he had erased them from his life forever. And there could be no return to the past!

Tom then realized that his father was right, and that, despite all his efforts, he could no longer perform as before. And to engage in all sorts of ancillary activities and to look with pain or envy to be there — under the dome of the circus, where he would like to be... Spending his life on this sadness — would be a waste of time!...

And so, for several years, Tom worked different jobs. He easily mastered new ways of applying his forces in various matters, and earned a good salary. But the circus... remained an “unhealed wound”.

One day, he visited the circus performance of Mr. Lurie — and there he realized that he must return to the circus! It didn’t matter what position he had to take, he just knew that he had to come back!

So he decided to become a clown and composed several funny numbers.

His first acts were not very good, but Mr. Lurie could discern talent in people. He had a kind of “flair”. He liked this young man with incredibly sad eyes — and he took Tom to the troupe. Mr. Lurie was not mistaken: Tom became a “star” of sorts. And his numbers became even better as time passed due to his clever irony, incredible ingenuity, and a willingness to laugh at himself... Mr. Lurie rightly believed that he helped Tom become one of the best clowns in the world!

For a long time, Tom tried with all his might to forget his father’s offence, to erase it from his memory... But... he only managed to drive it very deep within himself.... Only today, he happily realized that he had forgiven his father and all of them... And
that he simply loves all of them now! He loves Tonya — without jealousy, without pain and sorrow for the past, he loves their entire team, and he loves his father!...

He put his arm around Katya’s shoulders. Without her, his beloved little Katya — this probably would not have happened.

That’s what this was — as Tonya said — “the continuation of the dynasty”!

And what exactly is a dynasty?! It does not matter! Katya became the main joy and meaning in his life! She needed him! For her, he was a friend, a teacher, and a father! And she, in fact, had become like a daughter to him!

* * *

The next day Tom, nevertheless, slightly hoped that Tonya would come to their show, he even thought over the idea of how to make fun of himself for no longer being a gymnast now, but a clown...

After the show, he watched the public from behind the scenes.

Katya walked over and touched his sleeve.

“Don’t be sad! They probably had to leave. You know: it happens...”
Chapter Four:
A Holiday of Good Deeds

Several years had passed. Katya became the real “star” of the circus of Mr. Lurie.

Once, in one of the large cities, every day among the public in the first row, Katya began to notice a teenage boy, dressed in a suit, about the same age as she or slightly older, who enthusiastically clapped and did not remove his gaze from her.

A few days later, after another show, Mr. Lurie brought this boy and his father backstage to the room where Katya had taken off her wings and was about to change clothes.

“Well, here she is — our ‘star’!” — He introduced Katya. — “And this is Count de Noiri and his son Alex. You made an indelible impression on Alex, Mademoiselle Kitty!”

… Katya looked with surprise at her admirer and at the director, who became so unnaturally kind with her.

Alex handed Katya a gift: a beautiful box with a bow, and then unexpectedly for his father and for Mr. Lurie to hear, pronounced:

“I want Mademoiselle Kitty to come to our house today and dine with us. And tomorrow — I want her to spend all day with me: because tomorrow there is no show!”

He pronounced it in a tone, implying no possible objections.

“It’s not customary,” — Mr. Lurie tried, nevertheless, to object…
But, apparently, the boy’s father often yielded to
the whims of his son. And now he took a voluminous
bundle of banknotes out of his wallet and with an odd
smile extended the money to the director:
“But we can make an exception, can’t we?”
“Yes of course!” — Mr. Lurie said, realizing that
at the whims of this “baby” he could make a nice
profit.
“Can I wash myself and change clothes?” —
Katya asked.
“No: I like it this way! You are so beautiful in
this dress!” — Alex said. — “If you want, you can
take a bath in our house before going to bed! Let’s
go right now!”
Katya left the unopened box on the table and
threw on her old plain-looking coat, which contrasted
so sharply with her glittering and sparkling attire for
performances, and went to the count’s crew.
... They drove up to the luxurious mansion.
The servants accepted their outer garments.
Katya had never seen such luxury!
“It’s like I came to the palace of a fairy tale about
Cinderella!” — she thought.
... Then there was a huge hall with a large table
on which there were only three covered plates.
Alex’s father did not sit down: he said he was
not hungry and left the children only in the company
of lackeys who silently poured juice and served food.
Katya looked with amazement at several forks
and spoons near the plate, not daring to choose one
of them.
Alex broke the awkward silence:
“You can eat with a spoon, even with your
hands! Here — there is no one to observe etiquette!”
Katya looked around in astonishment at the four servants, frozen in silent poses...

"Ah," — Alex laughed. — "Go away: we ourselves will choose what to eat and drink!"

The footmen left with bows.

"Don’t you consider them humans?"

"Why? Yes, they are people... But these people do everything that I want; my father pays them for this. And if I want — they will be driven out onto the street. So, don’t be embarrassed!"

"And what about me? After all, I also came here due to your father’s payment."

"You’re another matter! I like you! We had to somehow convince your director to let you go!"

... After dinner, Katya got accustomed to the unusual situation in which she had fallen into.

But then the caretaker came in and strictly pronounced that now it’s too late and it’s time for everyone to sleep. A maid led Katya to a bathroom which was trimmed with marble. Then, when Katya had finished enjoying the warm bath with snow-white foam from a special fragrant soap solution, the maid gave her a robe and a nightgown — all in lace — and led her to a separate bedroom.

... The next morning after breakfast Alex led Katya to his room. Katya was surprised to see little figures of people and animals made out of wood or porcelain, “magic boxes” with different wonders and music, painted houses, boats with sails, and even a railway with a locomotive, trailers, and rails.

"I have no toys, and I do not know how to play with them," — Katya said, embarrassed.

"It’s easy, I’ll teach you!" — Alex replied confidently.
... They built a city for a while from the blocks, and laid a railway... But it got boring for Alex very soon. Then they went to the garden and let very beautiful and lifelike toy ships with sails out into the pond.

This also very quickly bored the young earl. But Katya still did not cease to be amazed that it was possible to spend time like this...

Alex suggested:
"If you want, we can go shopping and I’ll buy you everything that you want: a new coat, shoes, elegant dresses, all kinds of toys, anything that you want... I want to make you feel good!"

"But your father will be the one who is paying for this... Right? So, it turns out that it is he — not you — who is giving gifts to me, and, maybe, he does not even actually want to do this..."

"Well then..." — Alex thought for a moment. — "I remember: I have my own money! I was given it as a birthday present, but I did not spend it! This may not be enough for all your desires, but this is my own money!

"Tell me: what would you like?!"

"Yesterday it seemed to me that I was in a fairy-tale castle, and now I want to be a fairy who does good miracles! So — that in real life, at least for a short time, life becomes the same as in a fairy tale!

"Have you ever dreamed of being a magician?"

"No..."

"Well, I have dreamed about this!... When I was little, my friend Tom, the clown, taught me how to begin every day with a good start. We turned it into a kind of celebration. The main rule was to do some-
thing good for others! We went for a walk — and arranged little kind miracles.

“For example, in winter, we fed birds that were freezing and hungry. And, at the market, we bought food from the poorest old woman. And sometimes — we just walked along the street and gave smiles and kind words to people! Tom always knew how to joke so that where we passed, flowers of joy as if blossomed out!

“And today you, too, can help me to do little miracles!”

“But I am not good at making jokes…”

“Well, that’s okay: I thought of something else!”

... They went to the city in a carriage accompanied by only one servant who was in charge of the safety of the young count.

Instead of outfits and gifts, Katya asked Alex to buy chocolates, sweets, soft and lush buns and pies, and to put everything in large boxes.

Then, at the request of Katya, they went to the poor neighborhoods of that city.

“Formerly, I lived with my mother very poorly, we rarely had enough food. And it always felt like a real holiday — to get a piece of soft bread or candy,” — she told Alex.

... The poor neighborhoods surprised Alex. He had never before even imagined that there were people living in such poverty!

And Katya was so happy treating the children with free treats! She felt like a wonder-worker who could do miracles!

Katya was surrounded by little and older children. They looked at her circus outfit.

The children began to ask:
“Tell us about the circus, please!”

... At first Katya tried to describe the performance in words. And around her more and more little listeners gathered...

Then she began to show everything that she herself could do. An audience gathered from many neighboring houses. The children and their parents approached. And even random passerby stopped — and could not leave!

Katya invented her own show, as if she wanted to present the beauty of the whole circus action.

And she was enthusiastically applauded by both children and adults who had never before been and who would never be able to go to the circus! They applauded her so much that their hands even turned red from all the clapping!

Alex and his servant also clapped.

... But, after the performance, Katya became sad.

“Thank you for this day, Alex! Now, can you please take me back to the circus?” — she asked.

Alex obediently agreed. For on this day, there also was a change in him. In the morning, he ordered how to be entertained, but now, he tried more and more to give pleasure to Katya and help her. This brought him a new, never before experienced joy of caring for another, for others.

And he began to understand something new, which — from now on — could change his life...

“When I grow up, I will find you — and we’ll get married,” — he said seriously.

“It will never happen: you are a count, and I am a circus performer...
But, anyway, today, we had a good holiday of good deeds!"

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In the evening, Katya thought for a long time, and then asked Tom:
“Tom, do you believe in God?”
“I guess I believe in Him, Katya! All the circus people here to some extent believe in the Higher Powers that control destinies, and in all sorts of signs.
“Here in the circus, we are all so different from each other: different nationalities, different faiths... Most of us risk our lives, going out into the arena with predatory animals or, like you, climbing to a height, from which a fall could be deadly. Or, some of us are riders, for whom a mistake could also cost lives... But even those of us who risk only disgrace, if a number does not work out — also usually perform some rituals: for everything to go well... Perhaps, man has a need to believe in help from above...”
“Do you have a prayer which you normally use?”
“No... It seems to me that any prayer is suitable. If God hears us, is it not the same to Him, what words we use to address Him?
“However, He really does hear us, and namely here!” — Tom pointed to the center of his chest. — “From here, from the depths, He hears us! From here, He teaches us to forgive others.
“And if there is the warmth of love in my chest, then it seems to me that this is because God understands me and approves. But if inside here there is emptiness and sadness, then it seems as though He is not with me at all…”

“Why are some people rich — and others are poor? Someone was born into a family of servants and forced to work hard their entire life, doing hard work, — but someone like Alex was born by wealthy parents and is tormented by boredom, not knowing how to use his money and time...

“Today, we were in the poor neighborhoods of this city. There was so much poverty and dirt! And people, including children, live there…”

“Everyone can probably change something in one’s own life, I suppose. Even children from these poor families can try to escape from that poor life and start learning... I met people who achieved everything that they had dreamed of, even though they were born in poor families.

“However, we must also realize, Katya, that happiness does not always come from material wealth!

“Sometimes happiness comes from embracing a beloved and dear person, just as we are sitting together now, embracing. We can talk heart to heart, we understand each other. In some of those poor families, children can receive much more love than in families of aristocrats...

“Happiness cannot be purchased with money!

“And today you gave those people joy — and it’s great too! Perhaps, your treats and your performance brought more happiness to those people than
we will ever be able to give in our shows to the whole audience!”

Chapter Five: Appearance of the Fakir

Time went on; Katya was now 14 years old. The spectators were no longer impressed by a girl, who was hovering under the dome of the circus. All the complications of the number that Mr. Franz had invented were not noticeable to the public. It did not matter how many turns in the air were made, or how difficult were the jumps in the performance... — the spectators were just not surprised by the skill of aerial acrobats!

Katya also worried that the previous ovations and cries of enthusiasm had now been replaced by lackluster applause and boredom among many of the public.

Mr. Lurie himself was indignant at the fact that everything in the number was now “as old as the world”. He threatened to drive Mr. Franz out of the circus if he did not make a new number.

And then Franz came up with a “death number”: the net-trampoline is removed, the safety cord is uncoupled in front of everyone, and Katya must jump from under the dome itself, every time seriously risking her life...

Tom offered to make a spare cord, which would be invisible to the public. But Franz did not even listen, saying:
“It is not good to deceive the public! Maybe you can play a fool and deceive fools, but I’m doing a real job!”

... Before the first performance, Tom admonished Katya:

“Do not uncouple the cord! After all, this is a very ‘distasteful’ number!... Spit on this audience, on this Franz, on the director!”

“No! When everyone shrinks from fear for me, and I jump — it will be so great! I must succeed!”

“Your head is being turned by the desire for applause, glory, and triumph! Why risk your life so much? It’s just a manifestation of pride!”

“This is my skill!” — Katya pouted.

Then she embraced and kissed Tom:

“Everything will be fine!”

... Recently, Katya had become stubborn: she argued with Tom, insisting on her way even when she was clearly not right.

Tom reasoned that this was because she was going through her “transitional age”. He said to himself: “The girl is growing up! She does not like too much care. She wants freedom and admiration from fans...”

* * *

Tom worried so much for Katya every time that, after a few months of such performances with her jump from under the dome, some of his hair had turned gray.
He had an inner feeling that everything was going wrong... He was trying to figure out a way to change this.

He even spoke with the director, Mr. Lurie, so that he would give the order to ban this number.

But the conversation turned out to be fruitless:
“Mr. Lurie, I ask you: let’s cancel this number! Give me two weeks — and I will make a no less spectacular number for Katya, one without such a senseless risk!

“The execution of this jump has been incorrectly conceived: the danger is too great, and it is very easy to make a mistake! And, no matter how hard she trains, this risk will not be decreased! Yes, I understand: we all live under God and the days of our lives are numbered... But here — Katya tempts fate every time! You cannot do it this way!”

“Leave it, Tom! All is well! Katya herself agrees to do this number. It would be different if she was afraid or did not want to...

And so, what you say is just ridiculous! Many circus performers work without insurance — and there is nothing to worry about!”

Tom tried again:
“Yes, there are always risks. Even by just eating a cookie, someone can choke and die!” — Tom pointed to the table, where there was a cookie jar and a cup of tea near Mr. Lurie, and continued: — “But there are also risks that are senseless and unreasonable! Why do you need this horror in the hall before the jump, or the cries of nervous young ladies?! Moreover, in this number, there is almost no beauty! And the technique is very doubtful!”
“That’s enough, Tom! Do not object! Crowds stand in line for tickets to see this number with a deadly leap! I do not intend to cancel anything! This conversation is over!”

Tom realized that he was powerless to influence the situation.

... Everything was fine for the first, second, third, and even fiftieth time... But then something terrible happened...

Tom saw everything while standing behind the scenes.

Katya only hesitated for a split second... She flew in the air, and did some flips... But the trapeze just barely slipped past the tips of her fingers...

If Tom had been nearby instead of Franz, he would have pushed the trapeze closer to her, he would have caught this fraction of a second and accelerated the movement of the trapeze... But Franz... did not notice... And the result was fatal...

... Katya’s flattened body lay on the ground of the arena, screams of spectators could be heard, and panic was all around... The entertainer tried to calm the audience. At once, Madame Matilda appeared with some dogs and monkeys...

... Katya was carried in his arms to her room.
She was still alive...
He agonizingly waited for a doctor...
The doctor’s words sounded like a verdict:
“I’m powerless in this case... If she does not die in the next few days, then she will remain a cripple, and she will never walk again... So, perhaps, to die is the best way for the girl. I’m not a magician...”

... Tom followed the doctor:
“I have savings, I saved for my old age, I will give everything! Let’s take her to the hospital! Maybe it’s possible to do something!”

“You can pray if you believe in God. Besides, she would die before we even reached the hospital…”

... Tom looked desperately after the departing crew...

Snow fell on his red-haired wig, tears of despair and powerlessness appeared in his eyes...

He did not even know what to ask from God: for a quick and painless death for Katya — or for her to survive?

At that moment, a stranger touched his shoulder:

“Perhaps, I can help you?”

He was a tall Indian wearing the European dress of a rich man and a snow-white turban. He introduced himself:

“Fakir Ra-Mak-Mey.”

Tom had heard this name before.

In the circus world, there are famous magicians who show old tricks, wrapping them in a new entourage. But there are also those who, under the mask of tricks, do what the experts in this matter cannot explain in any way.

There were legends about the fakir Ra-Mak-Mey, newspapers published articles about his miracles, or, on the contrary, there were attempts to “expose” his tricks. But these attempts to “expose deception”, however, did not reveal the secrets of the magic of the fakir.
Tom also knew that their director had sent a letter to Mr. Ra-Mak-Mey with a proposal to perform in his circus.

The dark brown eyes of the fakir were special. They as if opened a passage to other worlds...

Tom... suddenly began to believe in the impossible, in a miracle...

"Katya fell from under the dome...," — Tom deliriously began to explain.

"Let’s go: we can help her in time!"

* * *

Katya was in a coma. Life was about to leave her body.

The fakir, staying next to the girl’s body, told Tom not to enter and to close the door to the room.

It took about half an hour.

Tom prayed without words. He put all the strength of the soul into a request to God to save Katya, to restore her health! He asked God to forgive him for having very seldom remembered Him all his life, he said that he was ready for any sacrifices, he was ready to give any promises and to keep them, he was ready to give his life... Only let her live, let her recover!

When the door was opened, Tom thought that a wave of unusual warmth spilled out of the room, but then — it was as if the waters of the ocean poured through that open door!

... He recalled how several times in his childhood he felt what he himself called the Presence of God. In those years, as a child, he did not see the Di-
vine Light, did not hear His words, but knew for sure: God is near! This was accompanied by a feeling of great joy, tenderness, and happiness! But later — all of this… was forgotten behind the bustle and sorrows of an uneasy life...

Now he was covered with a wave of a similar state, but a thousand times stronger!

Then the wave subsided.

Katya breathed evenly and seemed to just be asleep, as if nothing had happened...

Ra-Mak-Mey said:

“She will now live in this body for a long time. Her body is already healthy, but we will not wake her up for a while, so as not to make others around feel uncomfortable with a healing by the Will of the Higher Powers.”

“Do you know how to work miracles?”

“This was nothing more than the possession of a knowledge that can be used to restore the matter of the body…

“Let’s go to have dinner and talk.”

They settled down in a quiet corner of a half-empty hall in a small restaurant next to the circus. Ra-Mak-Mey ordered them vegetarian food, juice, and water.

The dinner passed in silence, the conversation started after.

Ra-Mak-Mey peered into the space around Tom’s body and inside it for a long time, as if he saw right through the body and soul. Then he said:

“In fact, everything happens in accordance with the Divine Plan.”
“As for the healing, there are different levels from which man can influence what surrounds him or her.

“Man is not only a body!

“And the human body, if one considers it carefully, is not only bones, muscles, and internal organs...

“However, all of this consists of the smallest particles that are organized in a certain way and move and interact according to certain laws. There are — how would I say it? — ‘rules’, which control how the material body is formed and manifested in this world.

“And, within every body, there are certain layers that are invisible to the ordinary eye, which are as if nested within each other.

“And, furthermore, there is a soul — a living immortal entity — that must control this body.

“Both bodies and souls live according to the laws, created by God.

“And if you understood how it is possible to control processes in bodies — from the spiritual world, then it would not be surprising that one can restore any damage in one’s own body. This can be done by one in relation to one’s own body, however, there are also exceptional cases when one can help another in healing.

“You would be surprised that healing the body is much easier than healing the soul!

“Katya’s situation is a kind of advance for her, a chance to correct some of her own mistakes. And, even more important, it is an opportunity to learn a lot and help other people.
“If we cannot explain it to her, then this tragic situation is likely to be repeated again — one way or another.”

Images of her falling began to appear before Tom’s inner gaze, and fear squeezed him like a vise...

The fakir stopped the growth of this emotion by using simple words, and it became clear that he could as if read everything that was happening in Tom’s thoughts and emotions like an open book.

“Fear is one of the most destructive emotions! Do not give in to it! You yourself taught this to Katya! For a person, fear can be useful only as a security deterrent against those processes and events of which the soul is not yet ready.

“I would not have been able to heal Katya, prolonging the life of the soul in her body, if God had not pointed out the possibility of a very favorable further course of events, useful not only for Katya herself, but also for many other people.

“If Katya did not have the possibility of a complete spiritual transformation, then her further life in the material world would not make any sense!

“I’m telling you this because you, Tom, played an important part in Katya’s fate.

“By the way, you prayed and spoke of your readiness to carry out any tasks from God!”

“Yes: I prayed and asked for this, I am ready!”

... Suddenly unpleasant thoughts slipped through Tom’s mind: what if the Hindu does not actually heal with the Divine Force...

“Doubts destroy faith!” — Ra-Mak-Mey said and fell silent...

Tom thought: “God, direct me so that I serve only You and not some powerful but dark forces! Only
to You I gave promises! And I thank just You for saving Katya!”

Ra-Mak-Mey, as if listening to Tom’s thoughts and appreciating his resolve, continued:

“Jesus often said to those who were healed: ‘Your faith has saved you!’”

“Are you Christian?”

“In the conventional way, no, but it does not matter. Do you think that Jesus Himself was a Christian — in the modern sense of the word?

“Most likely, if Jesus were to come to the Earth now and started talking to people about God and healing others — then all the ministers of all Christian churches would have declared Him to be a false prophet or even an antichrist, just as the worshipers did in that old time.

“But, in fact, everything is so simple: GOD EXISTS! This is the basis and essence of faith!

“He is not restricted to any particular religious tradition or belief of mankind! He is One for all people!

“He is the Creator of the entire universe!...

“However, in India, most people only worship the ‘god’ Ganesha or other make-believe ‘gods’. They perform all sorts of rituals or do Hatha Yoga exercises. And they are sure that this is enough...

“You asked about my faith. I am not a slave of any religious doctrine.

“I will say one other thing: almost all people worship God or ‘gods’, but only very few personally know Him, the One Whom they worship!

“But Jesus knew the One Whom He called the Heavenly Father.

“I, too, know the Divine. For me, It is the Reality.
“He is ONE! Although, He is composed of a Multitude.”

“Are you a Messenger of God?”

“I’m just a person who has learned to look a little behind the ‘illusory world’ — into the Divine world and who has studied some rules and laws by which the Divine Primordial Consciousness controls His Creation. I do not know everything, and I continue to study.

“And the one, who studies, inevitably wants to share the acquired knowledge and experience — with other people who might need it.”

… On this day, and over the next few days, Tom and the fakir talked a lot with one another. They became very close, because Tom had found someone who could answer questions about life and death, and the purpose of everything that exists in the universe. These were the questions that had long haunted the soul.

… Ra-Mak-Mey signed a contract with Mr. Lurie and stayed in the circus, preparing to show his number.

Tom invented a shortcut for the long eastern name of the fakir — and he, along with everyone else in the circus, began to call him simply Mr. Ram.

Chapter Six:
Katya and Ram

A week had passed since the fall. Katya remained in a kind of quiet slumber, but Ra-Mak-Mey did not hurry to wake her.
“Let her body get used to being healthy, and then everyone around will forget about what had ‘impossibly’ happened!” — he laughed, when Tom anxiously inquired about her health.

And, in fact, soon everyone was already casually interested in asking Tom about how things were with Katya, and Tom would answer with confidence: “Better! She is recovering!”.

So, no one in the circus was surprised when Katya had fully woken up. The only one who was really surprised was Katya herself, seeing Ram leaning over her bed.

“Who are you?”

Katya looked at the stranger, who was wearing an eastern-styled turban and sitting on the edge of her bed, gently holding her hand in his swarthy hand with his thin and graceful fingers.

His eyes were so friendly, caressing, soothing, and familiar…

But she had never seen before his face.

“Or have I?…” — she thought.

“Yes!” — she realized. — “I saw you in a dream!…”

In that dream, he as if found her and called her. She saw only his eyes in the Light, Which was like a gentle sun. His loving peace enveloped her like a cloud and then… But she could not remember what happened next.

Suddenly, Katya remembered something else… She recalled how she fell from under the very dome of the circus itself, feeling fear, pain, and understanding that this was the end…

Did it really happen? Or was it just a terrible dream?
“Am I alive?” — she wondered.

The stranger said:

“It was a kind of ‘terrible dream’. Do not think about it now! Your body is all right!

“And everything that happens to us here, in this world, is truly like a dream.

“But man is able to wake up — and know the Reality!

“But we’ll talk about this another time, if you want to, of course.”

“Who are you? Where is Tom?”

“Tom is performing right now. Soon he will come and be glad that you have fully recovered.

“And my name is Ra-Mak-Mey. But Tom shortened that name, claiming that it was too long. So now, here in the circus, everyone just calls me Ram. I like that name.

I am a fakir. Recently, I signed a contract with Mr. Lurie — and now I am also performing in your circus.”

“Can I stand up?”

“Yes… But… Tom is coming! Now I must go to prepare for my performance.”

“May I see it?”

“Yes.”

Tom carried Katya in his arms to the arena, still fearing for her health. Katya was cheerfully welcomed and seated next to the entrance of the arena — on the pedestal that was used for the performances of dogs.

Katya was not the only one watching the fakir’s performance from behind the scenes. Even the artists, who had already seen the different tricks of the show many times, watched it once again.
The show was fascinating not only because of the novelty of the different elements, but also because there was a special feeling which enveloped all the viewers.

A golden fog like smoke was released by the fakir at the beginning of the performance from an empty bowl. For this, Ram put his hand in the bowl and as if began to stir it. And then, this fog enveloped everything and everyone, giving everyone a sense of happiness.

Then four white pigeons emerged from the same bowl and took flight under the dome. There, they seemed to as if snatch a light translucent fabric out of the void, pulling it out with their beaks, and then bringing it to the fakir.

He covered these birds, which were sitting on the edge of the bowl, with the fabric — and they... disappeared.

Then a flame began to flare in the bowl. From it, Ram began to extract different objects...

And everything that happened after that was also magical!

Sometimes Ram invited someone from the audience to check the objects before another miracle — for firmness or for emptiness...

Most viewers believed that those who took part in this were so-called stooges: special helpers of the fakir, playing along with him. But the circus people knew that this was not so, and their surprise was limitless!

Ram’s show ended the program — since it was the most new and spectacular! The public accepted everything “with a bang”. Mr. Lurie even decided to extend the tour in that city.
Chapter Seven: About Love for People and God

Days went by. Mr. Lurie dismissed Franz after the tragedy with the fall of Katya. And Ram promised the director that Katya, when he taught her what he had in mind, would act in his part of the show.

And gradually Ram began to carry out his plans. The preparation of this new program took several months.

In the meantime, there was also another training for Tom and Katya by Ram.

In these trainings, the questions for discussion would come from them. After all, Ram never began to explain something only because he knew it himself.

Tom found Ram to be a very interesting interlocutor. Even before the full recovery of Katya, they began to discuss many of the philosophical themes and problems of people’s lives that Tom had wanted to understand before, but did not have someone who could at least somehow answer his questions.

One of the first of such conversations happened late in the evening after the performance, when Ram and Tom were alone together. In this conversation, Tom asked:

“Who needs this work of mine, on which I spend the days and years of my life?

“I’m tired of seeing dull faces laughing at primitive jokes! I am sad about what makes my spectators laugh!
“Sometimes I look at the crowd and I try to find at least one meaningful face... — and, seeing none, I then want to give it all up!

“But I tried to live without the circus! Out there — it is even worse!...”

“Well, wouldn’t it be a dream to make a number in which laughter would ennoble people to overcome their weaknesses and vices, and teach them to help others and be compassionate?”

“I already tried this. But people are simply stupid and evil! Everything, which I was trying to do, was useless!

“Explain something to me: does human life make any sense?

“After all, there has to be a reason why we are all jostling here on the Earth, in this booth of suffering and deceit!

“What’s the point in the existence of all this? We are not here just to run around in circles and from time to time trip ourselves up, are we?! We just keep repeating the same things! We fall, hit our noses on the ground — bang! Then fall down again, stand up, shake ourselves off, run again, and then fall down... And then one day — we can no longer even get back up...

“Why does God allow all of this?”

... Tom then recalled one of his previous numbers. He absurdly ran around the entire arena to reach the gymnastic bridge and jump on it as the balancers acted before him. He started running, and then with one foot, he dexterously tripped himself — and fell crashing full force to the floor flatwise — to the laughter of the audience. He got up, glanced around, looking for something on the sand of the
arena that could have caused such a fall. Seeing nothing, he then threatened someone in the audience, ran again, ran even harder — and then fell in an even funnier way...

... Waking from the memory, Tom continued the conversation:

“The majority of people are stupid and evil! For many years, I have seen how almost every evening they roll with laughter, when they see how a person has fallen, been hit, or deceived another... And they laugh in the same way outside the circus at those who have fallen into real trouble!

“But when trouble happens in real life with one of them, they do not laugh, but are angry and look for those who are guilty for their troubles, and then they take revenge on their offenders...”

“You do not love people, Tom! You made an exception only for Katya — and it saves you, giving you a reason to live!”

“Well, don’t you agree?”

“It seems to me that you complicate your life, thinking this way about people...”

“But why are people so stupid and evil? Can you explain this to me?”

“Let’s go.”

“Where?”

“You will see...”

They donned their walking-clothes and went out into the night...

After walking several blocks through empty city streets, Ram opened the door on which was the inscription: “Children’s Orphanage of St. Sophia”. The sleeping watchman did not stop them.
They entered a large room, where an overweight woman in a dull gray dress and a white apron tried to cradle a baby who was yelling at full strength. The other children, who were lying in the other cots and cradles, heard the baby’s weeping, woke up, and also started to bawl.

“Tom, answer me: why are they ‘stupid and evil’ — these little people, who are selfish and screaming about their suffering?” — Ram asked, pointing to what was happening.

“But these are babies, children, and they do not even know who their parents are!”

... The woman with the screaming child in her arms, became frightened, thinking that these strangers were possible inspectors, and began to make excuses explaining that the children are hungry and therefore do not sleep well...

Ram took the baby from the hands of the woman, began to rock it — and it suddenly fell silent. And, in general, suddenly everything was quiet: the rest of the children also stopped crying and fell asleep. On some of the faces, there were even smiles.

Then Ram took money out of his wallet and handed it to the woman.

“Buy what you deem most necessary for the children! It is a gift to the Orphanage of St. Sophia from an Indian guest who is here on an unofficial visit.”

This explanation and the money rendered the poor woman speechless for a while.

And then Ram and Tom just as calmly walked past the sleeping guard.

Ram continued:
“The majority of the adults surrounding us are similar to these babies. Yes, they have adult bodies, but they — as souls — are still babies. They barely know how to think yet. They are full of selfish desires. They want to eat! They want to be loved! They want to be happy, but do not know how and where to seek happiness!

“And no one taught them that to fight, to take away from others for oneself, to hate, and to envy — is not just bad, but also generates a whole chain of misfortunes in their own lives! This is because they must then be born in the worst conditions and experience the pain that they had previously caused to others! In India, this is called the action of the ‘law of karma’.

These people do not know, do not feel their Divine Parent! They do not even look in the direction of God, Who alone can give true happiness!”

“God can give happiness? Why does He do not this?”

“We’ll talk about this some time later. For, as yet, you cannot even imagine the happiness that God can give a person! After all, you need to be at least a little ready to be able to perceive this happiness, and accept it!

“If you give a baby, who is screaming, a mountain of diamonds or make it the owner of a castle, it will not become happy and it will not stop bawling. It still needs only its mother’s milk and care... But the one who knows that true Happiness, which can be found in the Unity with God, will never exchange this happiness for mountains of diamonds or for factories or castles!
“But this is about happiness... And you asked me about the stupidity of people.
“The majority of the people around us are still young souls, who have not been brought up yet, and who do not wish to learn.
“They are still young and small souls. And so — they are stupid. They have not yet learned to love — and, therefore, they are evil.
“They are orphans, because they do not know their Divine Parent: the Mother and Father for all!
“Would many children want to learn if their wise parents have not taught them to joyfully learn about the world and to work for the good both of themselves and of other beings?”
“So, where is God? Why does He not teach His children? Why did He leave them to be orphans — here, in this cruel world?”
... Ram suddenly pointed a finger at Tom’s chest:
God — you will find Him here, in yourself!
“As for people — start teaching them! This is the meaning of your life, of which you asked me!”
“To teach? I?”
“Yes.
“You are no longer a baby! You are capable of thinking and drawing conclusions. You can watch how easy it is to control a crowd: how one can freeze it with delight by showing it beauty like, for example, that of Katya’s performance, or make it laugh at good jokes, or turn it into a frightened herd... And if at the head of such a crowd there is an evil man, then he or she can, by manipulating the thoughts and emotions of such people, turn them into a boiling hateful weapon to achieve his or her own selfish goals...
“Recall: people listened with enthusiasm to the preaching of Jesus — and then, those same people, demanded to crucify Him!…

But Jesus, nevertheless, taught people — both by His life, and death! And by those words, which are preserved in the Gospels, He teaches even now!”

“Ram, it is probably just in India that everyone can become a guru and teach people in their own way…”

“Everyone already, at least by one’s own example, inevitably teaches those people, who are with him or her, how to live and how to act. One teaches — either bad or good. So you: teach only what is good!

“We have a wonderful job for this! It allows us to directly address many people and give them the opportunity to begin feeling life and thinking more correctly!

“God will help people — through your deeds and words! You can begin to gradually awaken in people that which in them is truly good. You can start teaching them to think a little better, to look at the world and one’s own place in it…

“But it is only an individual who can significantly change himself or herself! This must be a fully conscious work on oneself-soul. Here, the two of us plus Katya can do it, if you want.

“As for other people… When will they get tired of enjoying information about wars, about the cruelty and atrocity done by one person to another, or about the tragedies and wrecks in someone’s life path? — I do not know the answer to this question…
“But do not take it too much to heart! The whole world around us does not have to correspond to our desires and the level of our own development!

“Just accept that if man has cognized the Light, then he or she can live in the Light, even if there is darkness around! It is so, because this Light is burning now in oneself!”

Tom asked:

“What can we change in this world?

“What can be changed in a world where lies, violence, hatred, envy, the desire to rule over those who are weaker, and the fear of those who are stronger abound? What can be changed in a world where people live only by the animal instincts of obtaining food and reproducing, and do not use the opportunities given to men by man’s nature — which is supposedly higher than that of animals?

“Often even animals are more intelligent and capable of love than so many people!”

“It’s all so, Tom, but...

“God sees everything that is happening here. And He takes into account everything that we are doing, when building our future destinies.

“And there is an amazing FREEDOM granted to every soul: the freedom to choose — among different possibilities — Light, Good, and Love. And to choose God as the Main Goal!

“Only then does the opportunity become open to learn to move oneself into the Divine World and to look, love, and understand — in the way that God does.

Then, one no longer feels despair, believing that it is impossible to change the whole world! One begins to change oneself — and then everything
around also changes unexpectedly! This is one of the Divine Laws existing in the world order!

“Then, it will be possible to help others, showing them the way of liberation from suffering. However, only those, who understand this and want this, will travel this path.

“In this world, we can change very little. We can change mainly — only ourselves. It is the efforts aimed at changing oneself: the purification of the soul, and the approach to God — which change the world around us!

“Everything and everyone then begins to synchronize with the harmony that this soul carries. And, the stronger and stronger the soul, the more clearly its impact is felt by other people.

“Like the light of the sun, this effect can be unnoticed. But it exists and works!

“The light of the sun gives life the opportunity to grow and develop on our planet.

“Similarly, the soul, which has become the Light, helps others — even simply by radiating Love and Peace into the material world.

“Sometimes they say that a certain person is radiating joy and love. When such a person communicates with people, he or she has an influence on them. It’s as if he or she entered a dark room with a candle — and then it became evident, what in the room is the right thing, and what in it is trash.

“In the same way, the presence of a person, carrying the Light, illuminates in other souls the bad and the good, the important and the unimportant. And people then have the opportunity to ignite their own lamps from that spiritual Fire, by following the example of the one who has learned much.
“But this is the choice of each person.
“And there are some who try to ‘turn off the light’, so as not to see the vices in themselves...”

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Soon, Tom created a number with screaming babies and a stupid tutor of an orphanage. Everything fell from his hands, he dropped his pacifiers and ridiculously got confused on how to use diapers. Then in one or another cradle a baby started screaming. And from backstage, swaddled folds, depicting abandoned babies, were brought and handed over to Tom... Tom fussled, rushed between the cradles, and fell. And, at the end of the number, unwound swaddling clothes appeared under the dome and depicted the inscription: ORPHANAGE OF ST. SOPHIA, THERE ARE 185 OF THEM!

At that moment, the audience, which had been laughing to tears up until then, suddenly calmed down... Tom had never before stood in such silence at the end of a number.

And then there was applause.

After the performance, one of the spectators after handed Tom money, saying:

“This is what people gathered for the orphanage. Please, pass it on to them!”
Chapter Eight:
Principles of Life Established for Us by God

Every morning and every evening, Ram in his room immersed in meditation.
Once Katya asked:
“What is meditation, what do you do when you sit so still? You have not done anything for so long… Why?”
“This is the body that sits quietly and does nothing. But the soul at the same time communicates with God.
“Do you read prayers in the morning, before eating, before going to bed?”
Katya was embarrassed:
“Sometimes I read, and sometimes I forget…”
"Why do you read?"
“For everything to be good — with Tom, you, me, all people! I ask God about this!”
“Does God hear you? What do you think on this?”
“I do not know… Sometimes I think that He hears, since all people pray so. And sometimes I think He cannot hear, since there is so much sorrow around.”
“Know, Katya: you can address God, as to Tom, for example, with simple words! He hears and understands everything. He is — Alive! And — He is always everywhere!
“He is invisible to ordinary sight, but you can learn to both see and hear Him by soul.
“And you can interact with God. You can learn directly from Him. My meditations — this is my study from God.”

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Once Katya asked Ram:
“How do you do your miracles? Are you Messiah-the-Wonderworker, the prophet? But then why are you performing in the most ordinary circus?”
“What prophet am I? And even more — the Messiah...
“I just a little more than many other people know about how this world, visible by the eyes of our bodies, is arranged. And yet — I know how to see by the soul in those worlds which are not perceived by the usual bodily glance.”
“Is it like mediums who talk with spirits? We had a medium in the circus, his table jumped and spun when he summoned the spirits, but then Mr. Lurie chased him away.”
“What mediums do is only a tiny little crack into intangible worlds, even if such a medium is not a deceiver. And the spirits, with which mediums usually speak, are most often not Divine and very fond of evil pranks and deceiving. The fact that the world of spirits is invisible — does not mean that the Truth abides in it!
“There are so many invisible spirits...
“In the most dense and darkest layers of the invisible (for the ordinary vision) space, there are anger and violence. There is like the dirt of a garbage dump, the waste of the universe.
“In the middle layers are different gray states of sadness.

“There are also worlds of joy, happiness, which are usually called paradise.

“But there is the World of God, Who has created everything here!

“And those who are already entering the World of God, can continue to live in the body in the material world. Such man can live in this world and be the Conductor of Divine Love, Kindness, Wisdom, and Justice.

“This can be learned by anyone of good — to the best of one’s ability. And this one becomes an example of a clean and righteous life, a life of love, without anger, hatred, condemnation, without the urge to snatch for oneself anything at any cost.

“And this is more important than all miracles!

“Many sages have often told people the simplest rules of a righteous life! But people usually seek only physical health, happiness in the world of matter, power over other people, supernormal powers for miracles — but not their own observance of those simple rules for a pure and ethical life that please God!

“But it is the observance of these rules that can lead to the true happiness that God gives to such people!

“You can live among people — and yet not suffer yourself and not bring suffering to others.

“The constant calm and joyful state of the soul — this is the paradise that one creates for oneself and other beings around.

“But such constantly dominating states as grief, anger, irritation, resentment, and other negative emo-
tions — are hell in which such one immerses oneself and also spreads around, harming others.

“Moreover, living in one of these states at the present time, one brings this into one’s future: in the near future in the earthly life and in the ‘posthumous’ existence of the soul.

“Did you notice that when doing good, a person experiences joy?”

“Yes, Tom and I made the days so kind and happy! This was our ‘magic’ game.”

“And God also feels joy for man who does good to others! In this unity in the joy of man and God — only is possible to live happily!

“And through this — the sensation of the Living God comes, His Presence in one’s own life.”

“Can you teach me this? Can you teach me to feel God, to see and hear Him?”

“Of course!

“Most people in different religions are not looking for God at all! This is so — and in my homeland in India. And everywhere: in Europe and in Asia, I met with such a perversion in religion! Those people only fulfill certain ‘rules’ — and expect for this the satisfaction of their desires.

“Another similar naivety is the guard magic. It is like you here in the circus: one kisses a cross before the performance, another reads a prayer, the third in a certain sequence puts on the details of the costume and places a statue in front of the mirror... But all this helps only... to believe in your luck, not more.

“But to feel God, we need to establish contact with Him in the mutual emotions of love! And your own love should be directed towards Him!
“God can be cognized only by striving with one’s mind and heart to such cognition of Him!
“This is how the world is constructed: one, as a rule, finds in it what one is looking for!
“The world is like a space in which there is a lot of objects. And one directs one’s attention from one to another, to which one considers necessary for oneself or for helping others.
“Until one finds an entrance to the World of God, rushing to there, — this one will wander about among the events and subjects that are not too important.
“To cognize God — it is possible only through love to Him!
“It is that love which allows us to connect by the souls with one whom we love.
“Try to feel the place where love arises in you! Think, for example, about Tom — and feel, how you love him!”
“Yes, here, in the chest, it is as if it had become warm. And — joyfully from this!”
“Yes, love is born in the heart: not in the material, but in that, which is in the soul. It is called the spiritual heart. It is located, in the chest, where we feel the inhaled air.
“In India, such energy centers in the spiritual structure of an organism, where various states of the soul arise, are commonly called chakras.
“And here, just where the lungs are located, is the chakra anahata. It is here that bright emotions of love arise.
“And it is through mastering this center, you can learn to feel God! It is here the entrance to His World opens!
“Try to feel in the spiritual heart a little sun with rays! Try to shine by it and caress all good creatures!

“Soon you will learn that if you look at everything from the spiritual heart, then everything changes in a magical way!”

... Katya began to learn this, gradually mastering the ability to live always in a state of calm and joyful love for everyone and everything.

And Ram continued to reveal to her and Tom the rules for the life of souls in the material world.

* * *

Katya loved to ask Ram about that invisible and mysterious Divine world that Ram knew so much. All the magic of Ram’s shows was based on his knowledge and skills! And Katya thought that even a little bit — and Ram will teach her and Tom, too, to create magical and good miracles!

And Ram repeated to them that all that he can do is not magic, like in children’s fairy tales, but the manifestations of the Divine Laws of the universe’s life!

“The laws of God,” — he said, — “are not at all what some people invented and recorded in special books, so that everyone would follow them.

“The laws of God are the Principles of Love and Harmony, by which everything is created by God and must develop! Violation of these Principles — voluntary or involuntary — brings disharmony, the consequence of which are what people call troubles and suffering.
“But such events are only pointers to the fact that the rules of harmonious life are violated by one and one should change something in oneself.

“Sustainability in one’s own life is ruined by oneself alone, if this one violates those Principles that are laid by God in the basis of the development of the universe!

“The observance of these Divine Principles by people brings beauty and joy, peace and happiness to their lives!

“If all the people of the Earth for at least two weeks observed the Commandment of Jesus, not responding evil to evil, wishing peace and love to everyone around — then probably the ‘golden age’ would come on the Earth!

“Answering evil for evil, we multiply evil.

“And answering with love and peace — we, though a little, however will transform into better the world around.”

Chapter Nine:
On Patanjali’s Commandments

Once Ram told Tom and Katya about a wise man who lived in India. The name of this sage was Patanjali1.

Ram spoke in detail about his Teachings, commenting on his understanding of each saying:

“The instructions of Patanjali are written for those who want to approach the Divine Perfection.

1 See also in the book “Ecopsychology”.
They were divided as ascending steps — in order to make the gradual preparation of the soul and body for new states more evident.

“So, Patanjali outlined some preparatory rules for those who enter the spiritual Path.

“The first such rule should be called non-harming other creatures.

“This is a very important commandment, which should be thoroughly thought out and applied in everything in your life.

“You need to learn not to harm other people and not only people — by our own deeds, words, emotions, and even thoughts.

“I explained to you once why I do not eat the bodies of dead animals. This is also included in the principle of not harming other beings.

“But I would like, not for you to imitate me, rather that you always follow the principle of non-killing nourishment namely from compassion.

“The second rule is truthfulness.

“This is the desire to always tell the truth. And in those cases when the truth cannot be said because it can hurt someone — then keep silent.

“This rule should mean sincerity, truthfulness not only before people, but also before God — with the constant understanding that He knows about us everything in every moment, and we cannot hide from Him either our deeds or even thoughts. Such truthfulness before God makes it very easy to perform the process of purifying yourselves-souls.

“The third rule is not to want of another’s.

“For someone it means not stealing, for other someone — also not to be envious. And in the end, the fulfillment of this rule brings calm satisfaction to
what God has bestowed, without striving for excessive material savings. And this, in turn, will allow one to send the maximum attention to the Creator and improve oneself in the love for Him through meditative practices.

“The fourth rule is freedom from all unnecessary, superfluous in life, which also distracts from the main task: the spiritual transformation of self-soul.

“This is very important: to learn to get rid of the excess, obsolete, from attachments to unnecessary, interfering on the way forward.

“If you do not clear your life of the old, then it cannot be filled with the new. Our old habits, desires, aspirations should gradually give way to new spiritual aspirations.

“The fifth rule calls to learn to love God, to become ‘charmed by Brahman’ (the Holy Spirit — in the collective sense of the word) — as it sounds in Sanskrit: the ancient Indian language.

“The sixth rule concerns observance of the purity of the body.

“This can be done only externally, through frequent washing of the body, cleaning teeth and the like. But it is appropriate to add the energy purification of the chakras and meridians.

“Then I’ll teach you this if you want.

“An important seventh rule is clean food.

“Acceptance of food should be in a favorable atmosphere of peace and love.

“Food should be clean, filled with the energy of good when preparing it.
“And let it be deprived of the energies of fear and pain, with which the bodies of dead animals are saturated.

“The eighth rule concerns maintaining a positive emotional state.

“To live in joy and to give this joy to others is very important and very much helps to overcome difficulties in both material life and the spiritual Path. We have already talked a lot about this.

“The ninth rule — the direction of thoughts on God, philosophical conversations, the reading of spiritual books.

“Necessary earthly affairs, including concern for others and other social obligations, should, of course, be carried out. But they should not overshadow the Main.

“The fulfillment of this rule allows us to turn the mind from the worldly problems — to God.

“There is also a rule called tapas. These are voluntarily accepted self-restrictions, self-discipline for mastering the will and independence from the desires of the body or wanderings of the mind.

“There are people who suffer and even get sick — because of the absence of something unnecessary yet passionately desired in their lives. But the voluntary abstinence from delicious food and observance of reasonable self-restraint from everything superfluous — both disciplines bring joy and health.

“And, if we apply these restrictions not only for health, but for approaching the Divine World, then joy multiplies in the soul!

“When all of the above is largely mastered, it becomes possible to fulfill the eleventh rule — the feeling of penetration of all that exists by the Creator!
“Also Patanjali taught that one should observe tolerance for those who think and act differently, always show kindness, mercy.

“It is very important for us to learn, ascending the steps of the Path, to be simple, devoid of arrogance, to overcome pride in ourselves, to learn humility.

“These are the preparatory rules of Patanjali.”

... Tom pronounced:

“And is this just the very beginning? It cannot be mastered in all my life!”

“Therefore, souls are embodied on the Earth more than once, but many times, in order — on their own bitter experience of mistakes and suffering — to realize gradually the need to comply with these rules.

“And further in the Teachings of Patanjali there are the stages of study, on which asanas are mastered. These are special positions for the body that contribute to the purification of the chakras and meridians.

“Then for this purpose pranayamas are used, which teach to move the subtle vital energies of consciousness, which are called prana in India. This contributes to further purification and the ability to perceive the energies of Life in the subtle and subtlest worlds.

“Then the stage of pratyahara follows — the management of the indriyas. And indriyas are like tentacles of consciousness, which are stretched out, like hands, to certain objects to which the soul’s attention is directed.

“Our thoughts and desires form energy ‘tentacles’ with ‘suckers’, which keep the soul in connec-
tion with what they are attached to. It can be objects of the material world, concrete people...

“And it is important to understand that the salvation can be reached only if to redirect your attention to God! Then, for interaction with the material world, only a necessary and sufficient part of the soul’s attention and forces remains.

“This redirection of attention is called — maintaining the concentration of the attention on God, which in India is called the word — dharana.

“There the stage of dhyana follows. It means the mastering of meditative practices, which allow to an even greater degree to fulfill all the principles listed above.

“And the last stage is called by Patanjali as samadhi.

“This is teaching the Blissful Mergence with the Divine Consciousness and fixing oneself in this status of being.”

“And have you mastered it all?” — Katya asked, delighted with the mysterious knowledge of the Indian sage.

“Well, let me just say: I can teach you something, but now we will not run ahead! Now I’m glad that you listened with interest and are ready to start working on yourself from the very beginning!”

[To be continued.]