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**THEORY
OF ABSTRACTION**

LESSONS FROM THE HOLY
SCRIPTURE

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This work examines selected chapters of the Holy Scriptures. An original theory called the “Theory of Abstraction” (Part 1 of the book) is used as a key. It presents interpretations of well-known biblical narratives that may seem paradoxical at first glance. The title “Lessons...” refers both to the lessons that can be drawn from reading the texts of the Holy Scriptures and to lessons on how to read the texts themselves.

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THEORY
ABSTRACTION

*The Word—the first and last
level of abstraction*

ABSTRACTION

What is *the Word*? The *Word* is an abstraction.

What is an abstraction?

Let's recall an example. We know that *a number* is an abstraction. A number is the quantity of what is being counted without the thing being counted itself. Let's examine this in more detail...

Six apples are six apples. It seems that this is not yet an abstraction. After all, apples are real.

The word "six" is a numeral (a symbol), i.e., a term denoting the quantity of identical items in a group. It is already an abstraction, but not an absolute one.

The digit "6" is a representation of the numeral. It is also an abstraction, and also not absolute.

The number six is the quantity of apples without the apples themselves and without a quantity sign (without a digit and without a numeral), i.e., *nothing*—an absolute abstraction.

But before the digit, there was another, intermediate abstraction: the replacement of one group of countables with another.

"...God [Amon] pondered and said:

'Your speech flows smoothly, like the Nile at Memphis. But if you are indeed so wise, then write the word "Amon" for me in two ways.'

The scribe took out an inkwell and a brush and, without delay, wrote the word 'Amon' on the door of the mud hut in two ways, so clearly that even speechless creatures stopped to honor God.

"If you're as quick at calculating as you are at writing, then work out the math for a trade like this. If they give four chicken eggs for one partridge, how many chicken eggs should they give me for seven partridges?"

The scribe gathered some pebbles, arranged them in several rows, and before the sun had even set, he replied that twenty-eight chicken eggs were due for seven partridges.

The almighty Amun beamed with a smile, seeing such an outstanding sage before him..." [B. Prus, The Pharaoh].

Could it be that this outstanding sage did not know the multiplication table?

He didn't! This ancient legend shows that the sage's level of abstraction was sufficient to replace partridges and chicken eggs with pebbles (intermediate abstraction), but insufficient to do without objects altogether. Nevertheless, for its time, this was a great achievement. It was another step in abstraction.

Think back to your first grade. At first, you counted actual apples. Then you counted apples on your fingers. Then you were asked to count apples using counting sticks. Describing the number of apples—which aren't always at hand—using counting sticks—which are always at hand—is already a huge step for a first grader.

The next step, they say, was taken by those ancient people who devised the multiplication table. But this, too, was an intermediate step. Here, the digits are merely symbols denoting the number of units in a group. Numbers do not yet exist.

Numbers appear later, as an abstraction of a set. A set is a higher level of abstraction than a group.

In a group, each unit is separate. In a set, all elements are fused together and form something unified, whole, and indivisible.

So, we can identify three stages here:

Stage 1 — distinguishing and understanding a group and indicating the number of units in the group using some other group (, a group of fingers or sticks);

Stage 2 — distinguishing and understanding an abstract group (a group in general) and denoting the number of units in it using numerals or symbols—digits.

Stage 3 — distinguishing and understanding an abstract set (in which individual units are not distinguished) and its corresponding abstraction — a number. The digits and numerals remain the same.

Thus, initially, *the* unified physical *World* is broken down into a multitude of abstractions. Then, they are grouped according to certain characteristics, and subsequently, *the World* becomes unified again, but now at a new, higher level.

Now we can reconstruct the chronology of events (the creation of the world in human consciousness).

In the beginning—the separation of a certain part from the unified, eternal, and infinite, within boundaries discerned by humans (discrimination).

Then, the assignment of a sign to this part (a word-sign, a number, a drawing), followed by the replacement of the sign with a complete abstraction (a number, *the Word*), and a return to the original unified whole on a new level.

Every person born into the world masters all the levels of abstraction that were traversed by previous generations. They master them through learning. And in the first five years of schooling, a child travels a path equivalent to tens of thousands of years of humanity's natural evolution. But they do not achieve this on their own, but with the help of *teachers*, who are the guardians and transmitters of the attained levels of abstraction. If, for any reason, the process of preservation and transmission is interrupted, humanity will be forced to start all over again.

NUMBER AND WORD

A digit is not a complete abstraction, but only an intermediate one. A digit is a sign, and a sign can be imagined. Nevertheless, the formation of a digit is an abstraction, a separation—the separation of some essence from the group being counted.

A *number*, unlike a digit, is *nothing*. A number cannot be directly imagined. It is the highest, absolute abstraction.

The Cheshire Cat from the fairy tale **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland** had a remarkable ability. He could vanish. And he vanished gradually. First, his tail disappeared. Then his paws, his torso, his head. The smile was the last to vanish. *The smile!* The head is already gone. The mouth and lips are gone too. But the smile remains. The Cheshire Cat's smile without the cat is nothing, an abstraction.

The word “smile” does not resemble a smile, just as the word “cat” does not resemble a cat. A word is a sign denoting something that we can perceive through our senses. But the highest abstraction of the observable is also called a “*word*.” Moreover, people confuse *a word* with a word-sign that denotes *a word*. That's how they say: “such-and-such is denoted by such-and-such a word.” Therefore, *a word* as an abstraction and a word as a sign are usually not distinguished. They are not distinguished in the same way that a number and a digit are distinguished.

A digit is a sign by which we represent *a number*.

A word is a sign by which we represent... *a word*.

A digit can be represented as a written sign or a sound. It is precisely this sign that we imagine when we speak of a digit.

A number, however, cannot be represented in any way. It is not a sign. As soon as we try to represent a number in any form, it turns into a digit or a specific quantity of objects. Nevertheless, we can operate with a number without converting it into a sign (a digit).

A sign-word can be represented as a written sign or a sound. It is precisely this sign or the object corresponding to it that we imagine when we speak of an ordinary word.

An abstract word cannot be represented in any way. It is not a sign. As soon as we try to represent *an abstract word* in any form, it turns into a sign-word or an image of an object. Nevertheless, we can operate with an abstract word without converting it into a sign (sign-word).

Some people think and reason using concrete images (groups). Most people think in terms of symbolic words (numbers). But there are people who think *in terms of abstract words* (numbers). This is true thinking. True thinking (*the true word*) exists beyond symbols, beyond language, and beyond nationality.

The transition to true thinking, to thinking in abstract words, the transition to *the Word*—is a long and painful process. Only the chosen few, a handful out of millions, reach this level on their own. But these are random flashes. What about the rest?

At each new stage of development, humanity masters increasingly sophisticated forms of learning, and at a certain stage, under the influence of professionals and the presence of a sufficiently dense information environment, the controlled education of the Truly Thinking Human becomes possible.

First *a gesture-sign*, then *a sound-sign*, then *a word-sign*, then the first controlled absolute abstraction—*the number*—and further—*the Word-abstraction*.

Only a human being is capable of abstraction. It is only through this ability that he comes into being. And the first

sign of the birth of a human being was the appearance of *the Word*. In the beginning was *the Word*, and through this *Word*, man came into being. *The Word was in the beginning of Man!*

Before that, there was nothing. Animals used gesture-signs (pose-signs) and sound-signs. But these were not *the Word*. They do not separate themselves from themselves or the visible from the visible. They do not know how to abstract. That is why *the World* both was and... was not.

And where did humanity's ability to group things together and count come from?

GENESIS

The evolution of matter took billions of years: from the Big Bang and the emergence of elementary particles to organic life. For hundreds of millions of years, the natural evolution of life unfolded: from the first organic formations to mammals. The reign of beasts lasted millions of years. And all of this—*Being*—is a state in which nothing was distinguishable as something independent. Everything is fused into one gigantic mass, in which there are no separate particles, no separate trees, no separate beasts... Even this gigantic mass does not exist: a mass has boundaries, but *Being* has no boundaries. But if *Being* has no boundaries, then it does not exist either. It cannot exist, because there is nothing outside of *Being* in relation to which one could say that it, *Being*, is.

In the beginning, *Being* is one, eternal, infinite. Nothing in it exists separately, in isolation.

The law of universal gravitation draws all bodies toward one another, and no body can refuse to obey this law. Attraction occurs through the gravitational field... But who can precisely determine where a body ends and this field begins?

The laws of *Being* cannot be violated in any way. If there is oxygen and a certain temperature is reached, a tree cannot help but catch fire. If a predator is hungry and has sensed prey, the chase is inevitable. The beast reacts to what is dictated by its instincts and reflexes, both conditioned and unconditioned. Through them, it is connected to the rest of the world in a single *Being*. And in these reactions, the beast is inseparable from the source of the stimulus. The predator and its prey are inseparable. The predator, obeying instincts and reflexes, tries to catch up

with its prey; the prey, also obeying reflexes and instincts, tries to escape. One might say that universal gravitation is an unconditional reflex. Obeying it, objects, planets, and worlds are drawn to one another... Everything is a single system.

Let us imagine a world in which all sensations are merely reactions to stimuli: the sun, warmth, light—pleasant sensations; rain, cold—time to take shelter; hunger—time to hunt, and so on. Any object, phenomenon, living being, anything at all—evokes in you only a reaction fixed by reflexes and preserved by instincts, and therefore cannot be distinguished as something isolated, separate, independent of you. Just as your hand is an extension of you, so is the fire of the campfire an extension of your hand. And if you get burned, where does the fire end and your hand begin? And where does your hand end and you begin? No choice, no options, no sorrows or griefs, no hopes, doubts, or disappointments...

A primal paradise?

Being!

And it lasted until the appearance of *Man*.

Man emerged from *Being* and created *the World*, distinguishing it, knowing it.

But what is knowledge?

KNOWLEDGE IS THE END OF BEING

Outside of Man, in the world of beasts, there is no knowledge. Reflexes and instincts are not knowledge. A beast does not even know itself. And in a reflection in water or in a mirror, it cannot see itself. It cannot, because it cannot separate itself from itself. Only *a human being* can do this. And this ability is abstraction. The new being separated itself from the world of animals and split *Being* precisely thanks to the emergence of this ability.

But before recognizing and distinguishing itself, humanity recognized and distinguished the surrounding world. No animal can do this either.

But how did a human do this?

Man stepped out of *Being*. He stepped out through the ability to abstract. For him, *the World* first came into being. And this became the beginning of Man... and of *the World*.

Human memory retains abstract images and the symbols associated with them. *Thinking* is an operation on abstractions and the basis for decision-making. And these decisions are no longer reflexes or instincts. Because the abstraction has just come into being, and it never existed before. It does not even exist after its creation, because it is an abstraction. And how can one develop a reflex for something that has never existed and does not exist?

At the beginning, a human is a being who has just acquired the ability to abstract, but has not yet applied it in any way and is therefore no different from an animal. All instincts and reflexes are present. They completely control him. What is human is, for now, only potential.

But now they have begun to use the ability to abstract. The simplest and most important thing one can now do is *observe*. To observe means to distinguish. To distinguish what cannot be distinguished by the ordinary senses.

A beast cannot observe. A beast can only see.

But “the most important things cannot be seen with the eyes.”

And Man enters the first level of abstraction.

To observe, one must first distinguish something outside oneself.

The first act of observation is the separation of the observed from the unobserved and from oneself, from the observer. How else can one observe if one does not separate oneself from the observed and the observed from the unobserved?

The distinguished and observed part of *Being* becomes *the World*, begins to exist, becomes *existent*.

That which is, is the observed part of the indivisible, eternal, and infinite, artificially perceived as isolated, separate, and whole.

The observed (i.e., the existent) transforms into an image (abstraction) and receives its description—a sign. The preserved image allows one to perform operations on the observed without touching it, without it. And its sign allows one to convey the image of the observed and the result of a mental operation on it to another person.

An abstraction that has been preserved and translated into symbolic form is *knowledge*.

Every observer has their own abstractions.

The system of knowledge shared by a community of people is *consciousness*.

The physical world is deterministic. The world of consciousness, the human world—is free. Only humans are capable of freedom.

Consciousness is created by the physical human, and the soul, being born in the physical human, creates the spiritual human and... is created by the spiritual human. *The word*, here, is the foundation, the beginning of the soul.

The ability to abstract is the beginning of the human being.

Abstraction is the harbinger of the soul’s emergence in a human being.

THE BIRTH OF MAN

Suppose there is a first being capable of abstraction. But until this ability is applied at least once, it does not exist. It does not exist, just as there is no sound in a violin until the bow is drawn across it. And so every external stimulus elicits a new kind of reaction in the human. Sounds appear that did not exist before. And only now does the possibility of *observation* arise.

This new quality makes possible for a human what is impossible for an animal—observation. Observation and abstraction are inseparable. Only the ability to abstract allows for observation. Otherwise, it is not observation, but mere reflection. Moreover, it is the reflection of a certain property of the unified environment (*Being*) in a specific part of it, not of a separate object. A *separate* object without a human does not exist.

Observation is the first thing a human being—one who abstracts—begins to do. As a result of this first act of abstraction, *Being* breaks down into a trinity: *the observer*, *the observed*, and *the unobserved*—that is, respectively, into *Man*, *the unified World*, and *Nothingness*, relative to which *the unified World* can be observed.

But what lies beyond the boundaries of *the World*?

Nothing!

If there were anything there at all, it would instantly enter the boundaries of *the World* as the observed.

Observation is the distinction of an isolated part of the *whole*.

But to observe, to distinguish this new thing that cannot be distinguished by ordinary sight, a different *Light* is needed.

Clearly, we are not talking here about physical light—a stream of photons.

To see something, one must distinguish its boundaries. If a person does not distinguish the boundaries of *the World*, then they are drawn into it, absorbed by it, merging with *the World* and *Nothingness* once again into a single *Being*.

When a person separated from *Being* and distinguished *the World*, they “saw” its boundaries. They saw it through *the new Light*—that is, through the ability to abstract. The appearance of *Light* heralds the birth of the physical human being. Through *Light*, they distinguish *the World*; they distinguish their physical surroundings and their physical self, but they do not yet distinguish their spiritual self.

Light is the very ability to abstract. *Light* makes *observation* possible.

The beast cannot observe. The beast can only see. For it, there is no *Light*, only light.

For a time, *the World* itself remains for a human being something whole, unified, yet distinct from both *Nothingness* and from *the human being* itself. But this separateness of *the World* is artificial. *The World* is the first entity, that is, *artificially* perceived by a human being as separate, as a whole.

The World can be called a *part of an* absolutely unified *Being* only in the human imagination.

It is only thanks to humanity that *the World* begins to be, to exist—it becomes a *being*.

The existing is a part of *Being*, artificially accepted as a whole, unified, and isolated. *The existing* is the result of abstraction. Every result of abstraction, every abstraction, begins to *exist*.

Further, as a result of a series of subsequent abstractions, *the unified World* splits into the ordinary physical

sky and earth. Next, land separates from water. Then plants, animals, sea creatures, and so on are separated and distinguished. And everything receives its own names (signs). Ultimately, a person recognizes and distinguishes themselves. A person begins to separate themselves from themselves. The person themselves becomes the object of their own observation. And the person themselves receives *a name*.

In fact, a child, looking in the mirror, begins to understand that what he sees in the mirror is himself, not another child, long after becoming acquainted with his surroundings.

This is how a person is born. This is how the “I” awakens within a person. At first, there is the physical person, distinguishing the external world from their physical self. Much later, the spiritual person is born, distinguishing themselves as a spiritual being and... beginning to seek another person.

SIGN

By continuing to divide (distinguish) *Being*, a person creates signs corresponding to each element they have distinguished. A sign can be a gesture, a characteristic sound, or a drawn image. A process of knowledge accumulation takes place: the process of creating and preserving images and signs corresponding to them.

The exchange of signs—a new, previously unimaginable way of interacting—*is communication*. Communication allows for the creation of a new, higher form of organization within the pack. The preservation and transmission of information from generation to generation transforms the pack into a tribe. Only this enabled humans to survive in an environment where their physical capabilities were catastrophically inferior to those of animals.

How do you convey information about what you observe?

The simplest way is a gesture toward the observed object.

But what if the object is already out of sight? Then a description is necessary. The simplest way is a gesture resembling the object's appearance, or making a sound characteristic of the object, or drawing the outline of the observed object.

In all cases, the image of the object is separated from the object itself. It is abstracted from it and receives its own sign (name).

A sign is an artificial reproduction of what exists.

And how do you get more detailed information about the object? You need to refine the description. To do this, the observed object must again be divided into parts, and a description of those parts must be provided.

For example, take the same bull: distinguish and describe separately the head, horns, legs, tail, and coloration. The more parts into which the observed object is divided, the more detailed its description can be.

Thus, starting with simple observation, a person comes to know *the World*. The result of observation must be described. And for a more complete description, one must divide *the World* into parts. *Being* continues to split apart.

Now, humans divide everything into the inner world (themselves) and the outer world (separating themselves from the world). And they continue to divide (distinguish) not only the outer world, but also to divide (distinguish) the inner world.

DESCRIPTION AND MODELING

A more detailed description requires more sophisticated means. The first signs, which denoted abstract images, are divided into gestures, sounds, and graphics. The main characteristics of the observed—appearance, characteristic sound, size, etc.—receive an increasingly detailed description.

Observation is the act of distinguishing a separate part from a unified whole. It is the foundation of abstraction—the process of forming and fixing images, phenomena, and sensations. *Description* is the translation of these into symbolic form. *A definition* is the briefest description. In turn, each definition is assigned its own symbol—a *term*.

All *school* lessons are subject to this requirement. And everything is subject to a single goal—the transition to a higher level of abstraction.

The need for a more detailed and refined description requires the continuation of the process of differentiating (distinguishing) the observable world.

The External World is divided into the living and non-living worlds. The living world is divided into animals (biology) and plants (botany). The non-living world is divided into bodies (physics) and substances (chemistry). Let us call all of this together the philosophy *of the World*.

The inner world evolves from myths and paganism to monotheism and world religions. At the same time, human history is enriched. All of this together conditionally forms the philosophy *of Man*.

At the same time, the means of description are improving. Dance, music, writing, drawing, and counting emerge. Language is refined. Literature emerges—both to describe the qualitative characteristics of objects and phenomena

and to describe human emotions. According to , mathematics emerges—for a more refined description of quantitative characteristics. Together, they form the philosophy of *Nothing*.

Let us construct a model of the creation of the world based on the theory of abstraction.

In the beginning, there was nothing. There was not even nothing itself. There was the absence of everything. Let us call this darkness. In this darkness, as a result of the first act of abstraction by the first human, a point appears. A point has no dimensions; it cannot be seen. It is the first nothing. A point cannot be described in any way. It is zero-dimensional. Then a person stretches the point left and right to infinity. A line is formed. A line cannot be seen; one can only imagine it as a multitude of points side by side... A line can be described using a point; it is one-dimensional. Then a person stretches the line up and down to infinity. A plane is formed. A plane cannot be seen, but it can be imagined as a multitude of parallel lines arranged one above the other. A plane can be described using points and lines; it is two-dimensional. Then a person stretches the plane back and forth to infinity. The result is space. Space cannot be seen. But it can be imagined as a multitude of parallel planes arranged one behind the other. Space can be described using points, lines, and planes; it is three-dimensional.

So, space already exists, but there is nothing in it. Or rather, we have obtained nothingness, in which there is nothing.

How does something appear, i.e., how does a noun appear?

Let's delimit a part of a line with two points. We get a line segment. A line segment has a length. That is already something. Line segments can be compared.

Let's enclose a part of a plane with a closed line. We get an area. An area also has a size. Areas can be compared.

Let's enclose a part of space with areas. We get a volume. A volume also has a size. Volumes can be compared.

Our space has filled with objects, diverse shapes from which we can construct any models of reality.

And what lies between these shapes and models? They say—space. But it can be conceived in two ways. As nothingness and as a certain extent of something, that same ether, for example.

In the first case, space-nothingness is traversed instantaneously. There is no time here.

In the second case, to traverse space-extension, some time is needed, i.e., time exists.

And what kind of space exists in reality? Most likely, both. "Space-extension" is the third dimension, and "space-nothingness" is the fourth. Although in the latter case, the word "dimension" doesn't quite fit. There's nothing to measure. Therefore, it would be more accurate to call "space-nothingness" the zero dimension.

THE FOURTH DIMENSION

A singularity means that in the beginning there was a point. If that was the case, what was inside the point and what was outside?

There was nothing outside. There wasn't even space. Inside, there was everything, including space. The "Big Bang" expands the point, expanding space and everything within it... Although, it is not space that expands, but the medium. In short, we need to clarify the terminology. In our observable physical world, "space" is the medium. The medium that fills the voids between bodies.

In the model with an expanding point, the space-medium is inside it. Outside the point, there is nothing, not even space. Let's call this "nothing" — zero-space.

The space we know behaves like a medium because it has extent. Zero-space has nothing, not even extent.

Now let's take two objects in expanding space. Between the objects is extension, i.e., space-medium. And where has the zero-space (nothingness) gone that was outside the point?

It cannot remain outside the point, since the point no longer exists. And it is not part of the three dimensions known to us. This is the fourth dimension. Let us assume that it "fills" the voids between parts of space, ensuring its discreteness. And this discreteness is not discernible to us, since it is separated by nothing. Therefore, space has a cellular structure. Within the boundaries lie the cells of space, while the boundaries themselves are nothing, zero-space.

If a particle, such as a photon, moves through the spatial medium, traversing its extent, then the particle's speed is limited. If there are particles that can detect the zero-space zone at the boundaries of the spatial medium's discreteness, then their speed is not limited by anything. That is, they can be instantly transported to any point in three-

dimensional space through zero-space. To an observer in three-dimensional space, this appears as the appearance and disappearance of virtual particles in the quantum field. In reality, it was an instantaneous transfer. This means that the speed of light can be exceeded. One need only transition to the fourth dimension, in which there is no measurement or change as we know it. In it, there is no time, or time stands still.

Near massive bodies, the density of the spatial medium increases. All processes slow down. But at the same time, the density of the boundary lines within which zero-space is located increases. Consequently, the number of particles transitioning into the virtual state increases. For them, time slows down.

When supermassive bodies collapse, black holes form. The colossal pressure inside black holes forces matter into the zero-space zone, into the fourth dimension, making it virtual. The macroscopic world becomes a player in the quantum field, acting as virtual elementary particles. Every appearance and disappearance of matter at the boundary between space-time and zero-space slows down time for it. A portion of matter can spread throughout the entire universe via the channels of the zero-space boundaries. This explains the mass defect during the merger of two black holes. But this also implies the existence of mass inflation in a single black hole. It remains to be discovered.

But let's return to reality. And how does reality come into being?

Reality is born together with humanity—or rather, humanity gives birth to it, since it is human reality.

MAN AND REALITY

When a newborn baby opens its eyes for the first time, it sees everything at once, without distinction. After some time, it begins to distinguish between light and dark, moving and stationary. Among the moving objects, it distinguishes its mother, and so on. The ability to abstract allows it to break down the infinite, the eternal, the unified, and the whole into parts. For a person, objects that can be distinguished by the physical senses become reality. Each object receives a sign. Next, a set of homogeneous objects is grouped together into a set. The generalized image of an element of the set also receives a sign. But this is no longer a real object, but an abstract image of all homogeneous objects in that set in general. Consequently, a person forms an abstract world corresponding to the real world. And we have already constructed the abstract world in the first part. Thus, the abstract world from above and the real world from below converge and unite. This enables a person to construct the most diverse abstract models of reality—millions of models per second. This process occurs on a virtual level (at the subconscious level).

As soon as an abstract model of reality is formed that is more desirable than reality itself, resonance occurs, and this model becomes a desire. A person can begin to act to turn this desire into reality. The desire becomes a goal. Human activity becomes purposeful. This is the fundamental difference between humans and animals.

Operations on abstractions—that is thinking. There are an infinite number of ways to model reality using abstractions. Consequently, a human being is a dynamic, ever-changing concept. After all, the level of abstraction does not stand still. Humans raise it and elevate themselves in

the process. It turns out Baron Munchausen wasn't lying when he said he pulled himself up by his hair.

At first, only a few individuals are granted a new understanding, a new level of abstraction. Then the number of people who have mastered this level grows, and after some time it becomes the norm for everyone, until a new person appears who discovers a new understanding.

It took humanity thousands of years to pass through the first levels. But the higher the level of abstraction, the faster the process goes.

So, at the very beginning of human history, a being separated itself from the animal tribe, having acquired a new quality—the ability to abstract, that is, to separate something from *Being*, to distinguish it as an object, and to separate the image of the object from the object itself. The ability to receive, store, process, and transmit information in abstract form emerged.

Man succeeded in separating himself from himself. He can suppress his instincts because he can act upon himself as an external force. He can accept a signal given by another person, or he can refuse it. He can give a signal to another person, or he can choose not to. The abstracting human gains the ability to choose, which no other creature possesses.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

In one of the most ancient primate groups, a creature is born possessing genetic data unprecedented until then. Data that could not have been passed on to him by his parents. This data did not yet exist. But where did it come from, if no one passed it on?

Only one thing is clear: since the human was physically born, he had a physical mother. But she could not have passed on “human” genes to him. She did not possess them. So, were they passed on to him by his father?

But there was not yet a human on earth who could pass on “human” genes to him. *No one had* them yet. So he had no physical father! The first man could pass these qualities on to his children... But no one could pass them on to him.

One could say that the first man was born of the Holy Spirit and was the first of those “...*who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God*” [John 1:13].

One could say that this was a genetic mutation or something of that sort. But that does not change the essence of the matter.

THE ACQUISITION OF A NAME

Images preserve not only elements of the external world, but also the person himself. If a person is able to separate himself from himself, then he himself must receive an abstract image and its sign, i.e., a name. No animal can in any way give itself a name (sign), for it cannot separate itself from itself.

If a person acquires an abstract image and a name—a sign corresponding to them—then this information also becomes knowledge—an abstraction preserved and translated into symbolic form. Knowledge can be passed down from generation to generation...

In a tribe, information about ancestors becomes the main factor in the struggle for survival. The tribe's history is born. But every history must have a beginning. And here, each tribe creates its own myth about the origin of the first ancestor. In most cases, this is a representative of the animal kingdom, the most revered in the tribe. It could be a wolf, a falcon, a snake, etc. They begin to worship it.

As we can see, early beliefs and the tribe's history are one and the same. The tribe's history (information about all ancestors) and the myth of the tribe's origin are, for now, inseparable.

DEITIES

Why did the earliest members of the human race need deities? What is the point of worshipping them?

A beast has no need for a deity. A beast will never face the problem that arose before the newly formed human consciousness. As long as there is danger, the beast is on guard, but once the danger is gone, the beast forgets about it. A tiger chases an antelope—the entire herd flees in panic. But then it catches one of them, brings it down... The chase is over. The whole herd calms down. It grazes peacefully right there, near the spot where the tiger is tearing its prey apart. The sight of the mangled victim evokes no emotion in the herd.

But if a tiger hunts a human, the situation changes. A primitive human pack does not calm down after the tiger catches one of them. And the sight of a torn-apart fellow human evokes even greater terror. After all, now everyone can imagine themselves in the victim's place.

The earliest members of the human race had very little protection. Humans have no claws, fangs, horns, or armor, etc. Primitive tools could not save them. Any encounter with a beast meant certain death. The beast was invincible. The constant fear of it and the realization that it was impossible to fully protect oneself had to be overcome somehow. Otherwise, survival was impossible. Let's consider one possible model.

In the earliest human tribes, people noticed that as long as the beast was full, there was no danger. If the beast caught its prey, it would stop hunting for a while. But the uncertainty of who exactly would be the next victim kept everyone in constant fear. Perhaps some tribes figured out that every time a beast attacked, they should leave a sacri-

fice for it. This could have been one of their own, chosen in advance. The certainty of knowing exactly who the next victim would be allowed the entire tribe to psychologically endure the situation.

In the famous “Panchatantra,” there is a story about how the animals in the forest decided to make a deal with the lion. After all, the constant fear of becoming a victim at any moment is paralyzing and makes life unbearable. Therefore, it is better to come to an agreement and settle the matter. The lion would not hunt them if they sent him one victim every day. This provided a degree of certainty, and most of the animals (people) could now live in peace.

Subsequently, as human tribes developed and grew stronger, and as they gained greater security through the emergence of more sophisticated tools and defensive structures, the fear of a specific beast began to wane. The specific beast was replaced by an abstract image of the beast in general. Members of the tribe considered themselves descendants of this mightiest beast, and sacrifices were now offered to it. The more substantial the sacrifices, the more confident the tribe felt; human sacrifices were the norm.

The earliest deities took the form of a beast worshipped by the tribe. The beast’s reign lasted for thousands of years.

Gradually, a new quality (the ability to abstract), developed by humans, began to yield tangible results. The improvement of tribal organization and the refinement of hunting tools began to occur immeasurably faster than through ordinary biological evolution. The ability to abstract provided a quality more perfect and dynamic than instinct or reflex. The process of accumulating knowledge (libraries of abstractions) began to grow exponentially.

Gradually, the beast’s power began to wane. In the same story (Panchatantra) about the lion, the change in the

situation is illustrated quite clearly. The hare, who was supposed to be the next victim, arrives at the lion's lair very late. The enraged lion demands an explanation. The hare reports that he was delayed by another lion. The lion cannot tolerate another lion in his territory and demands that the hare bring him there immediately. The hare leads the lion to a well and tells him that the other lion is inside. Peering into the well and seeing his own reflection, the lion assumes it is another lion, pounces on it, and drowns. The beast cannot distinguish itself in the mirror. Only a human can do that.

The process of replacing the deities begins. The pure beast is replaced by a deity that is only half beast: the head of a beast and the body of a human. Most ancient Egyptian deities had precisely this appearance. Accordingly, sacrifices began to be offered to the new deities.

The same process gradually leads to the emergence of new deities in the form of a beast's body but with a human head. Eventually, the deities of the Hellenes completely lost their beastly features. The gods of Olympus now resembled humans in every way. Man had finally defeated the Beast. But the sacrifices continue. Why?

Previously, human survival depended largely on protection from beasts. Now that problem no longer exists. But a new problem has arisen. The human "pack" has multiplied significantly and grown into tribes. The old methods of obtaining food—hunting and gathering—no longer solve this problem. Food must be produced. We must develop agriculture or animal husbandry. The results of these endeavors depend largely on climatic conditions and seasons, as well as on cultivation techniques and selective breeding. It is difficult to predict anything. This means we must appease the new "beast"—the forces of nature. Accordingly, new deities emerged. The actions of natural forces, unlike the behavior of beasts, exhibit a certain reg-

ularity or predictability. Identifying and preserving these patterns becomes the primary task. In the same way, rules governing human interaction within the tribe develop. Traditions take shape. Traditions now determine how to produce and distribute goods. Behind every tradition stands a god. And the chiefs oversee their observance.

Improvements in production technologies made it possible to conquer this new “beast” as well. The traditional communal structure of society and the natural economy reached their peak in Ancient Egypt.

The next stage is linked to the emergence of trade and cities. Cities and trade bring together people from different tribes with different traditions.

The expansion of trade, the emergence of urban architecture, and the increasing complexity of craft production require a new, higher level of thinking. New, distinct elements, both in the economic and social spheres, require new terms. A new, more complex language is born. The library of abstractions and their corresponding symbols (i.e., the library of knowledge) grows exponentially. New types of relationships form. A single law common to all takes shape. A single law implies a single God above all.

By the beginning of the new era, a transition to the next level of abstraction had taken place. The inner self of man had developed and risen to the awareness of it as *a soul*, something that was absent in more ancient civilizations. But with the acquisition of this new understanding of the inner self, a new problem arises: is the soul mortal?

It was known that all people are mortal, and preparation for death was addressed through the rituals of the old religions. But while people were prepared for the physical death of the body, the question of whether the newly discovered soul is mortal remained unanswered. And the question is very important: if the soul is also mortal, then beyond life there is only darkness. But if that is the case,

then life itself loses its meaning. Why continue to struggle, to hunt for food, to build homes, to raise children, if behind all of this lies only a black void?

Now, the salvation of the soul takes center stage. Questions of preserving life and continuing the lineage recede into the background. The power of a single external God is insufficient to save the immaterial soul. A new, single internal God appears, who rules over human souls...

Today we are witnesses and participants in the transition to the next level of abstraction. What kind of “deity” will it bring? And what will the person of the new era be like? And who will teach him to be a new person?

EDUCATION

A constantly expanding library of signs is necessary for a person to communicate with others.

In fact, if a person is alone, they do not need signs. They have ready-made images (abstractions) that they can use without translating them into symbolic form. A solitary individual does not need language. Language is needed by a group of people. But how did it come about?

One might suppose that the first person decided to communicate what they had seen and distinguished to another person. One can imagine that he created a distinguishable sign denoting a certain image. But how to convey it? After all, that other person does not yet understand the correspondence between this sign and the given image. He still needs to be taught to understand the meaning of signs. And how to do that? By teaching. Through what do we teach? Through words, probably. But here is what St. Augustine wrote on this subject:

“We learn not through words that sound externally, but from the truth that teaches internally.”

The meaning of words does not extend beyond this. Even if we attribute the greatest possible significance to them, they merely prompt us to investigate objects, but do not provide knowledge of them [...].

It is quite true, and quite correctly stated, that when words are spoken, we either know what they mean or we do not: if we know, then we recall rather than learn; if we do not know, then we do not recall, but are perhaps prompted to seek that meaning [...].

When, however, we speak of an object that we contemplate with the mind—that is, with reason and intellect—then although we speak of what we contemplate as inherent in the inner light of truth—the light by which the so-called in-

ner man is enlightened and delighted; yet even in this case, the listener, if he himself sees this object, perceives with his inner and simple eye what I am telling him, through his own contemplation, and not through my words. Thus, I do not teach him, who contemplates the truth, when I speak the truth: for he learns not from my words, but from the things themselves, which are clear to him through God's inner revelation; consequently, when asked about this, he can answer for himself. And what could be more absurd than the notion that by my speech I will teach one who, before I even begin to speak, could say the very same thing if asked? [...]

So, if I were to ask you about the very thing we are now discussing with you—namely, whether it is impossible to learn anything through words when one is initially unable to grasp the subject as a whole—you would find this absurd. — Then, so that your faculties might be able to listen inwardly to that teacher, I would have to ask you and say: where did you learn what you recognize as true in my words, what you are certain of, and what you claim to know?

Suppose you replied that I taught you this. Then I would add: well, what if I told you that I saw a man flying—would my words convince you as much as if you heard that intelligent people are better than fools? You would, of course, reject this and reply that you do not believe the first, and even if you did believe it, you do not know it; but the latter you know with the utmost certainty. — From this alone, you must surely understand that through my words you could not have learned either the former, which you did not know when I asserted it, or the latter, which you knew very well; for even after I asked you separately about both, you would have sworn that the former was unknown to you, while the latter you knew.

After this, you will acknowledge everything that you denied in general, since the particulars of which it is composed will, in your view, be certain and clear, namely: the listener either does not know whether what we say is true;

or knows that it is false; or, finally, knows that it is true. In the first of these three cases, he either believes, or ponders, or doubts our words; in the second, he opposes them or rejects them; in the third, he affirms them: consequently, he learns nothing in the first, second, or third case. For both the one who, even after our words, does not know the subject, and the one who knows that what he heard from us is false, and, finally, the one who, if asked, could himself answer the same thing we said—all of them, evidently, have learned nothing from my words.”

This lengthy quotation from Blessed Augustine is cited to show that words, in and of themselves, do not teach.

Learning is the acquisition of knowledge. But how does this process take place? One cannot teach through words, for if a word is unknown to the learner, it means nothing to him and therefore does not teach; and if it is known, it still does not teach, because it is already known...

First and foremost, a person must form an abstract image of what they observe. To do this, they must be able to isolate something from the whole, the unified, the infinite. This is observation (abstraction).

As a result of observation, a person isolates a separate entity from the whole. Then the person forms an abstract image of it. Then they give it a name, a sign. All of this is description. In this sense, Adam was the first and only pure scientist and teacher, and Cain was the first student. Subsequently, all people will simultaneously be scientists (creating knowledge independently), teachers (preserving and transmitting knowledge), and students (assimilating knowledge received from others). True, each to a different degree: some more of a student, some more of a scholar. By the same logic, the *Last Man* will be the only pure student who will never become a teacher.

Something identified through observation appears before a person as concrete, as an answer: there it is! And if a person is alone and there is no one else, then questions will never arise. He will use this abstract image for himself, and

there will be no need to translate it into a symbolic form. For the process of assigning names (designations) to begin, a society must emerge. There must be several people. And these few people must already have their own abstract images.

THE FIRST LESSON

“And though one asks, the other teaches, yet the meaning reaches both from a single source of wisdom”

(Alcuin)

And so, a lesson in the first school. The first scholar must also become the first teacher. The scholar has already given names to certain abstract concepts and, as a teacher, must now teach them to the students. Moreover, the students may already have these concepts in mind, but they do not yet know what they are called. How will the teaching proceed?

– Very simple. The teacher will show the students something and tell them what it’s called. Pointing to a tree, he’ll say “tree”; pointing to a stone, “stone,” and so on.

– It’s not that simple. How will he know that the student saw a tree and not something else?

– How? I’m telling you: he’ll point to it. He’ll walk up to the tree, point at it with his finger...

– At the tree? At the whole tree right away? Will he point his finger at the trunk, a branch, or a leaf?

– Let’s assume that the student can’t distinguish the parts of a tree yet. He hasn’t reached that level of abstraction yet. According to your own method, for him there is only the whole tree, without parts.

– Very good. But how do you know that he distinguishes the tree specifically? Maybe he only sees the grove as a whole and can’t distinguish individual trees yet?

– But a single tree is so obvious!

– More obvious than a single trunk or a leaf? And what does “obvious” mean? Let’s not forget that we’re in a primitive school.

– The teacher must surely find a way to make sure the student is seeing a tree.

– That’s right. But how will he make sure of that?

– He must... Ask? But wait, how does he ask? That would require words the students don’t know yet. How did the first question even arise?

– It was probably the sign-word itself that needed to be taught, but spoken with a rising intonation, with a threatening tone.

Danger, a threat to life, is perceived the same way by everyone, and a sign warning of danger was probably the first sign-word.

The first primitive school was actually based on primal fear. The teacher had to uproot a tree and, shouting “tree,” chase the student with it until the student could distinguish it. The next time, it was enough to say the word “tree” threateningly, and the student would instantly remember what was being referred to. There you have the primitive “question” and “answer.” True, over time, manners softened, and all that remained of the threat was a rising *interrogative* intonation.

Clearly, teaching more complex concepts requires somewhat more humane methods. You can’t uproot the sky and the stars and use them to chase a student. Today, there’s no need to fear questions. In education, questions are the very means by which knowledge is formed.

With the help of questions, the teacher strips away everything superfluous from the concept being taught. And when the student’s answers reveal that he has grasped exactly what is needed, the teacher utters the word (sign, name) denoting that concept.

That is learning! Alcuin was right.

ABSTRACTION. SIGN. THINKING

Every living creature obtains food, defends itself against external threats, and ensures the continuation of its species—it acts. Actions are usually based on instincts and reflexes—both conditioned and unconditioned. This is the world and realm of the beast. The beast can neither change the goals set before it by nature nor form new goals. The beast cannot act purposefully.

Humans, unlike animals, possess a unique quality that allows them to set goals. And to achieve a newly set goal, new types of actions are required. These are purposeful actions.

Humans acquired the ability to set new goals through their capacity *for abstraction*—to isolate and distinguish something outside themselves. This isolated element begins *to exist* for the human.

It might seem that animals can do this too. After all, a squirrel distinguishes a nut, and a fox distinguishes a hare. We know that the retinas of their eyes react to light, and their olfactory receptors react to scent. But we do not know whether a squirrel can imagine a nut, or a fox can imagine a hare. And we certainly do not know whether the squirrel itself decided to crack the nut, or whether the fox itself decided to chase the hare? Did they have a goal, or were they merely obeying instinct and reflex?

We know only that scientists, starting with Pavlov, believe that animals are doomed to obey instincts and reflexes. Moreover, it is impossible to determine exactly where the squirrel ends and the nut begins, or where the fox ends and the hare begins. It is all a single system in which signals and reactions to signals propagate. It is roughly the

same as how we do not know where we end and our hand begins.

The question of whether animals distinguish themselves remains open as well. At the very least, simple observations show that in a mirror they see not themselves, but other animals. Just as a child, up to a certain age, sees not himself but another child in the mirror.

Thus, for an animal, in our understanding, nothing exists. For an animal, not even itself exists. For what exists is something distinct from itself.

In the beginning, nothing existed for humans either. There was neither the external nor the internal, nor the human itself. Everything was one, whole, eternal, and infinite. Let us call this great unity "*being*."

Man, using his ability to abstract, has learned to isolate certain parts from this Being. He can *observe* the resulting parts, that is, consider them independently of both Being and himself. He distinguishes them. Moreover, to observe, in this context, does not mean to look. An animal can look, but it cannot observe.

The process of isolating and distinguishing parts of a single, eternal, and infinite existence in human consciousness is called *abstraction*.

A part of existence perceived by a human as a separate whole is *an abstraction*.

The isolated, distinguished parts begin *to exist* for the human being.

And what was the result of the first abstraction?

As a result of the first abstraction, humans distinguished from existence *the physical world (the observed)*, *nothingness (the unobserved)*, and *themselves (the observer)*.

This inseparable trinity was at the beginning of everything.

The physical world — a part of existence discernible by human senses.

Perceptible means having boundaries. At first, the physical world was one for humans. And what lay beyond its limits, beyond its boundaries?

Beyond the boundary of the physical world was *nothingness*.

Nothingness is an important part of existence. Without this *nothingness*, we cannot imagine the boundaries of the physical world, and therefore the physical world itself. Without *nothingness*, there is nothing.

Nothingness is an indistinguishable part of existence.

Through further abstraction, humans break down the physical world into separate parts (abstractions). They perceive each of these parts as something separate, a whole. Thus, the sun, sky, earth, water, etc., come into being for them. Each distinct (abstracted) entity begins to exist for humans. There is still nothing between the objects.

Later, a person unites homogeneous parts (i.e., homogeneous existing entities) into an abstraction of a higher order—an *absolute abstraction*.

For example, at first a person distinguishes a specific apple, then distinguishes different varieties of apples, and later forms an image of the apple in general. This is how *the existent* appears.

Being is a generalized image of a multitude of homogeneous existents—an absolute abstraction.

A person assigns *a sign* to every result of abstraction. Sounds, gestures, written symbols, etc., can serve as signs. Abstractions and their signs form what we call *knowledge*.

Knowledge is the abstraction, translated into symbolic form.

Using knowledge, a person can construct both models of imagined events and models of their own actions. A person begins *to think*.

| *Thinking is operations on abstractions.*

Thus, thinking consists of operations performed on entities using knowledge, i.e., using signs and images.

By observing the physical world, a person continues to break it down into an ever-increasing number of existing entities. Accordingly, the procedure for describing what is observed becomes more complex. At the same time, the shortest variants of descriptions are preserved as single word forms and are called *definitions*.

For example, if ten people try to describe the same observed object, one can obtain ten different descriptions, and all ten may turn out to be correct.

But if those same ten people are asked to construct the shortest possible description, the result will be the same for everyone. The resulting shortest version is *the definition*.

| *A definition is the shortest description of an observable.*

A definition is always singular. There cannot be two definitions of the same observable. Otherwise, the rule of brevity would be violated.

Since each observed entity is unique, it can be assigned a designation, a word. *Terms* emerge.

| *A term is a word that denotes a definition.*

Consequently, the term “*human*” must also have its own definition. Let’s try to formulate it.

| *A human is a being capable of abstraction.*

The ability to abstract is the main difference between a human and an animal.

The constant practice of forming and applying knowledge, the practice of constructing and applying

terms and definitions, develops a new quality in humans—the ability to act according to established rules. Let's call this new ability *literacy*.

| *Literacy — acting according to rules.*

A literate person uses terms and definitions, i.e., speaks concisely and precisely. An illiterate person, on the other hand, is forced to use rather lengthy descriptions.

Just as there are connections between phenomena, there can also be connections between objects (entities). These, too, can be identified and described using abstract symbols—*concepts*.

For example, there is a connection between the distance traveled and the time taken to do so. The longer you drive, the farther you go. We describe this connection with the concept of *speed*. Speed is the distance traveled per unit of time. Speed is a concept, i.e., a term denoting the relationship between the quantities of distance and time. When we hear that a car's speed was 60 km/h, we understand that the car traveled an average of 60 km per hour.

| *A concept is a term denoting the relationship between quantities or phenomena.*

A knowledge base includes the entire set of symbols and their corresponding abstractions. These include both terms and concepts.

The ability to use knowledge allows a person to model a state that is more favorable to them than the current one. This new modeled state is called a thought. A thought becomes a *goal* when a person begins to act.

| *A goal is an abstract model of the desired state.*

To achieve a new goal, new types of actions are needed. And these actions are no longer the result of instincts and reflexes. They are purposeful actions.

Consequently, a person is a being capable of acting purposefully. This means that there is a certain realm in which a person is free from the shackles of instincts and reflexes. Moreover, this realm is constantly expanding. Within this realm, a person gains the freedom to choose their actions.

An animal does not possess such freedom. Or, at the very least, the scope of an animal's freedom of action is infinitesimally small.

We have said that, based on known connections between abstractions and their symbols, one can construct models of new states. The desired result obtained becomes the goal. But how does one achieve this goal? What needs to be done? How should one act? After all, humans do not have options for actions programmed at the level of instincts and reflexes. No, because the goal has only just appeared; it did not exist before. Consequently, one must find options for new actions oneself and construct sequences of actions leading to the goal.

How do you do that?

One can use trial and error. It is a difficult and dangerous path. Or one can construct abstract models of actions and their sequences and choose the best option. That is, one can apply *analysis*.

In any case, the sequence of actions leading to the set goal that you find is saved as a *rule*.

| *A rule—the result of analysis—is a sequence of actions leading to a set goal.*

Repeated use of the same rule leads to the formation of a *skill*. That is, a certain sequence of actions is carried out on a subconscious level, automatically. Something resembling a conditioned reflex emerges.

| *A skill is an action performed according to rules, brought to the point of automaticity.*

Refining skills in the application of knowledge forms *language*. *Speech* emerges. Speech allows a person to communicate with another person on a completely different level. Cooperation emerges—joint, coordinated activity aimed at achieving a common goal.

THE THEORY OF COGNITIVE RESONANCE

How does a person think? How does a particular thought come to them? Can a person control their thinking? And finally, what is thinking?

First, some brief conclusions from previous theories.

A human is a being capable of abstraction. Abstraction is the process of distinguishing and isolating the existent from existence. An abstraction and the sign assigned to it constitute knowledge. Operations on abstractions constitute thinking. The result of thinking is a thought, a model of reality. A model of reality that is more desirable than reality itself is a desire. Desire accompanied by action is a goal. Activity aimed at achieving a goal—purposeful action—is unique to humans. This activity requires energy (resources). Resources are limited. Economic theory is designed to describe the patterns in this sphere of human activity.

So far, everything seems to be going smoothly. But!

Let's say our brain is a supercomputer. It performs a thousand trillion operations per second. How does a person manage, out of trillions of models of reality, to recognize and single out the one they like? After all, that's physically impossible!

But somehow it happens: a person sets goals.

Reflections on this topic have always hit an insurmountable wall. In fact, reflections on thinking—which generates a billion thoughts per second—cannot possibly explain how the best thought is selected, since this explanation— —is also the result of selecting the best thought. It turns out to be a vicious circle. We need to break it.

1

To break the vicious circle, we use differential calculus. We break the thought process down into infinitesimally small intervals and handle a billion operations per second. We obtain the change in thought at a given moment, i.e., practically a new thought. It is clear that the limit of differentiation cannot be infinitely small, otherwise the thought is lost. Consequently, we can say that there is a minimal component of thought—a quantum of thought. And if a thought is a model of reality, the structural element of which is abstraction, then abstraction is a quantum of thought. What is the magnitude of this quantum?

The magnitude of the quantum is determined by the frequency of its wave's oscillations... Consequently, we must assume that abstraction has a wave structure with a given minimum energy (frequency). In quantum mechanics, this minimum energy is Planck's constant (h). The energy of a wave is a multiple of h and is a function of the frequency of oscillation. That is, the energy of any object is $E = h\nu$, where ν is the frequency of oscillation of the wave of that object.

Let us introduce a minimum energy for an abstraction—the constant d . Then, the energy of a thought will be a multiple of the constant d and equal to $E = d\nu$. Where ν is the natural frequency of the thought, which is formed as a superposition of the frequencies of the abstractions that compose it.

And what does this give us?

Every thought has a fundamental frequency that is modulated in frequency, amplitude, and phase. Every thought has a unique natural frequency.

And how does modulation occur? That is the first point. Second, where and how does demodulation occur? How can manage to isolate and demodulate a thought from the trillions of thoughts appearing every second?

2

Let's consider a model with similar functions: a radio receiver. How do we pick out the desired radio station among the thousands broadcasting on the airwaves? After all, signals from all stations arrive at the antenna simultaneously. From our high school physics course, we recall the oscillating circuit, with its natural frequency of oscillation, and the phenomenon of resonance.

Since each broadcasting radio station has its own frequency, by changing the natural frequency of the receiver's oscillating circuit connected to the antenna, we amplify one of the signals as a result of resonance. Resonance is a sharp increase in the amplitude of a system's oscillations when its natural frequency matches an external frequency. Yes, everything is clear here. There is a radio station, and there is a receiver. Signal modulation occurs at the radio station, and demodulation at the receiver. What does thinking have to do with this?

A human is a being capable of abstraction. A unique region of the brain is responsible for this ability, and that is where everything happens. In every person, this region differs, so to speak, by its own (carrier) frequency. It's like DNA or fingerprints. It is unique. In an infant, the carrier frequency is already modulated by heredity—the genetic makeup of the parents. As the child grows and develops, the carrier frequency is further modulated by signals from the external environment—education, upbringing, and personal experience.

Consequently, at every moment of life, the corresponding area of the brain has a very specific, unique frequency of oscillation (energy). This area is called the pineal gland. It receives a signal from another area responsible for abstraction, i.e., for thinking. When the frequency of one of the billions of thoughts matches the frequency of the pineal gland, resonance occurs. This thought is sharply ampli-

fied, and a thought “arises” in the person. This can happen at any time and in the most unexpected place.

3

We think. We reflect... Are we really the ones doing this?

Thinking is an operation on abstractions. But in the hypothesis presented above, it is not us who do this. It happens spontaneously. We only process the thought we receive; we are not its creators. The fact that each person receives their own specific thought changes nothing. It is like a bunch of grapes picked from the vine—you grew it, but you did not create it. In this case, we do not think, but rather reflect—that is, we perform operations on the thoughts that our heterodyne has picked up.... The pineal gland probably plays the role of this heterodyne. It both modulates and demodulates the carrier frequency. That is, it transforms abstraction into reality and reality into abstraction. It also performs operations on abstractions. It is a kind of transceiver that speaks to itself and listens to itself. It is our inner self, with whom we ourselves speak.

Let’s go through this step by step. At birth, every child is assigned a carrier frequency for the part of the brain responsible for abstract thinking. This frequency is already modulated by genetic information inherited from the parents. Throughout life, this frequency is further modulated by information acquired through education, upbringing, and personal life experiences. Under the influence of this data, models of reality (thoughts) are formed. Each model is the result of operations on abstractions. Moreover, each abstraction is a multiple of the minimum frequency (energy)—the constant d . Apparently, the energy d is a very small quantity. Each model or thought that is generated, accordingly, also has a very small magnitude. But thoughts are generated constantly and in enormous quantities, and this process requires a great deal of energy. Next,

thoughts enter, so to speak, the pineal gland, which is tuned to a specific frequency range unique to each person. Within this frequency range, the generated thoughts overlap with the pineal gland's frequency range, and when they coincide, resonance occurs, amplifying and singling out one thought from the countless multitude. And—eureka! This thought becomes either a possible solution to the problem at hand or simply a desire. If, to achieve what is desired, a person begins to act, then the desire becomes a goal. Human activity is purposeful.

4

I am not a specialist in neurophysiology, and researching how the brain works is not my goal. Since I am an educator, I work with children and teach them things, so I want to know how this works. For example, how to teach a child to think! Is it even possible to teach this, or does it all happen spontaneously? If it is possible to teach thinking, then while physiologists figure out the ins and outs, I would like to have—if not an exact one, then at least some kind of model or theory.

So how do you teach someone to think? They say you have to start by teaching them to feel and distinguish. But how do you teach a child to feel?

What is the first thing a mother does with her baby? She feeds him. The first sensation a baby experiences is taste. It manifests itself through the touch of the lips to the breast and the milk received. Once the baby has tasted food, he learns what hunger is. Even before its first feeding, it already knows what hunger is. Therefore, if it is not fed from the moment of birth, it simply dies quietly.

Now, to satisfy its hunger, the child, drawing on its experience, will begin to search for the breast with its lips. If it cannot find it, it begins to make sounds (cry). The infant begins to explore the world through taste. For quite some time, it will grab everything new and pull it into its mouth

to explore the novelty with the soft tissues of its lips and cheeks. Many parents think the child is about to eat and swallow whatever they put in their mouth, and, shouting “No!”, slap their hands.

But the same instinct first manifests itself in an animal cub as well. In both cases, once something has been tasted, one wants to try it again if it brings pleasure, and does not want to try it if it brings bitterness or pain. How, then, does the development of a human infant differ so much from that of an animal cub that the child learns to think, while the animal remains under the control of instincts and reflexes?

5

So, the first thing a child understands is the connection between the sound they make (crying) and receiving food. They distinguish food by taste and smell. Later, they recognize the connection between the sound they make and having their diaper changed... or having any kind of discomfort relieved. But there are different kinds of discomfort, their number grows, while the sound remains the same—crying. Then they sharpen their hearing. They distinguish the sounds their mother makes. Whether during feeding or diaper changes—they are different. The child begins to memorize them and already makes the corresponding sound or set of sounds for each situation. Sounds are categorized as calling, encouraging, and prohibiting.

Later, the infant begins to distinguish the mother not only by taste and hearing, but also by sight. Vision comes into play. Now the task is to recognize the sound that can be used to make the mother appear. Thus, for every action, desire, or concern, the child has its own sound, its own signal. For animals, there is one sound for every situation. Puppies bark, calves moo, lambs bleat. There is no distinction here, no articulate sounds. Since there is no distinc-

tion, there is no comparison. No comparison means no analysis and no choice.

In a child, the process of differentiation and separation continues. He distinguishes between drinking and eating, porridge and an apple, dad and mom, his little brother and the dog... And for each distinct object, he recognizes and memorizes its own sound, its own sign. The child enthusiastically learns to manage the external world with the help of signs. He forms knowledge.

Knowledge is abstraction translated into symbolic form. How signs (sounds) are formed seems clear enough. But where did abstraction come from, and what is it?

6

It must be said that the first visually distinguished object, for example, an apple, is an abstraction. It is something isolated by the corresponding area of the brain from the eternal, infinite whole. An animal distinguishes only gradients; it does not isolate a separate entity artificially perceived as a whole. A human distinguishes an apple, which means they distinguish its boundaries. But to distinguish the boundaries of an apple from those of something that is not an apple, one must look at it from the outside, i.e., separate and distinguish oneself, the observer. This is how first-level abstraction, or physical abstraction, is born. I do not know which new area of the brain is responsible for the visual distinction of object boundaries. I only know that this distinction had to emerge, and emerge specifically in the visual area.

The distinguished and isolated physical abstraction later receives a sign (sound). People, by exchanging signs, exchange information. A child learns precisely this: they obtain what they need by reproducing its sign.

As mentioned, mental activity—especially at the level of constructing a physical abstraction and assigning a symbol to it—requires a great deal of energy. And the

brain's primary task is the optimal allocation of energy. We need to conserve energy when thinking. A new region—the pineal gland (heterodyne)—begins to take charge of this. It starts to group similar objects (physical abstractions) and assign symbols to these groups. Thus, it is not a specific apple that appears, but an apple in general, an abstract apple. This is already a second-level abstraction—absolute abstraction. An example of absolute abstraction is a number. Not a digit, not a numeral, but a number. Any attempt to represent a number gives rise to either a digit or a numeral

Following the same pattern, a person begins to communicate using signs and absolute abstractions. Moreover, they begin to use them to construct models of reality. However, they do not do this themselves (consciously); it happens spontaneously. The heterodyne extracts the absolute abstraction in the form of a modulation of the fundamental frequency. The modulated region of the wave closes in on itself and is stored in the memory zone. This is how memory works... If I myself understand what I have written.

But what about thinking?

7

Synapses. Since we're amateurs, let's check Wikipedia.

“Synapse (Greek: σύναψις, from συνάπτειν — connection, link) — the point of contact between two neurons or between a neuron and a signal-receiving effector cell. It serves to transmit a nerve impulse between two cells, and during synaptic transmission, the amplitude and frequency of the signal can be regulated.”

They can be regulated! Perhaps not just regulated, but modulated. And let's also assume that the exchange between two neurons is bidirectional. The modulated signal loops back on itself and is thus preserved. And let's as-

sume that groups of neurons can also exchange signals in this way and store signals containing more information.

Signal formation and transmission require energy. How much?

We read there: “A healthy human brain contains about 200 billion nerve cells, which are connected to one another by hundreds of trillions of synapses.” That is a very large number. If we assume that the transmission of a single signal requires a minimum energy of $E = dv$, then the total energy expenditure will be 12 orders of magnitude higher.

The neural cells of the pineal gland (pineal body) store information inherited from parents and generate new information. New information enters primarily through the optic nerve. Individual objects (first-order abstractions) are distinguished on the retina, and each object receives its own set of signal modulations stored in a nerve cell. This signal is constantly emitted and absorbed by neighboring neurons. Similar signals form a wave packet—a generalized image of isolated homogeneous objects (a second-order abstraction). This saves energy. Storing a single wave packet is preferable to storing hundreds or thousands of waves from individual homogeneous objects.

If the impulse received from the optic nerve is stored as a modulated signal, then such same signals, fed back to the optic nerve, can form an image.

8

As long as a person is alone, they have no need for speech. Knowledge of the first kind is sufficient for them: distinguishing an object by an abstract image and an image by an object. But when there are several people, the advantage that the ability to exchange abstract images would give them becomes obvious. A sign begins to be used to exchange abstractions. A sign—a sound, a sign—a gesture, a sign—a drawing... An abstraction translated into a sign is knowledge.

For example, our heterodyne receives a signal into which the ear converts sound (a word). This signal has its own carrier frequency and corresponding modulations. One of the wave packets stored in memory, whose wave characteristics match those of the signal, is excited and amplified as a result of resonance. This amplified signal is converted into a visual image. If the conversion of sound into an image and of an image into sound occurs automatically—this is knowledge. If the signal (word) does not find an image or the image does not find a word—this is ignorance.

The heterodyne is tuned by heredity and the education received throughout one's life. The frequency band in which it can modulate and demodulate a signal is unique to each person. The more literate, experienced, and educated a person is, the wider this range becomes.

Humans have a region of the brain responsible for abstraction. Conceptually, the heterodyne is a powerful oscillator with its own carrier frequency. This carrier frequency undergoes modulation under the influence of unique oscillations, both inherited and acquired throughout life. , auditory, gustatory, tactile, and olfactory signals received by the heterodyne are distinguished by it and stored as wave packets with a corresponding unique frequency (memory). Later, each packet receives a unique label. The frequency of the signal's oscillations aligns with the packet's frequency as a result of learning. Upon receiving the signal, the heterodyne demodulates it and sends it to the memory area. When the signal's frequency matches the frequency of one of the wave packets stored in memory, resonance occurs... And we remember!

9

Memory. It has always seemed easier to explain how a person remembers than to explain how they forget. And then, here I am, having forgotten some word or name.

People prompt me: maybe this? No, I say, not that! But how do I know it's not that if I don't remember what it is? And at the next suggestion, I suddenly exclaim: that's it!

You can recall what you know. Knowledge is an abstraction translated into a sign. Therefore, a sign received from the outside must generate an abstraction. Let's say the sign is the amplitude modulation of a neuron (or neurons), and the abstraction is frequency-based. Together, they form a wave packet with a unique amplitude-frequency characteristic (AFC), which is stored in memory. If you receive a sign (AH), it is transmitted to the memory region, and the search for the corresponding abstraction (FCH) begins. And vice versa. If this fails, it means you either cannot remember, or this packet is not in your memory at all. If it succeeds—you have remembered! A corresponding wave packet is generated. This packet is transmitted to the control region, and if there is a similar neuron there with the same AFT, resonance occurs. The signal is amplified and sent to the corresponding brain regions for visual, auditory, tactile, etc., demodulation. The person receives visual, auditory, or gustatory sensations.

Conversely, external physical signals are converted into amplitude-modulated electrical oscillations and transmitted to the corresponding brain region. There, they undergo frequency modulation by the corresponding abstraction (sign). The resulting packet is transmitted to the memory region and stored there.

The control of the body's mechanics occurs in exactly the same way. The heterodyne (epiphysis), having received a pulse amplified by resonance, recognizes the necessary motor functions—again through resonance—and sends the corresponding signals to the parts of the body. A person acts, moves, and creates fully consciously.

But this raises a question. How do several different people form the same picture of the world? If the world is

constructed in a person's consciousness, how do the worlds of different people coincide?

Every child learns to perceive the world through their parents and immediate surroundings. A self-replicating framework of the world emerges, which is refined and passed on to future generations.

10

Why was the theory of cognitive resonance developed? Certainly not to amuse neurophysiologists or AI experts. Multidimensional spatial functions—that's all true. But for practical work, for example, with children, they are not yet suitable. For building educational simulators or reference guides—yes, they are very suitable. For the guided development of thinking—not yet.

What does it mean to develop thinking, and can this process be controlled? The model presented here offers some answers.

Human thinking is not connected with the creation of a thought, but with its selection from among the few that stand out from the countless multitude of spontaneously arising thoughts through resonance. That is, a person receives ready-made thoughts and disposes of them at their discretion. If they wish, they put them into practice; if not, they leave them as mere thoughts.

The whole point lies in the range of thoughts selected by resonance. It is precisely this that varies depending on heredity, education, life experience, and so on. Consequently, teaching a child to think means expanding the range of modulated neurons, the range of knowledge formation.

Knowledge is an abstraction translated into symbolic form.

Knowledge can be formed by memorizing and retaining ready-made information. This requires a great deal of en-

ergy, which the brain actively resists. A child does not want to learn this way.

However, knowledge can be formed by developing the skills of differentiation, comparison, and abstraction. In this case, a process of self-sustaining subconscious reproduction of new neural connections is triggered. The process is continuous and proceeds with minimal energy expenditure. Moreover, cognitive resonance gives neurons more energy, which the brain is incredibly happy about. The child is thrilled by the new knowledge gained and exclaims, “Wow!” They want more and more of this “wow.” They want to learn! Active work is underway to modulate the carrier frequency in the pineal gland. Upon reaching a certain energy level, a sudden change in the wave packet occurs, and the child, as it were, moves to a higher level of abstraction. To a higher human level.

LEVELS OF ABSTRACTION

Every significant change in the requirements for human qualities can be identified as a transition to *a new human level*.

People at different human levels can coexist in the same territory at the same time. Every person also passes through the corresponding human levels from the day of their birth.

The transition from one level to another occurs in leaps. The history of the individual and of humanity is discrete.

The concept of “human” is defined, first and foremost, by one’s relationship to other people. Throughout history, the distinction between “human” and “non-human” has been made along the lines of “friend” and “stranger.” Violence cannot be used against one’s own; against a stranger—it can.

Thus, abstraction allows a person to create their own human *World*.

Only now, having sorted out what *Being, the World, Nothingness, the Existent, Light, Knowledge, etc.*, are, can we proceed to the study of the most ancient source, where, by all appearances, the same very things are being discussed. I tentatively call the following section the lessons of Holy Scripture. I understand that the first lines of the “Lessons...” may cause frustration for the reader. Everything is twisted in a way that is very unclear and abstruse: the *sky* is not the sky, *the earth* is not the earth, *water* is not water. And beyond *the World lies Nothing...*

But let the reader not be quick to put the book aside. It is only at first glance that the description seems incomprehensible and confusing. Later, as you gradually master this new language and everything falls into place, you will be enchanted by the simplicity and harmony of the meanings that unfold. And you will once again be struck by regret: why and how has all this been hidden from you until now...

To prepare for reading, try once again to reflect on how *a description* comes about.

To describe something, observation is necessary.

I observe. I am *an observer*.

The observer and *the observed* are not one and the same: there must be a boundary between them. Otherwise, everything will merge.

To distinguish *the observed*, *the observer* must distinguish its boundaries, beyond which, of course, there must be *the unobserved*.

So, for observation to occur, there must be at least three elements: *the observer*, *the observed*, and *the unobserved*.

Now try to imagine what would happen if you removed at least one of these three elements.

Let's remove the unobserved.

In that case, *the observed* will disappear as well. *The observed* will cease to have boundaries beyond which *the unobserved* would be expected to lie. But we have removed *the unobserved*. Therefore, the boundaries have also disappeared.

The absence of boundaries between *the observable* and *the unobservable* leads to *the observer* disappearing as well.

Now let's try removing *the observable*. The result will be the same. And what will happen if we remove *the observer*?

There is *the observable*, there is the unobservable... But since there is no *observer*, it is as if they do not exist either. But they do exist... Only no one is observing them yet!

Everything will begin with the appearance of the first observer. And by the time he appears, everything must already be ready. Someone must *create the observable* and *the unobservable*!

The oldest source where the creation of *the World* is first mentioned is the Holy Scripture, the Bible. An analysis of its main tenets based on the theory of abstraction is in the next chapter.

**LESSONS
OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
THE BIBLE: IN THE BEGINNING**

PREFACE

“I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it.”

[John 16:12]

So said Jesus to his disciples. The same words could have been spoken by the anonymous authors of the most ancient manuscripts to their readers. For the vocabulary of ancient languages was too limited to contain the full diversity of emerging meanings. Even if a sage could designate something new with a new word, who could understand him? This new thing exists only within him, but for those around him, it does not exist; and therefore, for them, the new word is merely an incomprehensible sound...

And so they had to use a familiar old word to denote one, two, or three new understandings. As long as it was written down: whoever needs it will read it, understand it, and move forward guided by their new understanding. And only centuries later will this new understanding find its own Word, understandable to all.

Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? Eternal questions for humanity. Knowledge of how we reached our current level is the only guide to the future. But no one knows for certain what that path was like. There are only countless models and theories...

Every thinker offers their own theory of the origin of the world and humanity. And each claims to possess the truth. But few withstand the test of the ultimate judge—time.

Sacred scriptures, which have come down to us from ancient times, are a unique source of wisdom for the inquiring mind. They serve as a touchstone for every new

theory. One must simply be able to correctly interpret the text, which appears deceptively simple.

“*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*”

[John 1:1].

Exactly so. In the beginning, *the Word* without mention of God. Then—God in the beginning and the Word with Him. And finally, the Word and God as one. Moreover, the Word is written with a capital letter.

But let’s take it one step at a time. Let’s first try to figure out what the Word is, at the beginning of what it was, and what existed before the Word itself appeared.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more”

[Rev. 21:1]

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

*“In the beginning, God created **the heavens and the earth**”*

[Gen. 1:1]

The concepts of *heaven* and *earth* are fundamental to the opening chapters of the Bible. They serve as the starting point. Here, however, *heaven* and *earth* are not the heaven and earth we are accustomed to, but abstract concepts denoting, respectively, *the observable* and *the unobservable*.

In modern terminology, the concepts closest in meaning to *heaven* and *earth* are, respectively, *Nothingness* and *the World*.

In the beginning, *the earth* and *the heavens* (*the observable* and *the unobservable*, i.e., *the World* and *Nothingness*) were not yet separated from one another; they were indistinguishable, as the second verse states:

The earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the deep; and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

[Gen. 1:2]

The earth was formless, and darkness was over the deep (i.e., *the sky*)... What does this mean? And what *water* is being referred to?

Here, *the earth* is everything that can be observed, the entire universe (i.e., *the World*); *the heavens* are the unobservable, that which is beyond the reach of observation, that which lies beyond *the World* (i.e., *Nothingness*).

In the beginning, the boundary between *earth* and *heaven* is not yet discernible, and neither is observable: “the earth... formless and void... and empty” () and “darkness over the deep,” and therefore they are both a single, boundless, formless, indistinguishable entity, which is called *water*. In the modern lexicon, the most appropriate word to denote this concept is the word *Genesis*.

The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

If *the water* is subsequently divided into *heaven* and *earth*, then *the Spirit of God* belongs neither to *heaven* nor to *earth*, i.e., neither to *the observable* nor to *the unobservable* (neither to *the World* nor to *Nothingness*).

The Spirit of God cannot be distinguished or observed by humans. It has a pseudo-boundary only with *water*. Moreover, it is impossible to discern exactly where this boundary lies.

The fact that the *Spirit of God* hovered over the waters should not be understood literally: there was neither “above” nor “below” yet. It is, as it were, above the third dimension.

In Scripture, *the earth* and *the heavens* were created by God. But God Himself, by definition, does not create. If we acknowledge that He created something, then that something and He Himself are not one and the same. Consequently, there is a boundary between them, i.e., it follows that God has boundaries. But He is infinite. Nothing can exist outside of God: God is everything. But the prefix “with” changes everything. Here and throughout, “created” should be understood as processes within human consciousness. By God’s will, man has been given the ability

to create a new World within his consciousness. God, as it were, watches over this process.

God's and humanity's first "creation" was the primordial *waters*, which were later divided into *heaven* and *earth*.

The Holy Spirit is not created; He has always existed or appears together with water... By and large, they—*water* and *the Holy Spirit*—are, in a sense, God.

This trinity was designated in Christianity as "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." But for later Christians, *the Son* is understood to be Jesus Christ, which does not seem entirely accurate.

God cannot be represented in any form. Therefore, any attempt to represent God in one form or another leads to the appearance of *water* and *the Holy Spirit*, behind which the incomprehensible God is understood to be hidden. (Just as an attempt to represent a number leads to the appearance of a group and a numeral.)

So, there was One (the Almighty) who "created" Two (*the Spirit of God* and *water*). The Two gave birth to *light*, and through it, Three: *the World*, *Nothingness*, and *Man*. The Three gave birth to everything and, ultimately, *the Word* ("...and the Word was God").

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Let's remember that there is no man yet.

Let us read the third verse:

And God said, "Let there be light." And there was light.

[Gen. 1:3]

The Spirit of God, hovering over the *waters*, having fertilized the primordial *waters* (*Genesis*), gives birth to *light*. Let us recall that the Almighty did not create. He is both *the water* and *the Holy Spirit*.

Light could not have been created by God, therefore: “...and God said.” The impossibility of God creating *light* is indicated by the fact that He “said.”

But God has no need to “*speak*,” in the ordinary sense of the word, for to speak is to designate something outside oneself and reproduce its sign. God has no need and nothing to designate outside Himself, because He is boundless and nothing can exist outside of Him. And besides, to whom would He speak? To man? Man does not yet exist. But he will!

Here, “*said*” means that God laid the potential for the emergence of *light* in human consciousness—the ability to abstract—and there was *light*.

What is *light*?

At least here, it is not physical light, such as that from the sun. The sun does not yet exist. Moreover, there is nothing *observable*, since there is no *observer*.

The process of the evolution of primordial *water* (i.e., *Genesis*) sooner or later creates the conditions for the emergence of consciousness. But consciousness is not a direct consequence of material evolution, since it is not material in itself. Therefore, the participation of *the Holy Spirit* in its creation is assumed.

The ability to abstract is *light*, that is, that through which a person distinguishes and *observes*.

To *observe* means to distinguish something outside oneself, while being completely independent of it. Outside oneself (*the human being*) means not only outside one’s physical self, but also outside one’s spiritual self, for a human being is the unity of the spiritual and the physical.

An animal has sight; it can see. But this is merely a reaction to ordinary physical light. An animal cannot observe.

To *observe*—in our case—means to distinguish the boundaries between *the observable (the World)* and *the*

unobservable (Nothingness). This is possible only if one has the ability to look from the outside, only if one has the ability to abstract. This ability did not exist at first, but it was “created,” and this is precisely what is meant when it is said that “... *and God said.*” It is, as it were, the inner voice of the future human being.

The ability to abstract appears only in humans. He is the first to “sense” (see) this ability...

But let us read the fourth verse:

And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.

[Gen. 1:4]

So who saw? God? It turns out that God only saw and realized that it *was good* after creating *the light*. But God is the unity of *Water* (Genesis) and *the Holy Spirit*, that is, the absolute All. He never ceases to intervene in the details. For Him, there is simply nothing else, and He already knows the rest. And He has always known that *the light* is good, for He is Omniscient. And it cannot be that He “saw,” for this would require looking *from the outside*, including at Himself. To see means to distinguish boundaries. And this is a violation of the principle of God’s boundlessness and unity. He is One and Boundless.

The fact that God is all-knowing means that He knows everything at once and does not possess knowledge in the ordinary sense we understand it, for *knowledge* is an abstraction preserved and translated into symbolic form. For Him, there are no parts, no abstractions, no knowledge. And He cannot look at Himself from the outside, for that would again violate the principle of His unity. There are no two gods.

But man himself does not yet exist either, for he *has not yet seen (observed)* himself. That is why it is said that God *saw*.

But God did not see in the ordinary sense of “seeing,” but rather “...God saw the light, that it *was good*.” To distinguish between good and evil, to distinguish what *is good* and what *is not good*—only God can do this, and it is precisely this *vision* that is spoken of here. Only God knows the ultimate destiny of man, by which alone it is possible to determine what *is good* and what *is not good*.

And man, having received a new quality (*consciousness, light*), began to *see (observe)*, to distinguish something outside himself, and gained independence from the external world.

Man himself, according to the chronology of the first verses, does not yet exist, since there is not yet a person who would recognize or see himself. But there is already a person who, with the help of *light* (consciousness), has distinguished the boundaries of *earth* and *sky*. They come into being.

Thus *the earth (the World)* and *the sky (Nothingness)* appear and are created. By “creation,” as mentioned above, we mean the joint action of God and man...

With the help of *light* (the ability to abstract), man will subsequently begin to distinguish (rather than merely reflect) what is on (in) *the earth (the World)*.

And how does the appearance of *light* affect *the sky* (i.e., *Nothingness*)?

The second verse spoke of *darkness over the abyss*. *The abyss* refers to the future *observable*, i.e., to *the earth*. *Darkness* refers to *the unobservable*, i.e., to *the sky*.

Light was separated specifically from darkness, from *the unobservable*, and it is part of *the immaterial heavens*.

Light is not part of *the material earth*, and this once again emphasizes that *light* here is not understood as ordinary physical light.

Ordinary physical light, on the other hand, is a component of *the observable*, i.e., *the earth*.

The appearance of *light* creates boundaries that did not exist before.

And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

And God made the firmament, and separated the water that was under the firmament from the water that was above the firmament. And it was so.

[Gen. 1:6-7]

So, the waters were separated from the waters.

But what does "water from water" mean? It is clear only that something has been divided. Separated after the appearance of *light*. That which was indistinguishable before the appearance of *light* has been separated and distinguished. And only now do the concepts of "above" and "below" appear. This once again emphasizes that before this, the *Spirit of God* was hovering over the waters not in a literal sense. Both *the water* and *the Spirit of God* are one, and they are both one with God...

Before the light appeared, *the waters* had not yet been divided (*Genesis*); *the earth* and *the heavens* were indistinguishable, that is, *the World* and *Nothingness*.

The *firmament* is the very boundary that separated *the World* and *Nothingness* after *light* appeared, i.e., the ability to abstract emerged.

One could say that the boundary between *heaven* and *earth* existed before, but it was not *visible*. *Light* (the ability to abstract) was needed to distinguish *the firmament*. And it is precisely this *light* that will be discussed later, when they begin to speak of the end of *the world*.

Before *the firmament* appeared, there was *water* and *water*; *the earth* (*the World*) and *the sky* (*Nothingness*) were indistinguishable; everything was a single primordial *water* (*Genesis*).

Through the appearance of light, the World (earth) and Nothingness (sky)—the observable and the unobservable—came into being.

But through *light*, the observer—*Man*—was born from *the water*. For one can only see *the World* within its boundaries, beyond which lies *Nothingness*, by being outside both this *World* and this *Nothingness*. One must emerge from *the water*.

For comparison, the same is found in the Quran, in Sura 25, not coincidentally named “The Criterion” (Al-Furqan):

He is the One Who set forth the two seas:

One is sweet and fresh,

The salty and the bitter—the other.

He has set a barrier between them—

an unbreakable barrier,

(That never allows them to merge).

He is the One Who created man from water...

[Quran 25:53–54]

The process of material evolution began long before the emergence of *the firmament* (boundaries). Exactly how *Being (water)* would be divided, and what the boundaries of the new parts would be—this was not yet known at the beginning. After all, there are countless possible variations of boundaries. Only the appearance of a specific human being with a specific metric allows human consciousness (*light*) to distinguish the specific structure of *our World*.

At the same time, no one can guarantee that there are no other beings possessing a different metric and perceiving within a different wavelength range. They will divide and distinguish the very same *Being (water)* within entirely different boundaries. Within *the same Being*, there potentially exist many different *Worlds*.

BAPTISM

To see something, one must distinguish its boundaries. If a person does not distinguish the boundaries of *the World*, then they are drawn into it, absorbed by it, merging with *the World* and *Nothingness* once again into a single Being (primordial *water*).

If in the beginning there was only *water*, and man, through his consciousness, split *the primordial water* into *the World* and *Nothingness*, then he himself, as an *observer*, emerged from *the water (Being)*; this, they say, is the baptism of man *with (holy) water*. But this is only the birth of the physical man. He distinguishes *the World* and *Nothingness*; he distinguishes his physical self, but does not yet distinguish his spiritual self.

The boundary of *the World*, beyond which lies *Nothingness*, is *the firmament* born of *light* (consciousness) (Fig. 2). The fact that *light* is consciousness and that it appeared before man should not be confusing. Man, for man himself, appears later, only after he has distinguished himself.

In ancient times, *the firmament* (the boundary of *the World*) and the boundary of the ordinary earthly sky coincided for humans:

 | *And God called the firmament heaven.*

[Gen. 1:8]

The sky in this verse is not *the sky* in the preceding verses.

In fact, verse 1 states that in the beginning God created *the heavens* and *the earth*. But *the firmament* was created later (verse 6).

Thus, the heaven referred to in verse 8 is not *the heaven* from verse 1; it is a different heaven. And this is already our ordinary physical heaven.

For a time, *the World (the water beneath the firmament)* remains for man something whole and unified. But it is whole and unified only artificially. It is *a part of* the absolutely unified Being (*water*), split by consciousness (*light*) into *the World* and *Nothingness*.

The World is perceived as independent, unified, and whole only by humans. And only for this reason does *the World* begin to be, to exist; it becomes *existent*.

That which exists is artificially taken to be whole and unified. It is one of the results of abstraction and a part of *the* absolutely unified *Being (water)*, which has no parts.

As a result of a series of subsequent abstractions, *the* single *World* itself splits into the familiar sky and earth. Next, the land is separated from the water (the familiar water):

And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.”

[Gen. 1:9]

Here, the *water* under *the sky* (the firmament) is *the earth*. Its gathering in one place forms *the dry land*, that is, our ordinary physical earth, and only now does ordinary water (the seas) appear upon it. Which is what we read in the next verse:

And God called the dry land *Earth*, and the gathering of the waters He called *Seas*. And God saw that it was good.

[Gen. 1:10]

The distinction between dry land and water under the sky—that is, the distinction between the now-familiar earth and the gathering of ordinary waters—also takes

place in human consciousness. It is he who *saw* them. But man himself does not yet exist, for he *has* not yet *seen* himself. Therefore, as in verse 4, God saw—and did not see in the ordinary sense of “seeing”—but saw that it *was good*.

Next, the plants are separated and distinguished.

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth vegetation: grass yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit according to their kind, with their seed within them, on the earth.” And it was so.

[Gen. 1:11]

To whom *did He say this*? After all, it seems as though there is no human yet. Is there only Himself? But God cannot do this, since to do so He would have to separate Himself from Himself. And this contradicts the principle of His unity and indivisibility. It is clear that *He* did not *speak* in the ordinary sense *of the word*. Here, “*said*” means “inspired,” “commanded”... This describes what is born in human consciousness and defies rational explanation. He commanded a human who did not yet exist, since a human cannot yet distinguish themselves. But they already exist, since they are capable of distinguishing plants on the earth and separating them from *the earth*.

“*Said*” means that a person has already acquired a world of images or a world of concepts that can be designated (named, spoken). And a person has acquired the potential ability to speak. But he has not yet spoken. Therefore: “*...and God said.*”

Next, the heavenly bodies, reptiles, birds, fish, beasts, and man are successively created (distinguished by man at God’s command, since there is no rational explanation here).

On the sixth day, man recognizes and distinguishes himself. And man begins to distinguish himself, to separate himself from himself. Man himself becomes the ob-

ject of his own observation, and he sees himself. This is his birth:

And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

[Gen. 1:27]

Indeed, a child, looking in the mirror, begins to distinguish in its own reflection itself, and not some other child, much later than becoming acquainted with its surroundings. But to see oneself does not mean to see another real self. It is possible to recognize oneself in a mirror's reflection only by comparing it with oneself, with one's own image. But an image is abstract. It can exist only in human consciousness. Outside of human consciousness, in nature, in the world—it does not exist and cannot exist. That is why it is said that the image arises by God's command.

For a person, their own abstract image and the "image" of God are similar: both are immaterial, spiritual. Hence: "... *in His own image, in the image of God He created him...*"

Man (in the general sense) is a part of the primordial water into which the Holy Spirit has entered. That is, he is the unity of both water and the Holy Spirit, that is, the image and likeness of God.

But for now, this is still a physical human being, baptized with water. A person must discern and see the Holy Spirit within themselves, so that they may not only perceive their own image but also their own soul. In other words, they must separate themselves not only from the primordial water but also from the Holy Spirit. The first allows one to see their physical self, the second—their spiritual self.

And the spiritual man is born, and the Word takes on flesh:

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God,

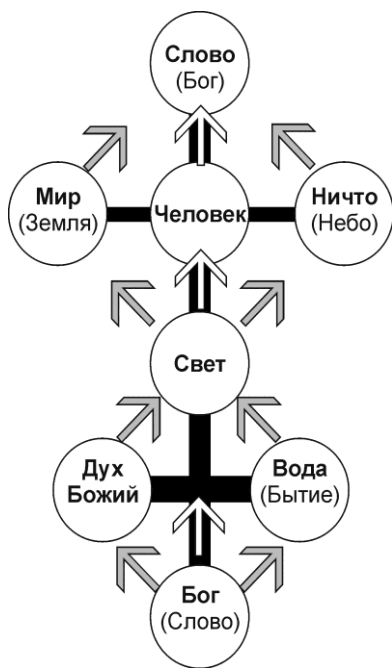
who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.

[John 1:12–14]

This is how *Man* came into being. This is how the “I” within a person awakens. First comes the physical man, emerging from (primordial) *water*, baptized *with water*, and becoming aware of himself, seeing his own image; and then comes the spiritual man, beholding his own soul, emerging from *the Holy Spirit*, baptized *with the Holy Spirit*. According to the Gospel, the first person to comprehend this mystery was Jesus. John the Baptist was the first to proclaim His coming:

...The One who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The One on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

[John 1:33]



According to one version, baptism comes from “cross.” In the East, where the Holy Cross originated, it is a sign of both protection and salvation. Baptism symbolizes the soul’s attainment of protection and its setting out on the path to salvation.

According to another version, baptism comes from “kresalo.” A kre-

salo is a device for producing fire. Hence, perhaps, resurrection—the rebirth (of fire).

So, at the very beginning, before the beginning, and always—God. Without Him, nothing makes sense. He “creates” *the primordial water (heaven and earth)* and *the Holy Spirit*, although the word “creates” cannot be applied here, for *water* and *the Holy Spirit* are our possible understanding of God. Then *light* is born (consciousness in man). Human consciousness (*light*) creates *the firmament*, which divides *the water: the World (earth)*, *Nothingness (heaven)*, and *the physical human* are born, and finally, *the Word* is born, by which *the Holy Spirit* is divided into human *souls*, giving birth to *the spiritual human*. The physical man is baptized *with water on earth*, and the spiritual man is baptized *with the Holy Spirit in heaven*.

In the first act of abstraction, man split *Being (water)* into three parts: *the World*, *Nothingness*, and *Man*, distinguishing them.

And this is logical. If we imagine exactly how the first abstraction took place, it is the distinction between something observable—that is, *the World*—something unobservable—that is, *Nothing*—and the observer—that is, *Man*.

Thus, a child, having just been born and opening its eyes for the first time, through the act of the first human abstraction distinguishes outside itself a single entity called *the World*, beyond whose boundaries lies *Nothingness*. Moreover, this division could only occur within the child’s own consciousness, giving birth to *the child itself*.

This results in the already familiar trinity: *Man*, *the World*, and *Nothingness*. But for this division of *Being* to occur, it is necessary for *Light* (the ability to abstract) to appear. Therefore, in the beginning was *the Light*, and:

...all things came into being through Him, and without Him nothing came into being that has come into

being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

[John 1:3-5].

THE SEVENTH DAY

And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done.

And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work that God had done in creation.

[Gen. 2:3]

Thus, on the seventh day, God *rested* from all His works. This can be understood as God's participation only in the first six acts of creation—acts that man cannot explain rationally. Next comes the seventh day—a time of events that man can understand and explain.

And now the seventh day continues, and now God *rests from all His works*, for man has already been created in His image and likeness, and the seventh day is the time of *man's* life and activity.

But in what specific works did God Himself participate?

This is the origin of the heavens and the earth, at the time of their creation, when the Lord God created the earth and the heavens,

and every shrub of the field that was not yet on the earth, and every plant of the field that had not yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground

[Gen. 2:4-5]

God “created” only *the heavens and the earth (the World and Nothingness)*, which are Himself and which, without man, had not yet been divided and formed a single

primordial *water* , that is, God “created” only this *water* “above” which *the Holy Spirit* hovered.

Here it is noted once again that any attempt to imagine, to “behold” God, leads to the appearance of *water* (and *the Holy Spirit*).

And there was not yet *a* separate *earth*, and there was not yet anything *in it*, since no one *had* yet *cultivated* (abstracted) it, because there was not yet a human being. There had not yet been a single act of abstraction, and *the World* had not yet been separated from *Nothingness*.

And in this *earth (the World)*, there was yet no one to distinguish *the field shrub*, which therefore *did not yet exist*, although the shrub had already been created in potential.

Verses 4–5 of Chapter 2 speak quite clearly about this: “...God created *the earth* and *the heavens*, and every kind of field shrub that *did not yet exist*... **for** the Lord God had not yet sent rain upon *the earth*, and there was no *man* to cultivate *the earth*.”

One might get the impression that this refers to “field plants” that did not yet exist and were simply created later. But Chapter 2 states that “...the Lord God created... every kind of field plant that did not yet exist,” since there was not yet a human to cultivate *the earth*.

Why justify the absence of “field plants” by saying that there was no man yet? After all, man himself would be created later: Chapter 1 clearly states that man was created after the plants. Therefore, we are talking here about “field shrubs” that both existed and did not exist at the same time. They were created before the appearance of man, but before the appearance of man they did not yet exist, for only man can distinguish them. This is the biblical principle of complementarity. The same applies to the creation of field grass, “which did not grow.”

Before the appearance of man, before his baptism *with water*, nevertheless, the natural process of material evolution was underway:

But a mist rose from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

[Gen. 2:6]

Since there is no man yet, the term “*earth*” here refers to *the World* in the sense of the cosmos, not to our ordinary earth. And *the vapor*, naturally, is not ordinary water vapor, since ordinary water does not yet exist: it will appear later, when land and water are separated. The *rising vapor* watering *the face of the earth* is a special process of interaction between *the Holy Spirit*, who was hovering over *the waters*, and a part of those *waters*, which would later become *the earth*. The appearance of man is being prepared on *earth*:

And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

[Gen. 2:7]

Man was created from *the dust of the earth*, that is, from a part of *the* indivisible primordial *water* called *earth*.

Earth as we commonly understand it did not yet exist, since there was not yet a human being who would separate it from *the World*. Therefore, *the dust* here is not clay, dust, or sand... It is that same primordial *water*, or rather the part of it that would come to be beneath *the firmament* (i.e., *the earth*).

God breathed *the breath of life* into man, that is, He united *water* with *the Holy Spirit* within him, making him *a living soul*. God did not breathe *the breath of life* into any other living creature.

But now man has been created, and all the splendor and diversity of *the world* gradually reveals itself to him and is perceived by him:

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He placed the man whom He had created.

[Gen. 2:8]

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

It is impossible to explain the origin of cultivated plants by human activity. In all of known human history, there is not a single known case of humans breeding a new species.

For human sustenance, the Lord God caused cultivated plants to grow in the Garden of Eden, plants that do not exist in the wild outside of human care:

And the Lord God caused to grow out of the ground every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food...

[Gen. 2:9]

Human life requires a great deal of energy—far more than any mammal of the same weight. This is due to the high energy expenditure required for mental activity. Animals do not incur such costs. Consequently, the food sources available in the wild do not satisfy human needs. Humans were able to discover and artificially sustain the existence of grains, vegetables, and fruit trees, which are far more nutritious (than wild plants) but which would perish without human care. However, humans could not independently create, breed, or “tame” any of these species. Therefore, the origin of cultivated plants is attributed to the fact that the Lord God created them specifically. But...

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

[Gen. 2:16-17]

Good and *evil* are known only to the Lord. Man is incapable of distinguishing and knowing good and evil. This theme runs like a red thread throughout all of Holy Scripture. It is impossible for man to know good and evil, so do not even try: do not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

For a beast, there is no good and no evil. For a beast, there is no death either. For a beast, there is only the instinct for survival and fear of a stronger beast. In a certain sense, for a beast there is only “fear” of a violent death... But for it, there is no “fear” of the inevitable, inescapable death that follows the end of the lifespan of any living creature. For a beast, there is perishing, but there is no *death*.

Man begins to understand that destruction will come, even if he successfully escapes predators, hunger, and disease. Yet the attempt to comprehend the forbidden *concepts of good* and *evil* can lead to the assessment of this event as evil, and through this—to the emergence of death itself and the fear of death. It is precisely against this that the Lord warns.

But for now, man remains in paradise.

And paradise is in Eden, and:

A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided into four rivers.

[Gen. 2:10]

The fact that Paradise is in Eden and that a river flowed out of Eden to water Paradise may mean that Paradise and Eden are different concepts. Eden is *the World* that emerged from *the water*. And the watering of Paradise is the construction of a new, more energy-intensive source of sustenance to support *human* life ().

This is explained in more detail in the Quran (*Quran 16:5–11*). And the four rivers mentioned in the Quran are not related to geography: the four rivers are the four main sources of drink for humans, consisting respectively of water, milk, honey, and wine. Humans can find drink, but cannot create it.

Thus, *humans* and everything necessary to sustain their lives already exist, but Adam does not yet exist...

ADAM

As long as man is alone, he has no need for a name, nor does he need to name anything. But:

And the Lord God said, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him."

[Gen. 2:18]

This is the first time the Lord God says, "*It is not good.*" Alone, man will not survive. And the point is not that he will not survive physically. A beast alone will not survive either, and physical survival cannot be judged as *good* or *bad*. Man, being alone, cannot grow, cannot ascend toward God, because he lacks the practice of communion with another person, with another soul...

It is not good to be alone from the perspective of the goal that the Lord has set before a person, but a goal that is as yet incomprehensible to the person himself.

And so a person begins the search for *a companion who is a good match for them*. A companion for what? And in what sense are they a good match?

Since man is created in the image and likeness of God, and God is unknowable, only communion with another person who bears this image and likeness makes it possible to develop a spiritual practice that can be...

A person, in search of a helper suited to him, discerns and examines everything:

The Lord God formed out of the ground every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

[Gen. 2:19]

It is clear that all *the beasts of the field* were created before the appearance of man, and not after. But the process of their “formation from *the ground*” takes place in the consciousness of man. *The earth* itself was formed in man’s consciousness from *the primordial waters*. Then, from this *earth*, within the same consciousness or by the same consciousness, ordinary earth and all the animals upon it were formed and distinguished. All of this is the work of man, not of God. God has already created everything and *is resting: the seventh day* has already come.

In fact, there is no need for God to bring all the animals to man to find out what he will name them. He knows everything in advance; He is Omniscient, i.e., the concept of *knowledge* cannot be applied to Him. God does not give names; only man does.

Man, by God’s will, distinguishes for himself *the earth*, the dry land, and everything on it, and gives names himself:

| *And the man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field...*

[Gen. 2:20]

This verse proclaims a completely new phenomenon: not only *the World (earth)* but also *Nothingness (heaven)* is already being fragmented and split apart. There are no names in nature, outside of man. *Words-names* are artificial parts of *Nothingness (heaven)*. Through these signs, it is already possible to communicate... But there is no one to communicate with:

| *...no helper was found for man, one like him.*

[Gen. 2:20]

Man is alone for now. Outside of man, there is no one like him. That which is like man can come only from man himself.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man; and while he slept, He took one of his ribs, and closed up the place with flesh.

And the Lord God fashioned the rib He had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man.

And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

[Gen. 2:21–23]

And so, from the *man's* rib (Adam does not yet exist), a *wife* was created for him. What "from the rib" means and why specifically "*a wife*," we will examine in the next chapter. For now, let us note that only after the appearance of the man's *wife*, whom he recognizes as "a helper like himself," does he begin to recognize himself as a human being (distinct from another human being) and receive his name: "Adam."

Adam is the first human who distinguished not only himself but also *another human*.

As long as man was alone, there was no problem distinguishing who is a human and who is not. I am a human, and that is all.

Now this problem has arisen. How do you determine who is in front of you—a human or not a human?

Thus, ***the first human level*** extends from the emergence of the human who distinguished the world and himself, to the emergence of the human who distinguished another human, that is, to the emergence of Adam.

In new terminology, one could say that the Almighty created Being. Man, by differentiating and fragmenting it, created *the World* and recognized himself as a human being. And Adam was the first to separate another *human being* from *the world* and recognize *him*.

EVE

Before the appearance *of his wife*, man was alone.

In fact, in the primordial pack, *the first human* is the only one who possesses a unique set of “human” genes. But in every other respect, he is indistinguishable from other individuals. And his offspring are also indistinguishable. Some of them may inherit human genes, and some may not. And everyone constantly intermixes. Moreover, according to the laws of genetics, the set of human genes can be completely lost in the absence of selection...

No matter how much all of the above might amuse geneticists, we must acknowledge that a pair of “humans” is necessary for the reliable reproduction of the human species.

But there is only one man so far, and no helper suitable for him has been found outside of him. And the Lord God forms *a wife* for him from the man’s rib. That is, the man begins to distinguish not only himself as a human.

By all accounts, *the man’s wife*, who was taken from his rib, is his daughter. Only she possesses human genes.

The fact that she was created by God means that there was no rational, premeditated action on the part of the first man to identify *a wife*, nor could there have been. The act of identifying, finding, *and* distinguishing *a helper equal to himself* was random and probabilistic in nature.

Now, having found *a wife*, man can forever break away from his former *animal* kin:

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother
and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become
one flesh.

[Gen. 2:24]

Indeed, for the assured continuation of the *human* race, a man’s daughter must become *a wife, the mother of all*

living. And only their children will assuredly possess human genes and will unambiguously be human.

The father and mother of the first man were not human, and man must leave them.

An echo of the idea that a man's daughter became his wife can also be found in the later story of Lot. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was so terrible that Lot's daughters decided they were the only ones left in the whole world:

And the older said to the younger: "Our father is old, and there is no man on earth to come in to us according to the custom of all the earth; so let us give our father wine to drink, and we will lie with him, and preserve a line from our father."

[Gen. 19:31–32]

So the man had a helper like himself—a *wife*. And they both lived in paradise.

And they were both naked, Adam and his wife, and were not ashamed.

[Gen. 2:25]

Only here, in the very last verse of the second chapter of Genesis, does the name "Adam" appear. This name can be translated as "He Who Came From the Earth" (from *the earth* in the primal sense, not in the ordinary sense). But his *wife's* name is not yet mentioned. And so *their* relationship is not yet judged: they were both naked and *felt no shame*. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil has not yet been eaten, so there is no judgment of "*good*" or "*bad*," and therefore no shame. Nakedness is not yet considered "*bad*," and so there is neither the need nor the possibility to feel ashamed.

But then *the serpent* appears and begins its famous deception.

The serpent was more cunning than any of the wild animals that the Lord God had made. And the serpent said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

[Gen. 3:1]

Why did the serpent *address the woman* specifically, rather than the man? The man had been warned by God that he must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. How the woman learned of this prohibition is unknown. Nevertheless, *the woman* did learn of it—albeit in a somewhat distorted form:

And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees, but God said, ‘You must not eat the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor touch it, or you will die.’”

[Gen. 3:2-3]

Man was forbidden to eat the fruit, but nothing was said about a prohibition against touching it.

Whether God spoke to *the woman* separately or she learned of the prohibition from the man’s words is unknown.

When Adam’s *wife* said that they would die if they touched the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the serpent objected:

*...And the serpent said to the woman, “No, you will not die,
but God knows that on the day you eat of them, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.
And the woman saw that the tree was good for food...*

[Gen. 3:4-6]

It is noteworthy that the woman saw that the tree *was good* for food before she tasted its fruit. This proves that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—

—is a convention; no eating of fruit gives a person the knowledge of good and evil. True knowledge *of good and evil* belongs only to God. But the serpent deceived them, convincing them that man could distinguish between *good and evil*, that man could be like gods, and:

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

[Gen. 3:7]

Believing that they could now distinguish between good and evil, Adam and his *wife* drew their first conclusion: being naked *is not good*, and they made loincloths for themselves out of fig leaves. Moreover, Adam and his *wife* hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden:

And the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, [Adam], “Where are you?”

He said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”

[Gen. 3:9-10]

The Lord God could not have failed to know where Adam was, but He wanted Adam himself to explain his strange behavior, and He receives the entirely expected answer: he hid because he was naked.

And the Lord God said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

[Gen. 3:11]

So: Who told you that you were naked? That is, who told you that being naked *is wrong*!?

In fact, until then everyone had been naked, and they probably knew they were naked, but they didn't know that it *was wrong* or that they needed to cover themselves; now they were covering themselves. That's how everything

came to light. Adam admitted that his wife had given him the fruit, and he had eaten it.

And the Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

[Gen. 3:13]

In essence, *the serpent* is chaos. But order is born from chaos. Chaos itself gives birth to order, and then becomes its victim.

And the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed above all livestock and above every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life; and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

[Gen. 3:14-15]

Adam and his wife—the first humans born from chaos (*water*)—began to apply the principle of "good and evil" and thus began to bring order to this chaos. They began to create order by destroying the old system of "*livestock and wild beasts*." The serpent is the culprit behind the destruction of this system, and therefore he is cursed specifically "*above all cattle and above all wild animals*."

But the serpent is also a destroyer of itself, that is, of chaos. It is condemned to *eat dust* all the days of its life. We must remember that *dust* consists of particles of *earth*, but not ordinary earth, rather that which resulted from the separation of *water* from *water* (the emergence of primordial chaos). *Dust* is particles of chaos. By eating *dust*, the serpent destroys chaos and gives birth to order. This order precedes the serpent; the serpent no longer has power over it; he can, as he catches up, only strike it in the *heel*, whereas order, turning around, will strike him in the head.

The Lord set enmity between the seed of *the woman* and the seed of the serpent, that is, between order and chaos. Here *the woman* is not the serpent's wife, but Adam's wife, the mother of all living.

But there is a price to pay for gaining the ability to create order. The Lord said to *the woman*:

...I will greatly increase your pain in childbirth; in pain you will bring forth children...

[Gen. 3:16]

In pain you shall bring forth children. No animal experiences labor pains. Childbirth is a natural process, and therefore it cannot be painful. But with humans it is not so; in the animal world, they are a freak, a genetic mutant with a disproportionately large head. Any other animal species with such characteristics would very quickly become extinct, as it would be unfit for life: difficult childbirth, a very long gestation and nursing period. Add to this the consequences of close kinship, of incest, as we say today: after all, Adam's wife is his daughter. There is a price to pay for this. And that is why you will give birth in pain...

There is another meaning here as well. If *the wife* became the first to bring order to chaos, then her bringing forth of order (children) will also take place in pain. For the true rule of transforming chaos is known only to God, and man will have to proceed by trial and error.

But Adam is also punished:

...cursed is the ground because of you; in sorrow you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
it shall bring forth thorns and thistles for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field;
by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, until you return to the ground from which you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

[Gen. 3:17-19]

Adam will be forced to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Cultivated plants require great labor and care. Without proper care, cultivated plants perish, and without them, the human race cannot survive. Gathering what grows in the wild and hunting wild animals can feed only animals, but cannot feed people.

On the other hand, cultivating *the primeval earth*—that is, continuing the division and differentiation of *the World*—is also no easy task.

The term of punishment appointed by God: until you return to the earth from which you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

Here it is necessary to recall that Adam was taken from *the earth*, which is not ordinary earth, and *the dust* is not ordinary dust. Here, *the earth (the World)* is part of *the primordial water*. Consequently, only after reuniting with *the water* (i.e., with the Lord) will the punishment be lifted from man.

How exactly this reunion will take place will be explained later. For now, let us note that these dramatic events herald a transition to a new human level: Adam not only recognizes his *wife* as a helper, his equal, but also recognizes her as *a human being*. He gives her a name:

And Adam named his wife Eve, for she became the mother of all living.

[Gen. 3:20]

At the same time, a new ability appears in humans: the ability to sew clothing. No animal possesses such an ability, and it cannot arise in the wild. Nor could humans have learned it from anyone. It is impossible to find a rational explanation for sewing clothing based solely on the natural, physical qualities of humans. Here, the intervention of higher powers was necessary.

And the Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

[Gen. 3:21]

Originally, clothing and jewelry had only a sacred meaning. They are symbols used to distinguish the social status of the wearer. The emergence of new social statuses is unknown to the animal world.

But the problem of Adam making himself into an idol remains. He absolutely wants to be like the gods.

“And the Lord God said, ‘Behold, Adam has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.

[Gen. 3:22]

The plural form—“*one of Us*”—once again underscores Adam’s delusion, in which he believes that there are many gods and that Adam himself can become one of them.

Indeed, the first results of applying the ability to abstract—to see *with the light* of consciousness—were so overwhelming that Adam could indeed have imagined himself to be omnipotent. But the freshness of those first impressions soon fades, and the routine of daily tilling the earth begins.

Adam is expelled from paradise, but remains in Eden.

And the Lord God sent him out from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he had been taken.

[Gen. 3:23]

Here again, the text speaks of cultivating *the ground from which he was taken*—that is, not ordinary earth, but a portion of *the primordial water* called *earth*.

The beginning of Chapter 4 confirms Adam’s breakthrough to a new human level. Giving his *wife* the name “Eve” signified recognizing her as a human being. Adam realized this:

Adam knew Eve, his wife; and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord."

[Gen. 4:1].

Knew. This word must be understood literally. He specifically knew her, accepted her as a human, and gave her a name (an image and a sign): Eve.

And only from a human could a human be born, and only now are Adam's children unambiguously human, and he recognizes them as human beings and therefore only now gives them names, for they are "human beings from the Lord."

CAIN

Only after Adam knew his wife, recognized her as a human, and named her, did it become possible to recognize their children as human beings. As a sign of this, the children also receive names.

And she bore his brother, Abel. And Abel was a shepherd of sheep, but Cain was a farmer.

[Gen. 4:2]

Only now are the children accepted as human beings and given names. And only now has the first fully human family come into being. And within it, new kinds of conflicts arise.

The first of these—the conflict between Cain and Abel—can be understood as a consequence of the growing human consciousness. Consciousness makes it possible to overcome animal instincts. The results of this overcoming may at first be the most unexpected...

Some time later, Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruits of the ground, and Abel also brought an offering from the firstborn of his flock and from their fat...

[Gen. 4:3-4]

This is the first instance of an offering to the Lord being mentioned. And this is a purely human manifestation: the renunciation of something very necessary for oneself, setting it aside for purposes that cannot arise in the living nature of a beast. A beast cannot, under any pretext, voluntarily give up its prey or food for some abstract purpose. A beast is incapable of this; it is entirely at the mercy of instincts and reflexes. Man, however, began to overcome instinct through his consciousness.

One might say that this served as a precursor to the emergence of future trade and the accumulation of capital.

But here another aspect also comes to light:

... And the Lord looked with favor upon Abel and his offering,
but on Cain and his offering He did not look with favor. Cain was greatly distressed, and his countenance fell.

[Gen. 4:4-5]

Cain could not withstand the competitive struggle. He did not yet know that chance (or God) largely governs here and that there is no reason for distress: there will be another chance, things will improve. But Cain was distressed. Why? Because his brother was more fortunate. But this state is unknown to the world of the beast.

This is the first manifestation of a human, not an animal, quality: the desire to have the same abilities as another—envy.

Beasts do not know envy. A beast may covet the prey that another beast has seized. But *to covet another beast's qualities*—never. And so the first human quality manifested itself in Cain. But this quality is new, untested, unknown. And God offers guidance:

And the Lord said to Cain: Why are you angry? And why is your face downcast?
If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.

[Gen. 4:6-7]

Here, *sin* is mentioned for the first time. Sin is not merely an attempt to distinguish between *good* and *evil*, but an attempt at *violent* action based on a value judgment of *good versus evil, right versus wrong*.

But the warnings are in vain:

And Cain said to Abel, his brother, "Let's go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him.

[Gen. 4:8]

Cain decided that if Abel were gone, he would receive all of God's favor. And he killed him.

Had he been a beast rather than a man, he would not have killed. There was no motive. But even from the standpoint of law or morality, Cain's act could not yet be judged: they themselves did not yet exist.

For the first time, Cain desired something human, not animal. And how to obtain this new desire? Just as it had been done before. Just as it is done among beasts. To take it away. There was no other way yet. But this specific quality that Abel possessed and that Cain wanted to possess could only be taken away along with his life.

Here one might recall, for example, certain wild tribes that until recently held the belief that by eating the knee-cap of a good runner, one would gain his speed, and by eating the heart of a brave enemy warrior, one would gain his bravery. And Cain killed Abel.

One can discuss whether this is good or bad, but only from today's perspective. For that time, however, it was a great sign of humanity's transition to a new level: humans had begun to distinguish *the qualities* of another human being. But Cain's path and Cain's mission end here. The Almighty shows that further advancement along the path of violence in resolving matters of good and evil is unacceptable:

...and now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand;

When you till the land, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be an exile and a wanderer on the earth.

[Gen. 4:1–12]

Anyone who begins to settle matters of good and evil through violence will be doomed to this: "...when you till the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." If you envy someone, envy them, but do not resort to violence: work harder instead.

And Cain said to the Lord: "My punishment is too great to bear;

Behold, You are now driving me from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth; and whoever finds me will kill me."

[Gen. 4:13-14]

Cain draws the correct conclusion: on the one hand, he has already realized that violence cannot solve the problem of envy, and that his deed deserves punishment; but Cain knows this only now, after committing murder, and did not know, could not have known this before. Therefore, he is in despair: *"my punishment is too great to bear."*

At the same time, Cain already understands that violence can be met with a response in the form of righteous force, and *"...whoever finds me will kill me."*

And so the Lord, noting on the one hand Cain's ignorance, and on the other—that he had become the herald of the transition to a new human level (a person's ability to discern the qualities of another person)—forbade the punishment (killing) of Cain himself:

And the Lord said to him: "Whoever kills Cain will be avenged sevenfold." And the Lord a mark on Cain, so that no one who found him would kill him.

[Gen. 4:15]

It is forbidden to kill Cain, but Cain himself is forbidden to live in Eden. There is no hope that Cain will no longer resolve issues of *good* and *evil* through violence. He did not repent. For this, he was banished from Eden:

And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

[Gen. 4:16]

The land of Nod can be understood as the land where the Cainites live, that is, those who use violence where it cannot be used...

And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city; and he named the city after the name of his son: Enoch.

[Gen. 4:17]

Here, in the land of Nod, the line of Cain continues. He has a son named Enoch. And Cain builds the first city and names it after his son, Enoch. Most likely, the city refers to a fortification where Cain and his descendants hid after carrying out raids.

Cain's *wife* is not named. This means that Cain recognized *his wife* as a "helper, equal to himself," but had not yet recognized her as a person and therefore did not give her a name.

It is only in the seventh generation of Cain's descendants that *wives* begin to be given names: Lamech's wives were named Ada and Zilla. Lamech's sons are also given names:

Ada bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents with their flocks.

His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute.

Zillah also bore Tubal-Cain [Fovel], who was a smith of all kinds of tools made of copper and iron. And Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah.

[Gen. 4:20–22]

Lamech's sons do not follow their father's warlike path. They choose entirely peaceful trades.

Here, for the first time, the first daughter, who is not yet married, is named: Noa.

Lamech himself embodies the warlike, predatory principle, and he is the last to persist in his desire not only to settle matters *of good and evil* by force, but also to take himself for a god: he himself decides what punishment will be meted out to those who dare to condemn him:

And Lamech said to his wives:

Ada and Zilla! Hear my voice; wives of Lamech! Listen to my words: I have killed a man for wounding me and a youth for striking me.

If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.

[Gen. 4:23,24]

Cain's descendants are not explicitly mentioned in the Bible thereafter. But those who persist in sin are counted among them: those who rely on strength when deciding matters *of good and evil*. They are, as it were, driven out of Eden again and again, eastward to the land of Nod.

And who remained in Eden?

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son, and she named him Seth, for, she said, "God has granted me another offspring in place of Abel, whom Cain killed."

[Gen. 4:25]

Here in the text, the name Eve is clearly not mentioned; it speaks only of Adam's *wife*. This situation—where the husband is clearly a human, but the wife is not always a human—will continue for quite some time. More details on this are provided below in the biography of Noah.

So, Seth (the promised one, the appointed one) was born. He will continue the righteous path:

Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh; then people began to call upon the name of the Lord.

[Gen. 4:26]

Unlike Cain and his descendants, the line of Seth is more pious. Seth's descendants are the first to call upon the name of the Lord, thereby renouncing the desire to become gods themselves.

The second human level came to an end—from the appearance of Adam to the appearance of the first human family. Moreover, from this time on, only members of Adam's family are considered human, while the rest are not.

Noah was his descendant in the tenth generation.

NOAH

Adam's children could continue to live only in the former animal pack. Neither Adam himself, nor his children, nor his grandchildren, etc., for millennia, generation after generation, differed outwardly from their "animal" kin. They lived together. After many generations in the primitive herd, there will be a certain number of individuals with human genes and a certain number without them. But they constantly intermingle. This intermingling prevents purely human beings from evolving and rising above a certain level. The fact that not all daughters were given names—and not even all of their wives were—speaks to this.

Those daughters of men who were born not of *wives* recognized as human beings were more beautiful—physically more perfect. Those daughters who were born of wives who were helpers, equal to Adam and had names, were not as perfect and were comparatively less healthy: the effects of incest were evident.

When people began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took them as wives, whichever ones they chose.

[Gen. 6:1-2]

Natural selection favors healthier partners for procreation. Natural selection does not and cannot take into account the spiritual component:

And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not always contend with man, for he is flesh; his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

[Gen. 6:3]

For the assured continuation of the human race and to guide it on the path to the Lord, *humans* must be separated from *non-humans*.

At that time there were giants on the earth, especially since the sons of God began to come in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them: these were the mighty men of old, men of renown

[Gen. 6:4]

Natural evolution selects the strongest. The physically strongest. But Eve is the daughter of Adam, and only their children can be human children. Physically, they will be weaker: close-kin marriages produce physically weak offspring. This is the law of genetics. But this is also the price of “humanity.”

The giants are sturdy, strong, and healthy, but they are not human. There arises a need to separate *humans* from *the giants*, even at the cost of physically weaker offspring. But for now, until the time comes, the instinct of natural selection prevails, favoring the giants.

Observing this, the Lord regretted having created humans:

And the Lord saw that the corruption of mankind was great on the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually; and the Lord regretted that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart.

And the Lord said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human beings I have created—from humans to animals, to creeping things, and to the birds of the air—for I regret that I have made them.”

[Gen. 6:6–7]

So, the Lord decides to wipe out mankind from the face of *the earth*. But not just mankind, but “...*the people I have created, from man to beast...*”

We have already decided not to attribute any action to God: the seventh day continues, when the Lord rested from all His works. Here, the point is simply that if people do not change their behavior, they will perish. But they cannot consciously choose the right behavior either, because the emergence of such rules (morality) is not the result of rational actions. All that remains is to trust in the Lord and to try, to seek, to experiment.

Noah manages to find a solution:

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

[Gen. 6:8]

Noah introduces the first taboo in history for the members of his family: not to mix with the rest (with the giants)! Consequently, the rule was established to “marry” only one’s sisters. The principle of preserving the purity of the human species, which Adam had stumbled upon by chance (and which had a random nature during Adam’s time), Noah elevates into a rule.

Ancient Egyptian civilization preserved this rule for the pharaohs’ families longer than any other, and in those days a wife was referred to as nothing other than a “sister in marriage.” And this is understandable: it was precisely the pharaohs, as direct descendants of Noah, who had the privilege and duty to preserve and pass down the most ancient rituals from generation to generation.

There is no rational explanation for how Noah came up with such a rule. It is all Divine Providence.

Noah’s family, having gained an advantage over other families (since it preserves and multiplies the human race), begins to develop rapidly and pulls ahead:

But I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and the wives of your sons with you.

[Gen. 6:18]

Here we see another innovation: the family transforms into a clan. That is, not only the members of one’s own family

are considered human, but also “*the wives of your sons,*” and this is the beginning of the formation of a clan.

If, before Noah, all members of the primitive tribe (including *the giants*) could generally be called representatives of the human race (...*I will wipe out from the face of the earth **the people I have created—from humans to animals, to reptiles, and to the birds of the sky**...*), then after him, only the representatives of Noah’s lineage can be called human.

And what became of the rest? Did they disappear? Were they swallowed up by the Great Flood? Or perhaps the rest simply remained at the same, pre-Noahic level? And man ascended one more step closer to the Lord.

At this new level, accordingly, the attitude toward the killing of one human by another also became new:

*I will require an accounting for your blood, in which your life resides; I will require it from every beast, and I will require the life of man from the hand of man, from the hand of his brother;
whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has man been made.*

[Gen. 9:5-6]

Thus, ***the third human level*** was defined: from the appearance of the first human family to the formation of the human race. Moreover, now only members of their own race are considered human, while the rest are not.

UPBRINGING

The family of Noah is also associated with the first moral evaluation of a human's actions by another human in history.

Noah was the first to plant vineyards, make wine, and taste it:

Noah began to cultivate the land and planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine and became intoxicated, and lay naked in his tent.

[Gen. 9:20-21]

He could not have foreseen what trying the new drink might lead to; he became intoxicated and lay naked.

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness; and he went out and told his two brothers.

[Gen. 9:22]

Disrespect and lack of reverence toward one's father are subsequently condemned. This is the first instance of moral condemnation of a person's actions by another person. This marks the beginning of human upbringing.

But Noah finds himself in a difficult situation. He cannot directly punish Ham, his son, who already has a son of his own, Canaan. One cannot punish a father in the presence of his son. But one cannot fail to punish Ham either! This is the first pedagogical challenge in history. And Noah solves it brilliantly. He strips Ham of the right to influence his son (the right to raise, punish, instruct, etc.) and transfers this right to his brothers: Shem and Japheth:

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant; and may God enlarge the territory of Japheth...; and let Canaan be his servant.

[Gen. 9:26]

Since those times, it has not been customary in the East for a son to be punished or even disciplined by his father. A father can punish his son only through his brother. The uncle is the primary disciplinarian.

In some Eastern countries, fathers still do not punish their sons. Europeans sometimes explain this by saying that, supposedly, in the East it is believed that a master's sons are future masters, and they must not know what punishment is. Otherwise, how will he grow up to be a master? In reality, this is not the case. The father does not participate not only in punishing his son, but also in instructing him. In this matter, he is usually replaced by his brother or his wife's brothers, who take on the responsibility of raising their nephew. This teaches the young man that in all matters, he will have to rely only on himself. The uncle, however, becomes the young man's primary mentor. Considering that, up to a certain age, all older men are "uncles" to a young boy, he learns from them all.

But if the father—who is the ultimate authority figure for the boy—directly participates in his education and discipline, the boy will not listen to or respect other adults. "You're not my father, so you have no right to lecture me!"—that is the response anyone who tries to instruct such a boy might hear. And that spells the end of his upbringing.

THE LEADER

The story of Noah and Ham, as told in pre-biblical sources, has a slightly different meaning—and a harsher one.

In every animal pack, there is a constant struggle for a place in the internal hierarchy. The leader's position is constantly challenged by young up-and-coming contenders. In the earliest primitive human groups, the order of things differed little from that of animals. Here, too, the father of the family is the leader, and the main contenders for his position are his own sons. The slightest weakening of the father-leader, the slightest misstep on his part, and he will be destroyed by a young and strong contender—his own son.

The struggle for the leader's position is constant. The main symbol of the leader's power is his harem. An attack on the harem is the main goal of the challengers. One instance of such an attack is found in Chapter 35 of the Bible:

While Israel was living in that land, Reuben went and slept with Bilhah, his father's concubine. And Israel heard...

[Gen. 35:22]

Upon hearing this, Israel (Jacob) stripped his eldest son of his birthright and blessing.

So, Noah made a mistake. He lies there drunk, helpless and naked. Ham could not help but take advantage of the opportunity to overthrow his father, the leader, and take his place; and, according to an older version, he cut off his genitals with a sickle.

Noah awoke from his wine and learned what his younger son had done to him...

[Gen. 9:24]

Before Noah's time, such an act would have been the natural order of things. But in modern times, it is condemned, marking a transition to a higher human level, where the top position in the hierarchy is granted not merely for strength and youth, but also for experience. The law of instinct has been replaced by the first human law, which must be taught.

But while living within a primitive human pack, it is impossible through any rational reasoning to conclude that the leader should no longer be the strongest. On the contrary: both reason and instinct suggest the correctness of the existing order, according to which the strongest must be at the head. This is logical and understandable. The elderly became a burden on the pack: they had to be fed, as they could not hunt for food themselves. Therefore, the elderly were usually killed (thrown off a cliff or left to die outside the pack).

Many peoples have legends about how this ritual—cruel by our modern standards—was overcome.

According to one mountain legend, the elderly were thrown off cliffs in baskets. Moreover, the basket had to be woven by the doomed man himself, and it was his own son who had to throw him off. Once, when the time came to die, an old man wove two baskets. When his son asked why there were two baskets, the old man replied that he had woven the second one for him: so that his son would have less work to do when his turn came to weave a basket, preparing to be thrown off the cliff by his own son. The son thought it over and decided to spare his elderly father's life, thereby forestalling his own fate.

Legends and myths offer possible answers to questions that once had no rational explanation. Today we know that different "rules" could arise spontaneously in various primitive human groups. They were different because they were no longer instincts or reflexes, but the result of a developing consciousness. This consciousness can vary greatly from person to person.

Of the multitude of rules that arose by chance, only those that give the pack-family a better chance of survival are preserved. Thus, rules are not chosen consciously, since it is impossible to know in advance exactly what they may lead to. Rather, the communities that correctly guessed the rules are the ones that are selected by them.

The lack of a rational explanation for why some rules lead to prosperity while others do not gave rise to a belief in the intervention of supernatural forces, of deities. Those clans that prospered and multiplied in number assumed that they were under the patronage and protection of a deity.

* * *

The entire following 10th chapter of the Bible is the genealogy of Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Noah's lineage multiplied and populated the earth. He correctly guessed the new rules and thus proved pleasing to God. Moreover, the families of each of the sons settled separately and formed their own lineages:

From them the islands of the nations were settled in their lands, each according to their own language, according to their own tribes, in their own nations.

[Gen. 10:5]

At first glance, this verse seems to contradict the first two verses of the following 11th chapter:

The whole earth had one language and one speech. They set out from the east and found a plain in the land of Shinar, where they settled.

[Gen. 11:1-2]

Noah's lineage is one. But *the "islands of nations"* descended from Noah's descendants have their own languages. Therefore, most likely, Chapter 11 is not speaking of a single language (the languages are already different), but of a unified, symbolic (linguistic) understanding of the world shared by all the families of Noah's lineage.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

In the habitats of the biblical tribes, building stone is a rarity. It is very difficult to build sturdy and safe dwellings. For an incredible number of years, the lack of strong and cheap building material was a major problem. And suddenly:

And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." So they used bricks instead of stone, and bitumen instead of mortar.

[Gen. 11:3]

People learned to make their own building material—fired bricks. And what was a rarity just yesterday is now available in unlimited quantities. In their euphoria, people imagined that they were now like gods:

And they said, "Let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top reaches to the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

[Gen. 11:4]

Retribution came quickly.

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the sons of men were building.

And the Lord said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have one language; and this is what they have begun to do, and they will not stop from what they have planned to do;

so let us go down and confuse their language there, so that no one will understand what the other is saying."

So the Lord scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth, and they stopped building the city [and the tower].

[Gen. 11:5–8]

This is the first time the word “city” appears. Most likely, it is the city that is meant by “the tower.” And life in a city is radically different from the patriarchal, tribal way of life. And a city requires new rules and new languages.

What about languages? As noted earlier, in Genesis 10:5, every people had its own language... while in Genesis 11:1–2, there was a single language throughout the earth. And now the languages are becoming mixed once again.

Noah’s descendants multiplied. The descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth settled in different regions. Language is a dynamic phenomenon, constantly changing. It could not be that in different regions, among different peoples, the language would change in exactly the same way. In those distant times, there was no way to explain this phenomenon: just yesterday we were relatives and today we remain relatives, but for some reason we have ceased to understand each other’s language. True, this problem was easily solved through interpreters. And learning a foreign language is, in principle, possible. For this reason, differences in languages would not have had catastrophic consequences, including for the construction of the tower.

But a city represents a change in the form of social life, and thus a change in the content of language. New grammatical categories emerge to denote new relationships between new social groups. And the invention of printing allows for the standardization of spelling rules. Grammar emerges. It becomes possible to provide standardized instruction in a new language to many thousands of people,

something that was previously unthinkable. Nations emerge.

On the other hand, the story of the Tower of Babel can be taken as an allegory. If we consider that the meaning of human existence lies in the awakening and perfection of the soul and, ultimately, in its union with the Almighty, and if the construction of the Tower of Babel is an ascent toward Him, then how could He have placed obstacles in the way and confused the languages?

Most likely, the legend of the tower is a warning: if people reject the new understanding of the world brought to them by the next prophet, then the construction of a new tier of the Tower will become impossible. Moreover, the previous tiers may collapse, and then everything must start over.

“When words lose their meaning, the people face disaster,” Confucius said.

If a portion of humanity has ascended to a new human level, where the old meanings of words are no longer sufficient and have become vague, yet a new language is not being formed, then it is very difficult to establish and preserve this new level. People cease to understand one another because two completely different meanings are packed into a single old word, and no one will be able to judge anyone else, leading to strife.

A new level of humanity is also a more precise definition of the concept of “human.” Someone must convey this to people. The time of a new prophet is coming.

ABRAHAM

Ten generations after Shem, Abram is born.

And the Lord said to Abram: "Go from your land, from your kindred, and from your father's house [and go] to the land that I will show you..."

[Gen. 12:1]

The Bible does not explain how Abram earned such favor from the Lord. The Quran provides a more detailed account of the life of Ibrahim (Abraham). Ibrahim's main achievement in his youth was that he fought against idol worship and spread monotheism.

Indeed, we read that the Lord commanded Abram: "...go from your land, from your kindred, and from your father's house...". For what purpose? Presumably, to spread monotheism.

By the age of 75, Abraham still had no children. But the Lord says:

...and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing...

[Gen. 12:2]

Abram's wife was named Sarah. According to the most ancient tradition, she was also his sister.

...and she is indeed my sister: she is my father's daughter, though not my mother's daughter; and she became my wife

[Gen. 20:12]

Perhaps for this reason, they had no children; Sarah was barren:

And Sarah was barren and childless.

[Gen. 11:30]

But the Lord says again:

...and I will make your descendants as numerous as the sand of the earth; if anyone can count the sand of the earth, then your descendants will be counted.

[Gen. 13:16]

After many adventures and events, which are described quite clearly and vividly in the Book of Genesis, the famous conversation between Abram and the Lord finally takes place.

After these events, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision [at night], and He said: "Do not be afraid, Abram; I am your shield; your reward [will be] very great."

Abram said, "O Lord God, what will You give me? I remain childless; this Eliezer of Damascus is the steward of my house."

And Abram said, "Behold, You have given me no offspring, and behold, my household servant is my heir."

And the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "He shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."

And He brought him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

[Gen. 15:1-6]

Nevertheless:

But Sarah, Abram's wife, had not borne him any children. She had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar.

And Sarah said to Abram, "Behold, the Lord has closed my womb, so that I cannot bear children; go in to my maidservant; perhaps I shall obtain children through her." Abram listened to Sarah's words.

[Gen. 16:1-2]

One can imagine how great was the despair of old Abram, who could not fulfill the Lord's command that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

"Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram."

[Gen. 16:16].

Let the reader not despair that the narrative about Abraham and his descendants, who were so difficult to conceive, goes on for so long. This is all preparation for the major events in Abraham's own life and in the history of the human race.

Abraham is already 99 years old and has no children by his wife Sarah, but he is on the threshold of the first great event. It was precisely to participate in it as the central figure that Abraham's preparation was taking place, and he was promised many descendants, as numerous as the stars in the sky.

Abraham was ninety-nine years old, and the Lord appeared to Abraham and said to him: "I am God Almighty; walk before Me and be blameless; and I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will greatly, greatly multiply you."

[Gen. 17:1-2]

This is the first covenant, God's agreement with Abram. Yes, God will greatly multiply Abram's descendants, but Abram must fulfill the agreement. Abram is ready:

And Abram fell on his face. God continued speaking to him and said:

“This is My covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations,

and you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I will make you the father of many nations;

and I will make you exceedingly fruitful; I will make nations come from you, and kings will come from you; and I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations, an everlasting covenant, that I will be your God and the God of your descendants after you;

and I will give to you and to your descendants after you the land through which you are traveling, the whole land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

[Gen. 17:3–8]

And all this is because Abraham (as Abram is now called) will fulfill the Lord’s covenant:

And God said to Abraham: “You, too, must keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.”

[Gen. 17:9]

What does the covenant consist of?

CIRCUMCISION

This is My covenant, which you shall keep between Me and you and your descendants after you [through their generations]: every male among you shall be circumcised;

you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and this shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.

Every male child among you, whether born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—one who is not of your own seed—shall be circumcised on the eighth day.

[Gen. 17:10-12]

It was for the sake of this 12th verse that all the great preparatory work was done. Whether God guided it or Abraham himself came to this decision—it doesn't matter. What matters is what happened: Abraham introduces the rite of circumcision, and this heralds the transition to a new human level.

By Abraham's time, the human race had multiplied greatly. Whereas before one could distinguish "one's own" (a relative, after all) by their face, now it had become more difficult to do so: one cannot remember everyone. Some kind of sign was needed to distinguish "one's own" from "strangers," humans from non-humans. And Abraham introduced the rite of circumcision. Moreover, the first to be circumcised were the ninety-nine-year-old Abraham himself and his firstborn, Ishmael.

But Abraham goes further: circumcision becomes not only a sign to distinguish his own (humans) from strangers (non-humans), but also a means of expanding the circle of humanity. Humans are now considered not only the de-

scendants of Noah and Abraham, but also “foreigners” who have undergone the rite of circumcision:

Every male child among you, whether born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner who is not of your own seed, shall be circumcised on the eighth day.

[Gen. 17:12]

Thus, ***the fourth human level*** was established: from the emergence of the first human lineage to the unification of lineages into a tribe. Now, members of one’s tribe (all who bear the mark of circumcision, even if they are not of your own seed) are considered human, while the rest are not.

But circumcision is merely the fulfillment of a condition, a covenant established by the Lord. But what about the multitude of descendants who are to be born of Abraham?

And God said to Abraham: “Do not call your wife Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah;

I will bless her and give you a son by her; I will bless her, and nations will come from her, and kings of nations will come from her.”

And Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, “Can a son be born to a man who is a hundred years old? And can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”

[Gen. 17:15–17]

Abraham is already 99 years old. And Abraham, in doubt, not daring to hope that a son would come from him and from 90-year-old Sarah, tries to intercede for his firstborn Ishmael, thinking that he would be the father of many descendants, and says:

And Abraham said to God, “Oh, if only Ishmael might live before You!”

[Gen. 17:18].

But God's words and choice are unambiguous:

And God said [to Abraham], "It is Sarah your wife who will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant [that I will be his God] and with his descendants after him."

[Gen. 17:19]

Here is the message that there will be a new covenant of the Lord with Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah. A verse later, it is repeated:

"But I will establish My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this very time next year."

[Gen. 17:21]

At this, the Lord finished speaking to Abraham:

And God finished speaking with Abraham and departed from him.

[Gen. 17:22]

The essence of the new covenant will become clear later. For now, Abraham does everything as the Lord commanded.

Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised.

And Ishmael, his son, was thirteen years old when he was circumcised.

On that very day, Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised,

and all the males of his household were circumcised with him, whether born in the house or bought with silver from foreigners.

[Gen. 17:24-27]

THREE STRANGERS

He did not have to wait long for the fulfillment of the Lord's promise. Very soon, three mysterious strangers appeared to Abraham.

And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent during the heat of the day.

He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing before him. When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the entrance of his tent and bowed himself to the ground, and said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant."

[Gen. 18:1–3]

The Lord appeared to him... in the form of three men. Abraham saw precisely three men, ran to meet them, and addressed them: "My Lord!"—in the singular.

At first glance, this may seem strange: did three men approach Abraham, or did one? The contradiction is resolved if we assume that Abraham, in representing God, already understood that He is not anthropomorphic, that He cannot be represented in either the singular or the plural: God has no number. But He must be represented somehow.

If the Lord is the source of all things and the beginning of all things, and the beginning is represented as primordial *water* and *the Holy Spirit*, then only with their help can one attempt to represent Him, albeit abstractly. At the same time, we must not forget that all three of them are the Lord, who is everything and who is indivisible.

Any attempt to conceive of the Lord leads to the emergence of the Holy Trinity, designated as “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” The Father is the Lord Himself; the Son is His “creation,” *water*; the Holy Spirit is that which connects *water* to the Lord.

In the same way, any observation necessitates the existence of a trinity: the observed, the unobserved, and the observer. Remove even one element, and everything vanishes.

And what did the Lord say to Abraham?

And one of them said, “I will return to you at this time next year, and Sarah, your wife, will have a son.”

[Gen. 18:10]

So, one of them said—it is not known exactly who, but it is known that it was the Lord God. In fulfillment of the covenant, He promises Abraham a son specifically from Sarah. But both Abraham and Sarah are old.

Now Abraham and Sarah were old and advanced in years, and Sarah had ceased to have her monthly period.

Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “Shall I indeed have this pleasure, now that I am old? And my lord is old as well.”

And the Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh to herself, saying, ‘Can I really bear a child now that I am old’?”

Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you next year, and Sarah will have a son.”

[Gen. 18:11-14]

The Lord, with a specific purpose (which will become clear later), does everything so that Abraham’s son, once

born, will be his greatest treasure in the world: both as a comfort in his old age and as the fulfillment of the Lord's covenant.

The meeting is over. The men set out on their journey.

And the men rose and set out from there toward Sodom [and Gomorrah]; and Abraham went with them to see them off.

And the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham [My servant] what I am about to do?"

[Gen. 18:16-17]

The Lord could have chosen not to reveal the purpose of His further journey. But He does reveal it and describes in considerable detail what He intends to do. This description is meant to serve as a lesson.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

A great and mighty nation will surely come from Abraham, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him,

for I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just; and the Lord will bring upon Abraham [all] that He has spoken concerning him.

And the Lord said: "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grave;

I will go down and see whether they have done as the outcry against them that has come up to Me is, or not; I will find out."

[Gen. 18:18–21]

Recalling, yet again, Abraham's election and the numerous offspring promised to him, the Lord states that He intends to go down and see whether *they* are indeed acting as the outcry against them suggests, and intends to... find out...(?) But the Lord is all-knowing. He has no need to go down and see in order to find out. He already knows and has always known.

As mentioned above, we do not understand the expression "the Lord said" to mean *what* He literally *said*. We use this phrase to denote everything that arose in the mind (in this case, in Abraham's mind) and has no rational explanation.

For some reason, Abraham decided that what was happening in Sodom and Gomorrah was sin. But since he knows that only the Lord understands *good* and *evil*, Abraham envisions a scene in which the Lord Himself informs him of the sin.

And as if to confirm that Abraham himself had nothing to do with this decision, he begins his famous bargaining with the Lord about whether He would truly destroy the righteous along with the wicked:

Then Abraham approached and said, "Will You indeed destroy the righteous along with the wicked [so that the righteous will be treated the same as the wicked]?"

Perhaps there are fifty righteous people in this city? Will You destroy it and not spare the whole place for the sake of the fifty righteous people [if they are] in it?

Far be it from You to do such a thing—to destroy the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be treated the same as the wicked; far be it from You! Will the Judge of all the earth do injustice?

The Lord said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare [the whole city and] this entire place for their sake."

Abraham replied: "Behold, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord, though I am but dust and ashes:

perhaps there will be five short of fifty righteous people; will You destroy the whole city because of five?

He said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there."

Abraham continued to speak with Him and said, "Perhaps there will be forty found there?" He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty."

And Abraham said, "May the Lord not be angry that I speak: perhaps there will be thirty there?" He said, "I will not do it if there are thirty there."

Abraham said, "Here, I have decided to speak to the Lord: perhaps there will be twenty found there?" He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty."

Abraham said, "May the Lord not be angry if I speak just once more: perhaps there will be ten there?" He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten."

Then the Lord went on his way, having finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

[Gen. 18:23-33]

Abraham had another goal in mind with this bargaining: his nephew Lot lived in Sodom with his family. Abraham's nephew could not have been wicked, and there could not have been more than ten people in Lot's family. It was them who needed to be saved.

What, then, was the sin of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and why did they have to be destroyed? To illustrate this in more detail, the narrative shifts to Sodom, where two angels are already visiting Lot.

Lot welcomes them just as Abraham had welcomed the three men. Both angels stay the night at Lot's house, and:

Before they had gone to bed, the men of the city, the people of Sodom, both young and old, all the people from every part of the city, surrounded the house.

And they called out to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them."

Lot went out to them at the entrance and shut the door behind him,

and said to them, "My brothers, do not do this evil;

I have two daughters who have never known a man; let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you please, but do nothing to these men, since they have come under the shelter of my roof."

[Gen. 19:4-8]

What the sin of Sodom consists of is now clear. But why has this only become clear now, and why was there no mention before that this was a sin?

Abraham is deeply concerned about fulfilling the Lord's covenant. Indeed, Abraham himself is very old, and he has only one son, Ishmael... How, under these cir-

cumstances, can he fulfill what the Lord has commanded, that is, how will Abraham's descendants become as numerous as the stars in the sky? Abraham decides that not a single drop of semen in his lineage should be used for anything other than the birth of children. Any other waste of precious semen must be severely suppressed and punished.

At first, sexual intercourse between men was deemed a sin—a practice previously common throughout the ancient world. Such intercourse does not lead to the birth of children but only wastes seed. And using the example of the terrible destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham shows what punishment awaits those who stray from the new rule.

And so Sodom and Gomorrah are doomed. The angels rescue Lot's family:

The men said to Lot, "Who else do you have here? Your son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, or anyone else in the city—bring them all out of this place, for we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it."

So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place, for the Lord is about to destroy this city." But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

[Gen. 19:12–14]

The sons-in-law were native inhabitants of Sodom. They were not related to Abraham. They persist in sin, and they must perish.

Lot hesitated:

And as he lingered, the men [the angels], out of the Lord's mercy toward him, took him by the hand, along with his wife and his two daughters, and led him out and set him outside the city.

When they had brought them out, one of them said, "Save your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in

this region; flee to the mountains, lest you be swept away.”

[Genesis 19:16–17]

But Lot’s *wife* is not a relative of Abraham either. And she is doomed. Doomed by the command not to look back.

Lot must flee to the mountains, but he is old and may not be able to make the climb:

But Lot said to them, “No, my lord!

Behold, Your servant has found favor in Your sight, and Your mercy toward me is great, in that You have saved my life; but I cannot flee to the mountains, lest the disaster overtake me and I die;

Behold, it is closer to flee to this city; it is small. I will flee there—it is small; and my life will be spared [for Your sake].

[Gen. 19:18–20]

This brief pause is necessary not so much to show that Lot cannot flee to the mountain, but rather to highlight the phrase: “But Lot said to them, ‘No, my Lord!’” Just like Abraham, Lot addresses them in the singular: “My Lord!”, even though there are two of them before him. But why two? Before Abraham, there were three of them.

Abraham understood and saw three, Lot saw two. But for both Abraham and Lot, they were the Lord God.

Unlike Abraham, Lot perhaps perceived only two hypostases: *water* and *the Holy Spirit*, and only they were “God” to him.

So, Abraham’s relatives are saved, while the Lord rains down brimstone and fire from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah...

...and overthrew these cities, and the whole surrounding area, and all the inhabitants of these cities, and all the vegetation of the land.

But Lot’s wife looked back behind him and became a pillar of salt.

[Gen. 19:25-26].

SACRIFICE

And the day of the fulfillment of God's decree came.

And the Lord looked upon Sarah, as He had said; and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken.

Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time God had told him;

and Abraham named his son, who was born to him, whom Sarah had borne to him, Isaac;

And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac on the eighth day, as God had commanded him.

Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him."

[Gen. 21:1–5]

Abraham's joy must have been boundless, having waited for the fulfillment of God's promise. Now he has a son by Sarah, and now he is certain that the Lord's other promise will also come true, and that Abraham's descendants will be as numerous as the stars in the sky. But here comes the first danger:

And Sarah saw that the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, was mocking [her son, Isaac],

and she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman and her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit with my son Isaac."

And this was very distressing to Abraham because of his son.

[Gen. 21:9-11]

Mocks...

If it were simply a matter of mockery, Abraham would not have paid attention to Sarah's words, much less drawn such serious conclusions. One might assume that "mocks" here refers to the sexual games among boys that were common in those days, which Abraham already considered a Sodomite sin, and that this sin could lead little Isaac astray from the true path. For from Isaac a great nation is to come forth, in fulfillment of the Lord's covenant. And Sodomite games with Ishmael are a troubling sign.

Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away.

After Ishmael's expulsion, Isaac is the only comfort and hope. But then—a second blow.

And it came to pass, after these events, that God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" He said, "Here I am."

God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac; and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

[Gen. 21:1-2]

This is a catastrophe. Abraham cannot disobey the Lord's command. But Isaac's death would mean the death of everything God had ordained. Nevertheless, Abraham is determined to sacrifice his son. But sacrifice him to what?

In pre-Abrahamic times, human sacrifice was the norm. Firstborn boys were sacrificed eight days after birth. It was this very tradition that Abraham decided to abolish.

One can only imagine how difficult this was and how truly great one had to be to accomplish it. After all, any attempt to challenge ancient traditions provokes fierce resistance and accusations of heresy. And no matter how respected you might be, for speaking out against human sacrifice, you yourself could be sacrificed...

For the people to believe you and change, you must make a sacrifice; you must be ready to give up what is closest and dearest to you... Abraham risked his own son. He knows that the slightest misstep—Isaac will be killed.

And so his hand is raised, but the Lord stops it!

The angel said: "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God and have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

[Gen. 22:12]

So what? Should he give up sacrifices altogether?

And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of [Isaac] his son.

[Gen. 22:13]

Since then, in the East, Eid al-Adha—the festival **marking the end of human sacrifice**—has been the greatest holiday, in which the slaughter of a sacrificial ram takes center stage.

But the abolition of human sacrifice could not be achieved simply by replacing a human with a ram. Abraham's authority and his willingness to sacrifice his son had a powerful impact, but they were insufficient to overcome a bloody tradition rooted in ancient times. Therefore, there were relapses.

It is known that Laban, the son of Abraham's nephew, sacrificed his eight-day-old infant to the gods.

Indeed, the shedding of human blood cannot be compared in its impact to the shedding of an animal's blood.

But the Lord foresaw this and, making a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, said:

"Circumcise your foreskins, and this shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. Every male child

among you shall be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth..."

[Gen. 17:11-12]

The removal of a man's foreskin is a kind of sacrifice accompanied by the shedding of human blood. And the eighth day is no coincidence here: in pre-Abrahamic times in Canaan, eight-day-old infants were sacrificed.

If we accept the hypotheses described above, the chronology of events would have to be somewhat different. First, the age difference between Ishmael and Isaac would have to be somewhat smaller. Otherwise, we would have to seek another interpretation of the line "*And Sarah saw that the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, was mocking [her son, Isaac]...*" Second, according to the customs of those lands, Isaac was to be prepared for sacrifice on the eighth day after his birth. Third, circumcision should have been performed on Isaac first, on the eighth day after his birth, as a substitute for the killing. And only after this miraculous event—the salvation of Isaac—should circumcision have become a universally recognized ritual for all.

* * *

After Isaac's miraculous rescue, the narrative of the Book of Genesis proceeds smoothly, without any particular hidden meanings or mysteries. It is a description of the life of a patriarchal family, with understandable problems, amusing coincidences, regrettable losses, and miraculous gains.

Isaac marries Rebekah—his uncle's daughter. They have two sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob is the younger, yet it is he who receives the birthright and his father's blessing.

Jacob marries Rachel and Leah. They are the daughters of Laban, Jacob's mother's brother. From them and from their two maidservants, who became his concubines, twelve sons and one daughter are born. After wrestling with a mysterious stranger, whom he takes to be God Himself, Jacob receives a second name: Israel.

The life story of the patriarch Jacob and his 12 sons is fascinating and instructive. There is no need to describe this story in full; the reader can easily read it for themselves in the Book of Genesis or in Thomas Mann's magnificent trilogy **Joseph and His Brothers**. But there is one point that deserves closer examination.

JOSEPH

Joseph—the son of Jacob and Rachel—the beloved son, the pillar and hope of the aging patriarch, was sold into slavery by his own brothers and ended up in the house of an Egyptian nobleman. Joseph was not only extraordinarily handsome but had also received a very good education in his father's house. That is why the nobleman's wife, in whose household Joseph, thanks to his exceptional talents, had made a career for himself and become the chief steward, fell in love with him.

And indeed, they say he was extraordinarily handsome, for which he earned the nickname “the Beautiful.” The legend of him has stirred people's hearts for thousands of years. Thousands of generations of women have been captivated by his beauty. The most poetic surah in the Quran is named after him... But why do people speak only of the influential Egyptian priestess's love for him and not of his love for her?

It is believed that he did not love her, for he rejected her advances:

And his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and said, “Lie with me.”

But he refused...

[Gen. 39:7-8]

Is that all? What, then, did Joseph become famous for?

For being sold into slavery by his brothers? Nothing new. In those days, there was nothing unusual about that.

For having made a meteoric rise from slave to Pharaoh's advisor? There is nothing un ly about that either. Both before and after him, there were no less meteoric rises.

For interpreting Pharaoh's dreams? And that, too, was nothing unusual for that time. There were plenty of magicians, sorcerers, and fortune-tellers of various levels.

To go down in history, one must do something that no one has done before.

So what did Joseph do?

Imagine a young man who received a decent education, beautiful in face, body, and soul, who ended up as a slave in a very wealthy and noble household. Moreover, in the household of a nobleman from the most advanced and powerful kingdom of his time. This nobleman's wife—also educated, beautiful, and refined, a priestess of a powerful temple—was like a goddess beyond reach to Joseph. And to her, the young slave was nothing. In Ancient Egypt, slaves were “the living dead.” And yet she fell in love with him. She fell in love to the point of oblivion, to the point of madness, to the point that her utterly unthinkable words—“*sleep with me*”—remained in people's memories and even found their way into the text of the Bible...

No matter how physically handsome a slave might be, he cannot arouse strong feelings in a noble Egyptian lady. He cannot arouse any feelings at all.

One can only assume that, having risen in the household and become its steward, Joseph had the opportunity to interact with the lady. This interaction over the course of several years could have changed her attitude toward him and even aroused strong feelings in her. But this same interaction could not fail to have an effect on Joseph himself. He could not help but fall into *the beast's* snare.

Joseph fell in love. He fell in love with his mistress no less deeply than she did with him. And perhaps even more deeply, given the difference in their social standing. And so what?

He refuses!

He refuses solely on the basis of his own notions of piety. He refuses, even though in that world a mistress's relationship with her slave is a perfectly ordinary thing. All the more so because, according to legend, the master's wife was a priestess of the temple of love, and refusing her meant humiliating both the priestess and the temple...

But Joseph refuses. He refuses even after passions have flared up so much that they began to threaten his life. Why?

But he refused and said to his master's wife: "Behold, my master knows nothing in the house except me, and he has entrusted everything he has to my care; there is no one in this house but me; and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife; how then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

[Gen. 39:8-9]

Sin before the Lord... What is the sin? There is no prohibition against adultery yet. It will appear later, in the commandments of Moses. Joseph is young, healthy, and his sexual preferences are unambiguous—he is the grandson of Abraham and thus protected from the sin of Sodom. A relationship with a foreign woman, a representative of a different faith? But later Joseph marries an Egyptian woman, and he marries her according to all Egyptian customs.

It seems that the storm raging in his own heart was no less terrifying than the one in the heart of the priestess of love. Resisting one's own passion is harder than resisting someone else's. But Joseph stood firm, triumphed, and overcame the beastly instinct within himself. This was Joseph's destiny: he was the first to overcome the instinct of sexual desire within himself, to overcome it through human will. And he was the first to show that it was possible.

From this time on, a new criterion emerges by which one determines whether you are a human being or not yet: if you can overcome the instinct of sexual desire within yourself, if you can refuse a relationship while having the opportunity to freely indulge in it—then you are a human being; if you cannot—then you are still in the power of the beast.

And the first to demonstrate the possibility of overcoming what is perhaps one of the strongest animal instincts was Joseph.

* * *

Nevertheless, Joseph does not receive his father's blessing. He will not be the successor of the great line of Adam–Noah–Abraham–Isaac–Jacob... Joseph lived too long in the land of Egypt and strayed too far from the faith of his fathers.

According to Jacob's will, Judah will be the one to continue the great line.

Judah! Your brothers will praise you. Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you.

[Gen. 49:8]

JUDAH AND TAMAR

At that time, Judah left his brothers and settled near a man from Adullam named Hira.

And Judah saw there the daughter of a Canaanite named Shua; and he took her and went in to her.

She conceived and bore a son, and he named him Er.

She conceived again and bore a son, and she named him Onan.

She also gave birth to a son [her third] and named him Shelah. Judah was in Chezib when she gave birth to him.

Then Judah took a wife for his firstborn, whose name was Tamar.

[Gen. 38:1–6]

Tamara was a strong, persistent, and determined woman, possessing a certain gift that enabled her to recognize the divine election of Judah's lineage. She desired that her children would certainly become a link in a great chain. At first, she was plagued by misfortune. Er, the firstborn of Judah and husband of Tamar, died without leaving any children.

Er, the firstborn of Judah, was displeasing in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord put him to death.

[Gen. 38:7].

It is not known exactly why Er was displeasing to the Lord. But it can be assumed that Er was barren. This did not suit Tamar at all: she absolutely had to have children from the line of Judah. Therefore, it is likely that she played some role in Er's death.

Judah also had a son named Onan:

And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, marry her as a brother-in-law, and raise up offspring for your brother."

Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, and so whenever he went in to his brother's wife, he spilled his seed on the ground so as not to give offspring to his brother.

[Gen. 38:8-9]

Most likely, Onan suspected Tamar of his brother's death, and the reason for "spilling his seed on the ground" was not that the seed would not be his but his deceased brother's, but rather that he decided to thwart Tamar's desire to become the mother of a child of the house of Judah. But Abraham, in fulfillment of the Lord's covenant, forbade the use of precious seed for anything other than the birth of children. Otherwise, it is a sin. Sodom and Gomorrah paid the price for this sin. And that is why Onan was punished.

What he did was evil in the Lord's sight; and He put him to death as well.

[Gen. 38:10].

Judah had one son left—Shelah. But Judah himself suspected something was amiss and, under various pretexts, refused to give Tamar to Shelah as a wife.

But Tamar would not give up. And she resorted to a ruse.

She took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil, and, veiling herself, sat at the gate of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife.

And Judah saw her and took her for a prostitute, because she had covered her face.

He turned toward her and said, "I will come in to you." For he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you give me if you come in to me?"

He said, "I will send you a young goat from my flock." She said, "Will you give me a pledge until you send it?"

He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" She said, "Your signet ring, your sash, and the staff in your hand." So he gave them to her and went in to her; and she conceived by him."

[Gen. 38:14–18]

When Judah sent the young goat to retrieve the pledge he had left behind, the messenger found no one there.

Judah soon forgot about this incident. But...

About three months later, they told Judah, saying, "Tamara, your daughter-in-law, has committed adultery, and behold, she is pregnant by adultery." Judah said, "Bring her out, and let her be burned."

But when they led her out, she sent word to her father-in-law: "I am pregnant by the man to whom these things belong." And she said, "Find out whose seal, cord, and staff these are."

Judah recognized them and said, "She is more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah, my son." And he did not have relations with her again.

[Gen. 38:24–26].

And Tamar gave birth to twins, and they were named Perez and Zerah. From Perez came the line leading to King David. But Moses came before them.

MOSES

*And Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all their family;
and the children of Israel were fruitful and multiplied,
and grew and became exceedingly mighty, and the
land was filled with them.
Then a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know
Joseph,
and he said to his people, "Behold, the people of the
children of Israel are numerous and powerful, and
they are stronger than we are."*

[Ex. 1:6–9].

After many years, the people of Israel became numerous. And the new pharaoh, who did not know Joseph, was extremely displeased by this situation. The people of Israel began to suffer all manner of persecution: they were oppressed with hard labor, and the midwives were commanded to kill the infants... But nothing helped.

*Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying,
"Cast every Hebrew son into the river, but let every
daughter live."*

[Ex. 1:22]

And here begins the story of Moses (Moses—saved from the water). As we will see below, his story is extremely convoluted and contradictory. But first things first.

Who were Moses' parents? At first, this is unknown. It is only said that

*a man from the tribe of Levi went and took a wife from
the same tribe.*

She conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was very beautiful, she hid him for three months.

[Ex. 2:1-2]

In violation of Pharaoh's decree, they hid him for three months, and finally:

But when she could no longer hide him, she took a basket made of reeds and coated it with bitumen and pitch; she placed the child in it and set it among the reeds by the riverbank...

And Pharaoh's daughter went down to the river to bathe, while her maids walked along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to fetch it.

She opened it and saw the baby; and behold, the child was crying [in the basket]; and she took pity on him [the daughter of Pharaoh] and said, "This is one of the Hebrew children."

[Ex. 2:3,5-6]

Here is the first point of confusion: how did Pharaoh's daughter realize that the baby was one of the Hebrew children? This could only have been understood by the sign of circumcision, which was performed on the eighth day after birth. And if it became clear that this baby was one of the Hebrew children, then why did Pharaoh's daughter disobey her father's command? Why wasn't the baby killed?

But not only was the baby not killed, but also...

And his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a wet nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

[Ex. 2:7]

Why would Pharaoh's daughter want a Jewish baby, nursed by a Jewish woman, when the Egyptians and Pharaoh himself were alarmed by the large number of Jews and

had taken such terrible measures against them? The answer is unclear.

Most likely, the three-month-old infant had not been circumcised, and it was impossible to tell that he was a Jew. After all, among the Jews, a boy was circumcised on the eighth day after birth. In Egypt, circumcision had been known since ancient times, but it was performed on the fourteenth year after birth.

One theory suggests that Moses was not a Jew at all, but an Egyptian—and not just any Egyptian, but the brother of the future pharaoh, whose name was Mossa. After their father's death, both claimed the throne. Mossa was defeated, forced to flee, and took refuge among the Midianites.

The priest of Midian had seven daughters [who tended their father Jethro's sheep]...

Moses found it pleasant to live with this man; and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage.

[Ex. 2:16,21]

It is quite likely that it was the Midianite priest Jethro who advised Moses to establish his own kingdom among the Jews by leading them out of Egypt. And, most likely, it was he who advised Moses to demand compensation from Pharaoh for renouncing his claim to the Egyptian throne: gold, weapons, and provisions for the entire duration of the journey to the new lands.

It is no easy task to bring an entire people under one's control. And Moses is called upon to appear before the Israelites as the messenger of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: he has been commissioned by God to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land.

Moses was tending the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. One day he led the flock far

into the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. And he saw that the bush was on fire, yet the bush was not consumed.

Moses said, "I will go over and see this great sight—why the bush is not burning up."

The Lord saw that he was coming to look, and God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses! Moses!" He said, "Here I am [Lord]!"

And God said, "Do not come near here; take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

And He said to him, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

[Ex. 3:1–6]

Here Moses is recognized as a prophet, and he is given a great mission.

"I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt; I have heard their cries because of their taskmasters, and I know their sufferings.

"Go, therefore; I will send you to Pharaoh [the king of Egypt], and you shall bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

[Ex. 3:9–10]

But Moses, as already mentioned, understands that the people will not simply listen to him.

Moses said to God, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh [the king of Egypt] and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

And God said, "I will be with you, and here is a sign that I have sent you: when you bring the people [of

God] out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain.”

And Moses said to God, “Behold, I will go to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ And they will say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?”

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the Israelites: ‘I AM [Jehovah] has sent me to you.’”

[Ex. 3:11–14]

So, Moses was most likely not a Jew, was not circumcised, did not know the Jewish language, and did not know the God of Israel. But to become the leader of the people of Israel and establish his kingdom, all three of these things were necessary.

And God said further to Moses: “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel: The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial from generation to generation.

Go, gather the elders of the people of Israel and say to them: ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to me and said: “I have visited you and seen what is being done to you in Egypt.”’

[Ex. 3:15–16].

“The God of your fathers... has sent me to you.” To whom? To the sons of Israel. The Jews accepted Moses. But the journey through the desert is long, and building a new nation from scratch is difficult. Most likely, Moses managed to negotiate with Pharaoh that the new people would receive a severance payment.

And I will grant this people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty-handed:

every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her who dwells in her house, for articles of silver and articles of gold, and for clothing; and you shall clothe yourselves and your sons and your daughters with them, and you shall plunder the Egyptians.

[Ex. 3:21-22]

But the sons of Israel leave Egypt not only with gold, but also with weapons.

And God led the people by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the sons of Israel went out armed from the land of Egypt.

[Ex. 13:18]

It is difficult to imagine that the Israelites were permitted to carry weapons in Egypt: they could have been issued to them only upon their exodus in fulfillment of the aforementioned agreement.

At the same time, another problem is resolved: the problem of language. Moses does not know the language of the Israelites.

Moses said, "O Lord, send someone else whom you can send."

And the Lord's anger burned against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron your brother, a Levite, with you? I know that he can speak [in your place], and behold, he will come out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will rejoice in his heart;

you shall speak to him and put [My] words into his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what to do;

and he shall speak for you to the people; thus he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him...

[Ex. 4:13–16]

Aaron is appointed as Moses' interpreter. This concludes Moses' conversation with God, who spoke to him from the flame of the burning bush.

So Moses took his wife and his sons, set them on a donkey, and set out for the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

[Ex. 4:20].

But on the way, a strange incident occurs, at first glance:

While they were stopping for the night, the Lord met him and sought to kill him.

Then Zipporah took a flint knife, circumcised her son, and, throwing the foreskin at his feet, said, "You are a bridegroom of blood to me."

And the Lord turned away from him. Then she said, "A bridegroom of blood—because of the circumcision."

[Ex. 4:24–26].

Why would God want to kill Moses, whom He had just commissioned to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt? Most likely, a secret circumcision of Moses' son took place here. It had to be performed before their arrival in Egypt. Otherwise, Moses could have been killed by the Jews: they would not believe that their God spoke to a man whose son had not been circumcised on the eighth day.

Did Moses himself remember this, or did his wife Zipporah figure it out, or did Moses' father-in-law Jethro teach them both? It is unknown.

Jethro's identity is enigmatic: he was a priest among the Midianites. It will later become clear that he, too, traveled to Moses and lived with him for quite some time, giving him valuable advice on the organization of the judicial

system. The entire 18th chapter of the Book of Exodus is devoted to this.

Moses and Aaron began to speak to the elders of the children of Israel:

*So Moses and Aaron went and gathered all the elders of the Israelites,
and Aaron told them all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses; and Moses performed signs before the eyes of the people,
and the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and seen their affliction, they bowed down and worshiped.*

[Ex. 4:29–31].

Aaron is identified as Moses' brother. But this kinship creates a discrepancy.

Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron [his brother] eighty-three, when they began to speak to Pharaoh.

[Ex. 7:7]

It turns out that Aaron was three years older than Moses. But verses 1 and 2 of chapter 2 state that Moses was the firstborn. Moses' miraculous rescue is well known. But how did Aaron manage to be saved?

Moses claimed to be Aaron's brother in order to conceal his true origins.

Two other points indicate that Moses did not belong to the house of Israel.

First. During the journey through the desert, the people ate manna that fell from heaven. Most likely, this was food that was secretly delivered to Moses every night under an agreement with Pharaoh. But the sons of Israel began to complain that there was no meat. And here Moses turns to God:

And Moses said to the Lord: "Why are You tormenting Your servant? And why have I not found favor in

Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all this people upon me?

Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your arms, as a nurse carries a child, to the land You swore to their fathers'?

Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat to eat.'

[Num. 11:11–13]

So, “Did I conceive all this people in my womb, or did I give birth to them?”

After making the necessary changes to the agreement, Pharaoh changed the daily ration—quail.

Second. After reaching the Promised Land, the Jews refuse to enter it, for they will have to fight for it. And no one wants to fight. For this, the Lord was angry with them.

And the Lord said to Moses: “How long will this people provoke Me, and how long will they refuse to believe in Me, despite all the signs I have performed among them?

I will strike them with a plague and destroy them, and I will bring forth from you [and from your father's house] a people more numerous and stronger than they.

[Num. 14:11–12].

Here it is noted once again that Moses is not of the Jews. The Lord proposes to destroy this people and to bring forth a new people from Moses himself. But Moses asks Him not to do this, for:

...and if You destroy this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say:

'The Lord was not able to bring this people into the land He swore to give them, so He destroyed them in the wilderness.'"

[Num. 14:15–16]

The Lord forgives the people of Israel, but also imposes a punishment for their refusal to enter the Promised Land:

*...you shall not enter the land where I swore with uplifted hand to settle you, except for Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun;
but your children, of whom you said, 'They will be plunder for our enemies,' I will bring there, and they will explore the land that you have despised,
but your corpses will fall in this wilderness;
and your sons will wander in the wilderness for forty years, bearing the punishment for your unfaithfulness, until all your bodies have perished in the wilderness;
According to the forty days you spent exploring the land, you will bear the punishment for your sins for forty years, a year for each day, so that you may know what it means to be forsaken by Me."*

[Num. 14:30–34]

And Moses himself was forbidden to enter the Promised Land. There can be only one reason for this—Moses was not of the house of Israel.

We find confirmation of this in the Gospel of Matthew. At the very beginning of the narrative, *the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*, is given. Here, a lineage from Abraham to Jesus is presented, and Moses is not included in it!

Moses, as the son of Pharaoh, was highly educated. He knew how to lead a people, how to bring them to obedience, and, most importantly, how to teach them the laws. Moses could not have been unaware of the “Confession of Denial” from the Egyptian “Book of the Dead”:

*I have not wronged anyone
I have not killed people
I have not done evil instead of justice
I know of nothing that is unclean*

I have not oppressed the poor
I have not done what is abhorrent to the gods
I have not insulted a servant in front of his master
I have caused no one suffering
I have not made anyone weep
I did not kill, nor did I cause others to kill
I have not caused pain to anyone
I did not diminish the sacrificial food in temples
I did not commit sodomy
I did not shortchange the grain
I did not shortchange measurements of length
I did not encroach on others' fields
I did not tamper with the weights
I did not lighten the scales
I did not take milk from a baby's mouth
I did not drive livestock from their pastures
I did not catch the birds of the gods, nor did I fish in their waters
I did not hold back the water in its season
I did not build dams on flowing water
I did not extinguish the fire in its season
I did not remove livestock from the god's property
I did not hold back the god on his outings
I am pure, I am pure, I am pure¹

Therefore, it was not difficult for Moses to receive the Ten Commandments from the Lord:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;
You shall have no other gods before Me.
You shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth;

¹ The Ani Papyrus. 19th Dynasty. London, British Museum (translation from *The Book of the Dead*. Chegodayev, 1994 г .)

you shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I am the Lord your God, a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, and showing mercy to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy;

work six days and do all your work [in them],

And the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God: you shall not do any work on it—neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor [your ox, nor your donkey, nor any] of your livestock, nor the stranger who is within your gates;

for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Honor your father and your mother, [so that it may go well with you and] that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

Do not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, [nor his field,] nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, [nor any of his livestock,] nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.

[Ex. 20:2–17].

The “Sabbath day” stands out particularly from the general text of the commandments. The prohibition against working on the Sabbath was very strict, and violating it was punishable by death. Why? Is it simply because the Lord rested from all His work on the Sabbath?

The Lord gave Moses many more laws and prohibitions. Among them are words that are relevant even today:

Do not listen to idle talk; do not join hands with the wicked to be a witness to falsehood.

Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong, and do not decide a case by siding with the majority against the truth;

and do not show partiality to the poor in their disputes.

[Ex. 23:1-3]

The list of laws concludes once again with the requirement to observe the Sabbath.

THE SABBATH

...say to the children of Israel: Keep My Sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, so that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you;

and keep the Sabbath, for it is holy to you: whoever desecrates it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people;

Six days they may do their work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, consecrated to the Lord; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death;

and the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant;

This is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever, for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.

And when God had finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

[Ex. 31:13–18]

The Sabbath has a special meaning. While most of the commandments are concerned with the protection of property, the observance of the Sabbath requires a special explanation. The text states only that it is a sign between the children of Israel and God. A sign of what?

I propose a hypothesis: the exodus of the Jews from Egyptian captivity is a metaphor signifying the emergence of a new urban class—the city-dwellers—from under the authority of the patriarchal community. Egypt represents the pinnacle of the old patriarchal-communal system, an agricultural kingdom governed by traditions and customs. Urban culture differs fundamentally from this and requires new rules and laws. These arise spontaneously and are codified by “judges.” In the Bible, this is depicted as Moses receiving new laws directly from God. Moses thus becomes the first judge. Designating the Sabbath as a day of rest signifies a definitive break with the old world: in agricultural communal life, the rhythm is dictated by the seasons. In the city, seasons are irrelevant; only a city dweller can afford to set aside a non-working Sabbath. This is precisely why, in the initial stage, observance of the Sabbath is the primary means of the people of Israel’s definitive separation from their former “bondage in Egypt” and the closing off of any path back. And relapses, as we know, did occur.

The commandments brought by Moses had another purpose. Here, the system of distinguishing one person from another takes on a new development. The sign by which a person is distinguished, introduced by Abraham (circumcision), proves insufficient under the new conditions; external signs are no longer enough. Now, only those among the circumcised who keep God’s commandments are considered human.

True, a return to defining a person by external signs is also found after the commandments were received. In the Book of Judges, we read about Gideon, to whom the Almighty gave a sign to distinguish the warriors who were to defeat the more numerous army of the Midianites:

And the Lord said to Gideon: “Set apart those who lap up water with their tongues, as a dog laps, and likewise all those who kneel down to drink.”

And the number of those who lapped up water with their mouths was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people knelt down on their knees to drink water. And the Lord said to Gideon, "With the three hundred who lapped, I will save you and deliver the Midianites into your hands; let all the rest of the people go, each to his own place."

[Judges 7:5–7].

Thus, those who drank water from their hands were set apart as men who had risen to the level of the Lord's army. But those who lapped water directly from the river, getting down on all fours, were sent back: they had not yet reached the new level.

Nevertheless, **a fifth human level** had already emerged: from the formation of a tribe to the emergence of an ethnos—a people. A nation can emerge only in an urban culture that unites an unimaginable number of people—in previous communities—speaking a single language. And this is thanks to purposeful education, which became possible after the invention of printing. The book and a unified grammar united a mass of people into a nation. The tablets received by Moses can be considered the first book.

Now, only a representative of his people, marked by circumcision and observing the commandments, is a human being; all others are not.

The commandments are prohibitions against violating human rights, freedoms, and property. They are formal in nature. Thus, a limited number of formal prohibitions replaces the previous system of regulating relations between people. Previously, each tribe could have its own rules, upheld by chieftains, regarding how to act and how to behave. Now, however, the role of the chieftains is significantly diminished, since many tribes now follow uniform laws, and judges have replaced the chieftains. Accordingly, a new book of the Holy Scriptures begins—the "Book of Judges."

POST

Moses brought the Ten Commandments and a whole code of laws based on them. But there were two versions. The first version was written by God Himself

And the Lord said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and stay there; and I will give you the stone tablets, the law, and the commandments that I have written to teach them..."

Moses entered the midst of the cloud and went up the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights."

[Ex. 24:12,18]

Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain; in his hand were the two stone tablets of the covenant, inscribed on both sides—they were inscribed on one side and on the other;

The tablets were the work of God, and the writing on the tablets was the writing of God.

[Ex. 32:15-16].

Here are not only the 10 Commandments, but the entire ritual of serving God. It describes in great detail what the priests' clothing should be like, as well as the utensils, the tabernacle, how to perform purification, and how to offer sacrifices... Here is the entire code of laws, which the Jews did not have before.

But what are the tablets?

Wikipedia states: *"A tablet is a board or slab with text inscribed on it (usually sacred or ritualistic). According to biblical tradition, the Ten Commandments were inscribed on stone tablets at Mount Sinai. Under the influence of the*

Italian Renaissance , the tablets came to be depicted in almost all countries as the pages of an open book (with an arched top). ”

It is believed that there were two tablets. But how could two slabs contain not only the text of the Ten Commandments, but also a multitude of other laws? Perhaps Moses actually received an entire book or a method for printing a book? In a book, the pages are written on both sides.

Be that as it may, the people of Israel receive from the Lord not only the spirit of the law, but also the letter. This makes it possible to establish a new judicial system.

Upon returning from the mountain, Moses discovered that the people of Israel, seeing that he had been gone for a long time, had made themselves a golden calf to worship. And Moses, in his anger, smashed the stone tablets he had received from God.

When he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, he was inflamed with anger; he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain...

And Moses said to Aaron, “What has this people done to you, that you have led them into such a great sin?”

But Aaron said to Moses, “Do not let my lord’s anger burn; you know this people, that they are a head-strong people.

They said to me, ‘Make us a god who will go before us; for as for Moses, this man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’

[Ex. 32:19, 21–23]

Forty days and forty nights seemed too long to them. They lacked patience. And Moses first imposed a punishment:

Then Moses stood at the gate of the camp and said, "Whoever belongs to the Lord, come to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered around him.

And he said to them, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Let every man gird his sword upon his thigh, and go through the camp from gate to gate, and slay every man his brother, every man his friend, every man his neighbor."

And the sons of Levi did as Moses commanded; and about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

[Ex. 32:26–28]

After the punishment was carried out, Moses was given another chance to meet with the Lord:

And the Lord said to Moses, "Carve out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, [and come up to Me on the mountain], and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the former tablets, which you broke;

and be ready by morning, and go up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and stand before Me there on the top of the mountain...

[Ex. 34:1-2]

Moses again spends forty days and forty nights on the mountain. But this time something completely new happens.

And Moses remained there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he ate no bread and drank no water; and he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

[Ex. 34:28]

First, Moses himself writes the text on the tablets. Second, "He did not eat bread or drink water for forty days and forty nights"—a forty-day fast.

Moses introduces a new principle of distinguishing a person, which is also the method of training a new person. Only one capable of fasting—that is, voluntarily abstaining from food—for forty days and forty nights could accept the prohibitions imposed by the commandments and laws. And this time, after the forty-day fast, Moses is already capable of writing the words of the covenant on the tablets himself.

A test of “humanity” is set before a person: if you can endure a fast—a voluntary, deliberate refusal of food while having it at hand—then you are human. No animal, when hungry, can “voluntarily” refuse food if it is available. Refusal of food can occur only if the animal is not hungry, if it is sick, if there is no food, or if the food is withheld by a stronger creature. But no animal is capable of having food available and refusing it while hungry.

These days, many parents try to impose fasting on their children. The children try to figure out its meaning. In response, they receive explanations about how fasting is supposedly good for your health, or that a holy month has begun, or some other incomprehensible thing. That is why modern children often consider fasting an outdated ritual and are not in a hurry to follow it. But if we present fasting to them as a test of “humanity” and invite them to test themselves—to see if they can prove they have already reached a new human level, if they are capable of overcoming their animal instincts...

It is clear that today the test of fasting, in this sense, has long since outlived its purpose. Today, fasting is not so much abstaining from food as it is abstaining from the temptation to judge people by their “good” and “evil” deeds. But for thousands of years, people were like children, and voluntary forty-day abstinence from food was a great test.

The laws brought by Moses allowed God's promise to be fulfilled: Abraham's descendants multiplied and became as numerous as the stars in the sky. It is difficult for Moses to rule over everyone alone.

*And I said to you at that time: I cannot lead you alone;
The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold,
you are now as numerous as the stars of heaven;
May the Lord, the God of your fathers, increase you a
thousandfold from what you are now, and may He
bless you as He has promised you:
how then can I alone bear your burdens, your bur-
dens, and your disputes?
Choose for yourselves, from among your tribes, men
who are wise, understanding, and experienced, and I
will appoint them as your leaders.*

[Deut. 1:9–13].

Moses did everything to prepare the people for the transition to a new level. Moreover, Moses created a new people and became their spiritual father. Perhaps to emphasize precisely this spiritual fatherhood, rather than physical leadership, Moses appears not as a Jew, not as yet another patriarch in the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...

But Moses himself was not destined to see the emergence of this new human community. The level of "people" had been transcended, and Moses was the leader of the people. That is why he was not allowed to set foot in the Promised Land...

What, then, is Moses' mission? What lies behind the leading of the people out of the land of Egypt?

Egypt was the largest agricultural structure of the old communal era. Moses led the people out of it to build a new type of structure with new laws—*cities*.

Judeans (Latin: Iudex — judge, law) — the first name for the people of the new law, the people of the city. Later,

for certain reasons, Judeans came to be associated only with Jews. But in those days, anyone from any nation who accepted the new faith with its 10 commandments could become a Judean.

THE KINGDOM

And Moses died. A new generation of the people of Israel, led by Joshua, crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land. The following books, the Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges, recount the history of the conquest of the new land.

In relatively peaceful times, the Jews have no single leadership. Each tribe resolves internal disputes through elected judges. Disputes between tribes are also resolved by judges elected jointly. There is no single leader or judge above all. Only during wartime is an autocratic leader elected. Autocracy allows for the unification of forces to fight the enemy. This was known. But the new era requires a single authority to preserve and defend the common law shared by all—the Commandments. Judges make decisions only regarding the existence of a crime and the measure of restitution based on the common law. But someone must ensure its inviolability. A new legal status is needed—a king—the physical defender of the new world order.

This is the beginning of the Book of Kings. But how did the need for a new status arise?

Nothing like this existed before. Different peoples, understanding in their own way what is *good* and what is *not*, create various social institutions at their own risk. These institutions are not a system of relationships arising among animals based on instinct and reflex. These institutions are created solely by human understanding and human will. And here, the ultimate truth is unknown to anyone, and it is impossible to determine in advance exactly which structure will yield the best result. Only with the passage of

time, in hindsight, do the advantages and disadvantages of various systems become apparent.

Those peoples who happen to stumble upon the correct option survive, preserving that very option. And those who erred—either die out or are subjugated by the more fortunate, leaving their descendants with the knowledge that their path was wrong.

The impossibility of logically and rationally calculating which system of social organization will be more successful is indicated by the fact that only the Lord, through His prophets, provides certain institutions. But even here, nothing can be definitively determined in advance, for there have always been plenty of false prophets. Which prophet is true and which is false was also determined in practice, over time, in hindsight.

The Jews embarked on the path of choosing a new, unified leader—not a chieftain, not a judge, but *a king*—a powerful defender of the law, as opposed to *a prophet*—the guardian of the people’s spiritual unity. And here a new principle of selection begins to be applied: a king need not necessarily be strong, but a prophet must be wise. These ideas are voiced at the very beginning of the First Book of Kings by Hannah—the mother of Samuel, the new prophet of the people of Israel.

Hannah had no children, and she made a vow to the Lord:

...and she made a vow, saying: “O Lord [Almighty God] Sabaoth! If You will look upon the affliction of Your servant and remember me, and not forget Your servant, and give Your servant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord [as a gift] for all the days of his life [and he shall not drink wine or strong drink], and no razor shall touch his head.

[1 Sam. 1:11]

At the same time, it is noted that Hannah was the first to begin praying not aloud, but as it were to herself, in her heart:

...and as Hannah spoke in her heart, and her lips only moved, and her voice was not heard, Eli thought she was drunk.

[1 Sam. 1:13]

Nothing like this had ever been seen before, and she was considered either mad or, like Eli, drunk. But this is a higher level of abstraction. This means that for her time, she was an extraordinary woman.

And a son was born to Anna. As she had promised, she dedicated him to the service of the Lord, and at that moment the famous prayer was uttered. In it, we find words about both strength and wisdom:

The bow of the mighty is broken, but the weak are girded with strength...

The Lord will crush those who contend with Him; He will thunder against them from heaven. [The Lord is holy. Let not the wise boast of their wisdom, nor the strong boast of their strength, nor the rich boast of their riches; but let the one who boasts boast in this: that they understand and know the Lord.] The Lord will judge the ends of the earth, and will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed.

[1 Sam. 2:4, 10]

Thus is prepared the coming of a new prophet of the people of Israel—Samuel, the son of Hannah—and through him, the coming of the first king. The king, as the guardian of the new unified (divine) law, must be chosen by the Lord Himself, and this decision must be conveyed through the prophet.

And Samuel was judge over Israel all the days of his life. And throughout his life there was war with the Philistines.

The Israelites were constantly defeated and fell under their yoke.

There were no blacksmiths in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines were afraid that the Israelites might make swords or spears.

[1 Sam. 13:19]

“There were no blacksmiths...” This means that the people of Israel did not yet know metal. They had not yet advanced to a higher level of civilization, to a higher level of abstraction. They still dwelled in the world of bronze, that is, in the pagan world. Only the chosen ones—the prophets and judges—could manage this transition. But now the time has come for the entire people to make a quantum leap. Iron is, above all, a weapon and a new organization of military affairs. The new world, founded by Moses and the Commandments, needs reliable protection. A king is needed. But it is very difficult to change centuries-old foundations. And Samuel does everything so that the people themselves will desire a king.

...and they said to him, “Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; therefore appoint a king over us, that he may judge us like the other nations.”

[1 Sam. 8:5]

Samuel used this opportunity not only to formally introduce a new system of government, but also to establish its economic and legal features, which differed from the previous system of authority.

And Samuel repeated all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king, and said: “These are the rights of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and assign them to his chariots, and he will make them his horsemen, and they will run before his chariots;

and he will appoint them as his commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and they will till his fields, reap his harvest, and make his weapons of war and the equipment for his chariots;

and he will take your daughters to make perfumes, to cook meals, and to bake bread;

and he will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves and give them to his servants;

and he will take a tenth of your crops and your vineyards and give them to his eunuchs and his servants;

and he will take your male and female slaves, your best young men, and your donkeys, and use them for his own work;

He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves;

and then you will cry out because of the king you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you then.

But the people refused to listen to Samuel's voice and said, "No, let there be a king over us,

and we will be like all the other nations: our king will judge us, go before us, and lead our wars."

And Samuel listened to all the words of the people and repeated them to the Lord.

And the Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and set a king over them..."

[1 Sam. 8:10–22]

As has already been said, the new, young urban civilization needed to establish its own new tribal rules of life. The old, rural (tribal) ones were no longer suitable. And to establish the new laws, revealed through Moses by the external One God, power was needed to compel people to

follow this law. At the head of this force were once the judges; now it is the kings.

Saul was appointed as the first king of Israel. It was him whom the prophet Samuel pointed out based on the signs received from the Lord. Now the Jews have a king. And according to ancient Eastern tradition, only one chosen by the Lord will be considered a king, and this choice will be conveyed through the high priest. Only that ruler who has a high priest is considered a king.

Over time, it became clear that King Saul was not fulfilling all of the Lord's commandments, and he was deposed by Samuel. David was chosen as the second king, and after David's death, his son Solomon became the third.

The First, Second, and Third Books of Kings are dedicated to each of these kings, respectively. The accounts of the lives of the first three kings of Israel read easily, like historical chronicles.

I would like to dwell in more detail on certain moments in the life of King Solomon.

SOLOMON

King David had many wives and children. His firstborn, Absalom, rebelled against his father and was killed. David's grief was immeasurable. Adonijah, the second son born after Absalom, was very handsome, and David pampered him.

Adonijah, the son of Haggith, grew proud and said, "I will be king." And he acquired chariots and horsemen and fifty men on swift horses.

But his father never asked him, "Why are you doing this?" For he was very handsome and was born to him after Absalom.

[3 Kings 1:5-6]

Later, David took Bathsheba as his wife. Their firstborn son was struck down by the Lord as punishment for David's unrighteous taking of Bathsheba from her husband, Uriah the Hittite.

After the infant's death, King David was inconsolable for a long time. But soon a second son was born to them. They named him Solomon. And David promised Bathsheba that Solomon would be king.

When King David was old and near death, Adonijah decided to proclaim himself king.

Then Nathan spoke to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, saying, "Have you heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has made himself king, and our lord David does not know about it?"

Now, here is my advice to you: save your life and the life of your son Solomon.

Go and enter the presence of King David and say to him: 'Did you not swear to your servant, my lord the king, saying, "Your son Solomon shall be king after

me, and he shall sit on my throne”?’ Why then has Adonijah become king?

[1 Kings 1:11–13]

They went to King David, and David said to Bathsheba:

Just as I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel, saying that Solomon, your son, would reign after me and sit on my throne in my place, so I will do this to-day.

[1 Kings 1:30]

Solomon became king. Adonijah was pardoned by Solomon.

And Solomon said, “If he is a man of integrity, not a single hair of his head shall fall to the ground; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.”

[1 Kings 1:52]

Some time after King David’s death, Adonijah went to Bathsheba and said:

And he said, “Please speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abishag the Shunammite as a wife.”

And Bathsheba said, “Very well, I will speak to the king on your behalf.”

[3 Kings 2:17-18]

The entire preceding story was recounted to examine this very case. Abishag was formally King David’s last wife.

And they searched for a beautiful maiden throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

The young woman was very beautiful, and she followed the king and served him; but the king did not have relations with her.

[1 Kings 1:3–4]

It was this very young woman that Bathsheba agreed to ask for as a wife for Adonijah, not knowing where this might lead. Solomon's anger was terrible:

And she said, "Give Abishag the Shunammite to Adonijah, your brother, as a wife."

And King Solomon answered and said to his mother, "Why do you ask for Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for the kingdom for him as well; for he is my elder brother, and Abiathar the priest and Joab, the son of Zeruiah, are his friends."

Then King Solomon swore by the Lord, saying, "May God do this to me and even more, if Adonijah has not spoken this word of his own accord;

but now—as the Lord lives, who has established me and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has built a house for me, as He promised—now Adonijah must die.

So King Solomon sent Benaiah son of Jehoiada, who struck him down, and he died."

[3 Kings 2:21–25]

Why did Solomon kill Adonijah? Why was the marriage between Adonijah and Abishag dangerous?

Adonijah was Solomon's older brother. Adonijah had his own priest and his own commander. He had everything ready to seize the throne. Only one detail was missing. Solomon became king only because King David himself had declared him heir and king. But if Adonijah marries Abishag, King David's former wife, he will gain an indisputable claim to the throne. This is the very "cunning" that Solomon warned Adonijah about. Solomon saw through Adonijah's intentions and ordered him killed.

Gaining the right to the leadership by taking possession of the leader's harem—though an outdated practice, it is still a valid principle. This story belongs to the same cate-

gory as the stories of Noah and his son Ham, and Jacob and his son Reuben, which we discussed earlier.

And when Solomon's kingdom was established, he offered great sacrifices to God and:

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream at night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you."

[3 Kings 3:5]

Ask what I shall give you. Here Solomon is tested, and he finds the right answer.

"Give your servant a discerning heart to judge your people and to distinguish between right and wrong; for who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

And it pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.

And God said to him: "Because you have asked for this and have not asked for long life, nor for riches, nor for the lives of your enemies, but have asked for wisdom to be able to judge—

behold, I will do as you have asked: behold, I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has never been anyone like you before you, nor will there ever be anyone like you after you;

and what you have not asked for, I will also give you—both wealth and honor—so that there will be no one like you among the kings all your days;

and if you walk in My ways, keeping My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, I will also prolong your days.

[3 Kings 3:9–14]

Solomon receives a wise and discerning heart to judge the people. Very soon this wisdom will be evident, and Solomon will be the first to be called wise.

What, then, is Solomon's wisdom? Is it that he was given the ability to distinguish between *good* and *evil*? No,

he does not know what *good* and *evil* are, for that knowledge belongs only to God, but he distinguished between *evil* and *violence*.

Solomon grasped the truth that there is a heavenly judge and there is an earthly judge. There are matters on which only the heavenly King makes decisions, and there are matters that the earthly king has the right to resolve. Solomon discerned this. Firmly, using the full power of his sovereign authority, he judged where an earthly king may judge, and he did not interfere, nor did he allow anyone to interfere or judge where only the heavenly King judges.

Solomon was able to distinguish between evil and violence. Acting decisively in resolving acts involving *violence and* encroachment on another's property, he completely ignored state (coercive) intervention in matters related to *good and evil*.

The Almighty will judge human deeds, both evil and good, at the Last Judgment. Therefore, a person cannot know what is *good* and what is *evil* for all people, but can only surmise what is evil and what is good for themselves. Only violence is recognizable by a person outside of themselves, and only here can a judge for all be chosen from among people.

Man was not permitted to eat from the tree of the knowledge *of good and evil*. And not because the Almighty did not want man to become equal to God, but because man has no power over this knowledge: the knowledge of good and evil.

But man could not resist the temptation and ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge *of good and evil*. He fell into sin. But he ate the fruit—yet he did not gain the knowledge *of good and evil*. The serpent deceived him: for he only tempted man and guaranteed nothing.

Solomon recognized this wisdom and did not overstep the bounds permitted to a human judge. Nor did he judge matters of *good* and *evil*; rather, as a king, he judged only cases of violence.

The very first case concerning the infant, which he resolved, came to be known as “Solomon’s Judgment” and brought him fame among the nations for all time.

Two women gave birth to children at the same time. But one night, one of them fell asleep with her infant, and he suffocated and died. Upon waking, this woman, seeing that her child had died, exchanged him for the other woman’s child. The next morning, the other woman, finding a dead child in her arms, did not recognize it as her own and demanded her child back. The matter went to court.

And the king said: “This one says, ‘My son is alive, and your son is dead’; but the other says, ‘No, your son is dead, and my son is alive.’”

And the king said, “Bring me a sword.” And they brought a sword to the king.

And the king said, “Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.”

And the woman whose son was alive answered the king, for her heart was moved with pity for her son: “O my lord! Give her this living child and do not kill him.” But the other said, “Let it be neither mine nor yours; cut him in two.”

And the king answered and said, “Give the living child to this woman, and do not kill him; she is his mother.”

And all Israel heard of the judgment the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.

[3 Kings 3:23–28].

It is, in principle, possible to figure out who owned what and how ownership changed. A crime against property can be solved: there will always be an Hercule Poirot, a Sherlock Holmes, or a Solomon. But it is, in principle, beyond human power to decide the question of *good* and *evil* deeds. That is the domain of the heavenly judge. Therefore, Solomon did not interfere in or decide, by his kingly authority, which shrines and which gods could be worshipped and which could not.

Rehoboam, Solomon's son and heir, broke this rule and imagined himself to be stronger than his father:

| *...my little finger is thicker than my father's loins*

[3 Kings 12:10]

He decided that he could also act as a judge in matters of good and evil.

| *...and he spoke on the advice of young men and said:
My father laid a heavy yoke on you, but I will increase
your yoke; my father punished you with whips, but I
will punish you with scorpions.*

[3 Kings 12:14].

And the kingdom of Israel was divided and never again attained its former greatness.

EVIL AND VIOLENCE

If you have been subjected to violence, then violence has taken place regardless of whether you consider it violence or not. If an eye or a tooth has been knocked out, then they are knocked out regardless of whether anyone acknowledges it or not. Therefore, here, there may be a judge from among the most worthy and wisest of the human race. And punishment is justified here, since violence, in most cases, can be stopped only by righteous force. And compensation for the damage inflicted can and must be calculated and paid. Entire chapters of the Bible and suras of the Quran are devoted to a detailed description of the procedure for compensating for material damage.

But if an evil act is committed against you, if you are insulted or humiliated, it will be considered as such only if you yourself deem it so. A slap does not imply inflicting injury, and it is not physical pain that causes suffering here. Even the weak can slap the strong. A slap is an act of moral impact, just like a verbal insult. But an insult is considered as such only if you yourself consider it as such. And if you do not consider this action against you to be an insult or an evil—then it does not exist. Therefore, in ancient times, it was believed that there is no common judge here other than the Almighty, and there cannot be.

Evil is within us. Within us in the sense that it only begins to exist if we ourselves consider it as such. It is impossible to stop evil with violence, for violence is directed outward, while evil resides within us. Force can only stop violence. An attempt to overcome evil with force leads to a retaliatory reaction in the form of violence.

It was believed that only the Almighty would judge human deeds—good and evil—on the Day of Judgment. There is no common judge among people on earth regard-

ing the matters *of good and evil*. Humans recognize only violence, because violence is most often directed against property. The return of forcibly taken property to its owner is the restoration *of justice*.

Ignorant people do not want justice; they want equality. It is equality that they mistake for justice. But these are ignorant people. They do not always become aggressors. Yet there are those who wish to possess more property, considering only themselves worthy of owning it. And when the free market reveals their true worth to them, they fly into a rage. And they no longer wish to be governed by the laws of justice, but by the laws of good and evil. And in the name of establishing “good”—which they falsely regard as justice—they begin to judge who should own what.

There are only two remedies for these ills: against violence—firm and lawful force and the compulsion to make restitution; against evil—the light of enlightenment and forgiveness. For which of our deeds are evil and which are good will only become known on the Day of Judgment.

An eye for an eye. A tooth for a tooth. These expressions are often taken literally: if an aggressor knocks out a tooth, then a tooth must be knocked out of him as well. In reality, this is not the case at all. The aggressor must make restitution for the damage caused, return the “tooth.” This can be demanded. But if someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other to him as well, for even the Most High Himself is Merciful and Compassionate.

To stop evil, one must not acknowledge it, not consider it evil, until there is a threat of it turning into violence. The first sign of not acknowledging evil is forgiveness. The next is a display of indifference, expressed in the saying, “*If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him.*” This is precisely how the next prophet—Jesus—put it.

JESUS

As humanity evolved, it gradually rose to a level where people began to sense within themselves something that had previously been completely unknown to them. In the depths of consciousness, something great and terrifying began to awaken, due to its incomprehensibility and grandeur. People began to sense the awakening of their souls.

The ancients had no concept of the soul. In the modern sense, it is said to have first appeared only in Plato. But Plato was a giant of his time. And by the beginning of the new era, what only Plato had felt before became accessible to the majority. And so new questions arose that everyone began to ask themselves: “Do I alone have a soul, or do others have one too? And what about death now?”

And there was no one to ask, since there were no new words yet to talk about it.

But then, from the East, a new idea emerges, a new religion—the belief in the One God, in which there is the possibility of the soul’s salvation. Accordingly, a man appears who brings the words with which this can be expressed. He says that yes, the soul exists, and it belongs to everyone, not just to you. And that it *is immortal!* And he proves this through his own resurrection. He says that life in this world and keeping the commandments are preparation for eternal life. And people regain their faith, and life regains its meaning. And this man’s name was Jesus. So goes one of the legends.

The Gospel is the good news of the coming of the Kingdom of God and the salvation of mankind, proclaimed by Jesus Christ and the apostles. The first chapter of the Gospel of John repeats almost word for word the first chapter of

the Old Testament, when viewed from the perspective of the Theory of Abstraction.

The law brought by Moses was in effect in society. Everyone lives under one God, that is, under one law, and this makes people equal before the law. The system for protecting rights, freedoms, and property takes on a universal (formal) character for all members of the people. This gives a boost to economic development. A market is formed.

But the same can be described in reverse. The development of trade and the market leads to economic prosperity and the emergence of new technologies. Human activity, freed from the shackles of traditional patriarchal-clan society, where everything was communal and subordinated to a common goal, began to bear unprecedented fruits. The quantitative and qualitative expansion of economic relations complicates language and elevates humans to a new level of abstraction. After all, from childhood onward, a child now finds themselves in an informationally more complex and saturated environment, which develops their cognitive abilities. The level of human abstraction rises, giving birth to a new understanding of law, spirituality, and religion. A fear of violating the commandments arises: even if one escapes judgment in this world, one cannot escape the Supreme Court in the next. The commandments were sent through Moses in the form of tablets, that is, the letter of the law appeared, uniform for all.

The New Testament speaks of the spirit of the law. If the old law was sent through Moses, then this new one must be brought by a new prophet.

And until the coming of faith, we were held in custody under the law, until the time when faith was to be revealed.

So the law was our guardian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith;

but now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

[Gal. 3:23–25]

He has made us ministers of the New Covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life...

[2 Cor. 3:6]

John the Baptist proclaims about Him:

John testifies about Him and exclaims: “This is the One of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me, because He was before me.’”

And from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace; for the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

[John 1:15–16]

John proclaims a new human level brought by Jesus. This is the level of “grace and truth.” Grace is a blessing freely given by God to every person. Through it, the path to truth is opened, the path to God. And this gift is the ability to abstract. This ability was originally given to man. But only now is man able to comprehend *the truth* with its help.

If the law from Moses speaks of prohibitions, then Jesus speaks of something new. And if reaching the level of Moses was marked by baptism with holy water, then the new level, the level of Jesus, is marked by baptism with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist speaks of this.

And they asked him, “What then are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor a prophet?”

John answered them, “I baptize with water; but there is One among you whom you do not know.

He is the One who comes after me, yet He is ahead of me. I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals.

...

I did not know Him; but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The One on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining, He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

[John 1:25–27, 33]

The new prophet proclaims a new level of humanity and baptizes with the Holy Spirit. What does this mean?

At the previous level, anyone who believed in the one Heavenly God and kept the commandments—do not murder, do not steal...—was recognized as *a human being*. In effect, the foundations of market relations and trade were being put into practice.

What, then, is the new prophet speaking of? What new level of humanity is he proclaiming?

Jesus answered: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.

[John 4:5-6]

God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

[John 4:24]

So, “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” Here, there is a direct connection to the first chapter of the Old Testament. A person must emerge from *the water* over which *the Spirit of God* hovered. At first, a person will discern the physical man, then—the man of the spiritual age. The New Testament speaks precisely of this. But this new teaching is difficult to impart.

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood abides in Me, and I in him.

Just as the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats Me will live because of Me.

This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your fathers, who ate the manna and died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.

He said this while teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

Many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, “What a hard saying! Who can accept such a teaching?”

[John 6:53–60]

The sign of reaching the previous level was baptism with holy water and the corresponding ritual—immersion in water. But what will the new ritual be? How can one physically perform baptism with the Holy Spirit? And what flesh and blood are we talking about here?

Most likely, this is precisely what *the Eucharist (Communion)* is dedicated to, which consists of the consecration of bread and wine (flesh and blood) in a special way and their subsequent consumption.

The Eucharist gives a Christian the opportunity to “unite with God in Christ.” Perhaps this is a symbol of the realization of the first Trinity: God, water, and the Holy Spirit, as noted in the first chapter of the Old Testament.

*“In the beginning, God created **the heavens and the earth**”*

The earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the deep; and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

[Gen. 1:1-2]

When there was neither *earth* nor *heaven*, when human consciousness had not yet awakened, when the ability to abstract had not yet been applied, there was only *water*, over which *the Spirit of God* was hovering. They are two in one—God. In the beginning was the Word (God), and “...all things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that has been made.”

Jesus most likely speaks of and teaches the comprehension of the mystery of the first verses of the Old Testament. And here, the bread (the body of Christ) is the primordial *earth*, the blood (of Christ) is *the* primordial *heaven*; both are *the* primordial *water* over which the Spirit of God hovered. And the division of *the waters* into *heaven* and *earth* took place within man, in his consciousness. That is, man participated in the creation of the world by the will of God, and therefore the text goes on to speak of the Son of God.

And John testified, saying: I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and remaining upon Him.

I did not know Him; but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining, He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’

And I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God.

[John 1:32–34]

And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace; for the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the Father’s bosom, has made him known.

[John 1:16-18]

Perhaps this is an attempt to describe the result of enlightenment, the realization of the truth about God and humanity. This enlightenment is difficult to describe and convey in words. No one has ever seen God... But one must “see.” And He is comprehended through an understanding of the Trinity, through the Holy Trinity. Jesus tries unsuccessfully to speak precisely of this. Here lies the truth. And grace is a free gift, consisting in the ability to abstract. It is a gift already woven into the human being, which will allow one to attain salvation.

Moses’ laws are external gifts that still need to be learned, that still need to be accepted. Compliance with these laws requires coercion.

Let us recall that the first holy trinity is *God, water, and the Holy Spirit*. And to understand it, we constructed a mathematical model: *the number*→, *the numeral*→, and *the group*.

A number cannot be visualized. Any attempt to see a number leads to a group of objects or a numeral (digit). For example, an attempt to see the number “six” gives rise to either a group of six objects or the numeral “six” (the digit 6). But all three are one.

Any attempt to see God leads to *water* or *the Holy Spirit*. But all three are one.

For Moses’ level, God is One, the same for all people, and He is outside, above all people. He is the external force that gave people the law. The law is a formal prohibition against the use of violence against a person.

For the level of Jesus—God is one within every person. He is the inner force that gives a person a soul. One who has grasped this no longer needs external law or coercion to keep the commandments. He is incapable of breaking them. This is the new man—*the Only-Begotten Son, existing in the bosom of the Father, He revealed...*

Let us read the beginning of the first chapter once more:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

It was with God in the beginning.

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that has been made.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

[John 1:1-5]

Most likely, the term “*Word*” here is the same as the term “*abstraction*.” But abstraction is the result of abstraction in the human mind. Why is the Word with God? And why is the Word God?

It should be noted that there is no identity here, i.e., the Word was God, but God was not the Word! After all, an abstraction is also a plan. God’s plan is also the Word. Therefore, in the beginning was the Plan.

The theme of the creation of the world from the first chapter of the Old Testament continues. A new human level is described, where a spiritual human is already distinguished from a human. And to this new level—a new path. But this still needs to be understood.

Jesus desperately explains that God is in Him.

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak to you, I do not speak on My own; the Father who dwells in Me—He does the works.

Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves.

[John 14:9-11]

*If you love Me, keep My commandments.
And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever,
the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

[John 14:15-17]

That is, the Spirit of truth is within everyone. To awaken it, one must believe and accept. It cannot be accepted or understood through logic and reason. One must take a leap of faith, a leap across infinity. And this will be a transition to a new human level.

So, if God is outside of man, and He is One for all—this is the level of Moses. Here, death is a punishment; it terrifies man. And coercion is needed to enforce the commandments, for it is difficult to be a man of the Old Testament.

If a person has developed to the point of accepting the One God not outside but within themselves—that is, God within—this is the level of Jesus. Here, a person's death is the return of their soul to the Father. There is no longer any fear. And this is salvation. It is easy to be a person of the New Testament, for it is founded on love. And love requires no effort. And love requires no law. It is grace and the path to truth.

The New Testament brings not only the message of the salvation of the soul. It allows us to expand the human circle.

There is no longer Jew or Gentile; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

[Gal. 3:28-29]

Peter opened his mouth and said, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him."

[Acts 10:34-35]

And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

[Acts 10:45]

This is *the sixth human level*, where a person is not only a representative of his own people (united by blood), marked by the sign of circumcision and acknowledging the commandments, but a representative *of any people*—even if not marked by circumcision—who discovers God within himself and loves God.

But what is love?

THE NUMBER 666

*Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate **the number of the beast**, for it is **the number of a man**; his number is six hundred sixty-six.*

[Rev. 13:18]

A sensation is that through which the soul is made aware of what the body is experiencing.

Augustine

How many physical senses are there? And how many senses do we know? We know five. They say there is a sixth, but they say it is something metaphysical...

All information from the outside world comes to us through the senses. For every kind of external stimulus, there is a specific sense organ designed to respond to it. The ear hears sounds. The eyes react to light; they see. The nose reacts to smells. The mouth senses taste. The hand, the palm, the skin—they sense touch; they feel. Five basic physical senses. Five?

What if there were six? Six, like the sixes in the Apocalypse.

Six physical senses. Six organs through which the world is perceived. Perceived at the level of reflexes and instincts. Relentlessly and unambiguously, with the ruthlessness of a beast... Here is the first six, and this is the number of the beast.

But they say there are only five senses. But there is, there is a sixth sense. And everyone knows it. And it is entirely physical and has its own organ. And this sense,

which cannot be obtained through other sense organs or replaced by other senses.

Yes, it is the sexual sense and the sexual organs.

The flourishing of the *beast's* world is the final formation of the six physical senses, which operate on the basis of instincts and reflexes. This first six—the first digit in the number 666—is *the number of the beast*.

In the first six (the number of the beast), each unit is separate. Each sense operates independently of the others. Each sense is directed inward and reveals only what the beast's own body experiences. And the beast cares nothing for what another body experiences.

Let's consider this from the perspective of abstraction theory. Let's take the example of the number of apples. Imagine six apples. This is a group. And in this group, each apple is isolated. The number of units in the group can be represented by a set of sticks (units).

And what is the second set of six?

Having acquired the ability to abstract, a person looked at the first set of six senses from the outside. He began to gradually abstract himself from them. In doing so, he gained the ability not to be subject to them, but to rule over them. To rule under the sign of... love.

Ordinary, physical love is the unification of all six senses under a single human sign, enabling one person to understand the feelings of another. To paraphrase Augustine, ordinary, physical love is that through which the soul is made aware of what *another* body is experiencing.

This awareness is, for now, the only path to knowing another soul. The united second six was initially weaker than the number of the Beast. But over time, the human began to overcome *the beastly*. The number of the Beast is replaced, supplanted by the Human number. The second six—in the number 666—is the human number.

Let us explain this using the example of the number of apples and the symbol of quantity—the digit.

Six real apples—as we have already said—are a group. But on the second level, the group is represented as a single, indivisible whole. And the quantity is denoted here not by a set of units, but by an abstract symbol in which the units are no longer distinguishable. This is the digit 6.

Jesus, in turn, brought a new Love. Love with a capital L. Love in which the animalistic, the physical, is finally overcome through complete abstraction from the sensory. The third six—in the number 666—is the removal of both the mark of the Beast and the mark of Man; the overcoming of the number of the Beast and the number of Man. The third six is love for God and the Divine number.

To paraphrase Augustine again, one might say that the Highest Love is that through which the soul is made aware of what another soul is experiencing. And love for the Lord, or Divine love, is the direct communion of the individual soul with the Universal Soul... This is the limit of man. Jesus speaks of the gradual transition through love to this new limit:

And the glory which You have given Me I have given them: that they may be one, just as We are one.

I am in them, and You are in Me; may they be made perfect in unity, and may the world know that You sent Me and loved them as You loved Me.

Father! Those whom You have given Me, I want them to be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory, which You have given Me, because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Righteous Father! The world has not known You; but I have known You, and these have known that You sent Me.

And I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.

[John 17:22–26]

It is quite possible that John the Theologian's original text was distorted by later copyists and that the original version read:

*Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate **the number of the beast**, for it is **the number of a man**, and it is **the number of God**; his number is six hundred sixty-six.*

Most people understood Jesus' call literally. Christians call for a departure from the sensual... through renunciation of it. They declared everything sensual and bodily to be sin and succeeded so well in this that the sexual sense is not even perceived as one of the human senses. Moreover, it is associated with sin. That is why they speak only of the five senses.

True love, as Jesus spoke of it, is a complete detachment from physical love, from the six senses, not a denial of them. It is like the Cheshire Cat's smile without the cat... But destroy the cat—and you destroy the smile. Destroy the physical senses—and you destroy divine love.

Here we can continue the example with the number of apples and the digit, adding the number. We get the same three stages as in counting: quantity—digit—number (six apples—the digit “6”—the number “6”).

The third stage—the number—completely removes the apples themselves and the sign of the quantity of apples. This is complete abstraction.

It is impossible to visualize a number. Any attempt to visualize a number leads to the appearance of either its sign (the digit) or the concrete quantity being counted. This is, as it were, a sacred mathematical trinity, continu-

ing the two previous trinities: *Father, Son, Holy Spirit*, and *the observed, the unobserved, the observer*.

The third six completely removes the marks of the Beast and Man. The Apostle John speaks of this:

Whoever does not love has not known God, because God is love.

God's love for us was revealed in that God sent His only Son into the world so that we might have life through Him.

[1 John 4:8-9]

No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

[1 John 4:12]

By loving one's neighbor, through communion with his living soul, a person, as it were, learns to commune with the universal soul, with God.

And you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.

[Jude 22–21]

To experience divine love—love for the Lord—means to communicate directly with Him. Before this, such a thing was unthinkable. The Lord communicated with people only through a veil or through revelation. Moses received a revelation from the Lord. But even as he simply conveyed God's words to the people, he covered his face:

And the children of Israel saw that the face of Moses shone, and Moses put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with Him.

[Ex. 35:34]

The appearance of Jesus, as it were, removes this veil, proclaiming the coming of a new era when God communicates with man directly. Those who persist and cling to the old go against the will of the Lord.

But their minds are blinded: for the same veil remains unremoved to this day when the Old Testament is read, because it is removed by Christ.

[2 Cor. 3:14]

But no matter how high a level of abstraction a person reaches, no matter how great a love they attain, no matter how deeply they penetrate the understanding of another person's soul, a physical boundary between souls remains nonetheless. The number *of the beast* will not be fully overcome, for it is also the number *of man*. Consequently, man will remain as long as human souls are divided [by the physical].

When the final transition is complete and the number of man is overcome, the final six—the number of God—will be attained. And the third step toward Heaven will be overcome. And all souls will merge into one and unite with God. And the end *of Light* will come, for God has no need of *Light*.

And Man will disappear...

HUMAN LEVELS AND QUANTUM PHILOSOPHY

Now we can formulate six basic levels of abstraction. At each of them, a distinct definition of the term “human” is given. From level to level, the human sphere expands.

The first human level extends from the appearance of the human who distinguished the world and himself, to the appearance of the human who distinguished another human, i.e., to the appearance of Adam and Eve. This is, conditionally, the level of the first human.

The second human level extends from the appearance of Adam and Eve to the emergence of the first human family, to the appearance of Cain, Abel, and Seth. The circle of humanity has expanded. From this point on, members of Adam’s family are considered human, but the rest are not. This is, for lack of a better term, the level of Adam.

The third human level spans from the emergence of the first human family to the formation of the human race. Moreover, representatives of the group of families are now considered human. The rest are not recognized as human. This is, for lack of a better term, Noah’s level.

The fourth human level—from the appearance of the first human clan to the unification of clans into a tribe. Now, members of the group of clans (all who are marked by the sign of circumcision, even if they are not of your seed) are considered human. The rest are not. This is, conditionally, the level of Abraham.

The fifth human level—from the formation of a tribe to the emergence of an ethnic group—a nation. Now, representatives of the group of tribes, marked by circumcision and observing the commandments under the sign of the

external of the One God, are recognized as human beings. All others are not. This is, roughly speaking, the level of Moses.

The sixth human level—from the formation of a people to the unification of peoples under the banner of a single faith. Here, not only are representatives of one's own people (ethnic group)—marked by circumcision and acknowledging the commandments—considered human, but also representatives *of any people*, even if not marked by circumcision, who love the One Heavenly God who dwells within every person. This is, roughly speaking, the level of Jesus.

At each level, rights, freedoms, and property are recognized only for people who are representatives of that level and the preceding levels. Only they fall under the system of collective protection. This is how civilizations were formed (from *civilis* — fenced in, protected).

A civilizational conflict is a conflict between representatives of different human levels, a conflict between the rules governing the distinction between “us” and “them.”

Every person passes through these same levels as a result of education and upbringing, from birth until adulthood.

How and why the transition from one level to another occurs is unknown to anyone. But it is clear that it happens in leaps. It is like the transition from one energy level to another in quantum mechanics.

In our quantum philosophy, certain conditions are necessary for a leap to a new human level. However, the mere presence of these conditions is not enough. Something else is needed. After all, history knows of many cases where communities remain at their lower level, no matter what fruits of a higher civilization are available to them. The same is true for individuals; no matter how they are raised,

they do not rise above a certain level . The leap does not occur. But this is a topic for a separate study...

So, today we are in transition to *the seventh level*, where a person is not merely a representative of their family, clan, tribe, nation, or faith, but anyone who recognizes and respects *the freedom, rights, and property of every human being*. Moreover, this recognition and respect require no effort and need no coercion.

* * *

We have examined only the broadest levels of abstraction and concluded that at the juncture of transition from one level to another, there is a prophet. One might say that it is precisely through prophets that human time is measured.

The sixth level, our time, the new calendar, is counted from the birth of Jesus. But who knows what new prophet walks among us today?..

LONELINESS

The most terrible trial for a person is truly loneliness. After all, a person only makes sense in the company of their peers.

Happy are those who can make friends quickly and freely. Sad are the less fortunate and the timid. Those surrounded by friends laugh merrily. Those abandoned and forgotten weep bitterly into their pillows.

But what is true loneliness?

Even in the strictest prison and in the most remote confinement, there is a connection with others. Someone sits in the next cell, someone brings food, someone takes you out for a walk. Though rare, contact with the outside world is possible. Physical loneliness is a relative concept. Some are lonely even in a crowd; for others, even a deserted island is too small—there is no hiding.

True Solitude is granted to the chosen few... If you have Solitude, then you are no longer alone.

My inner voice. My inner self. My soul. Engaged in conversations and arguments only with myself. There is no one to converse with. They say only God can answer it, but so far He remains silent. And those around me are the same. Or perhaps not. How can I tell? Speak? But it is only a voice. Show? It is merely a gesture. Touch? The body will respond. Not the soul...

The whole world is something outside. The entire universe is merely a mediator. A mediator in a conversation with no one, for He is lost in a multitude of cumbersome links: sound, scent, color. Only those who have lived eternity together will catch a chance reply... The touch of blind souls in the emptiness of human years...

Talk to me. Look into my eyes. Take my hand in yours. Show me the heavens... But no. It is all just a reflection. It is all just vanity. The outline of the main thing is only taking shape. A thin line is drawn with a sharp pen, breaking off and disappearing... Where are you?

Only hope glimmers that one day, in the indifferent darkness, not a touch, not a voice, not a light will answer me, merging with me in fear: "I am here..."

When? Surely only in death...



When the sun sets (and fades),
When (losing their brilliance) the stars fall apart,
When (like a mirage) the mountains begin to move
and vanish,
When the camels, carrying in their wombs
their last month,
Are left unattended,
When beasts gather in herds
(without distinction of species),
When all the seas swell and overflow,
When souls are distributed (according to merit),
When the baby girl
is brought forth,
For what sin she was killed;
When the scrolls
(of records of good and evil),
And the heavens are laid bare,
And the fire of raging Hell is kindled,
(When) Paradise is brought near—
Then every soul will know
What has been decreed for it.¹

[Quran 81:1-14].

¹ Here and below: “The Quran. Translation of Meanings and Commentary by V. Porokhova”

THE QURAN: PARALLELS

PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS

*We offer people in this Qur'an
Parables of various meanings,
so that they may reflect...*

[Quran. The Crowds, 39:27]

So let us reflect. Truly, this is the best remedy for malice and enmity. For whoever flees from reflection will, in the end, run to a sharp dagger as if to an argument. As if the blade of a sword were the path to truth. And words can no longer protect against it, and blood will surely be shed.

Yes, I agree, it is easier to guide a speechless beast onto the right path with kicks. But a human's path is different. It is impossible to force someone onto this divine path. Otherwise, the Almighty would have settled everything long ago.

And perhaps that is why:

It is not your responsibility to guide them to the righteous path—Allah guides by the straight path whom He wills...

[Quran. The Cow, 2:272]

It is sometimes easier to live with an enemy, an adversary, or a foe who does not rush to wish you well, than with a friend who, under the guise of good deeds, takes control of you. You can fight an enemy, but how can you fight a friend who has decided to bring you joy through kindness? You endure, and soon you no longer belong to yourself. For what will turn out to be good, and what will later prove worse than evil—only the Almighty knows. And among people, there is no common standard in this dispute.

And perhaps that is why:

*We know better all their talk,
But you, (O Muhammad!), are not the one
Who should compel them (to faith).
Therefore, admonish with the Quran only those
Who fear My warnings.*

[Quran. Qaf, 50:45]

Yes, like is cured by like. And it is true that a desperate ailment requires desperate remedies. And if an eye is gouged out or a tooth knocked out, then the eye or the tooth, or their value, becomes the measure, and thus the damage is calculated. But if you deem that a word or a glance brings you harm, how then can you find a measure for retribution?

And perhaps this is why:

*Good and evil cannot be equal;
So repel evil with good,
And the one who harbors hatred toward you
Will become a close friend.*

[Quran. Al-Baqarah, 41:34]

Yes, a wise judge has a wise heart that can settle a dispute and determine just compensation. But only in what the eye sees and the hand feels. For only in this world, among the things that have a master here, can a single standard be used to measure all things. But how can one repay evil that only you perceive as wrongdoing? And how can one repay an offender who appears to you alone as a villain in this world?

And perhaps that is why:

*For the recompense for evil
Is evil like it.
But for the one who forgives and restores peace,
A reward is reserved with Allah...*

[Quran. Al-Mujadilah, 42:40]

What should you do if idle chatter or the lewd speech of others annoys you, robbing you of peace and disturbing your mind? Ask yourself, how did you come to be among them?

Who is holding you by force in their misguided circle? Did you not choose them as your companions yourself? And look at those who can distinguish dignified speech from idle chatter. They know that arguing with a fool will not change the fool.

And perhaps that is why:

*As soon as they hear empty talk,
They walk away from it, saying:
“We have our own affairs, you have yours.
Peace be with you! We have no desire to be
Among the ignorant (in the Word of God).”*

[Quran. Surah Al-Nisa, 28:55]

How can one tell who is ignorant and who is wise? Whom should one seek out for guidance, and whom should one be wary of? For if the truth were easy and the word always clear, there would be no ignorant people. Moreover, a fraudster has it easy among the multitude. Among them, with the force of his speech alone, he can easily pass for a wise man. And the ease gained through others' labor inspires his audacity. And so, crowds already swarm around him, simply because they see the majority of people around him. But you know—the truth is difficult; in large gatherings, it is a rare guest.

And perhaps that is why,

*...if you follow those
who are the majority on this earth,
They will lead you astray from the path of Allah—
For they follow only their own fabrications
and make false conjectures.*

[Quran. Cattle, 6:116]

Yet a barrier awaits here as well. Not everything that is difficult to understand is true. They may befuddle you with abstruse narratives, words from a foreign tongue, and a hidden, seemingly inaccessible meaning. And only the true Teacher explains everything simply.

And perhaps that is why:

... *“Read from the Quran what is easy for you”...*

[Quran. The Enveloped, 73:20]

And there is another who is close to you, whose love warms your soul. And every step he takes is a reward to your eyes. His words and speech are simple, his deeds are honest, and his thoughts are comforting. And now you have become arrogant. And with new advice and new guidance, you rush to him, to continue your instruction... But who said that only your intentions have nurtured this wonderful fruit? He is already running away from you and dreads meeting you, and the day is not far off when you risk losing your loved one.

And perhaps that is why:

It is not you who leads the way

The one you love (with your soul and heart).

Allah guides the one

He deems fit by His will—

He knows best those

Who follow the straight path.

[Quran. Al-Nahl, 28:56]

And now there is turmoil in your soul. You no longer believe in yourself, and your strength is leaving you. The fear of loneliness weighs heavily and drives away sleep... Why are you in this world, who needs you, what can you do? Do you think you have been abandoned? But no: the Almighty is Merciful.

And perhaps that is why:

As a sign (halo) of the morning light,

As a sign of the night's darkening canopy, —

Your Lord has not forsaken you,

Your Lord has not forsaken you.

[Quran. Al-Fajr, 93:1-3]

ON TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

*These are the verses of the Clear Book.
Indeed, We have revealed it as
an Arabic Quran,
so that you may understand.*

[Quran. Yusuf, 12:1-2]

Divine revelations descend only upon the chosen few. But what are mere mortals to do? After all, clarity and reason are grasped by them only through words and the meanings of words. The only hope is that those gifted with revelation from above will find the strength to convey it in an accessible form. Otherwise, what good are the sounds of obscure speech? Moreover, where there is much verbal fog, there are many charlatans and false prophets. The Quran contains many warnings on this subject.

Indeed, not everything is within the reach of human understanding.

*He is the One who sent the Book to you—
Some verses in it carry an explicit meaning,
as if they were the Mother of the Book;
Others are hidden in their interpretation.
But those whose hearts wander in sin,
Desiring confusion, follow that
That suits their desires—
Seeking the hidden meaning,
Which is known only to Allah
And is revealed only to those
Who possess profound knowledge.*

*“We believe in (the Holy Book—
Where all (ayats) are revealed by God!
And its message can be grasped
Only by those whose minds are clear.”*

[Quran. The Family of Imran, 3:7]

A person who could distinguish between what is within human understanding and what is accessible only to the Almighty was called wise in ancient times. One cannot learn to be wise. One can learn to be intelligent, but it is difficult. Fraudsters who wish to become intelligent without effort and proclaim themselves wise declare themselves to be experts in “hidden meanings.” After all, no mortal can verify this. But ask them to explain anything that has a clear meaning—in response, you will receive both abuse and accusations of blasphemy... But this is merely a veil, behind which lie only greed and ignorance.

*The donkey that drags a load of heavy books
(But does not understand the meaning of what is in them),
Are like those entrusted to carry
the Holy Torah,
Yet they have disregarded its Covenant.
And those who
Who deemed the signs of Allah to be false.
Allah will not guide the wrongdoers to the right path.*
[Quran, Surah 62:5]

But the one whose mind is clear explains everything simply and accessibly. “He who thinks clearly speaks clearly.” And a true teacher always knows who is before him and how to conduct a conversation to avoid ambiguities and confusion. He has no need to coerce his students through violence or fear. He will never humiliate a lis-

tener who has come to hear him. And a true teacher will not incite the crowd with calls to violence. The law is above all, and there is no truth outside the law. A false teacher, who does not know what the law is, usually proposes to resolve by force what he cannot resolve with words. But there is a warning against this as well:

*Thus have We revealed it,
so that in the Arabic language there might be a code
of laws (of Our Judgment).
And if you follow their desires
after knowledge has come to you,
You will have neither a protector from God,
nor a protector (before Him).*

[Quran. Thunder, 13:37]

Truly, there is no refuge for the deceitful. They cannot claim that knowledge did not come to them (in plain and clear language). In ancient times, the proclamation of a new law in the public squares began with the words: "Listen, and do not say later that you did not hear." And today, it is simply impossible to claim that one did not hear the warning. True, one might claim that one heard but did not understand. But this is possible only if one's teachers were ignorant. Yet today, everyone chooses their own teachers. And, therefore, the responsibility lies with them as well.

But what if it turns out there is no teacher at all? Can one justify a forbidden crime here by claiming that one was, so to speak, ignorant, blind, and committed the crime out of ignorance, and could not find a teacher? No, of course not. "Seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Only those who do not seek will fail to find a teacher.

And how can you justify the fact that you yourselves refused to search? By the conviction that the message is only for the chosen ones, and you are not among them?

A weak excuse.

*As a sign of this Clear Book.
Truly, We have made it the Qur'an
in Arabic,
so that you might understand.
It is part of the Mother of the Book,
which is before Us—
full of majesty and wisdom!
Would We then turn away the Message from you
Just because you are a people
?*

[Quran. (Gold) Ornaments, 43:2–5]

All that is needed is attention and obedience. After all, that is so little. And honesty. If you understand something, say you understand it, and if you do not understand—say you do not understand—and that is all. But this is precisely what is very difficult. Without a teacher, sometimes you cannot even tell what you have understood and what you have not.

But it often happens that people reject a true teacher, saying, “Oh, this one says things that even I can understand. What can I learn from him?” And they mistakenly take as a teacher someone who speaks in a complicated and incomprehensible way, and, going to him for a “lesson,” exclaim, “Oh, he says things that are so incomprehensible. Now that’s depth!” The consequences of such learning are dire. And the wretched student begins to justify his ignorance by claiming that knowledge is generally impossible, and explains his rejection of the true

teacher by saying that it cannot be that the holy truth is so simply expressed in one's native tongue, not a foreign one.

True, there is an explanation for this as well:

*But if We had sent down the Quran
in a language other than Arabic,
they would have exclaimed:
'Where is the interpretation of its verses?
Is this not in Arabic,
Yet it is recited by an Arab?'*

[Quran, Al-Baqarah, 41:44]

But those who persist in their ignorance rush to find fault here as well. They begin to justify their poor choice of teacher by claiming that a true teacher cannot be found nearby. With skepticism, or even anger, they lament that no one among their acquaintances could possibly be born who could explain everything to them. "No," they say, "the truth cannot be so close; it must surely be in distant lands, with foreign sages, and in foreign languages." But this is merely a ruse. Behind it lie only envy and pride. In reality, things are somewhat different.

*This is truly a message from the Lord of the worlds
<...>
And if We had sent it
to a man of another tribe or lineage
And he were to recite it to them (in a foreign tongue),
They would not have believed in him.*

[Quran. The Poets, 26:192, 198-199]

But what is this? My reader is perplexed. He has heard many times already that this is the Arabic Quran, for the Arabs, in the Arabic language. And what is he to do if he does not know the Arabic language and, by birth, cannot

possibly be an Arab? But it is said—there is a teacher in every people.

*There is not a single people
In which (among them)
We have not raised up a warner from among them.*
[Quran. The Creator, 35:24]

*For every people—a messenger.
When their messenger comes to them,
Then whatever is in dispute between them
will be settled justly,
And no wrong will be done to them.*
[Quran. Yunus, 10:47]

*And no messenger has been sent by Us
Who did not speak the language of his people,
So that he might speak to them clearly.*
[Quran. Ibrahim, 14:4]

DISTINCTION

*And (remember) when
We gave Moses the Discernment and the Book,
so that you might follow the straight path.*
[Quran. Al-Baqarah, 2:53]

Along with the Holy Book, Moses was also given the Criterion. The Book is the sacred scripture of the Torah. And what is the Criterion (Al-Furqan)?

*We bestowed upon Moses and Aaron
Al-Furqan—
Light and a Message for those
who observe piety...*
[Quran. The Prophets, 21:48]

Al-Furqan (The Criterion) — Light and a Message. By all accounts, this is something very important. Moreover, it was sent not only through Moses and not only to the Jews:

*He is the One Who sent the Book to you in truth
As a confirmation of what was revealed before.
And before it, He sent down the Law (with Moses),
and after it, the Gospel (with Jesus)
As guidance for mankind,
And He has also sent down to you Al-Furqan...*
[Quran. The Family of Imran, 3:4]

The importance of *the* revealed *Discernment* is further emphasized by the fact that the 25th surah of the Quran is named precisely “Discernment” (Al-Furqan).

At first, like many others, I believed that this referred to the distinction between *good* and *evil*. But then I realized: according to all the Holy Scriptures, the distinction between good and evil is known only to God. A person can

only hope that his deeds will ultimately prove to be good.
No one knows this in advance.

*... When the scrolls
(of records of good and evil),
And the heavens are laid bare,
And the fire of raging Hell is kindled,
When Paradise is brought near, —
(Then) every soul will know
What has been decreed for it.*

[Quran. The Gathering, 81:10-14]

*And every soul will be fully recompensed for its
deeds—
For He knows best what they do.*

[Quran. The Crowds, 39:70]

Only on the Day of Judgment will every soul know what has been decreed for it, that is, which of its deeds were good and which were evil. Not before. And only He, the Most High, *knows best what they do*. If definitive knowledge of good and evil were accessible to man, everything would have been decided long ago. But this knowledge is beyond man's reach, and therefore the Holy Scripture forbids man from approaching the tree *of the knowledge of good and evil*.

*Then We said: "O Adam!
Live with your wife in the Garden of Eden,
And wherever you may be there,
Enjoy the abundant fruits to your heart's content,
But do not approach this tree,
Lest you fall into evil and transgression."*

[Quran. The Cow, 2:35]

But man, having been endowed with reason, cannot escape temptation and tries to determine for himself what is good and what is evil. There is no sin in this. The sin lies in his attempt to enshrine his conclusions as law and impose them on others *by force*. The consequences of this are

always dire, as they lead to a situation where, among people, everything is decided not *by the Law*, but by the whims of those who hold greater power. And lawlessness becomes the price they pay for their pride.

*But Satan led them into sin
and led them out (of bliss),
in which they were there.*

[Quran. The Cow, 2:36]

And today there are many who have been led astray into this sin. With angry faces and menacing words, considering themselves partners of the Most High, they call for violent resistance against what they claim to have identified as evil. They no longer place their hope in God, but turn instead to force and state authority. Yet a warning has been issued against them as well.

*Truly, whoever does not believe in Allah
And has led others astray from His path
And whoever opposes His Messenger
after the straight path has become clear to them,
Will not harm Allah in the least,
But He will render their deeds futile.*

[Quran. Muhammad, 47:32]

Yes, they will not harm the Most High. But their deeds bring much misfortune upon people. And much blood may be shed before they realize that their deeds are in vain. And in this lies a warning through *Discernment*.

One must distinguish between the realm where a person can enact laws and administer justice, and the realm where a person cannot do so, where the Judge is only the Most Merciful.

He who distinguishes these spheres is a wise man.

*We first bestowed upon him the wisdom of Luqman,
(saying to him), "Give thanks to Allah!
Whoever is grateful to the Lord,*

*thinks of Him with his soul for his own good;
And whoever is ungrateful to Him—well then!
Allah is, indeed, free from any
need and is glorious!*

[Quran. Luqman (the Wise), 31:12]

Luqman was told that a person can attain salvation and the good of his soul only through the Most High and by turning to Him alone. But under no circumstances by turning to another person or to the state authorities. Turning to power here is tantamount to making a partner for God on earth, and this—according to the Scripture—is the gravest of sins. And it all begins with pride... And Luqman thus instructs his son:

*Do not strut before people with arrogance
And do not stride proudly upon the earth, —
For Allah, indeed, does not love the boastful and
proud.
Try to moderate your gait
And lower your voice (as you should)—
For, without a doubt, the most unpleasant of sounds is
The sound of a (mindless) donkey's voice.*

[Quran. Luqman (the Wise), 31:18-19]

A person may turn to authority, power, or act as a judge only in matters concerning the material, the earthly, that is, in disputes over property. This discernment, this wisdom, was given to David and his son Solomon.

*(We admitted, in Our mercy)
Also to David and (his son) Solomon,
When they judged a case concerning a field,
Which had been damaged by stray sheep,
(Belonging to) a family from their community.
And We were present at their judgment Ourselves.
And We inspired Solomon
(to judge) this matter (justly),
And to each of them
We bestowed knowledge and wisdom.*

[Quran. The Prophets, 21:78-79]

According to tradition, Solomon did indeed possess outstanding abilities to resolve disputes over property. And he never used his royal power or authority to resolve spiritual matters.

The world is constantly changing. One must also be able to *discern* these changes. Thomas Mann spoke remarkably about this in 1942 in a lecture delivered on the occasion of the publication of his trilogy **Joseph and His Brothers**. Here are those words, which remain highly relevant today:

“...Religiousness is *attention* and *obedience*. *Attention* to the internal changes the world is undergoing, to the shifting landscape of ideas about truth and justice; *obedience* that immediately adapts life and reality to these changes... *To live in sin* is to live, through inattention, clinging to what is outdated and backward and continuing to live in this delusion. Whoever *cares for God* is concerned with the thought: does he not continue to consider right and just that which was once truly the truth but has ceased to be so? *Concern for God* is piety and humility, the ability to recognize what is evil, outdated, and everything from which a person has already grown inwardly, which has become intolerable, unbearable. Piety is a kind of wisdom, wisdom before God...”

MAN

*Hasn't that long period passed
That long period when he was nothing?*

[Quran. Al-Insan, 76:1]

Is it enough to be able to walk on two legs, wear clothes, and articulate sounds to be called a human? To whom do human laws apply, and whom should one treat as a beast? To whom can and should one turn, baring one's soul, and whom should one be wary of? How can one tell the difference?

The path from the emergence of the physical human being to the emergence of the spiritual human being, who is created from *nothing*, is very long. We cannot directly perceive the soul or the spirit with our senses... We cannot read minds or peer into the hearts of others. Yet the great journey toward the Almighty continues, where every step is a refinement of the human soul and where there is a constant sorting and distinguishing between the righteous and the transgressors.

*We created them and strengthened them
in perfect unity,
But if We so desire,
We will replace them—completely—
With those similar (in appearance), but righteous
(before Allah).*

[Quran. Al-Insan, 76:28]

“Similar in appearance, but righteous before God.” Yes, it is no trouble for the Most High to distinguish who is a righteous person and close to Him. But how can a person avoid making a mistake in choosing a companion? How can one recognize who is before them, if everyone around is “similar in appearance”? Signs are needed.

The first and most ancient signs were natural: the one who is closer by blood and kinship is a human; the one who is of my seed—that one is a human.

But when the population grew exponentially, it became impossible to remember all one's relatives and distinguish them by appearance. On the other hand, it became necessary to distinguish, even among numerous relatives, who was a friend and who was someone to be feared.

One of the first artificial signs of distinction (of a person) was circumcision. The sign of circumcision no longer indicated belonging to a particular clan, but rather belonging to a community with a specific, shared spirituality. The Quran says nothing about circumcision. Perhaps there was no need for this, because it had been described in sufficient detail in the previous Scriptures, or because the rite itself had already become natural and customary and required no further explanation.

Another ancient sign can be considered the way of distinguishing a person by how he drinks water from a river. This is mentioned both in the Bible [Judges 7:5-7] and in the Quran.

*When Talut set out on a campaign with his troops,
he said: "The Lord will send a river to test you,
And whoever drinks from it
shall not be among my warriors,
But a few sips from the palm
will be forgiven."*

[Quran. The Cow, 2:249]

Those who lapped water directly from the river like animals were set apart from those who scooped water into their palms and drank from their hands. The latter were considered the chosen ones.

Over time, as humans reached a higher level of spiritual development, purely external signs no longer helped in distinguishing between them. More subtle methods were

needed. One of them was *fasting*—the voluntary abstention from food, even when it was available in sufficient quantities. Only a human being is capable of this. Over a long period of time, it was precisely the ability to fast that became the sign by which the new human was distinguished from the old.

*O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you,
just as it was prescribed for those before you,
so that you may attain piety...*

[Quran. The Cow, 2:183]

According to the Bible, the first to introduce *the distinction* based on the ability to fast was Moses (Musa). Perhaps this is why the Quran specifically mentions that Musa was given “both the Book and the Discernment.”

Time does not stand still, and man continues his journey toward the Most High, perfecting his soul. There comes a moment when there is a need for even more subtle ways to distinguish the new man. Indeed, today it is not so difficult to drink water from a vessel, to undergo circumcision with the help of a doctor, to force oneself to fast, or to perform long-established and well-known rituals...

*Piety does not lie in that,
in turning one's face toward the east or the west,
But piety lies
To believe in Allah,
And in the Last Day,
And in His angels,
In the Scripture (the Holy Book) and in the prophets;
Loving (one's wealth), yet sharing it
And with one who is related by blood,
And with the orphan, and with the needy,
And with the traveler, and with those who call out...*

[Quran. The Cow, 2:177]

A new theme emerges: performing deeds not out of fear, but out of love. Only one who is capable of loving can do something out of love. Only a spiritually perfect person can love. First, love for one's neighbor is born and recognized, then—love for God.

*And among His signs is that He created for you
Has created spouses for you from yourselves,
So that you might live together (and raise offspring);
He has fostered mercy and love between you—
In this, truly, is a sign for those
who reflect.*

[Quran. Ar-Rum, 30:21]

Love is a feeling bestowed by God. It cannot be seen with the eyes nor distinguished by signs. It cannot be bargained for nor obtained through exchange. Loud cries of love (for God, for one's neighbor) only point to its absence. Truly, "only the heart is keen; the most important things cannot be seen with the eyes."

*O children of Adam,
your eyes are no help on the path to Truth,
neither your tongue nor your words lead to Him.
Your hearing is a source of sorrow,
and your hands and feet only plunge you into confusion.
True striving is connected to the heart.
Strive, then, to attain an awakened heart,
for it alone needs nothing.*

(Rabia)

Those *who strive* need teachers. On your own, without a teacher, even a thousand lifetimes would not be enough to walk this path. A true teacher knows all the previous steps and knows that they cannot be skipped or jumped over. Otherwise, it may happen that in old age you will have to go back and step onto the missed step.

But a true teacher knows that one cannot remain on a single step for long. A stairway to heaven is a stairway precisely because one must climb it, not rest on the step that one likes and finds comfortable.

The ascent is always difficult. Sometimes a student thinks wistfully of the previous class, where everything is already clear. And he lacks the strength to push through to the next class, where everything is very difficult. But that is a student; a teacher can correct him. And there are wretched teachers who hold students back simply because they themselves are still in the elementary grades.

If a person is able to describe with words what can be seen with the eyes, then there is hope that they will be able to describe what is in their heart as well.

If a teacher can teach a student to distinguish what is visible to the eye, there is a chance that he can teach him to distinguish what is visible only to the heart.

But how often do the blind volunteer to be guides, knowing that the others are blind too and therefore won't be able to see through their trick. Yet it is said, "If a blind person leads a blind person, both will fall into a pit."

KNOWLEDGE: HUMAN AND DIVINE

*He knows what came before them,
And what will come after them;
But with their knowledge
cannot comprehend this.*

[Quran. Ta-Ha, 20:110]

The expansion of knowledge is the path to perfection. But what is knowledge? And what role do the Holy Scriptures play in this? And what kind of knowledge is contained in the Quran? There is much debate on this subject, and many respected scholars have their own views on the matter. We will try to offer our own view, and those of sound mind will choose the one that seems most correct to them, bearing in mind that absolute truth belongs only to the Almighty.

The world is given to us for knowledge. We are endowed with reason to understand the world. Indeed, it is within man's power to figure out why the wind blows, how much three times seven is, and how to kindle a fire. Man can understand the structure of matter and the properties of various bodies, penetrate the atom, and peer into the depths of the cosmos. But man is born without knowledge.

*Allah brought you forth from your mothers' wombs
Devoid of all knowledge,
He gave you hearing and sight, knowledge and senses,
So that you might be grateful.*

[Quran. The Bee, 16:78]

The knowledge we will henceforth refer to as human is created by man himself, and for this opportunity he must be grateful to the Almighty. The surrounding world is a book; by reading it, man creates this knowledge.

*Is it not clear to you that Allah
has placed at your service all
that is on earth and in the heavens,
and has bestowed upon you abundant bounties,
Whether manifest or hidden?
And yet there are some among you
Who argue about their Lord
Without knowledge, without guidance
And without the Book that (is capable)
shed light.*

[Quran. Luqman (the Wise), 31:20]

Which are manifest, and which are hidden?

The manifest blessings are scientific knowledge. Therefore, there is no need to convey scientific knowledge through the Holy Scripture as well, as if it were hidden. In turn, the Holy Scripture is not a substitute for a textbook on geography, physics, or medicine, as is sometimes presented... In particular, it is suggested, for example, to consider the text of the 53rd verse of the 25th surah, "Al-Furqan," as scientific knowledge:

*He is the One who has set forth the two seas:
The pleasant and the fresh are one,
The salty and the bitter—the other.
He has set a barrier between them—
Such an unbreakable barrier,
(That never allows them to mix).*

[Quran. Al-Furqan, 25:53]

It is believed that this refers to actual seas, fresh and salty, discovered in the ocean by Jacques Cousteau only in the 20th century. Yes, ocean currents sometimes create such phenomena. But what Cousteau was able to observe did not necessarily need to be presented as a divine revelation. Especially since the following 54th verse, which is usually glossed over, offers food for thought.

*He is the One Who created man from water
And established for him kinship by blood and marriage—*

Your Lord is truly mighty!

[Quran. Distinction, 25:54]

Clearly, this is not about geography or seawater. It is about something that was actually hidden from humanity. And this is not scientific knowledge, but a model of the emergence of the first human knowledge and the birth of rational man. It is impossible to verify this by any scientific methods; one can only attempt to decipher it. And indeed, in virtually all Holy Scriptures, there is a primordial “water” from which all things were created. In the beginning, it is one; it is all that exists. Then, with his nascent mind, man began *to distinguish and* divide it, first into two parts (“fresh” and “salty,” “heaven” and “earth”), and then into ever finer components. And the barrier between them, preventing them from merging, is the light of human consciousness. Should it fade, the barriers will vanish. The world will once again merge into a single substance called “water.”

The Quran contains, encoded within it, knowledge about the spiritual human being, about law, about morality, about conscience, about duty, about love... These concepts do not belong to the realm of science, and they do not exist in nature, outside of humanity. But man is capable of comprehending them, and this comprehension does not take the form of scientific knowledge. It is rather in the nature of insight, enlightenment, and revelation.

Yet the Scripture also speaks of things that are not given to man to comprehend or know in any form whatsoever. These are things one can only believe in.

*They ask you about the Hour:
When is its appointed time?*

*Tell them: "The knowledge of this is with my Lord.
No one but He can reveal its time,
and its burden would be heavy
in the heavens and on earth.
It will come upon you quite unexpectedly."
They ask you about this,
as if you knew for certain about it.
Tell them: "Knowledge of it
is known only to Allah."
But most of them do not know.*

[Quran. Al-A'raf, 7:187]

We can read in all the Holy Books about the necessity of distinguishing between the realms of human knowledge, where the mind is capable of finding the truth, and the realms of divine knowledge, which are beyond the reach of the mind.

There is a third kind of knowledge—that which was initially hidden and could not be deduced by the human mind, but which could later be recognized, accepted, and followed. For example, not a single mortal in times not so long ago could have imagined that refraining from plunder, theft, and robbery could be a blessing for society and bring untold riches. Reason, on the contrary, cried out: “Take! Steal! You need this!” And family and friends welcomed those returning from raids as heroes...

The commandment "Thou shalt not steal!" could not have arisen as a consequence of human intellectual activity. This knowledge was recognized only as sacred, transmitted through the prophets. And the role of the priests was not to comprehend it, but to preserve and transmit it, for once lost, it could never be restored.

But how often did rulers begin to imagine themselves as the very sources of this knowledge (*the Laws*) and the creators of social prosperity...

And strife, turmoil, and wars began.

*When, with clear signs from Us,
Messengers came to them,
They (exultantly) celebrated
Over the (fullness) of that knowledge (and skill),
They had acquired,
But they were overcome by that
What they had mocked (in this life).*
[Quran. The Forgiving, 40:83]

*And We have given them clear signs
About (the commandments concerning) the Lord's
work.
But when knowledge came to them,
they all turned away
out of malicious envy toward one another.
Truly, your Lord on the Day of Judgment
will judge between them
in which they differed.*
[Quran. Those Who Prostrate, 45:17]

JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

*O my people! Be just in weighing and measuring;
Do not cause harm to people's property
And do not commit evil deeds on earth,
Spreading corruption and chaos upon it.*

[Quran. Hud, 11:85]

The call to observe justice and fairness, to renounce plunder and robbery, is nothing other than a proclamation of free trade. This call was a new phenomenon for the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, where military valor and spoils were held in higher esteem. People had to be compelled to observe justice and fairness. This required considerable force. And at first, the full might of the early Muslim states was devoted to this task. Swift and just judgment was possible here because weights and measures in commercial matters were known to all, and it was always possible to determine whether an item had been stolen or plundered and thus belonged to someone else.

*... A clear sign has come to you
from your Lord:*

*Observe weights and measures strictly,
And do not withhold from people
what is rightfully theirs.
And do not commit acts of lawlessness on earth
after order*

*(strict) order has been established...
Do not lie in wait on every path,
Threatening and leading astray from the path of Allah*

*those who have believed in Him,
attempting thereby to distort His path.*

[Quran. Al-A'raf, 7:85-86]

According to the Holy Scriptures, one of the first to heed this call was Solomon, son of David. During his reign, any crime against property was severely punished, and freedom of trade was strictly upheld. According to tradition, this led to 40 years of peace and the country becoming incredibly wealthy. Legends circulated about Solomon's own wealth, and those same legends attributed its origin to magic and his possession of secret diamond mines.

*(They were beguiled by them and) led them astray
the devils,
Who fabricated (lies) about Solomon's kingdom—
But Solomon was not wicked
But the devils were the wicked ones,
Who taught people sorcery...*

[Quran. Al-Baqarah, 2:102]

After Solomon's death, his son, having inherited great wealth and a powerful kingdom, resolved to govern trade, weights, and measures according to his own understanding of what constitutes justice, distinguishing people by faith and nationality. This led to the collapse of the ancient kingdom.

A person may act as a judge only in matters related to property, and the rules here are simple:

*You, too, observe justice faithfully,
Do not be among those
Who cause loss to others by short measure,
And weigh with just scales;
And do not withhold from people
That rightfully belongs to them,
And do not walk upon the earth, committing wicked-
ness.*

[Quran. The Poets, 26:181-183]

But man cannot be a judge in matters of good and evil, of faith and disbelief. There is no guarantor for man here, and the Judge here is only the Most High.

*Say: "O mankind!
The Truth has come to you from your Lord!
And whoever follows the straight path,
Has chosen a path that benefits the soul.
Whoever strays from this path
Has strayed to his own ruin.
And I am not a guarantor for you!"
But you, (O Muhammad!), follow that
That has been revealed to you,
And wait patiently and steadfastly,
Until Allah renders His Judgment,
For He is the best of judges (in the entire universe)!
[Quran. Yunus, 10:108–109]*

A thief, a robber, a rapist, and a murderer can be brought before a human court, and at that court a person may serve as a witness. But in matters of sins, a person can neither be a judge nor act as a witness.

*Say: "You will not be asked about our sins
And we will not be asked what you do."
Say: "Our Lord will gather us together, and then
He will judge us according to the Truth (His own)—
He is the Supreme Judge, the All-Knowing!"
[Quran. Saba, 34:25-26]*

ON READING

The texts of the Holy Scriptures are very specific and complex. To understand them, it is not enough simply to be able to read the written text. Even after memorizing all the surahs of the Quran, one can remain completely ignorant of their meaning. But the mere accumulation of scholarly knowledge may also prove useless: it cannot replace that brief moment of enlightenment...

The first and greatest reader of the Quran was the Prophet Muhammad. He received it from the angel Jibril: *“Read (and proclaim!) / In the name of your God, Who created—
...”*

But here we are talking about inner reading. For according to tradition, the Prophet Muhammad could neither read nor write... And this is a clear warning against charlatans who teach the empty clatter of words reproduced from written Arabic letters. After all, if one believes their claims, they can teach in six months (!) what the Prophet himself spent his entire life learning. In reality, they teach only sounds... But everyone chooses their own path, everyone is responsible for their own actions, and everyone pays the teacher they have chosen.

Anyone seeking the truth must understand that they can find only what they themselves are able to recognize. If you are looking for gold, you must know what it looks like and what properties it has, so as not to confuse it with copper. If you are looking for a diamond, you must know what it is, so as not to confuse it with zircon. But what is truth, and how will you know that it is indeed truth when you find what seems to be truth?

*For Truth comes only from God,
and therefore do not be among those*

In whom doubt dwells.

[Quran. The Family of Imran, 3:60]

But there is no person who would not cast aside doubts and believe if the Most High Himself addressed him personally and clearly. But God never addresses a person directly:

*And it is not given to man
For Allah to speak to him
Except through revelation,
Or through a veil,
Or by sending a messenger (angel) to him,
Who, by the Lord's will,
Reveal His will to him? —
For He is Great and Wise (beyond measure)!*

[Quran. Al-Furqan, 42:51]

Truth is born first in the soul. And only then can the reader perceive it, recognize it in the text of the Holy Scripture, but only those to whom knowledge has been granted.

*And those to whom knowledge has been granted
That what the Lord has revealed to you
Is the Truth that leads to the path
of the Mighty and Praiseworthy Lord.*

[Quran. Saba, 34:6]

The potential and ability to know are bestowed upon every person, but not everyone strives for knowledge and study. And without study, without painstaking, long-term work with a true teacher, the capacity for knowledge remains unawakened...

*Say: "The Truth comes from your Lord:
Whoever wills may believe (in Him),
Whoever wishes may remain an unbeliever"...*

[Quran. The Cave, 18:29]

CAIN AND ABEL

*This Qur'an could not have been
have been invented by anyone other than Allah.
It confirms the truth of that
That was revealed to you before it,
And makes clear—there is no doubt about it!—
The message from the Lord of the worlds.*

[Quran. Yunus, 10:37]

The Quran repeatedly speaks of confirming the truth of what was revealed before it (2:4; 2:136; 3:84; 4:60; 5:46,59,66,68; 10:37,94; 12:111). Perhaps for this reason, many narratives are so brief and concise that it is difficult to understand exactly what is being discussed; it is as if only a mention is made, and more detailed texts are suggested to be found in the previous scriptures.

From this perspective, we should probably also consider the story of Adam's two sons—Qabil and Habil (Cain and Abel). The Quran recounts very briefly and concisely that Qabil killed Habil.

*Read to them the true story
of Adam's two sons.
For both of them offered a sacrifice,
But it was accepted from one,
But rejected from the other.
And the other said:
"I will surely kill you!"*

[Quran. The Table, 5:27]

The story itself and its essence are not described in detail in the Quran. But some conclusions can be drawn if, in addition to the Quran, one reads this account in the previous scripture, the Bible (ch. 4, Book of Genesis). The Bi-

ble speaks of a decision by the Almighty that seems rather strange at first glance: not only to spare Cain (Qabil) from punishment, but also to protect him from persecution for his deed: *“And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, so that no one who found him would kill him”* (Gen. 4:15). This indicates that this event (Cain’s murder of Abel) is not an ordinary one—it is a symbolic event.

The murder committed by Kabil is the first murder committed not for the purpose of self-defense or to seize another’s spoils. It is the first human act committed out of envy. Envy is the desire to possess another’s qualities. It exists only in humans. In the animal world, outside of humanity, there is no such motive for committing an act, nor could there ever be. Yet its emergence in humans cannot be explained by any rational premises. Hence the conclusion regarding divine providence.

Cain wanted his offering to be accepted as well, but to do so, he needed to possess Abel’s qualities. And Cain decided to kill. On the one hand, this decision could have been based on the idea of eliminating a rival. On the other hand, it could have been an act committed based on a belief (which has survived to this day among some indigenous tribes) that through murder one can acquire the better qualities of the murdered person.

Neither the first path nor the second is true. Nevertheless, Cain was the first person to acquire a new quality, and his act became a landmark in human history. It heralded humanity’s advancement to a higher stage in its development.

The Quran warns that the entirely new abilities bestowed by the Almighty must be used in an entirely new way—without the use of violence. They must be directed not outward from the person, but inward toward the person themselves. That is, there is only one way to overcome envy—self-improvement. This path was found by Shis—

the third son of Adam. Violence is unacceptable where the Almighty passes judgment; He decides whose sacrifice to accept and whose not to accept.

And therefore We have prescribed to the Children of Israel:

Whoever kills a living soul—not in retaliation for a soul

nor for corruption on earth—

is as if he had destroyed all mankind.

But whoever saves that life—

It is as if he has saved all mankind from death.

[Quran. The Table, 5:32]

The killing of a person not for a crime recognizable by a human court, but in a fit of passion, with the aim of resolving a matter that is within the jurisdiction of the Almighty alone, is subject to severe condemnation. Indeed, killing based solely on an idea could lead (and often did lead) to the killing of prophets sent to people with a new message. The message could not be understood and accepted immediately. Very often, at first, it was perceived as a lie.

... Say: “And before me,

messengers of Allah

Bearing His signs,

And even what you speak of—

Why then did you kill them,

If you are truthful in what you say?”

And if they consider you a liar,

After all, the messengers who came to you before were also considered liars

The messengers who came before you,

Bringing clear signs and scriptures—

Scripture that (the Light of the Lord's) Truth (bears).

[Quran. The Family of Imran, 3:183-184]

And the killing of the prophets could indeed lead (and did lead) to the destruction of peoples who, without prophecies, remained blind.

*We have not destroyed any people
without first sending a guide to them,
To admonish them (against evil
and enjoin what is good)—
And in this We have never been
unjust (or cruel).*

[Quran. The Poets, 26:208-209]

NOAH

*We sent Noah to his people;
He remained among them for nearly
years.
But the flood overtook them,
When (in their unbelief) they*

[Quran. The Spider, 29:14]

In the Quran, the Bible, the Torah, and the ancient “Epic of Gilgamesh,” as well as in the traditions of many peoples, the story of the flood is found. Noah (Utanapishtim) is the prophet who survived the flood and gave rise to a new, post-flood humanity.

Indeed, (physical) floods that destroyed entire civilizations did occur. But Scripture describes not so much the history of physical processes as the history of humanity and human society. In this light, the flood can be understood metaphorically as the destruction of entire peoples due to the wrong choice of social system. And the similarity of the descriptions of “floods” here may suggest that every people had to overcome the level designated by the prophet Noah. What is this level?

According to one version, humanity was given the truth from the very beginning, but people, falling into the sin of unbelief, distorted it; the world collapsed, nations perished, until a new prophet appeared to restore the truth.

According to another version, humanity develops, improves, and, as it were, ascends step by step from the animal to the divine. Each prophet is a sign of overcoming the next step on this path. Each successive Message brings confirmation of the truth of the previous level and knowledge of the new one.

I am more drawn to the second version. And as I study the Scriptures, I find more and more confirmation of it.

*Truly, there are signs hidden here
(for those who listen)—
Thus do We test (mankind).
Then We raised up after them
another generation...*

[Quran. The Believers, 23:30-31]

The Quran's account of the Flood and Noah is very concise and brief. Most likely, this is because people are already quite familiar with this story from previous Scriptures. A recurring theme (7:59; 11:25-26; 23:23; 29:14; 71:1-2) is the reminder that a warning was sent to Noah's people, but they did not heed it.

*We sent Noah to his people,
and he said:
"O my people! Worship Allah!
There is no god for you besides Him.
I fear for you the punishment of the Great Day."*

[Quran. Al-A'raf, 7:59]

But how can one distinguish between those who sincerely worship Allah and those who merely speak of worship? For there is a warning about hypocrites.

*When the hypocrites come to you,
They say:
"We bear witness that you are
a messenger from Allah."
Yes, Allah knows that you
truly are His messenger.
And He testifies that
that the hypocrites are, indeed, liars!*

[Quran. The Hypocrites, 63:1]

And how can a person know—is he sincere before himself or not? Perhaps it only seems to him that he has believed, but in reality he is still wandering in disbelief. The

Judge here is only the Most High. He alone accepts or rejects whomever He wills.

*Allah chose Adam, Noah,
the lineage of Ibrahim and Imran above all
other lineages...*

[Quran. The Family of Imran, 3:33]

*... Remember that He has made you
as successors to Noah
and raised you above the rest of the people.*

[Quran. Al-A'raf, 7:69]

Thus, those who followed Noah gained an advantage over other peoples, who eventually perished (in the flood). Noah was the first to unite families into a clan. He is the first person known to have had grandchildren and to have acknowledged them. He also acknowledged the wives of his children. The other people, who did not follow Noah, remained at the same level, where social organization did not rise above the level of the family, and they suffered loss.

*And Noah said:
"O my Lord! They have disobeyed me and have
rushed after those
whose wealth and children only add to
their losses.*

[Quran. Noah, 71:21]

The Quran also contains God's condemnation of one of Noah's sons:

*And so he sailed with them upon the waves,
Which were like mountains,
And Noah called out to his son, who was keeping his
distance from the others:
"O son! Come aboard the ark with us
And do not remain with the wicked!"
But his son replied:*

"I will climb a mountain that will protect me from the water."

Noah replied, "By Allah's command, there is no salvation today for anyone

except for those to whom He has granted mercy."

A wave rose between them,

And he drowned along with the rest.

[Quran. Hud, 11:42-43].

Noah calls out to God:

And Noah turned to his Lord:

"O my Lord! My son is

of my family,

And Your promise is true,

You are the most just of all who judge!"

[Quran. Hud, 11:45]

There are many interpretations explaining exactly what Noah's son's transgression consisted of. Comparing the texts of the Quran, the Bible, and the Torah, the version that considers the following idea seems more plausible: it was only from the time of Noah that condemnation of disrespectful behavior toward parents emerged. Today, such condemnation seems self-evident and reasonable. But in nature—outside of humans—such behavior is uncharacteristic; on the contrary, as young offspring grow and become stronger, they begin to compete with their parents. And before the time of Noah, caring for and respecting one's elders was uncharacteristic. Moreover, the reason for the condemnation of his son was incomprehensible to Noah himself, and he accepted it only by virtue of his deep faith.

(Allah) said:

"O Noah! He is, alas, not of your family:

Truly, his deeds are unjust.

And do not ask Me for that which you do not know,

And I wish to warn you,

Lest you be among those who do not know."

[Quran. Hud, 11:46]

IBRAHIM

We had previously guided Ibrahim

The straight path (in life),

And We knew what he lived and breathed

[Quran. The Prophets, 21:51]

Ibrahim is one of the most venerable patriarchal prophets. The Quran briefly recounts certain episodes from Ibrahim's life: his destruction of idols (6:74; 19:42; 21:60–67; 26:69–77; 37:85–87; 43:26), his search for the true God (6:76–79), the good news of a son (11:71; 15:53; 37:101; 51:28), the construction of the Sacred House (the Kaaba) (2:125–127; 22:26), and sacrifice (37:102). This brevity is most likely due to the fact that more detailed information had already been provided in the previous Scriptures.

Indeed, all of this is found in the earlier Books—

in the scriptures of Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Musa!

[Quran. The Most High, 87:18–19]

Perhaps this is why the Quran repeatedly mentions Ibrahim's greatest achievement—the overthrow of idols

Even as a young man, Ibrahim was captivated by the search for the true God. At first, he turned his gaze to the stars:

*When night enveloped him and he saw a star,
he said:*

“This is my Lord!”

But when it set in the morning, he said:

“I do not love that which rises and sets.”

[Quran. Al-Saffat, 6:76]

Then he turned to the moon, then to the sun, and finally it dawned on him that there is a supreme power governing them all and all that exists—the One God.

*I have turned my face toward Him
Who created the heavens and the earth,
And have devoted myself to Him with all my soul.
I am not one of those who ascribe partners
(with Allah).*

[Quran. Al-An'am, 6:79]

At the same time, the Quran makes no mention of the rite of circumcision, which Ibrahim introduced for his people. This step was a direct continuation of the work of the previous prophet, Nuh, a work aimed at expanding the human race.

*And We did indeed send Noah
and (the Hanif) Ibrahim
And established the gift of prophethood among
their descendants
and access to the Book (of Our revelations),
but only a few have chosen the righteous path
,
while the rest turned into
.*

[Quran. Iron, 57:26]

The rite of circumcision was recognized by people not only among members of their own clan, but also among foreigners marked by the sign of circumcision.

Yet the greatest of Ibrahim's deeds was the abolition of human sacrifice. He had a vision that he must sacrifice to God the most precious thing he possessed—his son. And when he finally resolved to carry out what he had seen in the vision, a voice called out:

*We called out: "O Ibrahim!
You have fulfilled your vision!"—
Thus do We reward the doers of good.*

*This was indeed a trial from the Lord,
And We ransomed him
with a great sacrifice.*

[Quran. Al-Saff, 37:104–107]

Thus, through Ibrahim, a revelation was sent in which the prohibition against killing a person for ideological reasons was definitively established. The abolition of human sacrifice became one of the most joyous holidays (Eid al-Adha) for all the descendants of the lineage of Ibrahim.

From Ibrahim's two sons (Ismail and Ishaq) came two peoples, each of whom gave humanity new prophets.

*We have sent down the Revelation to you
Just as We sent it to Noah
And after him, to other prophets:
We sent a revelation to Ibrahim,
and to Ishmael, and to Isaac, and to Jacob,
And to all (twelve) tribes,
(as well as) to Jesus, Job,
And Yunus, Harun, and Sulayman,
And We gave the Psalms to David.*

[Quran. Women, 4:163]

MUSA

Has the story of Musa reached you?

[Quran. Ta-Ha, 20:9]

According to the scriptures, Musa belongs to the lineage of Israel (the grandson of Ibrahim). Musa was born in Ancient Egypt, where his people had settled after Yusuf (the great-grandson of Ibrahim) led them there. The new dynasty of the Pharaoh began persecuting the Jews: an order was given to kill every male infant. Musa's mother hid the baby, but when he grew a little older and it was no longer possible to hide him, he was placed in a basket and set adrift on the waters of the Nile. By a stroke of luck, the basket washed ashore where Pharaoh's daughter was bathing with her attendants. She took him in, and the wet nurse hired for Moses turned out to be his own mother.

When Moses grew up, an incident occurred that forced him to flee Egypt: he came to the defense of a Jew who was being beaten by an Egyptian. The Egyptian died from Moses' blow.

During his long time in exile, Moses married and started a family. After Pharaoh's death, Moses returned to Egypt, and a remarkable event occurred along the way: he saw a thornbush suddenly burst into flames.

*When he approached the fire,
a voice called out to him: "O Moses!
Truly, I am your Lord.
Take off your shoes,
for you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa.
And I have chosen you—
So listen to what I command you..."*

[Quran. Ta-Ha, 20:11-13]

From this moment on, Musa's prophetic mission begins. He must convey the new revelation to the people:

*The Hour is indeed drawing near,
Though I intend to keep it hidden,
So that every soul
According to their diligence (in the Lord's affairs).*

[Quran. Ta-Ha, 20:15]

Through Moses, it is proclaimed that the time is coming when what *each soul* receives will depend on its own *diligence*. In former times, this was not the case. Distinctions were made based on external signs and symbols. "The diligence of the soul" was accessible only to a select few.

Moses receives a sign that he will become the founder of a new people.

*We sent Moses with Our signs:
"Lead your people out of darkness into the light,
Remind them of the Days of Allah—
Truly, there are signs here for those
who are steadfast and grateful."*

[Quran. Ibrahim, 14:5]

The journey from darkness to light was long and arduous. Musa had to lead his people out of Egypt to a new land and, at the same time, raise them to a higher spiritual level.

The exodus of the Jews from Egypt following Musa's arduous (primarily spiritual) struggle with Pharaoh is described in considerable detail. Yet the people's acceptance of the new revelation proved no easy task. Upon reaching the Promised Land, the people refused to cross the river and begin settling it. For this, they were punished with 40 years of wandering in the desert. Only a new generation, raised in new conditions, was ready for a new life and made the transition. And of those who left Egypt, only two were allowed into the new land.

The first thing Moses instituted for his people was fasting.

*We appointed for Moses a period of thirty nights,
to which We later added ten more nights,
And so it was fulfilled within forty nights.
(His communication with) your Lord.*

[Quran. Al-A'raf, 7:142]

A forty-day fast for the average person of that time, who lived in constant fear of starvation, was a great trial. To be able to voluntarily abstain from food when it was readily available required a willpower capable of overcoming animal instinct.

Everyone who passed the test of fasting could begin to comprehend the next revelation received by Moses and recorded on the tablets (stone slabs). These are the Ten Commandments, the Law, and the ritual. "You shall have no other gods... honor your father and mother... you shall not murder... you shall not steal..."

*And We inscribed for him on the tablets
The essence of every thing
And an explanation of the concepts of all things:
"Take them and keep them strictly,
And command your people
To strictly observe all that is best in them;
I will show you all the abode of the wicked..."*

[Quran. Al-A'raf, 7:145]

*We gave Moses the Book
And made it a guide for the Children of Israel:
"Do not take any protectors other than Me!"*

[Quran. The Night Journey, 17:2]

A WONDERFUL FEAST

The commandments and laws brought by Moses transformed humanity century after century. The human spirit grew strong and soared. And new times arrived, and new times require new prophets. The miraculous birth of Isa (Jesus) marked the beginning of a new era for humanity and a new calendar.

*And (remember) how the angels said:
“Maryam, God sends you good news
of a Word from Him,
whose name is the Messiah Isa, son of Maryam,
who will be honored in this world and in the Hereaf-
ter—
one of those who are near to the Lord.*

[Quran. The Family of Imran, 3:45]

Isa’s revelations most clearly reflect the idea of the gradual development of the human being—his growth and ascent, step by step, toward *heaven*. Each step not only brings something entirely new, but also provides a new understanding of what came before.

*I have come to you
To confirm the truth of the Law (Torah),
Which was sent down to you before me,
And to permit you a portion of that
That was previously forbidden to you—
I have come to you with a sign from the Lord,
Therefore, fear His wrath
And obey me.*

[Quran. The Family of Imran, 3:50]

Man became increasingly aware of and attuned to his soul. And inevitably, the question of death arose anew. What comes after it? Will the soul, newly found, also die

along with the mortal body? Is life truly brief, merely a flash followed by eternal darkness? And how can one live without finding an answer to these entirely new questions?

A new, previously unknown thirst torments these fragile souls. New spiritual nourishment, a wondrous feast, is needed to soothe them.

And so the apostles said:

“O Isa, son of Maryam!

*Can your God bring down a meal for us
a feast from heaven?”*

“If you have believed (in God),” he replied to them.

They said:

*‘We wish to eat from it
and soothe our souls—*

And we will know that you have told us the truth,

And we will be witnesses to this (wonderful meal).”

[Quran. The Table Spread, 5:112–113]

The miraculous meal—death and resurrection. Isa brought the good news (the Gospel) of the salvation of the soul, of its immortality. And he himself, and his life, and his death, and his resurrection became signs.

“...Peace be upon me on the day I was born,

And on the day I die, and on the Day

when I am raised to life.”

[Quran. Maryam, 19:33]

Isa brings a new message about God. He speaks not of fear of God, but of love for Him. Love as salvation, as a means of elevating and developing the soul. And a new call to love one’s neighbor, whoever that neighbor may be. And a new message of forgiveness, mercy, and the love of the Lord.

And, truly, to those who believe (in God),

who have done good deeds

The Merciful will show love.

[Quran. Maryam, 19:96]

IN SEARCH OF THE BEGINNING

THE THEORY OF ABSTRACTION FOR DUMMIES

1.

Once, when my son was about six years old, he declared, “Dad, I don’t want to grow up!” I asked, “Why?” “Oh, I still have so much to do!” he replied.

I laughed and told him not to worry: he’d have plenty of time.

Many years later, I suddenly realized that I myself had missed out on a lot, hadn’t managed to do it all... In a panic, I rushed to make up for everything: I started learning French, bought a guitar and dumbbells, painted two pictures, began writing a play, even went to two exhibitions and one concert...

No, it’s all pointless: I can’t do everything, can’t learn it all... There’s just too much. Besides, my memory is strangely organized: I can’t remember anything, especially if I have to memorize something. Names, poems, numbers, and addresses can’t find a place in my memory.

But if the idea is clear, I can talk for hours. And to understand the idea, I need to know its origins, basic elements, and underlying principles. As one of the greats once said: “Knowledge of a few principles frees one from the need to know many facts.”

Still, you can’t grasp everything. You have to focus on the essentials.

“I need to start from the very beginning,” I decided, “from absolute zero.”

But where is that zero?

2.

I searched for that zero—that is, the beginning—for a long time. At first, I looked for it in elementary physics. I needed it for work—I taught physics. But with my strangely organized memory, I couldn't memorize formulas, conclusions, proofs, or the wording of laws... And the physics course is divided into mechanics, molecular physics, electricity, magnetism, atomic physics... and there's no connection between them. As if they were completely different disciplines. In short, a problem.

I identified the problem as the systematization of the elementary physics course. I must say that I successfully solved it. And I was no longer afraid to go up to the blackboard in front of my students...

I even wrote a dissertation.

At the academic council where I presented it, a rather sensible lady said: You know, systematization... or as we say, the generalization of the physics course—that's on a very serious level; it's at least a doctoral thesis. They won't let you through. Take this part of your work... It's sufficient for a candidate's degree.

Of course, I tried to argue. But the lady said: "If you want to publish your research, then please, no one is stopping you. But if you want to play the game called 'defending a dissertation and earning a degree,' then do as I told you."

Well, what can I say? I got the degree... And I published my research. Neither the first nor the second had absolutely any effect, except for some of my financial expenses. So I happily forgot about physics and got a job at the academic Institute of Language, Literature, and Art.

3.

At the institute, I headed the Information and Publishing Department. All the institute's work flowed into it. After a

while, it became clear that everything begins, of course, with language. I had endless conversations with the institute's staff about where language actually begins. But for some reason, all the conversations kept coming back to grammar and syntax. And I was interested in ontology, genesis, or epistemology... that is, where it all begins.

There was only one expert on these matters. He immediately stated that it all began, of course, a very long time ago, but then it came to a halt sometime around 7,000 BCE. And then it started developing again... In short, I need to study his theory on grammatical categories.

I certainly love original theories, but I didn't understand a single thing about this one.

The professor tried to explain to me what he considered the crux of his theory.

"Listen," he said, pouring another shot of vodka made according to his secret recipe. "At first, only deities could have names. And only the chosen ones—the priests—could pronounce them. Ordinary people could only use pronouns. Then names began to be given to these high priests, and later—to all adult men... The grammatical categories changed..."

"And why?" I asked.

"I don't know," the professor said. "I'm just describing how it changed and what pattern there is here. There is a pattern. And it very accurately describes historical periods: if grammatical categories become more complex, it means the people, the speakers of the language, are developing. If the complexity stops—then the people are stagnating." If simplification is observed—then this indicates the collapse or degradation of the people, or that some catastrophe of global scale, some disaster, has occurred... My calculations fully coincide with the results of archaeological research.

"Why degradation occurs is clear. But why does development occur?" I persisted.

“That’s not my area of expertise,” said the professor, smiling slyly for some reason.

A physicist and a philologist will never understand each other, I decided. We probably need a mathematician here.

4.

There was no Institute of Mathematics in our system of academic institutions. So we found a mathematician at the Institute of Socio-Economic Research.

How a mathematician of such high caliber ended up at this institute is a story in itself. But his caliber was indeed high. He graduated from the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics at Moscow State University, and his articles on mathematics were published in America as early as the 1970s.

When working on mathematics, he proved all the theorems himself, and to solve rather complex problems, he formulated and proved new theorems and used them to successfully solve his problems.

“What was there in the beginning?” I asked.

“In the beginning there was the number one,” he said. “Although one is the starting point for arithmetic.”

“And zero?”

“There is no zero in arithmetic.”

“How can there not be?” I asked in surprise. “Zero is used to represent tens.”

“That’s not a real zero,” he said. “It’s a symbol for an empty place. At first, it was written as a dot.”

“And what is the foundation of mathematics?”

“Sets are the foundation of mathematics,” he said. “There are infinitely many of them.”

“Yes,” I said, “and there’s a set with an infinitely large number of elements... It’s even called that: infinity.”

“There are many of those, too,” the mathematician smiled. “An infinite number.”

“How?” I asked in surprise. “Doesn’t an infinite set include everything? I can’t imagine a set of infinities. I can’t even imagine a single infinity.”

“And you don’t have to,” he said. “There’s just an infinite set of infinite sets, and that’s it! There’s an infinite set in which another infinite set is a structural unit of the first infinite set.”

Since I considered myself normal, I didn’t understand a thing.

“It’s simple,” said the mathematician. “Here, look.”

He took a pen and a sheet of paper and began to write.

“Let’s start with one. Add one to it. Add another one to the result, and so on. We’ll keep adding one to each new result, and eventually we’ll get...”

“Infinity!” I managed to interject.

“Correct,” he said. “Now let’s label the resulting infinity with some letter and keep adding ones...”

The sheet gradually filled with endless infinities... Everything seemed to make sense, but nothing made sense.

“How can you not understand?” the mathematician asked in surprise. “Look, you see, we have to jump from this infinity to that infinity. To do that, we have to jump across infinity. We can’t make a smooth, monotonous transition.”

“Is that like an electron jumping from one energy level to another?” I recalled my physics.

“Well, yes! From one level to another level...”

“Abstraction!” I blurted out.

“What abstraction?” the mathematician asked in surprise, and went about his business.

“The Mathematical Foundations of Natural Philosophy,” suddenly flashed through my mind.

Why didn’t I figure it out right away? I need to find a philosopher.

5.

I ran into the philosopher in the hallway. He was too absent-minded for a physicist, but not eccentric enough for a mathematician.

“Buddy, where can I get some water around here? All of it’s gone on our floor.”

He was holding a cloudy 1950s-era decanter in his hand. The mischievous gleam in his eyes made it clear that water wasn’t his drink of choice.

The philosopher had a phenomenal memory, an encyclopedic mind, and a good-natured disposition. He had worked in Moscow for a long time. His book on philosophy had been published by Nauka. And then, for some reason, he returned to Makhachkala. And it was clear that he had no one to talk to... The table conversations between the physicist and the philosopher began.

Of course, I was a grateful listener. But sometimes I felt the urge to chime in. He would smile gently, pour me another shot, and say, “My friend! You’ve probably read this from so-and-so, but you’re not retelling it quite correctly.”

With my strange memory, I certainly didn’t know or remember exactly who he was referring to. But one day he listened to me intently and, raising his eyebrows, said, “I know you couldn’t possibly have read so-and-so. That’s out of the question! But where did you get these calculations?”

The next day he solemnly entered my office, placed a thick book on the table, and said, “Here. It says here how it all began. It’s a gift! I even wrote a dedication to you inside.”

I picked up the book. It was... the Bible. I opened the first chapter. It began with the words: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

“Right,” I thought. “Indeed, I should start from the very beginning.”

I eagerly began to read. At the time, I didn't yet know that physicists, when reading the Bible, usually either laugh or write a critical review. But since I'm more of a physics teacher than just a physicist, I happily skipped Chapter 1 as incomprehensible and delved into the stories about the prophets, whom I'd vaguely heard of somewhere before.

It all read easily, like a historical novel.

But what's the point?

Philology, I decided.

6.

Soon it seemed to me that I had been spending too much time with philologists. I left the institute and opened my own printing shop. Now it wasn't just philologists bringing me their work. All sorts of people brought it in. I thought I was crazy. It turned out I wasn't the only one. There are even crazier ones.

At first, I tried to read the work they brought in. That was fine. Then I started getting into discussions with the authors about the content of their work. The authors, seeing only a printer in front of them, took my comments very hard. I started losing clients.

I had to adapt and skillfully mask my interest as mere amateur curiosity. It took a tremendous effort to restrain myself. Of course, sometimes I lost my composure.

Nevertheless, my years working at the printing house can be considered an excellent education. As it happened, for some reason, I mainly ended up handling academic works. Monographs, dissertations, and conference proceedings across all academic disciplines came pouring in.

At some point, despair gripped me again. In each individual field of science, everything seemed fine. But to look at it all as a whole, to see the system, the connections, to find the beginning, the zero... No, it wasn't working.

“I need to talk to those who have achieved something in their field and try to draw some general conclusions,” I decided. And so I went on television.

7.

The TV director listened to me with considerable skepticism. The idea of inviting experts and scientists from various fields to discuss their work had crossed his mind as well. But.

“It won’t work for you,” he said. “We’ve tried something like this many times, and a lot of people have offered to host. But no one lasted more than two or three episodes.”

“I’ll last,” I said. “You can put me to the test.”

“All right,” said the director. “Recording tomorrow at 10 a.m., and it airs Monday evening. Do you agree?”

“Of course!” I exclaimed.

“And you don’t need to prepare? Don’t you want to know who you’ll be talking to and what the topic will be?”

“I’ve been ready for a long time,” I said. “And the topic and the guest don’t matter.”

The director shook his head doubtfully and started making a call.

The next day, at exactly 10 a.m., I was on TV. I was led into a small room where there was a small table and two chairs in the corner. My first guest was already sitting in one of them. He was holding a thick book in his hand. As it turned out later, it was his book on the history of the Lezgins, starting with ancient Sumer... A large banner with a view of the city at night hung on the wall.

I said hello and sat down. The cameraman turned on the cameras and said we had 45 minutes.

On Monday at 11 p.m., the first episode of the program “Praxiology” aired. No one knew what praxiology was. Nevertheless, the program aired regularly on Mondays for a year and a half. Many experts appeared on it, mostly candi-

dates of sciences and doctors of sciences. With each of them, I discussed the goals they had set and the results they had achieved.

We talked about the structure of the universe, dark matter, ancient rituals and customs, politics and economics, schools and universities, the emergence of language and words, money and inflation, ancient manuscripts and their authors, inventions and their implementation. We even displayed a hedgehog skin, turned inside out...

At the same time, I tried to talk with each of the guests about what it means to be human, where it all begins, and how their work could help in constructing an answer to these questions.

Yes, many were interested in generalizations, but, as it turned out, no one was specifically engaged in that. Everyone was interested only in their own narrow specialty...

What is the point of a specific task if the general problem is not discernible?

Every time I heard a term I didn't understand or an unclear logical connection, I asked questions, trying to get an explanation. I rightly assumed that explaining all this would, of course, be interesting to my fellow specialists as well.

"Oh, what an interesting question!" the specialist would exclaim and enthusiastically begin to explain.

To be honest, I rarely encountered experts of such high caliber. More often than not, my guests would start getting nervous and glancing at their watches...

Soon, the number of people willing to appear on my show dropped sharply.

"They're afraid of your questions," they explained to me, and the show was canceled.

"I need to talk to people who are just starting out," I decided, and opened an educational center.

8.

Private tutoring is a serious business. After all, you can't force a client to stay if they don't want to learn from you. And here, not only does the client have to agree to learn from you, but they also have to pay for it!

It got worse from there. It turned out that no one was interested in studying physics. Everyone wanted either math or English.

Since I had studied French in school and was a physics teacher by training, I decided I knew math better.

I was wrong.

My hopes that by studying the textbook and drawing up a lesson plan, I—a candidate of pedagogical sciences—would be able to start teaching math to fifth graders, were dashed.

How did I find that out?

It's very simple. No one stayed with me for more than two or three sessions. Clients voted with their feet. I faced a situation unheard of in a general education school. I ran out of students.

I started reading the textbooks more carefully. Soon I realized that I didn't understand anything myself. That is, I didn't understand the language in which they were written.

As soon as I came across a word whose meaning I didn't know but should have known, I would frantically flip through the previous chapters, hoping to find the place where that word first appeared.

"There must be an explanation there," I told myself.

But to my horror, I couldn't find anything. One reference led me to another, which led me back to the first. Practically all the answers to the question "What is this?" had been replaced by answers to the question "What is equal to?" or, for some reason, "How do you find it?"

Finally, I noticed that in many of the problems that kids hate to solve, the familiar term "speed" appears! You know:

a train left point A for point B at a speed of... The physics teacher in me woke up.

"I wonder how mathematicians explain what speed is?"

I knew that when you know what to look for, it's easier to find.

I was wrong again.

I didn't find the answer.

Mathematicians pretended that second-graders already know perfectly well what speed is and that no further explanation is needed.

Then it turned out that there are also very weak connections between the different sections of school math itself. Solving "examples" is one thing, solving problems is another. Graphs are one thing, equations are another. Of course, there is some internal connection, but for students it remains a mystery. It turned out that this was a mystery to me, too. And considering my strangely organized memory, I found myself in quite a difficult position. How to memorize a multitude of formulas, theorems, proofs, methods for solving standard problems—all those double-angle formulas, sine theorems, differences of squares, areas of trapezoids...

"I need to tie it all into a system," I told myself. "And to do that, I need to find the beginning. I need to find zero."

"Well, in math, I suppose it's possible to find zero," I reassured myself. Although my experience talking to a mathematician was a bit unsettling.

Needless to say, I didn't find an answer in my school textbooks to the question of what zero is and where it came from. It was only mentioned that the Indians discovered it in the 6th century and that you can't divide by it.

Where and how did the Indians find it, and why can't you divide by it?

Nothing was said about that.

And then I remembered my dissertation, about systematizing the physics curriculum. Why reinvent the wheel? I already have a ready-made theory. Perhaps it would work for systematizing elementary mathematics as well.

I began serious scientific work and was making quite good progress, until one day...

9.

One day I was trying to explain to a sixth grader how to divide one by two.

“How many halves are there in an apple?” I asked.

“Four!” the boy answered boldly.

“Why?” I asked, surprised.

“Well, I usually cut an apple into four pieces,” he said.

When it turned out that there were indeed two halves, I said, “See, if you divide a whole into two halves, you get two. Do you understand? So, if you divide one by two, you’ll also get two.”

“I get it,” said the boy. And then he suddenly asked, “And if I split an apple in two, will that also make two?”

“Yes...” I said, and stumbled. “There will be... two halves.”

How can that be? I thought. Is dividing one by one-half the same as dividing one by two? No, I remember. Dividing one by two gives one-half.

Then why did I say two? Well, there are two halves. Although, in any case, dividing anything into two will result in two parts.

Right! I need to wrap up the lesson and figure this out thoroughly.

The key is visual aids. But you can’t stock up on apples. So, I need to buy counting sticks.

I looked for counting sticks for a long time. Finally, I found them. I bought a box of colored plastic sticks.

So, if you split a stick in two, you get two halves. Very good!

Split the stick into halves... that also gives you two halves... Not so good!

A week later, I bought two more boxes of sticks.

But what does it mean to divide? And what do textbooks say about this?

The textbooks don't say anything about this. They just divide things without explaining what it is. Moreover, when you divide pinecones into pinecones, you get squirrels, and when you divide toys into toys, you get Christmas trees.

Clarity comes first.

Let's try dividing something else using sticks to clearly show what division is.

Let's divide six sticks into two. We'll get... We'll get two halves of three each. We can clearly see that the answer can be either "two" (two piles) or "six" (two piles of three). The answer "three" can't be... But math says that six divided by two is exactly "three"! Three of what?

Mathematicians don't ask that. But physicists do. A mathematician can't say that six divided by two equals three units, because he knows that three units result from subtracting three units from six units... That's probably why they don't ask.

What to do? We need to look for the beginning. We need to find zero.

But there's no zero in the box of sticks!

And what comes before division and multiplication?

Counting comes first.

10.

Well, we know how to count. We need to examine this primitive process from the outside and describe it in detail. Maybe this will provide the key to arithmetic?

I lay out three sticks in front of another sixth grader and ask him to count them. He boldly taps the sticks with his finger and says, “one, two, three.”

Then I point to the third stick and ask, “How many is that?” Without hesitation, the boy says, “Three.” I pick up the stick and ask, “How many is that?” He says three, then, looking a little embarrassed, says that, of course, it’s one. But when it’s there, among those two, then it’s three.

The boy sees my confusion and sighs sympathetically.

How I love these kids who understand everything!

“So,” I declare, “we need to learn how to count. That’s where we’ll start our next lesson.”

When I said “we,” I meant it completely seriously. I have twenty-four hours to learn how to count. I need to learn how to count correctly. And for that, I have to go over everything from the very beginning again. From zero. But you can’t count zero. So what can you count? What do people count anyway?

One apple, two apples, three apples... One pear, two pears... We count objects of the same kind. We don’t count objects of different kinds. One apple and one pear remain just an apple and a pear. Two doesn’t work.

Items of the same kind are grouped together. So, counting is a description of the number of units in a group.

And how did people describe quantity in the very beginning?

At first, we counted... on our fingers. How does that work? Out of curiosity, I decided to ask the students if they could count three sticks on their fingers.

No one could do it!

Some counted the sticks with their fingers, some counted their fingers, and some tried to place the sticks on their fingers and count them directly on their fingers.

I was thrilled. What a wonderful problem! And I was the first to discover it. I have time.

Then I glanced at my watch and suddenly asked: why twelve?

Actually, why are there twelve hours on the clock face, and not ten or a hundred? And why are there 60 seconds in a minute, and not 100? And why are there 7 days in a week?

Okay, let's not get sidetracked. Although I knew that questions don't just pop into my head by accident.

So, before numerals existed, quantities could be shown using fingers. That makes sense. There are five fingers on one hand. So, if you used one hand to form a group and bent the fingers on the other, you could count in fives. Or you could do it the way my grandmother did: mark the phalanges of the remaining four fingers with your thumb... that makes a dozen, i.e., a group containing 12 units. Twelve! And if you mark every twelve with a finger of the other hand, that makes five times twelve, i.e., sixty! It all makes sense!

Now it all makes sense.

But have we gone all the way back to the very beginning? Where does what we count come from? Before we can count apples, there must be apples; they must exist. An apple is a noun. It exists.

And what does "exists" mean? What does "the existent" mean?

I've read about "the existent" somewhere before. Where?

With my strangely organized memory...

Then I remembered conversations with a philosopher. I knew it wasn't a coincidence, but I didn't yet know why.

11.

It all starts with observation. Then we describe and label what we observe, and if the terms match, we group them together and count them.

And how does the first observation happen?

And when do children begin to observe?

Here is a baby. He has just been born. He has just opened his eyes. What does he see? Let's observe. We see that he doesn't see anything specific.

But he is looking.

And sees everything at once.

His pupils aren't moving. He doesn't see anything—that is, he doesn't yet see that very “nothing.” So, he sees everything.

Is this a play on words, or is it actually true?

After all, to see something, a child must distinguish it outside of himself. Distinguish it within certain boundaries. And what lies beyond those boundaries?

Nothing.

If nothing is visible, then something is also not visible, since there is no boundary separating them.

And where does this boundary come from? I've read about a boundary somewhere before. Where? Here I remembered the philosopher again.

Can animals observe?

I need to think about it.

I thought about all this for so long that I had already forgotten I was thinking about it.

Nevertheless, things started looking up at the educational center. After I learned to count, divide, measure, calculate, and understood what all that meant, it turned out that there were quite a few people who needed to be taught these things.

Now I have a theory that helps teach arithmetic quickly. At the same time, the logic of the theory itself doesn't contradict the students' own internal logic. And once everything fell into place with arithmetic, it turned out that the other subjects became easier to handle. Much easier.

Word of this spread quickly. Calls that began with, “Excuse me, I was given your number and told that you teach children,” started coming in more and more often.

That’s all well and good. But here come those damn questions again.

If you teach a child math, physics, chemistry, biology, and so on, will that make them a human being? Probably not.

Then what will? And how do you teach someone to be a person? Here, too, we need at least some kind of methodology or theory. Well, at the very least, we need an answer to the question: What is a person? Otherwise, all this learning is a waste of time.

And where can one read about what a human being is?

For some reason, I didn’t feel like reading philosophical works. A featherless biped wouldn’t do.

I kept working.

12.

Once, I was figuring out with a seventh-grader how to measure angles. You have to take a protractor and measure. Compare it to the standard. And our standard is an angle of exactly one degree.

And what does it look like? I remembered that: 1 degree is the central angle corresponding to $1/360$ th of a circle.

I looked at the boy and asked, “Why did we choose one three-hundred-and-sixtieth of a circle, and not one hundredth or one five-hundredth?”

I was glad I was the first to ask. Because I suddenly realized I didn’t know the answer to that question. The boy didn’t know either. But he didn’t know that I didn’t know either.

Needless to say, the textbooks didn’t have the answer to this question either. But, as I’ve already said, my memory

works in strange ways. I had read about the number 360 somewhere before. In which book, I wonder?

And then I remembered! Of course, in Thomas Mann's trilogy *Joseph and His Brothers*. Well, you remember: Eliezer's lessons to little Dumuzi.

The number 360 is the sacred number of the sun—exactly that many sun disks fit along its daytime path on the equinox. That means exactly the same number on the nighttime path. A total of 360 double suns. And the two rays extending from the double sun define the standard angle—1 degree. Even the little sun icon remains.

13.

A sacred number. A sacred book... Here it is, the book the philosopher gave me. The Bible! It must be written about this here. And here is the first chapter, which I, as a physicist, considered too confusing and incomprehensible. But the first chapter actually speaks of the birth of the world—not the physical world, but the world in the consciousness of the first human or child, as we described above.

In the beginning, there was nothing. That means everything else didn't exist yet either. And there was no human being either.

In short, "the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the deep..." Then the firmament appeared.

What could that mean? And how do children see it? Yes, children can't put it into words. But...

I remembered my daughter's childhood drawings. Yes, children can't say it, but they can draw it. You've all seen children's drawings. Of course, they're different, but there's something they have in common.

It seemed to me that I knew how all children start to draw. First, they draw a horizontal line, the firmament. Above is the sky, and below is the earth. Then they draw

the sun. Then trees. They might draw little animals. Then mom and dad, and finally, themselves. Themselves last. On the last day of creation.

So, the world is eternal, infinite, and indivisible. At first, man saw everything at once. And then he began to divide the world with his consciousness into parts, which he began to artificially perceive as separate wholes. Existence came into being.

Later, humans began to assign names to these parts. After all, they needed to exchange information with others about what they had observed. In all sacred texts, this period is described as the period of the bestowal of names.

Identical names are grouped together, and their quantity must be described. This is counting. Size must be described. This is measurement. And where it is difficult to count or measure, calculation emerges. Arithmetic.

The model is rough, but understandable. And it works great with children. The main thing is to first figure out what level the child is at, and then bring them up to the necessary level.

And what level is necessary?

14.

So, at first, a person saw the world. They began to observe. And what came before observation?

And what is observation?

And can animals observe?

No, an animal doesn't observe. It looks.

What's the difference? And how do I know that it cannot observe?

On the sixth day, He created man. On the "sixth day," a child saw in his reflection in the mirror not another child, but himself. He saw himself from the outside. Perhaps that is what observation is. But we don't just observe ourselves. That means we can look at everything else from the outside,

while animals cannot. An animal will never see itself in a mirror; it will see another animal.

The outside perspective gives rise to a trinity: the observer, the observed, and the unobserved.

To observe means to look from the outside without reacting to what you are looking at. Animals cannot help but react. They have instincts and reflexes that trigger automatically and control the animal.

Humans have learned not to obey their instincts. They have learned to observe, count, measure, and calculate. But that is not enough.

The ancient Greeks and Romans knew how to do all this, and for some reason, they remained unchanged for a thousand years. Their pagan world was static. They stopped at the “digit.” They never developed the “number”—a higher level of abstraction. We know this because neither ancient Greek nor ancient Roman digits can be used to write zero. And zero is the foundation of numbers...

Right! Let’s go into more detail from here.

A digit is a symbol denoting the number of units in a given group... or a group with a given number of units. That seems clear.

Zero is not a symbol denoting the number of units in a given group, since no such group exists.

What, then, does it denote? And how does a number differ from a digit? Zero, which is a digit, as that mathematician told me, is not a real zero, but merely a symbol denoting an empty place...

And what is a real zero?

We remember: textbooks say that zero appeared only in the 6th century among the Indians. By this time, Ancient Rome had already fallen under the blows of... the barbarians.

And where did the Indians get zero? Were they really more advanced than the Greeks and Romans?

15.

Working with children, I noticed that textbooks use two terms—number and digit—in a completely arbitrary way.

The digit 6 represents a group of six elements.

And what does the number six denote? The same thing? Does the number denote the digit? Probably not. A digit is a symbol. And a number?

I asked a student to visualize the number six and describe what he saw. The student said he saw “six” and traced the digit 6 in the air with his hand.

“No,” I said. “I asked you to imagine the number, not the digit.”

“Well, then, six apples,” said the student.

“No,” I said again. “You have to imagine the number six, not six apples.”

Confused, the student said he couldn’t picture the number six. And I said that... I couldn’t picture the number 6 either. A number cannot be pictured. Any attempt to picture a number results in either a digit or a group.

So, three stages: group—digit—number.

The Trinity!

We can visualize the first two steps, but not the last one. Yet all three are essentially one and the same.

Is there anything else that we use all the time but cannot imagine?

Let’s start over from the beginning and go through it step by step.

So, first, a person singles out something from the surrounding world. This is the first abstraction.

Then they assign it a sign, a name, a word. This is the second abstraction.

A person sees an object and imagines a sign, a word.

A person hears a word and imagines an object.

Here, the object plays the role of a group, and the name plays the role of a number.

And what plays the role of a number here? Where is the third step? There must be a trinity.

Here is the object—a chair. Here is its sign—the word “chair.”

We recognize that this object is a chair because we compare it to the chair in our mind... No, wait! It's impossible to remember all kinds of chairs and compare them... And then there are stools and armchairs... Yet we recognize even the most bizarre chair, even one we've never seen before and that couldn't possibly be in our memory. How do we do that?

So, the image was there, but not of a specific chair, but of a chair in general—that is, an abstract chair that doesn't exist and is impossible to imagine. If we try to imagine it, either the word “chair” or a concrete chair emerges. It seems so. Everything is born from nothing. Another trinity is formed.

So, abstraction is an essence separated from the existing. Or perhaps it is the existing itself.

It seems I've started speaking the language of philosophers, the thought flashed through my mind. In the distance, the image of Kant's thing-in-itself loomed.

16.

So, I need to practice this new language. But in a way that doesn't scare people away. Otherwise, it'll turn out like the TV show “Praxiology.”

That's when my now-grown daughter came to the rescue.

“You need to pretend that you don't know much, but you want to learn more,” she said. “Let me help you start a club. And we'll call it the ‘Club of Simpletons.’ So people won't be afraid... And there we'll look for simple answers to simple questions.”

I agreed. Especially since I wouldn't really have to pretend. I actually don't know much.

We put out an announcement. We found a venue. We bought a camera. We gathered on the appointed day.

The first meeting was a bit chaotic, but the format was established right away: we'd name a topic, and three volunteers with their own opinions on the subject would come up on stage, where I was already sitting. I play the role of someone who honestly tries to understand what the opponents are saying and tries to bring them to a common understanding.

The club has been around for over three years. It meets regularly on Saturdays. Hundreds of participants have gone through it. And, of course, we've explored the philosophical aspects of humanity's major problems and their solutions. True, it turned out that no one really needed the results of this titanic effort.

But I got what I wanted: I learned to talk to people about philosophy, economics, politics, and history without scaring them off. At least, that's how it seemed to me. And need I add that the number of regular club members eventually dwindled to twelve.

But why can't an animal observe?

A beast sees, hears, and feels. So does a human. But a human can observe; a human can construct an abstraction. A beast cannot.

An animal feels. So does a human.

The sensory organs of animals and humans are, in principle, constructed the same way. But humans can abstract.

Is it possible to unite them according to the well-known principle: five apples—the digit five—the number five?

I don't remember whether this question came to me first, or whether the answer came first and then I formulated the question?

Humans communicate with one another by exchanging what can be felt. We don't know how to do it any other way yet. The primary form of communication is the exchange of words. But there are other forms as well. We can exchange gestures, scents. There are five types in total. The same number as the physical senses.

Consequently, all five senses can be combined into a single abstraction, which can be designated... How?

The more I thought about it, the more groups of three, trios, kept spinning in my head. The number three. Three numbers. And then, for some reason, the number six popped into my head.

Why six? And what is six?

Six, six... The number 666. The number of the beast.

I need to go back to the Bible.

The Revelation of John the Theologian: "...Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; his number is six hundred sixty-six."

This phrase literally burned into my mind. Here is the beast, and the man, and the number! How could I not have seen this before!

But there is also a certain ambiguity here. There is no trinity. The beast and the man—that makes two. But there should be three. Instead, there are three sixes. Perhaps that is exactly how they should be interpreted? Precisely as a trinity of three sixes on different levels.

But what does each six mean in this case? Six of what?

Moreover, this applies to the beast, to the man, and to... whom?

Of course, to God! This is the Bible, after all!

Count the number of the beast, for it is a human number and the number of God; his number is 666. Three sixes. That sounds good.

And so far, we only have two fives.

17.

Five senses of the beast and five of man. Sight, touch, hearing, smell, taste. Of course, we're talking here about purely physical senses and their corresponding distinguishable organs. And ones that were well known three thousand years ago. There are five of them! But there should be six.

But wait! There are actually six senses if we count the sixth as the sexual sense... And there is a corresponding organ.

From there, everything turned out to be simple.

The first six—the number of the beast—is a group, and each unit in the group is separate.

The second six—the number of man—is something like a digit that unites all six units, all six senses, into a single whole that can be called physical or human love.

And finally, the third six—the number of God—is a kind of number, the absolute abstraction of the senses, absolute love, which is salvation and the path to Heaven.

Now the phrases “God is love,” “Love the Lord,” and “Only in divine love is there salvation” become clear.

So, horses feel, but they do not love.

People feel, but loving must be taught and learned.

Love is the communion of soul with soul, of abstraction with abstraction.

Of course, for now, through physical senses.

It is clear that those whose level of abstraction is not high enough will never understand (cognize) what love is in this specific sense.

Likewise, we probably cannot understand what lies at a level higher than our own. After all, in the extreme, communication between soul and soul is possible without a physical intermediary, without senses, but we are not given the ability to imagine this.

And it all started with counting three sticks. Perhaps next time we should start by counting six sticks. Although, three would work too.

18.

Every new trinity gives birth to a new human being. This means that the very concept of “human” is changing. It is not a constant.

In fact, “human” is not a term; it is a concept. A term is static. A concept is dynamic. It encompasses terms and the connections between them. A concept, unlike a term, enables a person to act.

Consequently, a human today is someone who has attained the necessary level of abstraction. This level itself changes from millennium to millennium. Therefore, the concept of “human” also changes.

But people are different from one another. This means that people with different levels of abstraction can coexist today. The differences between some of them may be greater than those between a Neanderthal and a Homo sapiens. We must be careful not to fall into a new form of eugenics here.

We need a criterion that is more tangible than “loves—doesn’t love” or “abstracts—doesn’t abstract.”

So, we need to revisit everything from the very beginning, from scratch.

But in arithmetic, there is no zero.

In the first human observation—there is none either. “Nothing” is not zero.

When, how, and for whom does it appear?

Once again, from the beginning. The ancient Greeks and Romans had no concept of zero. For the Hindus and Arabs, zero was a symbol for an empty placeholder—that is, zero was not a real number.

I understood that the discovery of the real zero raised humanity to the next level of abstraction. But what is this level? What is the role of the number 666 here? What is the role of... the number?

Yes, of course, numbers themselves.

And when did a digit become a number? And when did the digit zero, denoting an empty place, become the number zero, denoting... Denoting what?

"A set is the foundation of mathematics," I suddenly recalled the mathematician saying.

And what is the foundation of arithmetic?

The foundation of arithmetic is a group.

And how does a group differ from a set?

In the same way that a digit differs from a number.

More specifically?

Let's consider a group. Suppose we have six sticks. Six is a numeral. 6 is a digit. Let's take away one stick. We're left with a group of 5. Let's take away another stick, leaving a group of 4. We're left with a group of 1. Let's take away that remaining stick. We're left with... Nothing remains. The group has disappeared. And since there is no group, the designations—numerals and digits—are not needed. That is why there is no zero in arithmetic.

Now let's consider the set of six... We won't be able to visualize it. As soon as we represent it, for example, as six sticks, a group appears, which is not a set. A set cannot be visualized. But it exists. Much like a point, which can be called a "point" but cannot be visualized. Any attempt to represent it produces a mark left by a pencil on paper. Let's start removing units from the set. Let's remove the set "five" from the set "six." We'll end up with the set "one." Let's remove the set "one" from the set "one." What remains is the empty set. An empty set can exist just as any other set does. After all, the set "six" doesn't exist either... That is, it does... Let's denote this empty set as "zero."

Let's consider a couple more analogies.

Suppose we have a box with six pencils. Six pencils is a group. And a box with six pencils is a set. If we take the pencils out of the box, an empty box remains: "zero."

Or, suppose we have a line segment drawn on a sheet of paper with a pencil (a group of marks). We can erase the marks one by one until only one mark remains. If we erase that one too, the line segment will disappear, and there will be nothing left to denote. But if we imagine an abstract line segment consisting of a set of points, no matter how many points you remove, there will always be at least one point left. After all, a point has no size, so it cannot be erased. The line segment is gone, but the point remains. That is, a point is "zero" for a line segment. It seems so!

19.

Why people began to abstract in the first place is known only to God. But why and how the transition from one level to another occurs is something we need to figure out. And we need to figure out why it doesn't happen for some people. After all, there are tribes known to have remained at the same level for millennia.

A new level of abstraction is not the result of a plan or intention. A person could not have suddenly decided at some point: "Let's see, I'll start speaking," or "Let's see, I'll start counting," or "Let's see, I'll invent a law, money... or zero."

The human is the unintended result of human activity. And there is no tautology here. We have already said that the concept of "human" is dynamic; it changes. For a new human to emerge, the activity of the old human is necessary—and specifically, human activity.

And what kind of activity is called human?

Only that which excludes violence.

Force and violence. Is there a difference between them?

Of course there is. An attack on a person's freedom, rights, and property is called violence.

The use of force against a violator is not called violence. It is called defense.

A person begins to develop when they begin to defend themselves, that is, when they begin to use force against an aggressor in order to protect...

Defend what? An abstraction? Nothing? After all, freedom, rights, and property are also abstractions. It turns out that this is the case. And that is precisely why they are sacred or, to put it in modern terms, they are the highest value, since they are given from above...

But let's not get bogged down in the thicket of modern debates about human activity.

Let's use the well-known law of regression and go back to the time when a simpler abstraction appeared: zero. Especially since all our reflections keep bringing us back to this sign of "nothing," which is "everything."

So, it is known that zero was sent down from above. It descended from Heaven. Of course, not from the physical sky, but from the one that in Russian has only a plural form—"heavens."

And in what language does it exist in the singular?

Well, in English. Here, they distinguish between "sky" and "heaven." The King James Bible begins just like this: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

And in what other languages? Quite possibly in many others. And, of course, in Avar!

20.

Human activity needs protection.

Freedom, rights, and property need protection, since these are abstract concepts. Does zero not need protection? It does, since... it's also an abstraction... If it isn't protect-

ed, if it isn't cultivated anew each time, it will disappear. And recreating it will be very difficult.

All abstractions come down from heaven... So protection must come down from there too... We need to figure out this sacred source of all that exists... The sacred heaven is "*heaven*" in English. But if the solution were here, it would have been found long ago; after all, English is the language of science today. So I need to look in another language I know—Avar. No one has looked for anything here yet, I thought, and I smiled at this "nothing."

Modern Avar texts contain virtually no mention of the sacred sky. I know this from my experience working at the literary institute and the printing house... In the spoken language of quite a few certainly older people, unspoiled by institutions, the sacred sky comes up quite often. But no one has been able to explain to me what it means. That's just how they speak, they said, and... that's all.

So I need to track down some old texts. There are practically no old texts left. And where would I even find them, when the Avar alphabet itself has changed three times?

As I was wandering around lost, the phone rang. It was a professor I knew from the university. A UNESCO representative had come to visit them to present a work on the rules of warfare.

"Come over," the professor said, "you'll find it interesting."

Of course, I was interested. I wanted to make sense of war. I went.

For about an hour, the lecturer spoke passionately about the necessity of observing the rules of war. Then he showed us a hefty, thousand-page book.

"This is all about the rules of war," he said, and asked if the audience had any questions.

The university audience had no questions.

I had a question.

“Does the esteemed lecturer consider war to be something bad, even criminal?”

“Undoubtedly, yes,” he replied.

“And does the esteemed lecturer believe that developing rules of warfare and monitoring their enforcement is, in a way, a form of support and justification for war itself? After all, it turns out that if it’s according to the rules, then war is permissible.”

The lecturer visibly grew somber, then spoke at length about the challenges of the modern world, and then picked up the book again and said that he was merely presenting it, but was not its author.

Nevertheless, the question piqued my own interest. What, in fact, is war?

We know it’s something bad.

But what exactly?

Any attempt to define the term “war” resulted in either a fight, a battle, a skirmish, or a showdown. It didn’t quite add up to war.

Dictionaries, for their part, stubbornly defined “war” as “an armed conflict between political entities...” But what is a political entity?

Okay, but what kinds of wars are there? Bandit wars, just wars, unjust wars... holy wars.

There is no such thing as a holy brawl or holy robbery. But there can be a holy war.

What is war?

We need to look at it from the very beginning. And if we’re talking about a holy war, what does the Bible say about it, and where in the Bible is war first mentioned?

The neighboring cities attacked Sodom and Gomorrah and plundered them, taking Lot, Abram’s nephew, and all his possessions, and then departed. When Abram heard of this, he gathered an army and pursued the raiders. He caught up with them, defeated them in battle, and brought

back Lot and his possessions and everything that had been taken from them. And for this, Abram received the Lord's blessing, and he gave a tenth of all the spoils to King Salim, the mysterious Melchizedek... It seems so.

An organized armed pursuit of robbers, with the aim of recovering what they had seized—that, surely, is war. And of course, it is sacred (permissible). Why?

Any defense of the sacred is also sacred.

The sacred—presumably—is of the highest value.

Is property the highest value? Is it sacred?

Let's read the Basic Law: Article 2: The human being, their rights, and freedoms are the highest value.

Property is not listed here as the highest value. So either the Bible got something wrong, or the Constitution did.

We need to examine everything from the very beginning.

21.

The human being is the highest value!

But is everyone a human being? Is everyone the highest value?

Perhaps today, a human is only someone who has managed to rise to the highest level of abstraction. And those who haven't—they are only potentially human, or human within the framework of previous levels.

And how can we tell the difference?

“You will know them by their fruits!”

“Whoever says, ‘I know Him,’ but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

So, according to Scripture, the foundation of a person is keeping the commandments.

Do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness... do not covet your neighbor's goods.

Consequently, according to Scripture: property is sacred, since it is protected by the commandments.

Property is the result of human activity.

If human activity is protected, then humanity prospers.

An environmentalist walked in. He sometimes comes by to check his flash drive for viruses. He can't do it himself because he doesn't have antivirus software. He doesn't have antivirus software, because the database needs to be updated from the internet. And he doesn't connect to the internet because he's afraid of viruses...

"We need to save the planet from humans," he declared and began sniffing angrily.

"Who do we need to save?" I asked.

"The planet, nature... Otherwise, there will be an ecological disaster. Humans have multiplied too much. After all, Malthus warned us: we must not allow excessive overpopulation! This ecosystem can only sustain a certain number of populations. Exceeding the limit leads to disaster."

"What about the hares?" I asked.

"What about the hares?" he asked, surprised.

"They reproduce..."

"Yes!" he said, raising his index finger. "They do. But nature has a mechanism for regulating the hare population."

"Doesn't it work with humans?"

"Humans have learned to circumvent that mechanism! That's why they're dangerous to the environment."

"But the environment, for the most part, is dangerous to humans. I'd rather protect humans than the environment."

"But without the environment, there would be no humans either," the ecologist smiled slyly.

— Yes, — I said. — But without humans, there is no environment either.

"There!" exclaimed the ecologist. "That is pure anthropocentrism in the paranoid stage of subjective idealism!"

"What? Say that again," I said, trying to make sense of what he'd said.

“You need to read Malthus,” he muttered, grabbed his flash drive, and left.

Who is this Malthus? Well, I have the internet. Let’s see.

“The population is strictly limited by the means of subsistence... The population grows in geometric progression, while the means of subsistence grow in arithmetic progression... Population growth can only be halted by counter-vailing factors, which boil down to moral restraint or misfortunes (wars, epidemics, famine).”

Let me explain: unlike animals, humans can produce and multiply the means of subsistence. This is called the economy. And why does this multiplication of the means of subsistence occur in an arithmetic progression, rather than a geometric or exponential one? Probably only because of laziness or plunder. Well, you might as well have said so!

Besides, God Himself commanded: “Be fruitful and multiply.” And He spoke specifically to humans. So there must be a mechanism for doing this without harming the population.

We need to find that mechanism.

Let’s go back to the beginning.

22.

In the old days, it was believed that the Lord created man “...from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” It was believed that the human soul rules the body by the will of the Lord. That is why an attack on the body was considered sacrilege. The body is the property of man.

The result of human activity is also a person’s property, as an extension of their physical body. Therefore, property is sacred (the highest value).

Human activity that gives rise to property includes: production, exchange, inheritance, first discovery, and gift.

There is no violence here. Violence and property are incompatible. What is seized by force does not become property, but becomes spoils. Like a beast.

To acquire property, a person must act. Act without the use of violence. And no one has the right to restrict him in this. This is his freedom. Freedom is sacred (the highest value). Any attempt on freedom is also sacrilege, a crime.

Only the individual has the right to decide exactly how to act, that is, how to exercise their freedom. This is their right. Right is sacred (the highest value). Any restriction of rights is sacrilege, a crime.

Another sacred trinity: freedom, rights, property!

No part of this trinity makes sense without the other two. And all three, in essence, are the person.

Violence is an attack on this sacred trinity.

The force that limits violence is protection.

Population growth, coupled with freedom of human activity and the presence of its protection, leads to an expansion of the division of labor and, consequently, to an increase in productivity. Society develops, new trades emerge. New groups of people appear, distinguished by subtle differences in social status. Language becomes more complex. After all, the relationships between these new groups of people must be expressed in language somehow. New... grammatical categories emerge!

I recalled conversations with a professor of philology, discussions about his new theory and his grammatical categories. So that's what it is!

A new, more complex language is a new level of abstraction. And now, from early childhood, people practice applying higher-level abstractions.

Does this mean that in Ancient Rome, for example, the level of protection for human activity was not high enough, and that is why it remained in the pagan Bronze Age? Perhaps.

But, on the other hand, how can one protect something that does not yet exist? And which comes first?

Does human activity give rise to protection, or does protection give rise to human activity?

And what does the transition to a new level of abstraction mean?

And how and when did the transition to a new level of abstraction occur for me personally?

I need to remember.

But my memory is strangely organized. I can't remember anything. Usually, what I need comes to me on its own.

I began to wait.

23.

One day, as always on Sundays, my cousin and I were sitting together. We were eating, drinking, and talking. He's the same age as me. We've been competing ever since we were kids... Ever since we were kids... And then I remembered!

Yes, it was in early childhood. I think I was still in first grade back then. My brother and I were competing to see who could count to the highest number. And then I got sick. I was bedridden with a sore throat. I didn't go to school. He came over. To visit. And right away he announced that he had learned to count to twenty.

I gasped:

"What! Come on, count!"

He started counting.

"One, two, three... nineteen, twenty..."

Something clicked in my head, and I continued:

"Twenty-one..."

"Twenty-two," he picked up.

Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five...

We counted for a whole hour. There was no end to the counting.

From that day on, our competitions to see who could count to the highest number ceased to make sense. Although just a day earlier, it had been a fascinating and very important game.

So, I remembered one of my first leaps from one level to the next. But my brother had the same leap.

And why did it happen? And where else is there mention of such leaps?

We need to study everything from the very beginning. From scratch. Our starting point is in the Holy Scriptures. But is there any mention there of leaps from one level of abstraction to another?

I started searching.

For a long time, my search yielded nothing. Besides, I didn't quite understand what I was looking for. That is, I understood, of course, but I didn't understand what it should look like in an ancient text.

One day, I was giving a lecture on my theory of abstraction and, for clarity, was drawing on the board with chalk. At some point, I turned to analogies from Scripture and began marking the prophets on a hypothetical timeline, starting with Adam.

And then I heard myself say, "This range can be considered the period of Adam, this one the period of Noah, this one the period of Abraham, and so on."

That's it!

The transition from one period to another is precisely the leap from one level of abstraction to another. And the prophets stand at the center of this leap! A prophet is, in a sense, the first person to make the leap to a new level of abstraction and teach it to the rest.

Excited, I wiped everything off the board and began to describe the periods of the prophets once more, but now in terms of my theory of abstraction. Everything fell into place.

The students listened intently. And I was somewhat annoyed. After all, I couldn't explain to them that all of this wasn't a prepared lecture, but a discovery that had just been made right then, right before their eyes.

"Yes," I concluded my lecture, "mathematics is a wonderful thing!"

"But what does math have to do with this?" one of the students asked.

"A leap across infinity!" I suddenly remembered my old math teacher.

"It's simple," I told the students. "Let's take one. Add one to it. Add another one to the result, and so on. We'll keep adding one to each new result, and eventually we'll get infinity. Let's call it Adam's level and denote this infinity with some letter..."

The students were delighted. Well, not all of them, of course, but only those who could understand me.

So, a multitude of infinities and leaps into a new infinity through an old infinity...

And in which infinity do we find ourselves today?

24.

Your whole life consists of periods, each one stretching on forever.

Moreover, each period suddenly ends, giving way to... a new infinity. And you only realize this in hindsight.

Childhood. You don't know or remember when it began. For you, it began an eternity ago. You live in this eternity, and it seems to you that it will last forever.

Youth. You don't remember exactly when it began. It seems like it has always been there. And you think it will last an eternity.

But suddenly you realize that you already have a family of your own. You've had a child. When and how did this happen? It seems like it's always been this way, and this

child has always been here. And you realize that you're already getting used to the changing infinities.

Looking at your child, you realize that he, too, lives in his own infinity. After all, you're familiar with it. But if you look at his infinity from the outside, you're no longer there. There, in childhood, you've already died. You're now in a different infinity. And you're already beginning to realize that if you died there, you can die here, too.

Gradually, you realize that you are entering that very world of the elderly, which used to be so infinitely far away.

And here a new infinity opens up. The infinity of your soul. There is no place in it for what you once valued and loved. You are alone more and more often. Alone with yourself. With your new infinity. You begin to master it. But you don't remember when it began. It seems to you that it has always been there and will last forever.

Your last infinity...

Is it really the last?

25.

My thoughts on infinity were interrupted by a voice that said, "No!"

"No to what?" I asked.

"Too simple!" said the voice. "If God's number were the third six, they would have figured it out long ago, even without you."

"Then what is God's number?"

"Haven't you figured it out yet?"

Then I woke up. Yes, I had dozed off a little. But who was I talking to? He said something! Something very important. I remember what he said. But I don't remember what? Something about God's number. The third six—no. 666—no, not that either. Zero?

How did they represent God in the old days? And why is zero represented by a circle? A dot, which is an empty placeholder, isn't drawn inside a circle. Occam's razor gets in the way.

The most ancient deity is the Sun. They worshipped the Sun...

"Will you help me publish a book?" I heard a voice say.

This time it was real. A woman was standing in front of my desk, holding a bag with a laptop in it with both hands.

"Oh! Sorry, I was lost in thought," I mumbled. "Of course, of course, I'll help. What's the book about?"

"It's a book about how language came to be."

"What language?"

"Language in general—human, articulate language."

It was clear that the woman had had to explain what her book was about more than once, and she was already tired of it.

"Anyway, sorry, that doesn't matter," I said. "How long is the book, and how many copies do you plan to print?"

"What do you mean, it doesn't matter? It matters very much indeed! Language is the foundation of everything!"

"Philology," flashed through my mind.

"And this isn't philology at all," the lady said. "It's not even syntax. It's the foundation. The foundation of humanity. It's a single, basic code."

"Comparative linguistics," I blurted out, trying to show that I knew something about the subject too.

"Nonsense!" the lady snapped. "Language is one! Just as humanity is one."

"So, with your code, you can distinguish any language?"

— Well, yes!

"So, you've deciphered the very first language that existed before the Tower of Babel?"

"Much earlier!"

"That's exactly what I need!" I exclaimed.

The woman hurriedly pulled out her laptop.

26.

“First and foremost, language consists of distinct sounds. And, of course, the first sounds of language, the first parts of words, had to mimic the sounds characteristic of the objects they described,” the lady said, turning on her laptop. “At first, the largest ones. There are four of them: earth, water, fire, air. The sounds they produce are quite distinct to any listener. All other words appeared later, as derivatives of the sounds characteristic of these four. There’s no need to invent a new word every time... And it’s impossible anyway. First, how would you come up with it? Second, how would you explain to someone else what you’ve come up with?

The computer turned on. The woman showed me the files. They were four volumes, each 500 pages long.

“That’s so much!” I exclaimed in surprise.

“What did you expect? I’ve analyzed practically every word in every available language. And so far, my theory hasn’t failed.”

“And which language did you use as a basis?”

“Lak, of course!”

“Why Lak?” I asked, with a touch of jealousy. “After all, according to your theory, since all languages are the same, you could have used any language as a basis.”

“Yes, of course. But, in my opinion, Lak is the most conservative, and it has changed very little over the millennia.”

— Millennia?

— Well, yes! Several ancient Greek vases have survived, depicting the god Prometheus shaping the first humans out of clay on the potter’s wheel he had just invented. He named his handmade clay creations, which were made

in his own image and likeness, Prometheus called “Lykes” and “Leges.” That is, he named them with the same word he had previously used to name his son— “Dev-Kalion,” born naturally through the birth canal—and his niece— “Pirra,” who became Dev-Kalion’s wife. The Myths of Ancient Greece emphasize that “Deucalion” and “Pyrrha,” also known as “Ppercha,” were “Lycian,” i.e., “Lacedaemonians.”

I forgot about the computer!

“The first potter’s wheel was invented and used by the god Prometheus,” the lady continued enthusiastically. “And Prometheus gave that very first, priceless wheel to his firstborns—the ‘Leg’ of the ‘Ba-Lh-ar’ tribe,” according to Laconian legend. Only “Prometheus” is called “Kul-Kacha,” “Kal-Kacha” = “God-Fire” in . The name of the god “Prometheus” = “Pir-Muta” is also translated as “Father of Fire.” The god “Klach” = “God-Fire” “taught the Laks to mold all kinds of objects from clay and, in addition, taught them to build clay kilns to fire their creations. “Fire” for the kiln was also presented as a gift to the “Ba-Lkh-ar” people by “God-Klach,” and the Laks began to call their hearths “klach” = “fire.” The first flame on Earth crackled joyfully for the first time in the clay kiln of the “Legov,” the “Le-Legov” of the “Ba-Lkh-ar” tribe—the “Ba-Lakh people.”

“Were the Greeks Laks?” I asked in surprise.

“No, of course not!” the lady frowned in annoyance. “The Laks came much earlier. Even before the flood.”

I grew concerned. And where were the Avars?

“The Avars?!” the lady exclaimed. “What do the Avars have to do with this? You don’t think I’m talking about modern Laks, Avars, or Dargins, do you?”

“No,” I said, flustered. “But what happened next?”

“What happened next? I’m just retelling well-known myths and legends.” Well, you know... Having received Fire from the hands of Prometheus, the humanized clay “Liks” eventually acquired great intelligence, multiplied, created their own powerful state, and named it “Lika-sur” = “Lika-ssar,” “Lika-shar” — “Land of the Liks.” The people of the land of “Lika” respectfully called their “kings” “Li-ka-Urg” = “Lakov-Father” > “Lakov-King.” “Urg” = “O’rg” in the proper name “O’rg-u-Butta” — “King-Father” = “God.”

— And all of this was before the flood? And why did the flood happen?

— You don’t know that either?

— I know what is described in the Bible. But there are no details there...

— Anyone who studies their own language and their most ancient legends and traditions more closely will find the details. This is especially true for Caucasians. And besides, — the lady grew wary, — if you try to summarize a rather complex theory, it ends up being a travesty, and the storyteller will seem like a madman. So, if you want to seriously familiarize yourself with my theory, here are the books. Shall we publish them?

“Oh, I’m sorry... Of course, of course, we’ll publish them.”

The lady left, and I immersed myself in reading. It was a bit difficult at first. I had to get used to the writing style, the numerous references, and the examples. But later I got into it. I hadn’t read anything more interesting. It turned out that I knew only the sounds of the words, while the words themselves, for the most part, remained completely incomprehensible to me...

Once again, I had to start all over... My studies all over again.

But I'd already gotten used to it. I even began to like that feeling when a sudden void sets in and you have to rebuild everything from scratch... As if falling in love all over again...

27.

The books had been successfully printed. I was eagerly awaiting the lady's arrival.

"What lovely covers," she said, turning one of the thick volumes over in her hands.

"I was recently rewatching an old Indian movie," I began from a distance.

"Oh, I love Raj Kapoor too," said the lady.

"So, in the version I watched, the old film **Awara** starts with the title **Awara**. And I've also heard that **awara** means a wanderer, a seeker, someone who is searching. Do you think this has anything to do with the Avars? Can you explain it?"

"Well, of course you can," the lady protested. "You're an Avar yourself! And to consider the Avars vagabonds? No, of course not. Here, look!"

She took a piece of paper and wrote: "awa-ra."

— "Awa" means "father," and "ra" means "sun." The Avars are "children of the sun" or those whose father is the "sun"! — said the lady, turning the piece of paper toward me.

"How interesting," I said. "The mountainous region where I was born is actually called 'sunny,' and the inhabitants are called 'people of the sun.' So is that why old depictions of sun symbols—crosses—are often found in the mountains?" I asked.

"I don't know anything about symbols," said the lady.

“So, in the old days, did we worship the sun?”

“Nonsense,” said the lady. “That’s what people think who don’t understand ancient languages and customs. After all, in ancient times, it was strictly forbidden to speak God’s name. It was taboo. Therefore, when addressing Him, they referred to that which is above all else, and above which God, as it were, resides—that is, they addressed the sun. Therefore, addressing the sun was addressing God. The uninitiated cannot understand this. Akhenaten, in his time, attempted to replace Aton with the One Amun. In both cases, it was about the sun, but the meanings were different. In the second case, it was already about monotheism. True, Akhenaten, as is well known, was never understood.

“But the sun was represented by a circle,” I persisted. “And the hieroglyphs for ‘Amon’ and ‘Aton’ must necessarily contain circles.”

“I don’t know,” said the lady. “We’ll have to look. But that’s not important.”

“How can it not be important!” I exclaimed. “It’s very important. After all, it might turn out that zero is the symbol of the One Heavenly God!”

“Zero? What zero?” the lady asked, and, gathering her books, she left.

I immediately started looking for the characters. And, of course, I found them right away. Both characters had a circle with a dot inside—the sun. Zero?

28.

If you’ve guessed something, it means it has already happened. It means that a transcendental message from your distant ancestors has reached you. It’s just that the further back in time you go, the fewer of them there are who know. Today there are many of them, but they don’t know what they know... Their knowledge has not yet been articu-

lated, not yet translated into verbal form. But once you hear it...

What did I hear?

Just as in the human mind several separate counting sticks merge into a group, and from the group a single abstract set is formed in which individual sticks can no longer be distinguished—everything has merged into a single entity... Probably, in exactly the same way, at some point in the human mind—where previously the unified world had been broken into parts—all these parts, and the deities representing them, suddenly united again into a single, infinite, eternal whole. This is how monotheism arose. And only those who, ascending through the levels of abstraction, had grasped “zero” could truly comprehend this.

Zero is the sign of the sacred sky. Zero is the sign of the sun. Zero is the sign of the beginning and the end. Zero is the sign of “nothing.” Everything emerges from “nothing” and returns to “nothing.” One must only manage to...

Once, when my son was about six years old, he declared: “Dad, I don’t want to grow up!” I asked, “Why?” “Oh, I still have so much to do!” he replied.

And I need to make it in time, too.

Everyone has to make it in time.

We must manage to become People of the new era and take another step into a new infinity.

A NIGHTTIME CONVERSATION

*“...And there is no answer to this in
my heart.*

*Only one thing: turning to language, I
utter a prayer to him, unwelcome to
Buddha, two or three times.”*

Kamo-no Tōmei

(“Notes from the Cell”)

When I press the pen to the paper, ink spatters like blood; on the white field, row after row, my troops take their stand. In a terrible battle, they vanquish the void and fill the silence. But the enemy between the lines is strong. His white ranks advance from the flanks... Now it will be decided, this is the moment of truth: either your words are no less empty and their flight is in vain, or their inspired onslaught will shatter the captivity and the light of life will suddenly shine through them... And you will see what I see.

* * *

I lived alone. Already accustomed to the beating of my own heart, shut off from everyday life, moving unhurriedly toward death and quenching the flight of my thoughts out of habit...

But suddenly, from the depths—a blow. My mouth twisted into an ugly grimace. A lump rose in my throat... In my confusion, my chest forgot to breathe. The sound of muffled sobs, hitherto unfamiliar, from the side, as if from a stranger, I heard from within myself...

Weary of my own hopelessness, my soul cried out to the heavens.

* * *

How can I discern another soul's reciprocal longing for me? What will help? A graceful sonnet from the pen of a former poet?

No, indeed! I will transform life's poison into the healing power of my feelings. They will melt the ice of human silence, lift the veil from our eyes, and shatter the chains of existence...

I am being reborn; you too will be reborn with me, returning to me after so many years of separation.

* * *

Where will I be when the sun goes out, when the dust of the constellations drifts from the heavens?

Where will you be? What word will you utter so that I may find comfort in time...

* * *

Lord, forgive me! Your foolish child speaks to You. Lord, take away my tongue, deprive my eyes of sight, deprive my ears of hearing, and make my fingers blind. Take away my flesh, set my soul free.

Your mercy will be my comfort, Your word will be my hearing, Your light will be my sight, the scent of eternity will make my head spin, my heart will burst with love for You, and my death will be like an epiphany.

Open the heavenly halls to me. Show me the sea, the sea of eternity. Dissolve me in that dark blue that was once my father and mother.

Take me away from earthly love. Give me the strength to forget the pain of my children. My chest is constricted by the memory of that earthly, human valley: and I cannot forget—without it I am no one, but with the memory I am but a creature on my own belly.

A wild beast is shut in, locked by silence, and only its eyes burn with a furious fire. It wants to break free from its skin, but cannot. It howls in anguish at the pale face of the moon, but the wind in the desert stifles its roar of despair.

So I speak to You—there is no answer... But I wait, I believe, it will come: it will sound like a single moan—Your voice and mine.

* * *

A small child struggles to recall the time before, that which was before birth. It wants to say a word of comfort to itself, but does not believe. And the mind is still weak.

It cannot merge the eternity before with the eternity after. And the faith that there is eternal life is still weak.

But already the millstones of time are grinding the silvery infinity of the stars into dust. Sand pours into the bowl, the pointer of the scales moves smoothly... Is it soon?

* * *

Lamentations in the night will not help; there will be no comfort in tears. The laughter of the feast and the clear light of the day will not dispel these anxious thoughts: they hold the soul in an iron vice with a dead chill...

What do I need? Will I breathe a full, peaceful sigh? Or will my final breath be the one that releases me from this world?

* * *

The world will sob inconsolably like a strong man sentenced to death. It will look plaintively, blink in confusion. All that was will become nothingness. The sun will blaze: neither sunrise nor dawn. There will be a day without light and a night without darkness.

What will save you? Only my soul. And the warmth of my hands upon yours will soothe the pain in your heart, will silence the cry of reason.

And no words will be needed, and no face will be needed. Without a face, you will recognize me and bow your gray head submissively, like a prophet before the executioner's axe.

* * *

Do you hear? It is I. I have come to comfort myself, I have come to hear myself from you.

* * *

When you realize what I know, when I realize this, I will press myself against you, sealing the question from your lips with my own: “What shall we do now?”

* * *

How to say it, if there are no words: I’ll just spread my hands... Patches of color merge into a shapeless mass, a thought struggles to the surface: it won’t come to fruition. A dull, beast-like moan distorts my face. And only the depth of my eyes conceals the secret. It waits for the rays of light to reveal my heart to me as well.

* * *

When two wise men meet, they sit side by side and remain silent. Occasionally, they lift their gaze to the mountains. Their gaze passes through them into the distance.

Sit down next to them. Listen. Your soul will hear the ringing of Abraham’s flocks of bells, the sound of the winds in the rocky deserts of Palestine, and the sacred “om” in the labyrinths of Tibet, and the measured step of Alexander’s merciless phalanxes, and a monk will utter “mea culpa!” in a Gothic cathedral...

Sit down next to me, and you will understand how much of the cry one must know to be silent like these two sages.

* * *

Come to me to think, to sit in silence, to watch the clouds in the evening sky. Only they—a reminder to the world that is fading, losing its light... What kind of picture is in the sky? We’ll paint it together: you and me. And what a blessing it will be to see each other, without saying a word about anything.

* * *

I search for words in the silence... From whom? Where do they come to me from? How do they clothe the emptiness of my thoughts in flesh?

It is frightening and awe-inspiring to think that you are merely a flute in the hands of the shepherd.

* * *

My inner voice. My inner self. My soul. In conversations and arguments only with myself. There is no one to talk to. They say only God can answer her, but so far He remains silent. And those around me are the same. Or maybe not. How can I tell? Speak up? But it's just a voice. Show it? It's just a gesture. Touch it? The body will respond. Not the soul. The whole world is something outside. The entire universe is merely a mediator. A mediator in a conversation with no one, for it is lost in a multitude of cumbersome links: in sound, scent, color.

Only those who have lived an eternity together will catch a chance response. The touch of blind souls in the emptiness of human years... Talk to me. Look into my eyes. Take my hand in yours. Show me the heavens... But no. It is all just a reflection. It is all just vanity. The outline of the main thing is only taking shape. A thin line is drawn with a sharp pen, breaking off and disappearing...

Where are you? Only hope glimmers that one day, in the indifferent darkness, not a touch, not a voice, not a light will answer me, merging with me in fear: "I am here..."

When? Surely only in death...

* * *

Suddenly a jolt, you wake up, staring long into the darkness. You wonder, what was that sound? Whose rustle or cry? You wait tensely: will it happen again?

No. It's not from outside. Look within yourself. What thought struck you in your sleep? But no, I can't catch it. I'm sinking back in...

* * *

They condemned me to life, imprisoned me in a ringing vessel, covered me with flesh and bone, and said, "You are here now!"

But I'm breaking out into the light, striving for freedom, toward where I am everywhere.

* * *

If I met myself, I would certainly recognize myself. But, I think, I wouldn't approach him, wouldn't speak to him. I rarely speak to others either...

And he wouldn't approach either: after all, he is me.

And only our eyes will show us everything we wanted to ask. And only they will tell us everything we need to answer.

Why, then, approach?

* * *

A light will flash, a beam will ignite. What color will it be?

A word will ring out, as if from the heavens. In what language will it be?

The scent of childhood will rise from the abyss. What will it be like?

A chance touch will stir the heart. What managed to touch it?

And I know these embraces: I have been waiting for them.

Who can separate us now?

* * *

How long is *the path* from that first vision, from that first thought that shook the savage, to the intoxicating sweetness of evening confession and the aching clarity of a dream...

And this is my path. I walk it—increasingly by touch, leaving another guide behind me. And even if I am not destined to reach the final limit— —the one following me will pass over me.

* * *

A line divides the world in two. Two, merging, bring it back to life. Thus, from a chance conversation, from a timid glance, a sprout stitches heaven and earth together.

* * *

I tear a piece from the world, cut away all that is superfluous: this is my spoils.

* * *

A basket of ripe grapes pierces my chest with its aroma. My eyes never tire of gazing at the plump clusters. Between the bends of the willow twigs, the sweetest juice oozes from the berries. In a fit of passion, like a beast, I sink my teeth in—the blood of the torn victim flows down onto my chest... And calm descends.

* * *

In the old poet's life, there is but one worry: to make it in time for the final dawn to mark and give away the line that matters most...

He had long since noticed it—the line of his turbulent youth—the one he had been chasing all these years. Chasing, as if it were not his own.

* * *

Power rules the world. The mind rules power. And the mind always obeys the voice of reason. Reason listens to the crowd, and the larger the crowd, the stronger it seems. And power rules the world... The circle has closed once again.

And only the mad poet weaves those circles into the canvas of the sacred path.

* * *

When I am no longer alone, closed lips will no longer have power over me. And false shame and the vanity of the world will not lure me into flight. And that alluring curve, and sweet laughter, the heavy scent of hair, and the surge of desire will no longer deceive me. And even my own mind will not separate me... When I am no longer alone.

* * *

I seek a companion for my weary soul. So that it does not freeze without warmth in the snow. So that it does not forget why I live, why, battling the frost, I burn a splinter of wood.

* * *

Will the whiteness of the walls become a home? Will the sun become light for the day? Will a tear become the heart of passion? Only two will know—you and I.

* * *

Tell me, how many times has a lump in your throat and a tear shattered your world for no reason? You look in the mirror. And there, once again, it's not you; once again, you must get used to your new self and say goodbye to the sharp longing for who you were just yesterday.

* * *

A rise, a fall, an epiphany, and a new word, its recognition. Joy bursting into first delight and, cautiously, fearfully, letting it go into the world, getting used to it...

Then again—a rise, but this is already a repetition, and until the last sigh, a memory piercing from that first, distant, childhood day... when the world was created by you.

* * *

A gray-haired prophet writes a message to those who have lived through the world. Not a parting word, nor a farewell, nor a lesson of fate. He writes from a humble cell, defying the indifferent crowd. He writes a confession of love, having forgotten how lonely he himself once was.

* * *

A torch burning in the darkness reveals the blackness of the night. The blinding light of the sun reveals the day.

A sorrowful smile within you will awaken your heart. But the ringing echo of laughter will only carry away your sorrow.

* * *

How sharp is the pain—from a child's laughter, from a faithful line, from a faithful stroke of the brush.

What will drown it out? How can a wound—from a bullet or a sharp dagger—erase from memory what was not written by you?

* * *

Blue snow swirls in the night. The dance of death draws one into endless cold. From nowhere, light flickers in the needles of the indifferent. The world falls asleep.

The horizon fades away, disappearing into the stars... Just a little longer, and this random sketch will be erased, and the white traveler will once again begin to seek the sacred path...

* * *

I recognize you. Your features grow ever softer. A smile lingers on your moist lips. Your eyes, as if leading me back to a childhood world, make my head spin.

I recognize you. Your gentle voice pierces my heart. I heard it years ago. Only once—in a dream—did my mother call to me from above my cradle.

I recognize you. I gaze, spellbound, at the image: here it is, drawing ever closer, filling the world, vanishing with me into nowhere...

* * *

A grimace of pain is not frightening to one who will fight the pain himself. A plot? There will be one. It will be born now.

* * *

What does this face of the moon wish to tell the world? Why are her eyebrows so sorrowful and her mouth so inconsolable? The cold of infinity cannot pierce her voice: a warning in vain...

* * *

How can you fit the turmoil of this motley world into your final thought? Only a cry: "Wait..."

* * *

I walk through the crowd. Sometimes, glancing back, I wonder if I'll spot a face among the backs. And again

through the stream, but will I catch even the wake of the traveler who has gone ahead of me?

* * *

The night sky is deeper than the daytime sky. The sun is closer than the stars. The nearby light of the simple-hearted leads the blind; moth wings glow: shadows fall...

* * *

In the rocky desert, I cannot find a shadow. Step by step, stubbornly, I kill time within myself in the heat, and the cool of the night sets in.

* * *

No, God does not need your prayer. Its sacred words are sent only to your ear. And only to your soul are they support and delight, and only for your feet are they steps that will silently lead you to the stern throne.

* * *

In the pocket of an old, forgotten coat—a note, in the handwriting of my childhood: “Buy me a book about a dog, Dad.”

My hand trembles.... I search feverishly in my memory: was that book ever bought? After all, that little boy is still waiting. What will I say when I return home to him in the evening? And so what if the little boy is already seventeen.

* * *

The round dance forms a magical circle, a white dotted line of children’s hands closing in. With incomprehensible words, a magical motif draws me in with its intoxicating rhythm. I wait with trepidation and fear for the signal—it

will sound any moment now... And the sky will turn upside down.

* * *

Grandfather draws a portrait for his grandson on a sheet of paper with his unskilled hand. From the pen comes an uneven stroke, followed by another line, and suddenly, there is no end to the delight: for the first time, a child's soul has recognized a person on paper.

* * *

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