

without wasting words with the bookseller, return it and get his money back, money perhaps earned by the sweat of his own brow.

I shall do this without fail, moreover, because I just now again remember the story of what happened to a Transcaucasian Kurd, which story I heard in my quite early youth and which in subsequent years, whenever I recalled it in corresponding cases, engendered in me an enduring and inextinguishable impulse of tenderness. I think it will be very useful for me, and also for you, if I relate this story to you somewhat in detail.

It will be useful chiefly because I have decided already to make the "salt," or as contemporary pureblooded Jewish businessmen would say, the "Tzimus" of this story, one of the basic principles of that new literary form which I intend to employ for the attainment of the aim I am now pursuing by means of this new profession of mine.

This Transcaucasian Kurd once set out from his village on some business or other to town, and there in the market he saw in a fruiterer's shop a handsomely arranged display of all kinds of fruit.

In this display, he noticed one "fruit," very beautiful in both color and form, and its appearance so took his fancy and he so longed to try it, that in spite of his having scarcely any money, he decided to buy without fail at least one of these gifts of Great Nature, and taste it.

Then, with intense eagerness, and with a courage not customary to him, he entered the shop and pointing with his horny finger to the "fruit" which had taken his fancy he asked the shopkeeper its price. The shopkeeper replied that a pound of the "fruit" would cost two cents.

Finding that the price was not at all high for what in his opinion was such a beautiful fruit, our Kurd decided to buy a whole pound.

Having finished his business in town, he set off again on foot for home the same day.

Walking at sunset over the hills and dales, and willynilly perceiving the exterior visibility of those enchanting parts of the bosom of Great Nature, the Common Mother, and involuntarily inhaling a pure air uncontaminated by the usual exhalations of industrial towns, our Kurd quite naturally suddenly felt a wish to gratify himself with some ordinary food also; so sitting down by the side of the road, he took from his provision bag some bread and the "fruit" he had bought which had looked so good to him, and leisurely began to eat.

But . . . horror of horrors! . . . very soon everything inside him began to burn. But in spite of this he kept on eating.

And this hapless biped creature of our planet kept on eating, thanks only to that particular human inherency which I mentioned at first, the principle of which I intended, when I decided to use it as the foundation of the new literary form I have created, to make, as it were, a "guiding beacon" leading me to one of my aims in view, and the sense and meaning of which moreover you will, I am sure, soon grasp—of course according to the degree of your comprehension—during the reading of any subsequent chapter of my writings, if, of course, you take the risk and read further, or, it may perhaps be that even at the end of this first chapter you will already "smell" something.

And so, just at the moment when our Kurd was overwhelmed by all the unusual sensations proceeding within him from this strange repast on the bosom of Nature, there came along the same road a fellow villager of his, one reputed by those who knew him to be very clever and experienced; and, seeing that the whole face of the Kurd was aflame, that his eyes were streaming with tears, and

that in spite of this, as if intent upon the fulfillment of his most important duty, he was eating real “red pepper pods,” he said to him:

“What are you doing, you Jericho jackass? You’ll be burnt alive! Stop eating that extraordinary product, so unaccustomed for your nature.”

But our Kurd replied: “No, for nothing on Earth will I stop. Didn’t I pay my last two cents for them? Even if my soul departs from my body I shall still go on eating.”

Whereupon our resolute Kurd—it must of course be assumed that he was such—did not stop, but continued eating the “red pepper pods.”

After what you have just perceived, I hope there may already be arising in your mentation a corresponding mental association which should, as a result, effectuate in you, as it sometimes happens to contemporary people, that which you call, in general, understanding, and that in the present case you will understand just why I, well knowing and having many a time commiserated with this human inherency, the inevitable manifestation of which is that if anybody pays money for something, he is bound to use it to the end, was animated in the whole of my entirety with the idea, arisen in my mentation, to take every possible measure in order that you, as is said “my brother in appetite and in spirit”—in the event of your proving to be already accustomed to reading books, though of all kinds, yet nevertheless only those written exclusively in the aforesaid “language of the intelligentsia”—having already paid money for my writings and learning only afterwards that they are not written in the usual convenient and easily read language, should not be compelled as a consequence of the said human inherency, to read my writings through to the end at all costs, as our poor Transcaucasian Kurd was compelled to go on with his eating of what he had

fancied for its appearance alone—that “not to be joked with” noble red pepper.

And so, for the purpose of avoiding any misunderstanding through this inherency, the data for which are formed in the entirety of contemporary man, thanks evidently to his frequenting of the cinema and thanks also to his never missing an opportunity of looking into the left eye of the other sex, I wish that this commencing chapter of mine should be printed in the said manner, so that everyone can read it through without cutting the pages of the book itself.

Otherwise the bookseller will, as is said, “cavil,” and will without fail again turn out to act in accordance with the basic principle of booksellers in general, formulated by them in the words: “You’ll be more of a simpleton than a fisherman if you let go of the fish which has swallowed the bait,” and will decline to take back a book whose pages you have cut. I have no doubt of this possibility; indeed, I fully expect such lack of conscience on the part of the booksellers.

And the data for the engendering of my certainty as to this lack of conscience on the part of these booksellers were completely formed in me, when, while I was a professional “Indian Fakir,” I needed, for the complete elucidation of a certain “ultraphilosophical” question also to become familiar, among other things, with the associative process for the manifestation of the automatically constructed psyche of contemporary booksellers and of their salesmen when palming off books on their buyers.

Knowing all this and having become, since the misfortune which befell me, habitually just and fastidious in the extreme, I cannot help repeating, or rather, I cannot help again warning you, and even imploringly advising you, before beginning to cut the pages of this first book of mine, to read through very attentively, and even more than once, this first chapter of my writings.

But in the event that notwithstanding this warning of mine, you should, nevertheless, wish to become acquainted with the further contents of my expositions, then there is already nothing else left for me to do but to wish you with all my "genuine soul" a very, very good appetite, and that you may "digest" all that you read, not only for your own health but for the health of all those near you.

I said "with my genuine soul" because recently living in Europe and coming in frequent contact with people who on every appropriate and inappropriate occasion are fond of taking in vain every sacred name which should belong only to man's inner life, that is to say, with people who swear to no purpose, I being, as I have already confessed, a follower in general not only of the theoretical—as contemporary people have become—but also of the practical sayings of popular wisdom which have become fixed by the centuries, and therefore of the saying which in the present case corresponds to what is expressed by the words: "When you are in Rome do as Rome does," decided, in order not to be out of harmony with the custom established here in Europe of swearing in ordinary conversation, and at the same time to act according to the commandment which was enunciated by the holy lips of Saint Moses "not to take the holy names in vain," to make use of one of those examples of the "newly baked" fashionable languages of the present time, namely English, and so from then on, I began on necessary occasions to swear by my "English soul."

The point is that in this fashionable language, the words "soul" and the bottom of your foot, also called "sole," are pronounced and even written almost alike.

I do not know how it is with you, who are already partly candidate for a buyer of my writings, but my peculiar nature cannot, even with a great mental desire, avoid being indignant at the fact manifested by people

of contemporary civilization, that the very highest in man, particularly beloved by our COMMON FATHER CREATOR, can really be named, and indeed very often before even having made clear to oneself what it is, can be understood to be that which is lowest and dirtiest in man.

Well, enough of “philologizing.” Let us return to the main task of this initial chapter, destined, among other things, on the one hand to stir up the drowsy thoughts in me as well as in the reader, and, on the other, to warn the reader about something.

And so, I have already composed in my head the plan and sequence of the intended expositions, but what form they will take on paper, I, speaking frankly, myself do not as yet know with my consciousness, but with my subconsciousness I already definitely feel that on the whole it will take the form of something which will be, so to say, “hot,” and will have an effect on the entirety of every reader such as the red pepper pods had on the poor Transcaucasian Kurd.

Now that you have become familiar with the story of our common countryman, the Transcaucasian Kurd, I already consider it my duty to make a confession and hence before continuing this first chapter, which is by way of an introduction to all my further predetermined writings, I wish to bring to the knowledge of what is called your “pure waking consciousness” the fact that in the writings following this chapter of warning I shall expound my thoughts intentionally in such sequence and with such “logical confrontation,” that the essence of certain real notions may of themselves automatically, so to say, go from this “waking consciousness”—which most people in their ignorance mistake for the real consciousness, but which I affirm and experimentally prove is the fictitious one—into what you call the subconscious, which ought to be in my opinion the real human consciousness,

and there by themselves mechanically bring about that transformation which should in general proceed in the entirety of a man and give him, from his own conscious mentation, the results he ought to have, which are proper to man and not merely to single- or double-brained animals.

I decided to do this without fail so that this initial chapter of mine, predetermined as I have already said to awaken your consciousness, should fully justify its purpose, and reaching not only your, in my opinion, as yet only fictitious "consciousness," but also your real consciousness, that is to say, what you call your subconscious, might, for the first time, compel you to reflect actively.

In the entirety of every man, irrespective of his heredity and education, there are formed two independent consciousnesses which in their functioning as well as in their manifestations have almost nothing in common. One consciousness is formed from the perception of all kinds of accidental, or on the part of others intentionally produced, mechanical impressions, among which must also be counted the "consonances" of various words which are indeed as is said empty; and the other consciousness is formed from the so to say, "already previously formed material results" transmitted to him by heredity, which have become blended with the corresponding parts of the entirety of a man, as well as from the data arising from his intentional evoking of the associative confrontations of these "materialized data" already in him.

The whole totality of the formation as well as the manifestation of this second human consciousness, which is none other than what is called the "subconscious," and which is formed from the "materialized results" of heredity and the confrontations actualized by one's own intentions, should in my opinion, formed by many years of my experimental elucidations during exceptionally favorably arranged

conditions, predominate in the common presence of a man.

As a result of this conviction of mine which as yet doubtlessly seems to you the fruit of the fantasies of an afflicted mind, I cannot now, as you yourself see, disregard this second consciousness and, compelled by my essence, am obliged to construct the general exposition even of this first chapter of my writings, namely, the chapter which should be the preface for everything further, calculating that it should reach and, in the manner required for my aim, "ruffle" the perceptions accumulated in both these consciousnesses of yours.

Continuing my expositions with this calculation, I must first of all inform your fictitious consciousness that, thanks to three definite peculiar data which were crystallized in my entirety during various periods of my preparatory age, I am really unique in respect of the so to say "muddling and befuddling" of all the notions and convictions supposedly firmly fixed in the entirety of people with whom I come in contact.

Tut! Tut! Tut! ... I already feel that in your "false" — but according to you "real" — consciousness, there are beginning to be agitated, like "blinded flies," all the chief data transmitted to you by heredity from your uncle and mother, the totality of which data, always and in everything, at least engenders in you the impulse — nevertheless extremely good — of curiosity, as in the given case, to find out as quickly as possible why I, that is to say, a novice at writing, whose name has not even once been mentioned in the newspapers, have suddenly become so unique.

Never mind! I personally am very pleased with the arising of this curiosity even though only in your "false" consciousness, as I already know from experience that this impulse unworthy of man can sometimes even pass from this consciousness into one's nature and become a



worthy impulse—the impulse of the desire for knowledge, which, in its turn, assists the better perception and even the closer understanding of the essence of any object on which, as it sometimes happens, the attention of a contemporary man might be concentrated, and therefore I am even willing, with pleasure, to satisfy this curiosity which has arisen in you at the present moment.

Now listen and try to justify, and not to disappoint, my expectations. This original personality of mine, already “smelled out” by certain definite individuals from both choirs of the Judgment Seat Above, whence Objective justice proceeds, and also here on Earth, by as yet a very limited number of people, is based, as I already said, on three secondary specific data formed in me at different times during my preparatory age. The first of these data, from the very beginning of its arising, became as it were the chief directing lever of my entire wholeness, and the other two, the “vivifying-sources,” as it were, for the feeding and perfecting of this first datum.

The arising of this first datum proceeded when I was still only, as is said, a “chubby mite.” My dear now deceased grandmother was then still living and was a hundred and some years old.

When my grandmother—may she attain the kingdom of Heaven—was dying, my mother, as was then the custom, took me to her bedside, and as I kissed her right hand, my dear now deceased grandmother placed her dying left hand on my head and in a whisper, yet very distinctly, said:

“Eldest of my grandsons! Listen and always remember my strict injunction to you: In life never do as others do.”

Having said this, she gazed at the bridge of my nose and evidently noticing my perplexity and my obscure understanding of what she had said, added somewhat angrily and imposingly:

“Either do nothing—just go to school—or do something nobody else does.”

Whereupon she immediately, without hesitation, and with a perceptible impulse of disdain for all around her, and with commendable self-cognizance, gave up her soul directly into the hands of His Truthfulness, the Archangel Gabriel.

I think it will be interesting and even instructive to you to know that all this made so powerful an impression on me at that time that I suddenly became unable to endure anyone around me, and therefore, as soon as we left the room where the mortal “planetary body” of the cause of the cause of my arising lay, I very quietly, trying not to attract attention, stole away to the pit where during Lent the bran and potato skins for our “sanitarians,” that is to say, our pigs, were stored, and lay there, without food or drink, in a tempest of whirling and confused thoughts—of which, fortunately for me, I had then in my childish brain still only a very limited number—right until the return from the cemetery of my mother, whose weeping on finding me gone and after searching for me in vain, as it were “overwhelmed” me. I then immediately emerged from the pit and standing first of all on the edge, for some reason or other with outstretched hand, ran to her and clinging fast to her skirts, involuntarily began to stamp my feet and why, I don’t know, to imitate the braying of the donkey belonging to our neighbor, a bailiff.

Why this produced such a strong impression on me just then, and why I almost automatically manifested so strangely, I cannot until now make out; though during recent years, particularly on the days called “Shrovetide,” I pondered a good deal, trying chiefly to discover the reason for it.

I then had only the logical supposition that it was perhaps only because the room in which this sacred scene

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occurred, which was to have tremendous significance for the whole of my further life, was permeated through and through with the scent of a special incense brought from the monastery of "Old Athos" and very popular among followers of every shade of belief of the Christian religion. Whatever it may have been, this fact still now remains a bare fact.

During the days following this event, nothing particular happened in my general state, unless there might be connected with it the fact that during these days, I walked more often than usual with my feet in the air, that is to say, on my hands.

My first act, obviously in discordance with the manifestations of others, though truly without the participation not only of my consciousness but also of my subconsciousness, occurred on exactly the fortieth day after the death of my grandmother, when all our family, our relatives and all those by whom my dear grandmother, who was loved by everybody, had been held in esteem, gathered in the cemetery according to custom, to perform over her mortal remains, reposing in the grave, what is called the "requiem service," when suddenly without any rhyme or reason, instead of observing what was conventional among people of all degrees of tangible and intangible morality and of all material positions, that is to say, instead of standing quietly as if overwhelmed, with an expression of grief on one's face and even if possible with tears in one's eyes, I started skipping round the grave as if dancing, and sang:

"Let her with the saints repose, Now that she's turned up her toes, Oi! oi! oi!

Let her with the saints repose, Now that she's turned up her toes."

...and so on and so forth.

And just from this it began, that in my entirety a “something” arose which in respect of any kind of so to say “aping,” that is to say, imitating the ordinary automatized manifestations of those around me, always and in everything engendered what I should now call an “irresistible urge” to do things not as others do them.

At that age I committed acts such as the following.

If for example when learning to catch a ball with the right hand, my brother, sisters and the neighbors’ children who came to play with us, threw the ball in the air, I, with the same aim in view, would first bounce the ball hard on the ground, and only when it rebounded would I, first doing a somersault, catch it, and then only with the thumb and middle finger of the left hand; or if all the other children slid down the hill head first, I tried to do it, and moreover each time better and better, as the children then called it, “backside-first”; or if we children were given various kinds of what are called “Abaranian pastries,” then all the other children, before putting them in their mouths, would first of all lick them, evidently to try their taste and to protract the pleasure, but ... I would first sniff one on all sides and perhaps even put it to my ear and listen intently, and then though only almost unconsciously, yet nevertheless seriously, muttering to myself “so and so and so you must, do not eat until you bust,” and rhythmically humming correspondingly, I would only take one bite and without savoring it, would swallow it—and so on and so forth.

The first event during which there arose in me one of the two mentioned data which became the “vivifying sources” for the feeding and perfecting of the injunction of my deceased grandmother, occurred just at that age when I changed from a chubby mite into what is called a “young rascal” and had already begun to be, as is sometimes

said, a "candidate for a young man of pleasing appearance and dubious content."

And this event occurred under the following circumstances which were perhaps even specially combined by Fate itself.

With a number of young rascals like myself, I was once laying snares for pigeons on the roof of a neighbor's house, when suddenly, one of the boys who was standing over me and watching me closely, said:

"I think the noose of the horsehair ought to be so arranged that the pigeon's big toe never gets caught in it, because, as our zoology teacher recently explained to us, during movement it is just in that toe that the pigeon's reserve strength is concentrated, and therefore if this big toe gets caught in the noose, the pigeon might of course easily break it."

Another boy, leaning just opposite me, from whose mouth, by the way, whenever he spoke saliva always splashed abundantly in all directions, snapped at this remark of the first boy and delivered himself, with a copious quantity of saliva, of the following words:

"Shut your trap, you hopeless mongrel offshoot of the Hottentots! What an abortion you are, just like your teacher! Suppose it is true that the greatest physical force of the pigeon is concentrated in that big toe, then all the more, what we've got to do is to see that just that toe will be caught in the noose. Only then will there be any sense to our aim—that is to say, for catching these unfortunate pigeon creatures—in that brain-particularity proper to all possessors of that soft and slippery 'something' which consists in this, that when, thanks to other actions, from which its insignificant manifestability depends, there arises a periodic requisite law-conformable what is called 'change of presence,' then this small so to say 'law-conformable confusion' which should proceed for the animation of

other acts in its general functioning, immediately enables the center of gravity of the whole functioning, in which this slippery 'something' plays a very small part, to pass temporarily from its usual place to another place, owing to which there often obtains in the whole of this general functioning, unexpected results ridiculous to the point of absurdity."

He discharged the last words with such a shower of saliva that it was as if my face were exposed to the action of an "atomizer"—not of "Ersatz" production—invented by the Germans for dyeing material with aniline dyes.

This was more than I could endure, and without changing my squatting position, I flung myself at him, and my head, hitting him with full force in the pit of his stomach, immediately laid him out and made him as is said "lose consciousness."

I do not know and do not wish to know in what spirit the result will be formed in your mentation of the information about the extraordinary coincidence, in my opinion, of life circumstances, which I now intend to describe here, though for my mentation, this coincidence was excellent material for the assurance of the possibility of the fact that this event described by me, which occurred in my youth, proceeded not simply accidentally but was intentionally created by certain extraneous forces.

The point is that this dexterity was thoroughly taught me only a few days before this event by a Greek priest from Turkey, who, persecuted by Turks for his political convictions, had been compelled to flee from there, and having arrived in our town had been hired by my parents as a teacher for me of the modern Greek language.

I do not know on which data he based his political convictions and ideas, but I very well remember that in all the conversations of this Greek priest, even while explaining to me the difference between the words of exclamation

in ancient and in modern Greek, there were indeed always very clearly discernible his dreams of getting as soon as possible to the island of Crete and there manifesting himself as befits a true patriot.

Well, then, on beholding the effect of my skill, I was, I must confess, extremely frightened, because, knowing nothing of any such reaction from a blow in that place, I quite thought I had killed him.

At the moment I was experiencing this fear, another boy, the cousin of him who had become the first victim of my so to say "skill in self-defense," seeing this, without a moment's pause, and obviously overcome with a feeling called "consanguinity," immediately leaped at me and with a full swing struck me in the face with his fist.

From this blow, I, as is said, "saw stars," and at the same time my mouth became as full as if it had been stuffed with the food necessary for the artificial fattening of a thousand chickens.

After a little time when both these strange sensations had calmed down within me, I then actually discovered that some foreign substance was in my mouth, and when I pulled it out with my fingers, it turned out to be nothing less than a tooth of large dimensions and strange form.

Seeing me staring at this extraordinary tooth, all the boys swarmed around me and also began to stare at it with great curiosity and in a strange silence.

By this time the boy who had been laid out flat recovered and, picking himself up, also began to stare at my tooth with the other boys, as if nothing had happened to him.

This strange tooth had seven shoots and at the end of each of them there stood out in relief a drop of blood, and through each separate drop there shone clearly and definitely one of the seven aspects of the manifestation of the white ray.

After this silence, unusual for us “young rascals,” the usual hubbub broke out again, and in this hubbub it was decided to go immediately to the barber, a specialist in extracting teeth, and to ask him just why this tooth was like that.

So we all climbed down from the roof and went off to the barber’s. And I, as the “hero of the day,” stalked at the head of them all.

The barber, after a casual glance, said it was simply a “wisdom tooth” and that all those of the male sex have one like it, who until they first exclaim “papa” and “mamma” are fed on milk exclusively from their own mother, and who on first sight are able to distinguish among many other faces the face of their own father.

As a result of the whole totality of the effects of this happening, at which time my poor “wisdom tooth” became a complete sacrifice, not only did my consciousness begin, from that time on, constantly absorbing, in connection with everything, the very essence of the essence of my deceased grandmother’s behest—God bless her soul—but also in me at that time, because I did not go to a “qualified dentist” to have the cavity of this tooth of mine treated, which as a matter of fact I could not do because our home was too far from any contemporary center of culture, there began to ooze chronically from this cavity a “something” which—as it was only recently explained to me by a very famous meteorologist with whom I chanced to become, as is said, “bosom friends” owing to frequent meetings in the Parisian night restaurants of Montmartre—had the property of arousing an interest in, and a tendency to seek out the causes of the arising of every suspicious “actual fact”; and this property, not transmitted to my entirety by heredity, gradually and automatically led to my ultimately becoming a specialist



in the investigation of every suspicious phenomenon which, as it so often happened, came my way.

This property newly formed in me after this event— when I, of course with the co-operation of our ALL-COMMON MASTER THE MERCILESS HEROPASS, that is the “flow of time,” was transformed into the young man already depicted by me—became for me a real inextinguishable hearth, always burning, of consciousness.

The second of the mentioned vivifying factors, this time for the complete fusion of my dear grandmother’s injunction with all the data constituting my general individuality, was the totality of impressions received from information I chanced to acquire concerning the event which took place here among us on Earth, showing the origin of that “principle” which, as it turned out according to the elucidations of Mr. Alan Kardec during an “absolutely secret” spiritualistic seance, subsequently became everywhere among beings similar to ourselves, arising and existing on all the other planets of our Great Universe, one of the chief “life principles.”

The formulation in words of this new “all-universal principle of living” is as follows:

“If you go on a spree then go the whole hog including the postage.”

As this “principle,” now already universal, arose on that same planet on which you too arose and on which, moreover, you exist almost always on a bed of roses and frequently dance the fox trot, I consider I have no right to withhold from you the information known to me, elucidating certain details of the arising of just that universal principle.

Soon after the definite inculcation into my nature of the said new inherency, that is, the unaccountable striving to elucidate the real reasons for the arising of all sorts of “actual facts,” on my first arrival in the heart of Russia,

the city of Moscow, where, finding nothing else for the satisfaction of my psychic needs, I occupied myself with the investigation of Russian legends and sayings, I once happened—whether accidentally or as a result of some objective sequence according to a law I do not know—to learn by the way the following:

Once upon a time a certain Russian, who in external appearance was to those around him a simple merchant, had to go from his provincial town on some business or other to this second capital of Russia, the city of Moscow, and his son, his favorite one—because he resembled only his mother—asked him to bring back a certain book.

When this great unconscious author of the “all-universal principle of living” arrived in Moscow, he together with a friend of his became—as was and still is usual there—“blind drunk” on genuine “Russian vodka.”

And when these two inhabitants of this most great contemporary grouping of biped breathing creatures had drunk the proper number of glasses of this “Russian blessing” and were discussing what is called “public education,” with which question it has long been customary always to begin one’s conversation, then our merchant suddenly remembered by association his dear son’s request, and decided to set off at once to a bookshop with his friend to buy the book.

In the shop, the merchant, looking through the book he had asked for and which the salesman handed him, asked its price.

The salesman replied that the book was sixty kopecks.

Noticing that the price marked on the cover of the book was only forty-five kopecks, our merchant first began pondering in a strange manner, in general unusual for Russians, and afterwards, making a certain movement with his shoulders, straightening himself up almost like a pillar and throwing out his chest like an officer of the