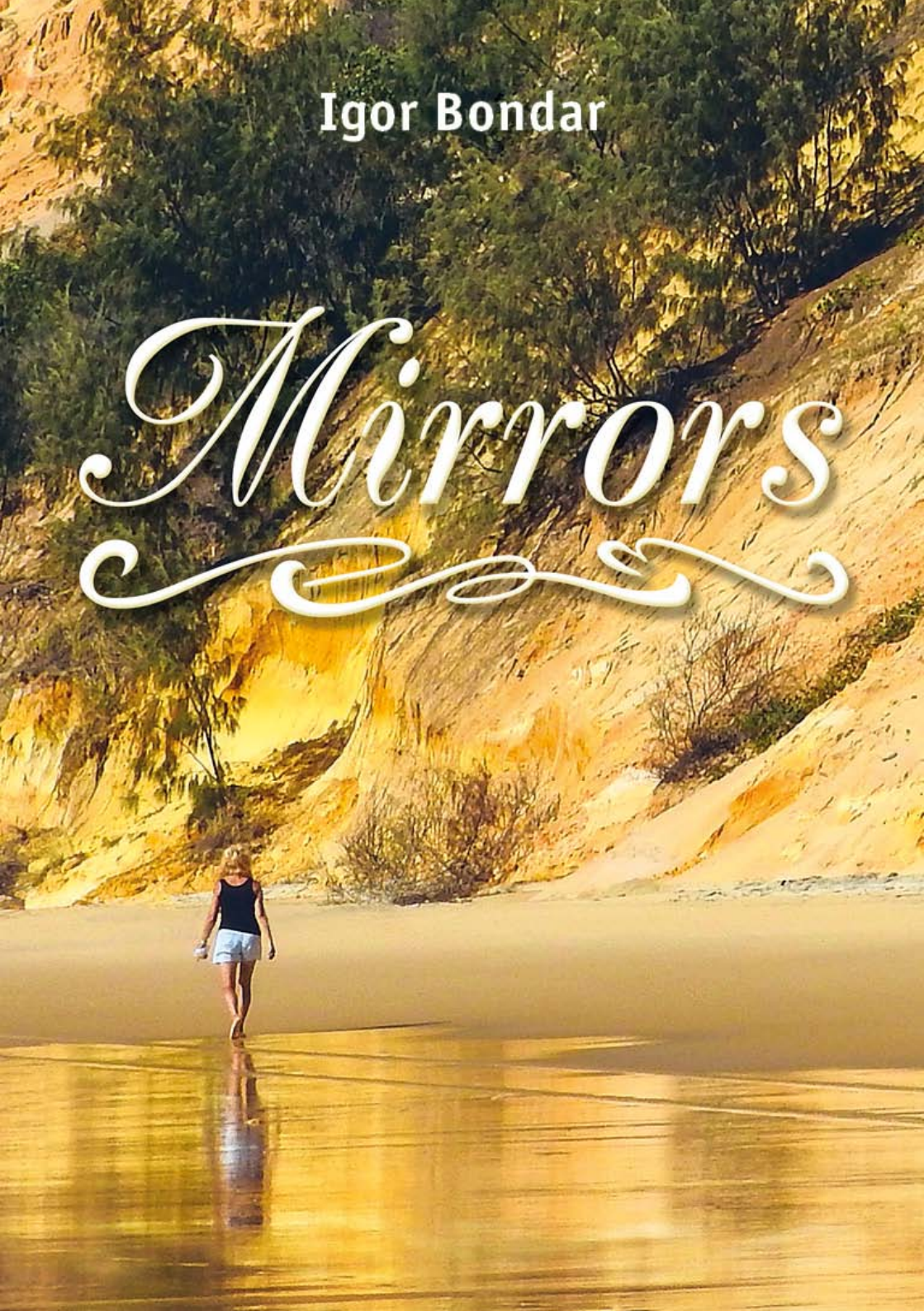


Igor Bondar

Mirrors



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Mirrors

Thoughts, stories



“Zolotoye sechenie”

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A collection of the author's reflections on various significant issues. Today the world is changing incredibly fast, but what can be changed in it, and what is important to keep unchanged? What makes people successful and what makes them happy? The author attempts to dive into these and other issues from the standpoint of religion, philosophy and history.

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Mirrors

A mirror is an interesting thing. It is so thin and flat but it can reflect such a big, volumetric world. And always, absolutely correct.

The mirror is uncompromising, you can not dispute on anything with it – it always reflects everything that is on our side in its true forms and colors. The best idea that people came up with is to slightly bend mirrors in order to look slenderer in the reflection. But a mirror would never agree to the change in color of something or turn ugly things into beautiful.

All of us have been used to mirrors since childhood - we can find them in every house and almost in every room. Nevertheless, we do not know everything about mirrors. Or to be more precise, about all kinds of mirrors. In fact, our world is also one big mirror, but it has a different construction. It reflects people's lives rather than their appearance. For example, if a person will do something good, something good will definitely happen to him in the future. And vice versa.

This is nothing new, many world sages talked about it at different times. But for some reason people tend to forget the most important things. If they remembered it, their reflections in the mirror of life would be much better. And life on Earth in general would be kinder, more honest and more beautiful.

All people want is kindness, love and understanding. So, as people understand that our world is a mirror, they would try to send these actions and feelings into it that they would like to have in the future. Especially, since they have some good daily practice in this regard. After all, no one is making faces in front

of an ordinary mirror in hope to see a beautiful face in the reflection.

The mirror of the world also always has hope for people. It is kind and, between us, it reflects hardly half of the bad things that we send to it every day. We cannot see this but the mirror of the world cannot do it otherwise. It forgives us and reflects the good things more often than it has to. In the modest hope that one day the good will certainly be reflected within us.

Fate

Is the fate of man on Earth predetermined? Many world philosophies claim that it is but they give this concept different names: karma, fate, lifeline, providence and so on. But how serious are these affirmations?

Actually, faith in the predetermined outcome of human life on Earth is pretty convenient. In this case, you can justify anything in life. For example, you did something wrong, so what? Call it karma... And there is no incentive to become better. After all, our entire life is already predetermined somewhere. So what is the point of trying?

But let's consider this issue with respect to the divine creation of the world – from the Christian point of view. In Christianity, in contrast to different philosophies, there are thousands of miracles. And this is, let's face it, the evidence of the existence of God. It is quite obvious that only the Creator of the world can surpass the laws of His creatures. So, it will not be too smart, if

as a result we miss something really important in life and follow the wrong ideas.

So, the Lord created this Earth so that the beautiful souls of His real children could grow on it. There is nothing unusual about that. People also love to have children and they are happy when children are just like them. But if we talk about the Lord, this similarity manifests itself not in appearance, but in the qualities of the human soul: kindness, honesty, generosity, love and so on. The Lord brought to us a complete list of the qualities dear to Him in His commandments.

And God can and does lead people so that they come closer to the correct understanding of the major things in life, as a result of their positive or negative experiences. This is the main purpose and the main life "route" of any person. And this is the only thing that determines "fate", "karma", "providence" of a person.

The logic of the Creator is not that difficult to understand in this case as well. For example, a man grows different crops which feed him or please the eye. If he doesn't get it, he will not cultivate it. In the same way, it is always pleasant for the Lord to look at the dear "fruits" that He has grown on Earth — His morally beautiful, kind and honest children. Of course, he does not get any joy by looking at evil and deceitful people.

That is why the educational process of human souls on Earth is the main purpose, and it gives an origin to all life's circumstances. But, the educational process may vary. For example, if a person can listen to the right things and bring them into his daily behavior, then the emphasis is placed on this conscious side. And, if a person turns away from understanding and comprehension and is guided by the idea "my life, my rules", the educational methods are different.

Actually, the Earthly life of man is not his own property. He receives it as a gift from God and must return it someday. That is why God has every right to take part in it and, by the way, it is always for the benefit of man himself. After all, following the rules of his Creator man can find happiness in this life and gain an eternal life afterwards. Whereas following "his rules", man can get into anything.

Serious departure of a person from the Commandments of the Lord always leads to the occurrence of less pleasant "teachers" - various difficulties and problems. They also educate a person in their own way: for some reason, a person wants to stick his fingers into the socket for the second time much less than the first.

Therefore, when we are talking about some predetermination of a person's fate, we can consider it only in the light of the inevitability of the education of his soul by God. All other life circumstances are subordinate to it, although they can be different and not obvious at first sight.

As for the first question: so, is human life on Earth predetermined or not, what will we get if we know the answer? If we are trying to understand God's providence this way, it is naive. Let's first try to create at least one living blade of grass on Earth with our own hands. And if we succeed, then we can start thinking about more serious things.

God once told to a great Saint: "Give heed to thyself and do not study the fates of people. It is not good for you." Perhaps this is good advice for us too. Since only God and no one else can correctly understand God's providence on our planet.

However, in order to love the Creator of all beauty, highness and purity in the world, a heart is enough for a person.

About lies

Lying is one of the greatest dangers to humanity. If not the greatest one. On the outside, things may not seem so serious, but it is a lie that serves as the basis for literally all the bad things in the world.

For example, any kind of nationalism represents a lie that some nations on Earth are higher or more important than others. God loves all His children and all nations.

Propaganda of any sinful behavior represents a lie that this path leads to happiness (let alone what it will bring us after earthly life).

And there are also lies in world views, distortion of historical and modern facts, false reference points and goals in life.

And much, much more.

So a lie cannot be harmless. It is not just a few letters, it is the opposite of everything honest, right, divine on Earth and the foundation for anything dark and sinful.

Today are those times, when lies already often try to present to people as not the worst door leading somewhere. However, in reality, there is nothing behind that door. There is no future behind the lies.

About illusions

We almost always perceive the world the way we see it. However, in fact we only observe the above-water part of the

iceberg our whole lives. But the reality we live in also has the underwater part which is much bigger and is not visible to the human eye. Nevertheless, it is there, and one day this reality will be revealed to each of us.

This part, which is yet invisible, is the wide world of the Lord, who leads and guides every person in his Earthly life, and also manages many processes on Earth. There are Heavenly inhabitants, different methods and laws that help people to make it through the "school of life" on the planet. Of course, we are used to taking all the achievements as our merits. But it is only part of the truth, and sometimes it is really a small part.

The education of human souls is a baseline for all the events that take place on Earth. A few dozen billion people have already lived and died on our planet throughout history – many more than people on the planet now. And they all did something, ate something, were interested in something. However, it does not really matter anymore today.

What really matters is whether these people became kind, honest, forgiving or not. If yes, then they still live in the eternal and beautiful world of the Lord. If not, their Earthly lives were, actually, in vain.

If God stopped regulating the world, chaos would appear quite fast. But all the people on Earth should have a chance to get a spiritual education and to think about the important things. Otherwise, the only valuable “fruits” of the Earth will not grow. Therefore, the Lord is closely monitoring this.

Of course, all this in no way diminishes the merits of people in their desire to develop and improve the world. Respect and care for relatives, friends, country, world – this is what makes a

human to be human. Two thousand years ago, the Lord came to Earth to explain this to us.

Superstition

There are some topics in humanity that are difficult to be serious about. There is just very little common sense to them. Superstition is one of these topics. So, what are superstitions and omens? Where do they come from and how are they destroyed? Let's try to figure this out a little.

Of course, every person on this planet wants to be successful and happy. The statement sounds more than logical that only The Creator of man knows with absolute accuracy, the secret to human happiness. However, logic does not always reign on Earth. Moreover, sometimes it seems that the more obvious the truth is, the more people want to look for it somewhere else.

So, the people who do look for the truth with good logic come to faith as they learn about the abundance of God's miracles on Earth over thousands of years. Faith leads them to the Commandments of the Lord. After that, these people find an understandable explanation for all negative or positive life situations based on the laws of the Creator of the world.

Despite this, there are not as many believers on Earth as the Creator would like. But everyone wants to be happy and successful. That is why many "secrets of happiness" from other sources are also very popular in the modern world. Plenty of different books in esoteric stores can confirm it. But, since they are rarely based on the laws of God, their efficiency is not as

high as their creators promise. And over time, this becomes obvious.

But, the laws of the Creator of this world are quite simple. For example, all the bad things that a person has done in life will return to him like a boomerang. Same is true for good deeds. Also, a sinful life can never lead a person to happiness.

However, if a person does not have faith, it will be difficult for him to accept the inevitability of these rules. But everyone wants to protect themselves from troubles and, preferably to do this the easy way. Therefore, various superstitions and omens appear.

Superstitions are the most primitive and unsubstantiated explanations for our troubles which also give primitive recommendations on their prevention. Usually, just a bit of logic is enough to understand their absurdity. After all, if you make a list of superstitions in different nations, you will be able to see that they are very different and often contradict each other. It is difficult to find at least some common sense in them. However, the fear of trouble in people is stronger than common sense. That is why superstitions have existed for a very long time.

How does one get rid of the belief in omens? The shortest and most reliable way is to begin to correctly understand the world with its Creator at the head. As you know, serious knowledge quickly crowds out ridiculous and primitive beliefs. Often this process is accompanied by cheerful smiles...

Heroes and superheroes

People have always had role models and it has always been like that. Fearless heroes, brave commanders, great sages - they all inspired others to follow their example. It has always been useful for a person to see that someone could achieve a lot. It brought him strength and gave hope.

Then Christianity appeared on Earth and people were given the commandments pointing the way to God. They seemed unusual to people because of their focus on kindness, forgiveness and faith. Compliance with these Commandments required great courage and people who staunchly followed these rules became righteous men and saints. Subsequently, they also became role models for many people. Moreover, when a person is keeping the commandments of the Creator of the world diligently, it leads him to eternal life in Heaven.

Today, a lot has changed in humanity. In recent decades, we have been able to see new types of heroes on TV screens, computers and in movie theaters. These are fictional superheroes. As a rule, they are fantastic characters with some superhuman abilities. Superheroes quickly became popular among people and especially among children. So popular that they replaced some of the former role models.

As a rule, superheroes are generally positive characters who fight evil or protect humanity. And this is definitely their positive side. But are there any negative moments in the story with superheroes?

There are, though they are not so obvious. Well, first of all, former role models were usually real people. That is, their

example showed that a person could reach pretty high if he tried hard. In the case of superheroes, their superhuman abilities are initially unattainable for an ordinary man. It means that there is no incentive in trying to become like them, no incentive to strive for something. That is why superheroes are not good role models.

The Lord's Commandments and many moral values of nations in different parts of the world teach people to live together in peace. All saints and righteous men are, in fact, close brothers. However, that is not always the case among superheroes. Usually, they have a charismatic personality and sometimes a sharp temper. Quite often, different superheroes are at odds with each other.

One last thing. The popularity of superheroes shows that this image is close to many people today. It is simpler and does not require a person to achieve something, to strive for different things, it does not make a person feel guilty for his own laziness and inaction. However, the example of the real Jacques Cousteau awakens a calling for the underwater world, the example of Gagarin makes a person attracted to space, the examples of saints show people that Heaven is attainable. But what does Spider-Man lead us to?

Superheroes are fictional characters. Their presence on the screen does not change the real life of a person. They are an absolute fantasy. But our life is real, God is real, His commandments are real and so are the different variants of our future which depend on our behavior. And one more reality is that we can only succeed in our life by doing something ourselves.

Depression

The soul is simple but at the same time it is the most complex organ in a human. It is simple because the causes of all joy and sorrows of the human soul are actually very simple. They have been known to people already for 2000 years. Our soul is happy when it is loving, doing good, forgiving and living an honest and moral life.

However, if we deceive someone, do bad things, condemn, get angry and unwilling to forgive, then our soul gets sick. It happens because in this case we do the things that our soul just cannot accept. And if we do such things quite often, then our soul will be sick more seriously. People call this state a 'depression'.

On the other hand, our soul is a complex organ as well because any attempt to control or to influence it never does any good. The steady increase in the number of depression cases all over the world, despite the great effort of scientists, provides good evidence for this. Why is it so? Well, it is so because the Creator created our soul in a way, that it cannot be controlled or influenced.

Considering the fact that only a good and pure soul is the real reason for the happiness of a person, the secret of people's happiness remains unchanged as well.

Of course, people try to improve the state of their soul with the help of alcohol or various pills. However, if a person does not change his views and habits in the right direction, then the effect will always be temporary. Alcohol and pills cannot heal one's soul. A human soul is healed only according to the rules of its Creator.

Words and sounds

The way to understand the important things in life usually comes through words. A word is something that resonates in one's memory and gives rise to some thoughts. Words can make people think about many different things. If not, then it is not a word but just a sound. Sounds don't make sense.

The same word can be both a word and a sound at the same time. For example, a word pronounced in one of the world's languages is a word for the native speakers of that language but it is just a sound for those who do not speak this language.

Besides, sometimes words can remain sounds even though we understand their meaning. An example involves the case whereby a five-year-old child is listening to a textbook on quantum physics. Or, a convinced atheist is listening to the Gospel. In these cases, words also become sounds but the filters in this situation are the lack of education or ideological presets. There are a lot of similar filters in humanity.

However, the Creator of our world somehow must still explain the most important things to everyone on the planet, regardless of their perception. That is why He solves this difficult task with flexibility depending on the situation. This explanation is necessary because every person on Earth is His child. And Father really wants to give His children the most important things – things that will make them happy in their earthly life and bring them back to His perfect home afterwards.

So, He says different words to different people but talks only about one thing. To Christians, the Creator recalls the things He said two thousand years ago through His Son. And these are the most accurate and detailed words about the main things in

humanity. By the way, it is no coincidence that another name of His Son is Logos ("Word").

For people of other world views and philosophies, Creator finds other words that they can understand. He tries to choose the words that would be very close to the main purpose: about the importance of honesty, forgiveness and morality. Fortunately, there are already many related good and right words stored in different books, films and other sources.

That is how the word from the Creator of the world gradually promotes a real evolution. And those people who perceive everything from Him as words and seriously think about it, thereby make a good gift to their Creator and to themselves.

Horizon

The modern world is very material. Nowadays, people spend their whole lives trying to improve their living conditions. These improvements can be various: some people try to get a better-paid occupation, some want to improve the housing conditions, some buy a new car-computer-smartphone and much more... They think that this can help them to be happy. The world that they live in fosters this idea through advertising and different opinions. But is it true?

Actually, it is quite easy to check the concept of "identity of wealth and happiness". Let's look into the most luxurious houses and prestigious cars. Do you really see the most cheerful, kind and happy people owning these? I think the answer is obvious.

It is not that difficult to understand this situation. Our modern world is very pragmatic and it is profitable to make all the people to be consumers. However, the "purchasing psychology" of happiness is actually like the horizon. You can walk towards it but you can never reach it. You will always find something else that you need to buy or improve in order to "become happy".

To prove this idea, we should just look back and think logically. After all, everything that we have today, especially at the technical level, was the limit of human dreams just ten or fifteen years ago. And now, almost everyone has it but there is no surge of happiness in the world.

Of course, it does not mean that we do not have to earn money, achieve and strive for something in life. No, it does not impede us at all. However, we should realize what really makes us happy. And first of all, we should understand that our happiness is definitely not located beyond the financial and technical "horizon".

To find happiness we should look at the usual road that we walk every day rather than at the horizon. This road conceals all the secrets to human happiness. Our thoughts about some "happy phantom horizon" only distracts us from the right search.

Happiness lies in the very joy of life, in the movement. It is in our lovely surroundings, in our cheerful smile. The happiness of a person is in his kind gaze at the world and people. It is always within the pure and loving heart.

Happiness is also found in the singing of the birds, in the fresh breeze, in the boundless sea along which we walk sometimes. And which we often do not even notice, because we are busy looking at the "happy horizon".

The past

Nowadays, you can frequently find an opinion that the previous experience of humankind is no longer matters much. Some people think that in our times everything looks absolutely different and even a child today can adapt to the modern conditions better than his or her grandfather or grandmother.

What is can be said here? Only time and life will give, as always, a real appreciation of everything. However, the first results of this ‘separation of the advanced generation from its roots’, are already presented in the statistics of the latest changes of humankind. And these statistics sadly show that people have no significant reasons to be proud.

The number of families and their children in the world have decreased significantly; many diseases that relate to sedentary lifestyle and constant engaging with screens have emerged. And many, many other things. Besides, now there is more cynicism, lies and coldness in the world. All these demonstrate serious problems in mankind more likely than its progress. By the way, today all these deviations are mainly noticed by these very “grandparents” who are fortunately still here.

Now, about God. It is noted that the contemporary generation of youth is much less religious. That is not surprising - daily usage of the computers for many hours forms the corresponding areas of interest and communication. And the topics about God, as we know, are far from being in the place here.

However, nobody has canceled every human’s death yet. Thousands of miracles from God that have occurred on Earth for many hundreds of years and which undoubtedly prove His absolute possession of the world remains as a fact. And that

means that human destiny after death is also determined not by some newfangled computer program but only by the observance of the ancient, “old-fashioned” for some people, commandments of the Lord. But if to take into account that life in Paradise is eternal, and on the Earth is only few decades long, then people should definitely redirect all their logic and pragmatism to this “ancient” question.

Of course, flowers and leaves always look more beautiful on a tree. The trunk and root behind them are not even noticeable sometimes. Nevertheless, the beauty and well-being of all flowers and leaves on a tree depends on them. However, when it happens that some modern leaves to begin to question the value of their roots, then ...

Another tomorrow

Humankind will not stay the same. It is unlikely the new generation will ever read “Robinson Crusoe” or “Three Musketeers” with enthusiasm. Why would they need it? Now, it has various games and it can discover unknown islands in them by itself, or fight for evil or good. (Well, it depends on what you choose in the settings).

The spirit of previous times is leaving and today’s older generation seems to be the last carrier for it. Words like “romanticism”, “healthy adventurism”, “thirst for discoveries” are still familiar to them. These notions have existed on Earth for hundreds of years.

What will the new generation be like? How long and in what way will it exist on Earth? Who would know about that - it very different.

It explores the world mostly through the screens of their computers and smartphones. It does not really prefer to wake up early and go somewhere in order to see how the sun rises or dolphins swim. What for? The dolphins are clearly visible on the screens of smartphones. You can stop the video, zoom in on the image and look at a cute face.

While being in beautiful places on Earth, this generation cares a lot about a “selfie”. It likes making ‘the story of its life’ - it sees a significant meaning in this. On the Internet, the new generation likes to create the new corners of its ‘I’ that it shows to the other ‘I’s.

This is a completely new epoch (well, or just time). And, according to the existing signs today, it may probably be called the “Period of the flourishing of self-expression personality”.

All days will come

Sometimes, it may seem to us that time moves very slowly and almost stands still. But it is not so – eventually, each day will inevitably come.

In our childhood it seemed to us that we would never graduate from this boring school and would never transit to adulthood. However, the day inevitably comes when we cross its doorstep for the last time never to return to our desk.

Then, it seems to us that we will not have serious relationships with somebody, our own family and children so soon. So in exactly the same way a moment comes when we have suddenly realized to our surprise that we already are inside it all. And that our family life has become an ordinary reality for us.

It also seems to us that our 30th or 40th anniversary - the age of real dinosaurs - is still very, very far away from us. However, one day we will inevitably wake up at fifty. And suddenly, we understand that life has not yet ended and moreover - it is very interesting.

We also hardly believe that, necessarily, we will ever become grandmothers or grandfathers. But then again, the moment comes when children of our children are already in our arms. And we rejoice and understand that this is great.

However, most of all in life we do not believe that our life itself will once end. That one day we will have to leave our body and appear before the Creator. But, this day will come as well...

School or park

It is difficult to live on Earth without God. Without Him the world often turns into "Jurassic Park" with a full range of relevant dangers.

There is a deadly nuclear weapon behind a rock. Global warming is sneaking up on humanity from behind tall trees.

Financial crises and an evil set of dangerous diseases are sitting behind the bush. And the whole "forest" is like that.

Moreover, at the end of this route even the most experienced traveler will run into a ruthless crocodile called "death". Yes, there is something to become sad about...

However, things are different with God. In this case, life becomes a school for our soul with a large set of different situations and circumstances. With the help of the Lord's commandments, perseverance and diligence one can finish this school quite comfortably and in the foreseeable future.

However, I can see a skeptical smile from disbelievers here: 'Deceiving yourself to lighten the mood!' Despite the fact that God's existence is not a self-delusion but a historical fact, which anyone can easily verify, skeptics could not care less. Despite the thousands of pieces of evidence available even if there were millions of them – whosoever does not want to believe, will not believe.

Nowadays anything can be disputed, even the skies above. But, there is a catch. The skeptic, who wins this dispute, will not see anything but the crocodile at the end of his life...

God is raising friends

All the people on Earth are children of God by birth. His biological children. However, when the Lord had created Earth

and had settled people on it, He wanted to have there not just His biological children.

Why does He need them? If God just wanted to look at something funny or beautiful, it would be much easier to fill the Earth with nice little animals, with fluffy tails and cute faces. They do not oblige Him to anything, they delight the eye and are a million times less troublesome than people.

The Lord created the Earth in order to raise not just His children but His like-minded people, friends. Those who would appreciate honesty, reliability, kindness and other high moral principles most of all in life. For whom these qualities are the most important and who would never trade them for anything else, especially the bad.

To educate such high human souls, God created a voluntary and publicly available school of morality on Earth. It has existed for thousands of years. At different times, the teachers in this school were dozens of God's prophets, His Son and thousands of saints after Him. In this school, a person can study the views and principles that one should firmly follow to become better and closer to the Creator. The basis for all the education there, are the Lord's commandments.

The Lord always appreciates freedom of choice and never demands love or respect from people. And how can one make someone fall in love? This feeling always comes from only a free heart and only voluntarily. Those who choose the Father's school gradually learn to correctly see and understand all the things in life. After that, they begin to feel many things more correctly.

Yes, the real children of God adore Him with all their hearts. They adore Him for the great love and the highest meanings in life which He opens to them, and to which He is leading them, and for the happiness that fills their hearts as a result of this life. For them He is the Sun of everything and all together they are the most united and beautiful family.

For the emergence of such a family, God created Earth.

Black and White

'Don't mess with me. This is black and this is white! There's nothing more to discuss.'

'What a conservative mindset you have! As if you didn't graduate from a modern University but live in the wilderness, in the uneducated past century. You're afraid of a new thought and don't want to call into question the things that you see.'

'Get off me. This is white and this is black.'

Three years have passed.

'I see that you think over my words from time to time.'

'No, I don't think about it at all. This is white and this is black.'

'That's right. But what is black? And who called black 'black'? Did you see him? I didn't. So, maybe black is actually white from a different perspective?'

'Don't confuse me. Black is black and white is white.'

Three years have passed.

'Finally, you begin to see the world from a higher position. I'm so happy for you, so happy!'

'Well, I don't know. Anyway, white seems white to me and black seems black.'

'Perfect, you are already beginning to see the gist. It *seems*, namely *seems* to you. However, black, as you call it, seems white to me. But which of us is right?'

'But I've been taught that since I was a child...'

'Exactly. However, are you sure that your teacher knew the truth? Are you a hundred percent sure? His teaching is outdated and mine is modern. Could the more educated one be lower?'

Three years have passed.

'Well, basically, I can admit that black - is not black. At the same time, I still cannot call it white.'

'What indecision! It's the courage in approaches that has always moved humanity forward. Otherwise, we'd still be living in caves.'

'I haven't thought of that before...'

Three years have passed.

'Yeah, now I can clearly see that black is white. They became the same.'

'And now you're wrong again! Actually, the thing that you call white is black. You just need to see how much black there is in white...'

* * *

It is not just an abstract conversation. This is the logic of changing world views in humanity on basic issues over the past few decades. Only the roles of white and black perform good and bad, honesty and lies, beauty and disharmony, righteousness and sin, God and the devil.

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