

# ***The Messiah in Check***

H. van Doren

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## ***Translator's comments***

The first comments to make surround the identity of the author, H van Doren. There has been confusion regarding van Doren's true identity as there are those who have considered H van Doren to be a pseudonym of Bruno von Ehremberg, an old Chilean, Siloist activist, who was shamefully tortured during Pinochet's era<sup>1</sup> and who eventually fled to the UK where he seems to have disappeared if my research (which is not so extensive I admit) is any good. However, it seems clear that H van Doren is in fact a pseudonym employed by Silo himself. Clarification of this matter came in an e-mail from Hector Pojomovsky, a Siloist from Mendoza in the sixties who told me:

*"I can assure you (with no other proof than my word, if it is good enough) that H. van Doren is Silo, and that H. van Doren is not Bruno von Ehremberg. I can remember the good laugh we had when Negro (Silo) was explaining the importance of a "good" pseudonym that could confuse everybody, and that he had come up with one mixing the names of an Argentinean union leader (Vandor<sup>2</sup>) and an American pin-up of the times (Mamie Van Doren).*

*"The Messiah in Check was first published in Mendoza in the summer of 1969/70 (if my recollections are not wrong). Later on, it was decided to re-print it in Santiago de Chile, because it was cheaper than in Argentina. For that matter, and to avoid hassle with the copyright, Bruno von Ehremberg registered (in Chile) H. van Doren as himself. To my knowledge, I could not say that he actually claimed (outside of that bureaucratic office) to be van Doren, but I met many Chileans at the time who firmly believed he was van Doren. Then again, it's easier to accept that von Ehremberg=van Doren because it's a better combination than Rodriguez=van Doren."*

I first came to know about this book after a visit to Chile around the year 2002 when I found an old and tattered copy on the bookshelf of a friend's house in Santiago. It was around the time when Silo launched his Message and he officiated Ceremonies of Recognition in Rome, Madrid, Buenos Aires and Santiago; where I attended. The book – in three parts: Socrates, Jesus and Rama– was very strange but it was explained to me that in Rama there were elements of the early Silo. In those days I couldn't really read Spanish well enough and gave up after the first few pages.

I couldn't find an English translation, although I'm sure that the many Siloists in the USA at the beginning of the seventies must have had this book and probably circulated it. So it is

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about von Ehremberg's incarceration during Pinochet's time see case number 1799 from the Inter-American Human Rights Database <http://www.wcl.american.edu/humright/digest/1974/case1774.cfm>.

<sup>2</sup> Augusto Timoteo Vandor (1923 – 1969) was an Argentine trade unionist leader and politician.

likely that someone has previously written a translation and it's sitting on a bookshelf in San Francisco somewhere as I write this.

I decided to do this translation shortly after the death of Mario Rodriguez Cobos in September 2010. The reason I chose to do it then is that the character Rama in the third part of the book is alleged to have elements in common with Silo and there are clear points of convergence between Siloism and Ramaism which I thought it might be interesting to study given that Rama fakes his own death and sails out from Antofagasta, Chile. Could Silo somehow have faked his own death and be sailing around the Pacific?

What I discovered on doing this translation is the sheer human encyclopaedia that was Silo right from the gestation period of the Humanist Movement. Already in the sixties his knowledge of ancient civilisations, myths and cultures is astonishing. He touches on Ancient China, Greece, India, Persia and Rome like he's as familiar with the subject as any University Professor. Not bad for someone who never completed his University studies.

While translating the book I was so grateful for the internet, and especially Wikipedia, which makes it possible to find translations and definitions in seconds and then read background information to try to put the context together for the story. If anyone did try to translate this back in the seventies I take my hat off to them because it can't have been easy.

As I normally do with translations of Silo I like to put lots of footnotes. Hopefully the footnotes save time for those as ignorant of the context as I am.

The sadness with this translation is that there is now no way to confer with the author so there may be errors simply because there was no way to cross check what the author intended to say. If friends read this and find errors I will be happy to incorporate changes. As normal with Silo's work, some parts are incredibly hard to get your head around and I'm not convinced about every part of this translation.

I haven't done this translation for publication, just out of a personal interest to study Silo's earliest writings and to get a better feeling for the early days of Siloism. I think the third part on Rama is highly educational for understanding the climate in Argentina during the military dictatorship and oppression of Siloism.

Maybe English speaking scholars of Silo in the future will also find this translation and it can be somehow useful for them in trying to understand the man who would later go on to lay the foundations of the Universal Human Nation.

For everything that you've given me, thank you Silo.

Tony Robinson

12 November 2010

# ***Presentation***

Leaving to one side van Doren's personal contribution (his profound erudition, his philosophical flight and his remarkable polish as a writer), the treatment of the themes of this book belongs to the system of Siloist thought.

The stories, very separate in time, are linked by an inner leitmotif. Socrates, Jesus and Rama live in different times, in different cultural contexts and nevertheless the stories of the three repeat certain constants: the struggle to awaken from sleep, the political misunderstanding created around those who proclaim inner revolution, the unhealthy rejection by contemporaries of that which dignifies them and the systematic violence against the ideas of peace.

In the three chapters the same chess players appear, sometimes with similar names, such as Anytus in Socrates, Annas in Jesus and the "Anael Lodge" in Rama; sometimes with different names but with the same conflict in their consciences, such as the cases of the "Prefect", Pontius Pilate and "the Boss".

Maybe it will shock the reader that at the end of each chapter there is the death and resurrection of the central character in a humorous and down-to-earth way.

This reaction must be explained through the tragic instinct of the times that makes one feel pity when great men are brought down and that prevents one from laughing when the check is thwarted, imposing an unusual movement on the pieces of the game.

Van Doren insinuates that the archetypal game is reaching its end and is trying to transmit his certainty with a brief epilogue spoken from the mouth of a man from the American continent.

# *Prologue*

This book does not count on the benevolence of the Athenian aristocracy... nor that of the Pharisees of Judea, nor the defensive bourgeoisie of western Christian civilisation.

It clashes with the Persians, the Romans and the Yankees.

Nevertheless, the Left (to give it a name) – who through simple dialectic must sympathise with it – feels touched in their own love and condemnit. It seems that the movement of history is always foreign to the interests of different sides.

The Temple of Apollo, the Sanhedrin and the Catholic Church were able to repeat their errors a million times, suffering from the same amnesia.

Therefore, nobody can accept the facts that are presented here.

Whoever reads the evidence of this book will think that the author has based themselves on different sources of information:

Plato, Aristophanes<sup>3</sup>, the four Evangelists, the Apocrypha, Josephus, Strauss, Renan<sup>4</sup>, Petruccelli della Gattina<sup>5</sup> and the chronicles of the scribes of the year 1970 of the era of Pisces... Nothing further from it!

The three stories that make up this book are based on Hasein's<sup>6</sup> audio-visual archives (a sort of video tape) that were developed for the author so that this would be translated in turn or so that he would recount what took place.

These archives have been known for a long time under the pompous name of the "Akashic records"<sup>7</sup>. In reality they are recordings stored on a small crystal data processor and information repository.

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<sup>3</sup>Aristophanes was a prolific and much acclaimed comic playwright of ancient Athens. Eleven of his forty plays survive virtually complete. His powers of ridicule were feared and acknowledged by influential contemporaries - Plato singled out Aristophanes' play *The Clouds* as slander contributing to the trial and execution of Socrates.

<sup>4</sup>Possibly this refers to Ernest Renan (28 February 1823 – 2 October 1892) who was a French philosopher and writer, devoted to his native province of Brittany. He is best known for his influential historical works on early Christianity and his political theories.

<sup>5</sup>Ferdinando Petruccelli della Gattina (Moliterno, 28 August 1815 – Paris, 19 March 1890) was a journalist, author and Italian politician.

<sup>6</sup>Whether intentional or not, Hasein is the name of the grandson character in Gurdjieff's book "*Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*".

<sup>7</sup>The akashic records is a term used in theosophy (and Anthroposophy) to describe a compendium of mystical knowledge encoded in a non-physical plane of existence. These records are described as containing all knowledge of human experience and the history of the cosmos.

For the peace of some people of extreme sensitivity (who imprudently hinder the free circulation of this volume), let's say that this is, strictly speaking, a fiction and that even if some of the characters employed existed, things weren't how they are related here.

We trust that with the above statements all of us continue to be good friends and that our digestion and our sleep continue benefiting the greater glory of God.

In the third dynasty under the emperor Wu Wang<sup>8</sup>, Yu-tsen<sup>9</sup> was executed who was the son of God and practised the doctrine of Awakening.

With reference to this, the historian Sima Qian<sup>10</sup> wrote in horror: "Such was the clumsiness of the human species even in those days. Thanks to heaven, the barbarity has stopped."

The historian Sima Qian lived nine hundred years after Yu-tsen; two hundred years after Socrates; two hundred before Christ and two thousand one hundred years before Rama.

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<sup>8</sup> Also known as King Wu of Zhou or King Wu of Chou, Wu Tang was the first sovereign, or ruler of the Chinese Zhou Dynasty. The dates of his reign are 1046-1043 BC or 1049/45-1043 (Cambridge History of Ancient China).

<sup>9</sup> I cannot find a reference to this on the internet.

<sup>10</sup> Sima Qian (ca. 145 or 135 BC–86 BC) was a Prefect of the Grand Scribes of the Han Dynasty. He is regarded as the father of Chinese historiography because of his highly praised work, Records of the Grand Historian, a "Jizhuanti" style general history of China covering more than two thousand years from the Yellow Emperor to Emperor Han Wudi.

# Socrates

## *The Banquet*

Socrates remained lying down and said, "Through everything that we say with irony you will understand the mission that has been conferred on me by that particular woman named Diotima<sup>11</sup> (who was certainly not Xanthippe<sup>12</sup>, the cook). That very task I confer on you so that you may carry it out.

"You must understand that, being in the centre of civilisation, your task becomes easier calling it 'Philosophy'. Through which you can transmit the true knowledge that is enshrined in the Ministries of the schools.

"According to what we have developed, man forgot his divine origins; transforming prayers into birds, prayers into quadrupeds, prayers into serpents and he will have to end with fish. When this stage is complete he will be able to restart the circle until he remembers his origins. Then he will be a demigod.

"All of you understand that this is a riddle as I have placed mankind at the start and from him I have derived all the animals, so things have proceeded inversely. Ea! Let each one seek and find the meaning.

"This being clarified, we can continue.

"Krishna fed the bird; Hermes, the quadruped. Here we are feeding the serpent and then will come the fish carried by someone that we don't yet know but who will surely incarnate because the idea exists and must be fulfilled in the sensitive world.

"In order for all of this to become more evident, I want to mention that this distancing from the Origin that on first sight appears as degradation, is in reality one turn of the circle and is the necessary step for the evolution of mankind.

"The other thing I want to say refers to transformations: the category of birds that have feathers instead of hair, comes (after a small modification) from those men lacking in all malice, but light, who are concerned with celestial appearances and believe due to their simplicity that the observations made through the sense of sight are the most solid. That happened to the Brahmin when they lost the teaching.

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<sup>11</sup> According to Plato, Diotima of Mantinea is a female seer. Her ideas are the origin of the concept of Platonic love. In Plato's Symposium the members of a party discuss the meaning of love. Socrates is the most important speaker. He says that in his youth he was taught "the philosophy of love" by Diotima, who was a seer or priestess.

<sup>12</sup> Xanthippe was the name of Socrates' wife.

“The species of terrestrial animals and savage beasts were formed from those who had nothing to do with philosophy and never subjected to consideration the nature of any of the celestial objects, and that due to lack of use of the revolutions that take place in the head and follow only the directives of those parts of the soul that are located in the chest. As a consequence of those habits, their forelimbs and their heads bent towards the earth, attracted by the affinity they feel for it. Their skulls lengthened and took all kinds of shapes according to the manner in which the revolutions of the soul had been compressed as an effect of their laziness. As a result of this, this class of beings was born on four legs.

“God gave more points of support to the stupidest as they were more attracted to the Earth. That’s what happened in Egypt at the start of their decline.

“As for the most moronic among them, those who spread their bodies completely on the Earth, the Gods let them be born without legs and they crept on the Earth given that their feet were no longer of any use,. Such is our situation, cultured and beautiful gentlemen of Athens.

“Finally, the fourth and final species – the aquatic – were born from the most bestial and ignorant of all. To them the divine architects have not even conceded a pure breath as their soul is full of impurity as a consequence of all their disorders. For this, in place of a pure and light breath of air, they have been given nothing more than a deep and murky breath under the water. They have received the lowest places to live in, that is the depths of the waters... The same will befall others that mark a new stage.

“In this way living beings metamorphosise from one to another according to how they gain or lose in intelligence or in stupidity.

“However, these animal species must feed themselves in order to not perish and thereby fulfil the curve of their destiny.

“As has been explained, each body possesses depth. Every depth necessarily surrounds the nature of the surface and every surface is composed of triangles.

“Therefore, a living body like that of the living species which includes the four solids also feeds from them, every part seeking affinity with the external elements.

“When from one body more comes out than goes in, the whole dies, and it grows when less comes out than goes in.

“However when the constitution of a being is young, when it still has the frame of its birth made of totally new triangles, that youth assures it of a strong mutual bond. Its entire substance is of tender consistency. The triangles that it gets and that come to it from outside (those that make up the food and the drinks and that are older and weaker than their own), the youth dominates and digests them with their totally new triangles. In this way, youth makes the being grow as it feeds from such triangles in great number. But when the root of the triangles is broken and distends for having already sustained numerous struggles against multiple enemies over a long time, they are no longer capable of breaking and assimilating nutritional triangles that penetrate the body and are left easily to divide through those that come from outside. Therefore, on being dominated by others, the entire being decays and this state is given the name of old age.

“Finally, when the links that keep the triangles bound can no longer resist, they in turn let the links to the soul relax and being liberated in conformity with nature the soul flies away joyfully.

“Right from the start we have given nourishment to human beings with the love that a father feels for his child, but when the child reached maturity, the father despised it, his legacy having passed to the younger sons. This is the meaning that the mystical feasts have had, to prepare such triangles that serve to feed the new bodies and not the way

Xanthippe does it, garnishing the meals in such a way that instead of these divine figures, I have been swallowing indigestible cubes for twenty years. That's why you see me now, old, bald and deficient."

All the disciples laughed and one of them asked, "If Athens releases its soul, to whom will it pass?"

"Let's hope that the soul escapes through the mouth and not through any other orifice," said Socrates. "Be attentive to Macedonia because if she appears barbaric it is because her body is tender and can digest the food of the Gods better than this aged body. When she grows she will carry the Doctrine to all the lands that she conquers. On no account think that Persia can do this because she is also aged and will only serve as a link to Asia.

And so, Socrates had finished, they all sang a dithyramb<sup>13</sup> to Dionysus and drank the sacred wine.

Then they left hurriedly.

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<sup>13</sup>The dithyramb was an ancient Greek hymn sung and danced in honour of Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility.

## ***The Process***

In the hall of the Seal of State there remained only one man.

The Prefect in his capacity as supreme magistrate could have not summoned the court, delaying the trial. That day there was sufficient work to avoid it. The reception of heralds and ambassadors had taken all morning and he had to dedicate his scarce free time to ordering the political issues in course.

The tasks of revision, of filing and of document research would have allowed him to delay matters considerably.

He was in the middle of finances and besides needed time to at least comprehend seditious movements and denounce them to the people of Athens. Perhaps they themselves had taken charge of forcing things in order to encourage the scandal that brought Socrates before the court.

The Prefect knew that even delayed, the result would have been identical. At least now he remained with the sensation that thanks to his intervention he had fulfilled the minimal formalities that would allow every citizen to have a dignified trial.

He had made Dysias<sup>14</sup> available to prepare the defence and if the accused had declined it, that was his problem.

Personally, he had no greater objection to Socrates than any other administrator concerned for citizens who default on debt. Besides, what could the Democratic Party do? And aristocrats were coming and going everywhere employing deception to demand a trial! He was a mere representative of the people and he must do what they asked.

Nevertheless, a doubt remained in him: either Socrates was the soul of the sedition or it was the coalition of parties, or a group unknown to anyone.

According to the politicians, Socrates wanted a Republic that turns it back on the people and, supported by armies, would strengthen resistance against the Persian threat. For them it was evident that such a danger did not exist and that this was just a pretext.

He knew that the trial was political, but as accusations of that type were forbidden by the amnesty that reconciled the democrats and the oligarchs, they had tried to present the matter differently.

For some reason Socrates had continually made fun of the Heliaia<sup>15</sup>. He had started to call its members "Athenians" instead of "Judges", reproaching them in a veiled way that their hierarchy was an act of chance and not of merit.

Besides, his final words after receiving sentence had been suspicious. In fact he had said, "By Zeus, I promise you, men that have condemned me to the final penalty, that immediately after my death I will send you a harder punishment than the one you inflict on me with your sentence. You have done this with the idea that you will see yourselves free to account for your lives, but the contrary will befall you: there will be more from now on who ask you to account (I was the one containing them, although you didn't notice) and they will be more upset because they are younger and your anger will be greater."

What did he mean by, "I was the one containing them, although you didn't notice"? It was obvious that he was alluding to a group of young, disenchanting people of the

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<sup>14</sup> I can find no reference to this character in Ancient Greece.

<sup>15</sup> Heliaia or Heliæa was the supreme court of ancient Athens.

coalition. On the other hand it was known that in both parties there was a latent current of support for him and it was coming above all from those young people, be they of democratic or oligarchic extraction.

For years, there had been sectors who busied themselves with discrediting him publicly and Aristophanes was one of the most perceptive of them, he had launched his darts landing him in the “Thinkery”<sup>16</sup> while explaining falsehoods about the most diverse subjects, teaching expensive rhetoric to the Sophists<sup>17</sup>.

Other comments made it appear that Socrates and his sworn disciples were in a hidden party that was growing day by day, supported by the Macedonians.

The contacts that his followers maintained with foreign tyrants were known about and this made people fear a political circle that was surrounding Athens and that very well could have their agent in Socrates. Not in vain did they journey often to Megara and Egypt, to Cyrene, Taranto and Syracuse.

His previous attitudes couldn't be discounted. In fact Socrates, having taken part in the Council of Five Hundred<sup>18</sup> and being a member of the Prytaneis<sup>19</sup>, opposed the full Assembly to defend several generals who had fought in the Battle of Arginusae<sup>20</sup>.

On another occasion he confronted the Thirty Tyrants<sup>21</sup> when they ordered him to capture Leon of Salamis<sup>22</sup>.

In Potidea as well as in Amphipolis and Delion military battles had been fought, managing to influence the command decisions.

As a result of this, it was no surprise that both sides had calculated the tendency of Socrates to rise above them. Plus, he was suspected of being a sophist and Athens remembered the sad experience suffered when their disciples rose to power with Alcibiades<sup>23</sup> and Critias<sup>24</sup>.

The Prefect explained now why Anytus<sup>25</sup> of the Democratic Party (backed by Mellitus and Lycus) had presented the accusations in these terms, “Socrates is committing the

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<sup>16</sup> The “Thinkery” is the school in the play “The Clouds” by the celebrated Greek playwright, Aristophanes. The play gained notoriety for its caricature of Socrates, ever since its mention in Plato's Apology, as a factor contributing to the old man's trial and execution.

<sup>17</sup> In Ancient Greece, the sophists were a category of teachers who specialized in using the tools of philosophy and rhetoric for the purpose of teaching aretê — excellence, or virtue — predominately to young statesmen and nobility.

<sup>18</sup> In cities of ancient Greece, the Council of Five Hundred or the boule was a council of citizens appointed to run daily affairs of the city.

<sup>19</sup> The Prytaneis were the executives of the boule of ancient Athens.

<sup>20</sup> The naval Battle of Arginusae took place in 406 BC during the Peloponnesian War just east of the island of Lesbos.

<sup>21</sup> The Thirty Tyrants were a pro-Spartan oligarchy installed in Athens after its defeat in the Peloponnesian War in 404 BC.

<sup>22</sup> In the Apology, Plato's Socrates argues that he fears committing injustice more than he fears death. In support of that claim, he cites two incidents in which he, at great personal risk, disobeyed unjust commands of the Athenian government. One of those orders was for him to arrest Leon of Salamis and bring him to the Thirty for execution.

<sup>23</sup> Alcibiades Cleiniou Scambonides (c. 450–404 BC), was a prominent Athenian statesman, orator, and general. According to Plutarch, Alcibiades had several famous teachers, including Socrates, and was well trained in the art of Rhetoric.

<sup>24</sup> Critias was an uncle of Plato, and a leading member of the Thirty Tyrants, and one of the most violent. He was an associate of Socrates, a fact that did not endear Socrates to the Athenian public.

<sup>25</sup> Anytus was one of Socrates' prosecutors.

following crimes: he doesn't believe in the Gods of the city, he is trying to introduce foreign Gods and he is corrupting the youth," implying what this meant politically.

The arguments themselves were weak and it would be very difficult to bring evidence to light. This is why the accusers had tried to influence public-opinion with simultaneous campaigns about the irreligiosity of the accused.

Anytus was a good Athenian and thought that he understood the danger hanging over his homeland. Therefore he was doing the impossible with the aim of protecting the values that he believed to be important, that is, the family, traditions and the religion of his people (although these were in reality the values of the aristocracy).

When the Prefect summoned the court he knew that the general mood was hostile to Socrates. Apart from the problem of the sides, the priests of Apollo contributed to magnifying his crimes, fearing that their prestige was being displaced in favour of the Socratic groups that accused them of trading in the divine. Socrates in the same trial had set upon the Pythia of Delphi<sup>26</sup> in a declaration regarding her wisdom with the evident aim of neutralising the representatives of the cult that were making common cause with the powerful.

Socrates had been magisterial in his own defence, destroying his opponents and showing everyone his innocence...

But, in a mean way the factions had drowned out his voice with a great din, throwing accusations at him from all angles, "He remains with Critias<sup>27</sup> to the shame of the people." "You are an ignoramus who has never left Athens, but you give counsel to everyone and give talks the whole day long without showing any industrial productivity." "You say that you discover the truth continuously by denying and discussing." "You can be found at all times in the public squares, the gymnasia, the porticos, the craftsmen's shops, but always with young people, corrupting them." "Charicles<sup>28</sup> has banned you from teaching and perverting the youth." "You let two of your sons die of starvation." "Your wife, Xanthippe, has said that you come home drunk and summon her so that she may feed you at all hours." "You are the son of Sophroniscus and from birth we have known you and we know that you ruined him taking twenty-five minae<sup>29</sup> that was his entire savings." "You fled like a coward from Potidaea, Amphipolis and Delium. Traitor." "You have said that the sun is stone and the moon is rock instead of Gods." "You use the Gods and deny them at your convenience." "You have dared to say, 'work in a way that you see fit to fulfil the order that God has given me through the voice of the oracles and through the voice of dreams'." "Who do you think you are? Because for us you don't pass as a madman or a phoney." "Teach us something new because this thing of 'knowing yourself' was told to us by our grandmothers." "Apart from the potions that you make with Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Archelaus and others, don't you have anything good for the liver?" "Besides being a sophist, what else are you?"

The Prefect, then, had managed to quell the mob and brought the matter to a vote. The result was doubtful as two hundred and twenty judges voted in favour as opposed to two hundred and eighty, and this was a sign that the rift could widen.

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<sup>26</sup> The Pythia was the priestess at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, located on the slopes of Mount Parnassus. The Pythia was widely credited for her prophecies inspired by Apollo, giving her a prominence unusual for a woman in male-dominated ancient Greece.

<sup>27</sup> According to Plato in *The Apology*, Critias was a faithful, probably life-long companion of Socrates. The two had evidently grown up together as friends, being from the same area and of roughly the same age.

<sup>28</sup> Charicles, son of Apollodorus, was an ancient Athenian politician, notorious for his role as one of the Thirty Tyrants.

<sup>29</sup> A mina is 100 ancient Greek drachmae. Minae is plural.

Socrates, maybe in order to accentuate the division, had continued to attack a section of the court proposing as a punishment nothing more than to be fed by the State.

“He said, ‘Well, what punishment for myself can I propose to you? Really, I must suggest what I deserve? Well then, what punishment must I suffer or what fine must I pay for having no moment of rest in life, for having neglected the things that are the concern of the majority of men: profits, government of the home, the Generalate<sup>30</sup>, speeches to the people, public positions, conspiracies and the dissention that takes place in the city. For having forced myself to convince each one of you that one should not dealing with these things before trying to be the best and as prudent as possible?”

“What do I deserve to happen to me having been thus? Something good, Athenians, at least if the suggestion is made according to the merits. And what’s more, something good of such a nature that suits my person.

“And what prize suits a poor man, a city do-gooder who has been obliged to neglect his personal interests to dedicate himself to instructing you? There is nothing more appropriate, Athenians, than to maintain such a man in the Prytaneion, with much more right to this than if one of you had become a champion of Olympus in horse racing. Because he makes you believe you are happy but I make you really happy. He has no need of support and I do.

“In summary, then, if I must consider, in accordance with justice, the sentence that I deserve, this is my evaluation: to be maintained in the Prytaneion.

The Prefect had considered all the aspects of the case and now understood that Socrates had forced his own sentence, because presenting such an extreme option left nothing but the decision that was taken.

Nevertheless, it wasn’t clear why he had done it.

For his background, for his slander, for playing with different sides, for his growing influence among the young, for that suicidal obstinacy in not abandoning his ideas, he asked himself now, “Who was this man really?”

And in his ears those incomprehensible words resonated, “If, asleep as you are, you were to beat and kill me, you would spend your life asleep. I am here to awaken mankind. I am the gadfly that stings the spirit, the one who wants to make you abandon the dark cave of appearances, to bring you to the reality of the light.”

It was better to not think. Soon he would forget about Socrates and, in turn, he would be deemed to have operated as a dignified public servant his whole life.

He breathed deeply and left the hall thinking about his wife who was waiting for him with open arms.

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<sup>30</sup> I can’t find a reference for this.

## ***Death and Resurrection***

The day before the sentence, the priest of Apollo crowned the stern of the galley that was carrying the offering of the Athenians to Delos. As the law prohibited sentence to be executed before the return of the galley, Socrates was one month in Prison during which time his acquaintances could enter whenever they wanted.

On the day of the execution his disciples, sons and wife arrived very early but she made so much noise that they expelled her from the cell.

Then Socrates was released from his chains and sitting on the bed said, "How strange what men call pleasure seems to be and how surprising that it is tied to what they call pain. So, while that unpleasant woman was here screaming and beating herself on the chest it was I who was receiving the pounding of pain. But once she was removed, here arose in my soul the sensation similar to the one experienced when, tired by the efforts of the tournament, ones limbs are treated with balsam and oil. This is also true of the pleasure that suddenly replaced the pain once the prison guard had released the shackles that enchained my leg. Pleasure and pain are mutually enchained, and desire each other, one taking the initiative from the other all the time."

And so he continued all day.

In the evening, Socrates allowed his wife to re-enter and hugged her affectionately and kissed her on the forehead. Immediately he spun round and said to Critias, "We owe a rooster to Asclepius. Please, don't forget to pay the debt."<sup>31</sup>

On hearing this Critias hurriedly left to find the prison doctor and pay him the price of his consistent service with ten minae, for which (as was agreed) he promised to change the hemlock for a special juice that had the property to make it look like someone was dead while they slept.

The prison guard having entered with the disciple of Asclepius, Socrates looked at him sideways like a bull and asked him, "What do you say to that drink to make a toast to the gods, it's good or not?"

Then he took the overflowing cup given to him, he drained it in one go and rubbing his belly with delight said to his wife, "It's an opportunity from heaven to die innocent with the belly full instead of living with guilt yet empty."

This indirectly increased Xanthippe's pain to the point that she couldn't take it and she had to be taken outside.

At 2 o'clock, the man that according to Zopyrus<sup>32</sup> had all the vices and was the picture of loyalty and joviality was dead to everyone's eyes.

Critias, Ctesippus and Apollodorus lifted his body onto a carriage and took it to the funeral pyre prepared by Plato and Epigenes.

Athens could be satisfied, Socrates had succumbed.

Nevertheless, the next day the old man and his friends left from Piraeus sailing into the sea.

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<sup>31</sup> This is a quote from Plato's 'Phaedo'.

<sup>32</sup> Zopyrus seems to be a character from Plato's 'Phaedo'.

# *Jesus*

## *The Supper*

Jesus stood up from the supper and took off his cloak and taking a towel he wrapped himself in it.

Then he put water in a bowl and started to wash the feet of the disciples and to dry them with the towel he was wrapped in. As he finished he said, "Now go and walk along all the paths and even the ones of the gentiles because it is there in Rome from where the spirit will irradiate towards all the domains that belong to her. Don't take the snake by the tail because it can turn back and bite your hand. Take the serpent by the head and the whole body will follow you as you move it from side to side.

"The feet that I wash are also the fish, the last part of a body that ends in many years to come. Then when this is fulfilled we will send the Spirit to mankind and it will be the end of times.

"But it is necessary that the light shines within you and that you comprehend that just like this wine can turn to blood and this bread to flesh, so the bread and wine of mankind will turn into the flesh and blood of a new being. This will be possible as long as the operation and craftsman are good.

"In the meantime, explain to everyone this that I have taught you and make the change in yourselves and do it in my memory.

"See how I go now to keep watch and you will sleep because the spirit is willing but the body is weak. Time and again I have awakened your spirit but your body has defeated it. So also it will come to pass tonight.

"Be vigilant, wake up and the bread and wine will turn into the flesh and blood of a new being within you.

"These things I have spoken so that you may not stumble. They will expel you from the synagogues. And even the hour will come when someone who may kill you will think that they are providing a service to God.

"I did not tell you this at first because I was with you but now I go to what I have been sent."

He stopped a second and added, "Father, I have glorified you on Earth. I have finished the work that you gave me to do."

Then Jesus fell silent. He took the bread and wetting it gave it to Judas and said to him, "What you are going to do, do it soon."

After this Judas looked at the Maestro and his colleagues saying, "Let it be God's will," and left hurriedly.

Once they had sung the hymns, everyone retired.

Jesus and others who followed him headed for the Olive grove.

## ***The Plot***

Pilate understood the situation well.

On the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Nisan<sup>33</sup>, Jesus had set out from the Mount of Olives towards Jerusalem. His disciples, those of the Baptist and numerous others from Galilee followed him. Then more people had joined in due to the commotion that they, and those who had not found out about the suspension of the revolt, were causing.

Nevertheless and despite the cries of “Hosanna to the son of David” the mass of people had let them pass until they reached Solomon’s Porch where the group broke up.

The next day, Jesus created more confusion by taking on a few foreign merchants who – not knowing the rules – were trading in the Temple. In trying to show the priests as complicit in the business he had alienated the common people.

Pilate knew that Jesus, although encouraged by Annas<sup>34</sup> and the Sadducees for the Passover Plot, didn’t take part in this game. Being Procurator was complicated.

In fact Sejanus<sup>35</sup> from Rome had conceived the plan: Judea was rebelling. The Romans were weakly resisting and allowed the uprising to triumph. The legions of Judea and the Jews then forced Syria to fold and this she did under the weight of circumstances and above all with the complicity of Pomponius Flaccus, Governor and right hand man of Sejanus.

In several places, the Jews kept hidden reserves of treasure to stop encouraging the Legionnaires of Gaul<sup>36</sup> and Hispania Baetica<sup>37</sup> from where he came. Even Britannia<sup>38</sup> was in revolt against Tiberius<sup>39</sup> who was disintegrating the Empire by the day and putting loyal patriots in the position of traitors.

Besides, the Praetorian Guard<sup>40</sup> itself would handle the despot thereby avoiding a confrontation between the legions.

Things were going to change! Judea was after all was one of the poorest dominions and demanded enormous expense for its occupation; he deserved manumission<sup>41</sup> in recognition of his collaboration.

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<sup>33</sup>Nisan (or Nissan) is the first month of the ecclesiastical year and the seventh month (eighth, in leap year) of the civil year, in the Hebrew calendar.

<sup>34</sup>Annas was appointed by the Roman legate Quirinius as the first High Priest of the newly formed Roman province of Iudaea in 6 AD when Iudaea had been brought directly under Roman rule.

<sup>35</sup>Lucius Aelius Sejanus (20 BC – October 18, AD 31), commonly known as Sejanus, was an ambitious soldier, friend and confidant of the Roman Emperor Tiberius. An equestrian by birth, Sejanus rose to power as prefect of the Roman imperial bodyguard, known as the Praetorian Guard, of which he was commander from AD 14 until his death in 31.

<sup>36</sup>During the time of Ancient Rome, Gaul was a region of Western Europe encompassing present day France, Luxembourg and Belgium, most of Switzerland, the western part of Northern Italy, as well as the parts of the Netherlands and Germany on the left bank of the Rhine.

<sup>37</sup>Hispania Baetica was one of three Imperial Roman provinces in Hispania, (modern Iberia). Hispania Baetica was bordered to the west by Lusitania, and to the northeast by Hispania Tarraconensis. Baetica was part of Al-Andalus under the Moors in the 8th century and approximately corresponds to modern Andalucia.

<sup>38</sup>Britannia is an ancient term for Great Britain.

<sup>39</sup>Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus (November 16, 42 BC – March 16, AD 37), born Tiberius Claudius Nero, was Roman Emperor from 14 AD to 37 AD.

<sup>40</sup>The Praetorian Guard was a force of bodyguards used by Roman Emperors.

But Herod Antipas<sup>42</sup>, governing Galilee (although subject to Rome), had defeated the purpose by sending messages to Tiberius whom he served loyally. No one was ignoring that the Tetrarch's ambition was equal in strength to his weakness and fear.

In such a situation, without the support of the Herodians and denouncing the plot, he was exposed along with the Jews.

Passover<sup>43</sup> was close and those days were a sort of watchword for all those who remembered the exodus from Egypt. The plot in any case could be deferred due to the magnitude of these seventy thousand inhabitants, plus those arriving from all points of Judea had been warned by their leaders of the change of plans.

In such a situation, Jesus had entered provoking that commotion confusing all the sides that were outdoing each other to quell any sign of rebellion to not justify Herod before Tiberius.

Jesus wasn't participating in the revolt and incomprehensibly changed tack day by day, accumulating for himself the antipathy of those groups willing to do anything.

The Praetor<sup>44</sup> warned that the latest attitudes of Jesus implicated all the hierarchies of Judea, bearing in mind that the uprising was already known by Caesar. In any case, he, who was already compromised, was not afraid of hierarchs.

After the commotion provoked by the Rabbi, they were forced to use him as the only rioter in order to protect their positions and to certify in some measure the reports of Herod, conveniently replacing the real actors.

Besides, the Nazarene seemed to want to rise up against all the parties to personify the role of Liberator, but on doing so he had consolidated old enemies onto the same side.

The High Priest, the Great College, the Sanhedrin<sup>45</sup>, the Synagogue, the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the Boethusians<sup>46</sup>, the Zealots... all (invariably all), felt touched by the preaching of Jesus.

Even the Essenes, who passed in large numbers to the groups following the new doctrine, were committed to the struggle against the invaders and their representatives. For this the Baptist had given his life to denounce Herod, being venerated as a national hero in the process.

And the Rabbi instead of closing ranks now spoke with the Samaritans, entered into foreign temples and denied the Jews were the chosen people continually crying, "brood of vipers, hypocrites, white-washed sepulchres, false and narrow minds." He profaned the Sabbath. He declared war on ritual and provoked scandals in the Synagogue. He broke the Law of Moses in the chapter on uncleanness, eating in the house of Simon the leper where a prostitute washed him in front of everyone...

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<sup>41</sup>Manumission is the act of a slave owner freeing his or her slaves.

<sup>42</sup>Herod Antipas was a first-century AD ruler of Galilee and Perea, who bore the title of tetrarch ("ruler of a quarter"). He is best known today for accounts in the New Testament of his role in events that led to the executions of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>43</sup>Passover is a predominantly Jewish holy day and festival. It commemorates the story of the Exodus, in which the ancient Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt.

<sup>44</sup>Praetor was a title granted by the government of Ancient Rome to men acting in one of two official capacities: The commander of an army, usually in the field, or the named commander before mustering the army; and an elected magistratus (magistrate) assigned varied duties. In this case we are talking about the latter.

<sup>45</sup>The Sanhedrin was an assembly of twenty-three judges appointed in every city in the Biblical Land of Israel.

<sup>46</sup>The Boethusians were a Jewish sect closely related to, if not a development of, the Sadducees.

At least, this was what the Pharisees' spies who followed them everywhere stated; taking note of everything he said and did.

Pilate noticed that among his own followers, Jesus had provoked dissention on referring to the Baptist as a simple reed blown by the wind, or affirming that even the smallest in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than him.

He didn't believe in all the calumnies one bit, but it was evident that the Nazarene's enemies were becoming more and more restless by the day.

Undoubtedly Jesus' fame was running through all the important towns and things were being arranged with an incredible art of confusion without presenting a finished doctrine, because he knew well that in the chaos of doing so either Jesus would repeat things already known without gaining influence in the people, or he would say new things: in which case he would be open to all accusations of heresy.

Nor could he, as Procurator, tolerate much more time for the figure of Jesus to grow without understanding well where he wanted to go. For now, it was evident that he was trying to gain time in order to consolidate his position.

His disciples were circulating the most incredible stories about him and were magnifying any event in order to make the multitudes admire him. Everywhere they were fabricating fables, marking the wall with his famous fish and writing declarations that for the most part reached the enemy.

At the end of the day, it was war and after all the Nazarene had the right to use any resource to disseminate his ideas in front of an enemy that had all the means in their favour.

Pilate also felt sorry for the side opposed to Jesus. He hated Tiberius, he was the temporary comrade of the Jews, but above all he was a Roman even when he was born in Hispalis<sup>47</sup>. He also thought that what Caesar had achieved by advancing on Rome from Gaul could be done from Asia and with such projects he couldn't walk around with many contemplations.

The Procurator knew the counter-strikes of Jesus' adversaries and as the rude fighter he was, he fully justified them. But he couldn't stand the clumsiness of their accusations. Without good arguments against Jesus there always remained the sensation that he, instead of heretic and rebel, was a peaceful man, kind, like the teachings of the Stoics<sup>48</sup>.

Yes, the Procurator instead of proof, had smoke between his hands. He saw the hoaxes of the accusers and in any case, he had nothing to do with their internal problems. This is why he had sent Jesus to Herod Antipas, under whose jurisdiction the prisoner fell because the Procurator was in Jerusalem and Herod in Galilee.

Herod surely would set him free, as he knew about the rebellion and understood that they wanted to make it fall on Jesus to pass unnoticed.

In this moment Annas, Caiaphas and other notable people entered. The Procurator let them pass.

"And so," said Pilate.

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<sup>47</sup> Hispalis is the Roman name for Seville.

<sup>48</sup> Stoicism was a school of Hellenistic philosophy founded in Athens by Zeno of Citium in the early 3rd century BC. The Stoics considered destructive emotions to be the result of errors in judgment, and that a sage, or person of "moral and intellectual perfection," would not suffer such emotions. Stoics were concerned with the active relationship between cosmic determinism and human freedom, and the belief that it is virtuous to maintain a will (called *prohairesis*) that is in accord with nature. Because of this, the Stoics presented their philosophy as a way of life, and they thought that the best indication of an individual's philosophy was not what a person said but how he behaved.

“Procurator,” said one of the visitors, “we have asked the accused about his activities and those of his followers and he was not willing to cooperate, saying with insolence that he preaches in the Synagogue and in the temple where everyone is gathered.”

“That’s a bad answer,” said Pilate.

“Indeed,” added the speaker. “Besides this we asked him to tell us about his henchmen, because we know that they are all wrongdoers. They are always lurking in dark places, meeting with one Mary Magdalene, of whom it is said that they removed up to seven demons from her, with Joanna the wife of Chuza<sup>49</sup>, Herod’s steward and Susanna and many others who provided for them out of their resources and with whom carnal pleasures were performed in honour of Beelzebub.”

“This is something serious!” replied Pilate ironically, looking sideways at Lentulus, his confidante.

“By Moses!” he continued obfuscating. “He denies having a mother as if we don’t know Mary who conceived him in a spurious manner, for which she had to escape to Egypt to avoid being stoned. We know his brothers James, Joses, Simon and Jude. His sisters are among us and he pretends that he has neither mother nor siblings. A man who knew him in his childhood told us and swore on the books of the Law that Jesus never received instruction because he insulted all his teachers right from the teaching of the letter aleph<sup>50</sup>. He also killed another child, throwing him from the top of a terrace and this reprobate family being pursued, moved from town to town, expelled by the witchcraft of the mother and the evil of that devil child. So, on the death of his father Jesus fled with their savings and left them in the land they were visiting, without considering his sister Leah who almost died of hunger.”

“Sorry for interrupting you,” said Caiaphas, “but I wanted to give the Procurator decisive proof about the artifices that are being used to trick the people, making a fool of them and our assumed ignorance... This man, Jesus, as he walked through the lands of Egypt and Asia believes that we are all illiterate.”

“Go on,” said Pilate bored.

“You must know that on one occasion he said that he resuscitated someone we never found but, according to someonein on it, was someone from his entourage and suffered from a malady that was not death but something similar in appearance. So, on other occasions (according to the writings of their followers in this papyrus that they circulate) he made someone called Peter walk on water through the power of faith, he multiplied food and other marvels. But all of this we have known for hundreds of years in the legends of Sabatti<sup>51</sup>, Jambunada<sup>52</sup> and others... Even his Sermon on the Mount appears deformed from Dhammapada<sup>53</sup>. Is this man really a Rabbi, Procurator?”

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<sup>49</sup>Joanna was one of the women associated with the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, often considered to be one of the disciples. In the Bible, she is one of the women recorded in the Gospel of Luke as accompanying Jesus and the twelve: "Mary, called Magdalene, ... and Joanna the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources"

<sup>50</sup> Aleph is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

<sup>51</sup> I cannot find a source for this.

<sup>52</sup>Mount Meru is a sacred mountain in Hindu and Buddhist cosmology as well as in Jain cosmology, and is considered to be the centre of all the physical, metaphysical and spiritual universes. An ancient book of Indian astronomy called *Surya Siddhanta* mentions that Mt Meru lies in 'the middle of the Earth'in the land of the Jambunada.

<sup>53</sup> The Dhammapada is a versified Buddhist scripture traditionally ascribed to the Buddha himself.

Pilate started to feel uncomfortable and then Caiaphas retook the discourse with an air of pettifoggery<sup>54</sup>, “if we didn’t know that we were distracting you from your concerns, many more proofs we would bring about his alleged teachings that is nothing more than the very same Sakyamuni<sup>55</sup>, only more poorly expressed. For us there is nothing new in this ‘love thy neighbour,’ just as in the doctrines of Zend Avesta<sup>56</sup>, that Jesus mixes with the tales of his infancy, making the three Fire-Worshippers<sup>57</sup> appear as wise men that came to venerate him from the country of Zoroaster.”

He raised his shoulders, looked at the ceiling and added, “We represent the beliefs of all the peoples, but we cannot allow our traditions, our family and our religion to be corrupted, subjugated as they are by foreign domination. It is not the case of making distant histories appear, as if they occurred under our own noses.”

“Well,” said Pilate touched, “I am also from other lands. We will see what happens, but I tell you that this business is not my problem.”

“Today, you must decide,” interrupted Annas. We have interrogated him in the Sanhedrin and he has also declared himself King, not recognising Caesar and this business is a matter for you.

Then Pilate approached Annas and whispered to him, “Now you are Caesar’s defender, or maybe you are friends with Herod Antipas?”

The High Priest stepped back and left the Praetorium right at the moment that Hosea arrived, “Procurator, Antipas returns the accused in proof that he is subject to your jurisdiction.”

Then Pilate abandoned the Praetorium to head towards the Mariamne Tower<sup>58</sup> to meet Judas Iscariot (the one who had initiated his wife into the curious doctrine of the Nazarene).

As he hurriedly climbed up to her rooms, the Procurator remembered it all: the suggestive presence of Judas, his machinations of Sadducee noble, his political instinct, his contacts with all sides who seemed to respect him and at the same time his relations with those mystical followers of the Rabbi. At the end of the day was he a religious man disguised as a politician, or were he and all of his friends, including the prophet, politicians and subversives disguised as men of faith?

He wished that Jesus were nothing more, nothing less than that: a politician, a patriot in his way, ready to use any means to get rid of him and all Romans. Because in such a case the struggle somehow levelled out and he could eliminate him as the defender he was of Pax Romana<sup>59</sup>. All of this caused his contacts with Judas to become frequent and with him he had designed the Passover uprising in what he did to Jerusalem<sup>60</sup>. Judas, nevertheless, always maintained his scepticism, letting it be known that it was all just a

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<sup>54</sup> Pettifogger: 1. Someone who quibbles over trivia, and raises petty, annoying objections. 2. An unscrupulous or unethical lawyer, especially one of lesser skill.

<sup>55</sup> This is another name for Gautama Buddha.

<sup>56</sup> The Avesta is the primary collection of sacred texts of Zoroastrianism.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Fire-worshipper’ is a derogatory term for a follower of Zoroastrianism.

<sup>58</sup> The Mariamne tower in Jerusalem, built by Herod, was without doubt named after Mariamne I, also called Mariamne the Hasmonean (died 29 BCE) who was the second wife of Herod the Great.

<sup>59</sup> Pax Romana (Latin for "Roman peace") was the long period of relative peace and minimal expansion by military force experienced by the Roman Empire in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.

<sup>60</sup> I cannot make a better translation because I don’t understand what the original Spanish version I have is trying to say.

means to expand the Doctrine and that nothing could be done “from outside,” without gaining the hearts of men.

So as he reached the tower he found Judas who was waiting for him.

“Salve, Pontius Pilate!” greeted Judas.

“You know that I have to convict him.”

“Yes,” said Judas without emotion.

“How can you say that?” asked Pilate.

“We always knew and he knew it before any of us,” Judas added.

“Now you must do your part. I will choose Lentulus.” And saying this he bid farewell.

The Procurator remained alone in the tower, took a few steps and sat on the window sill, wondering to himself, “Who then directs the actions of men and what is freedom and what is truth?” And he felt like a marionette moved by the strings of an incomprehensible Destiny.

## ***Death and Resurrection***

After continual procrastination, the centurion Lentulus (who had been designated by Pilate with special recommendations) took Jesus and two other seditious criminals accused of common crimes.

Fourteen people (five soldiers, Lentulus, the three condemned, Judas, Joseph of Arimathea<sup>61</sup>, John, Simon and Mary Magdalene) left as a group through the judicial door that opened onto the Shiloh-Gibeon road, leaving behind the tomb of Ananias on the left and starting the climb on the right to the Golgotha heights.

Reaching the top around the fourth hour, they laid the condemned on the crosses and started to adjust them. Then they lifted two until the crosses slotted into their deep holes.

On the cross of Jesus they placed a large sliver of wood by way of a platform on which he could put his legs. His arms and legs were tied carefully. Immediately Lentulus himself took care of fixing his two hands to the wood with precise strokes with broad-headed nails as Jesus let out two searing screams.

The two criminals had their legs broken with metal bars, while Jesus was hoisted with consummate care, fearing to tear his hands.

Once the soil around the bases of the three crosses had been trampled in, the soldiers positioned themselves around in an attitude of custody.

No one knew if it was because of the time (it was already past four and the Sabbath started at six) or because of the special climate they had in Jerusalem, what is certain is that no one apart from those previously mentioned were present and of those John was expelled by Judas as he was known for having a big mouth, for which he received the nickname "Son of Thunder".

Then Jesus said he was thirsty and wine was passed to him soaked into a sponge that was fixed to the end of a pole. After a short time he started to say incomprehensible things to his companions-in-torture until he fell profoundly asleep.

Verifying the death of the other two convicts, Lentulus with great care stabbed Jesus in the side from which scarcely any blood flowed and on seeing this everyone considered the execution over.

The soldiers lowered the two executed men and the centurion and Jesus' friends lowered him, handing the body formally over to Joseph of Arimathea who, with the others, carried him to the tomb in the garden of his house. Judas held back a moment and passed Lentulus 30 pieces of silver for his service, requesting him to tell Pilate everything that had happened.

The bodies of the other two were thrown down the side of Calvary mount.

Reaching the house, they revived Jesus with some concoctions and cared for his wounds that were causing great discomfort. In the mean time, Pilate put a guard in front of the stone that had been placed at Joseph's tomb, with everyone assuming that Jesus' body was inside.

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<sup>61</sup> Joseph of Arimathea was, according to the Gospels, the man who donated his own prepared tomb for the burial of Jesus after Jesus' Crucifixion. He is mentioned in all four Gospels.

Once recuperated the Maestro left with Judas, Simon and other friends in a journey to Joppa<sup>62</sup>.

On the third day, Mary announced to the followers that Jesus had resurrected and in their state of depression and dejection they found themselves in, they beat her unconscious.

Jesus and his friends now in Joppa set sail into the sea on a beautiful evening.

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<sup>62</sup>Joppa appears in the Bible as the name of the now Israeli city of Yafo, otherwise known as Jaffa.

# *Rama*

## *The Meeting*

Seated around the table, everyone was listening to the last explanations given by that young man, surely descended from the tribes of America.

Rama had stopped to reconsider his words. Then he proceeded, "Given what was said before, but from the angle of Tradition, the legend is this: the Creator made man in his own image, but he didn't finish the work so that man could develop harmonically, in accordance with the process of nature which he had been sent to direct.

"In addition, until he populates the entire planet and forms a communication network between all the corners of the planet, he will be unable to attain another level of consciousness. If his species achieves becoming a delicate fabric covering the whole Earth, it could be said that he has reached his consciousness and is in conditions to expand life towards other points of the solar system.

"Like all processes, three forces were acting here from the beginning: differentiator, complementor and synthesiser.

"Dealing with an evolutionary sequence, every new synthesis; amplifies with respect to the one that preceded it reaching its maximum point, starts a new process of differentiation until exhausting the triad, and replaces the old elements with the new that have been created within.

"While cultures and civilisations fell one after the other – the most developed elements of a level – the conditions were created for the emergence of a subsequent level.

"Initially isolated cultures complemented each other thanks to the contacts that were established between them, through economic interchange, through development of their communications, through the confrontation of their politics, their art and their religion.

"The phenomenon amplified itself from triad to triad to triad, resembling an ascending spiral, in which each rotation had a bigger diameter than the one before.

Rama paused and then continued, "Bearing in mind these processes, thinkers developed two central, mutually antagonistic concepts: cyclical and lineal.

"The first brings a repetitive interpretation of history; the second, an evolutionary interpretation.

"What really happens is that processes in all stages are born, grow and reproduce, and pass progressive elements to the following stage, while regressive ones decay and die.

“Now, when the cultures were islands, they could develop in their measure without greatly influencing each other. But this changed over time until reaching the present stage in which all cultures existing on the planet are communicating and belong to the same structure. As a consequence, everything that happens in one point has repercussions across the entire globe and nothing that happens can be isolated from the whole.

“This global system which we have reached (and whose internal elements tends to inter-relate increasingly closely) impedes the existence of independent phenomena.

“As an example of a system in movement, let’s consider a rocket moving away from the Earth. If an astronaut steps out they will continue to be dragged by the inertial strength of the system to which they belong and so their freedom of movement is always relative.

“Let’s suppose that the navigator could move from the nose cone to the propulsion system at three kilometres per hour. In less than one minute they would reach it. So apparently, they would have got closer to the Earth. In fact, they would have got closer with respect to the nose cone in that moment, but in that minute of walking the whole system would find itself five hundred kilometres further away from said planet (supposing that the velocity of the rocket were thirty thousand kilometres per hour).

“So, the current world system locates all phenomena in a position dependent on the whole. In the historical process in which we find ourselves immersed we are dragged by it with the velocity the process imposes. Our movements are relative to the whole system in motion and they are in no way independent.

“If in every stage of the evolution of mankind, exceptional beings were launched (from a certain circle unknown to us) who could orientate the entire process in the direction that they were proposing, it would be useless because regressive factors are trying to walk from the nose cone towards the propulsion system stage.

“The current moment carries the entire previous history of mankind and projects it towards its development in the direction it was pointing at launch.

“Looking at things like this, it has meaning to talk about a Destiny of mankind.

“It effects biological jargon<sup>63</sup>, see it rather like the preparation of the elemental genetic code of the living being that is limited to developing in confrontation with the environment, the characteristics ‘recorded’ in the basic DNA.

“Men believe that they make history when strictly speaking it is their basic conditioning that develops them in the proposed line.

“Of course, in every stage corrections to the path are made to avoid deviation, just like the struggle with nature and the game with the environment; new characteristics are imprinted in the living being, modifying their experience and giving them a greater management of possibilities... But always possibilities relative to the system they are a part of.

“If history seems to repeat itself in every stage, in the general process it is always changing.

“In appropriate moments, those beings mentioned before provoke corrections of the path and their struggles are always of change and evolution against inertia and stupidity.

“These appropriate moments are known as ‘messianism’ and it matters little if men that took charge of such situations were messiahs in the objective sense, or if they were responding to the spiritual need of the times.

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<sup>63</sup> The translation of the sentence needs a review against the original book.

“Every time they appeared, they brought a new unveiling of Being, a new lifestyle and a new level of consciousness, but they did it in a moment when a great stage was concluding, serving as a link between a world in agony and another world, young and luminous, that the greatest spirits of each era could intuit on the horizon which was theirs to contemplate.

“In large groups, a small number of these men were always sufficient to provoke shocks appropriate to the material circumstances and psychological state of the society in which they acted.

“We can understand these relationships from another angle.

“Today, it cannot be denied that lead can be transmuted into gold. And those who pursued our alchemists grumble now in front of the cyclotrons<sup>64</sup> of physics, although they are obliged to concede.

“It is known that particle acceleration creates transmutations but for the moment it is inadmissible in public opinion that mankind can accelerate in their interior, accelerate psychologically, in order to provoke their own transmutation.

“No one ignores in chemistry that catalysing factors introduced in tiny quantities cause enormous accelerations in large quantities. Likewise, transmuted men in different times modified the codes of large groups with their teachings. Nevertheless, on passing (such teachings) from one stage to another the “information noise” (as cyberneticists would say) invariably increased. That is, what was explained was degraded from the start.

“Every time that this happened, just as happens in feedback circuits, a new signal arose that reordered the whole. Or in other words, all the broken merchandise was thrown overboard.

“If it hadn't been like that everything would have ended up in total dis-intelligence as related in the myth of the Tower of Babel regarding the ‘confusion of languages’. What happened here precisely is that the increase in noise from the transmitter to the receiver was such that every time the message arrived distorted.

“Despite the example, it must not be believed that we are referring to problems of expression and linguistic meaning, but rather to human endeavour in general.

“Returning to our primitive subject and with reference to Tradition: they weren't even crazy, those who spoke of the geometric composition of the world, of the triangles of things, nor were those who spoke of changing wine to blood and bread to flesh being naïve. But on the contrary they were inspired in the mysticism of Awakening and their language (in some measure) was poetic, the truth they transmitted was no more remote than what we know today as Science.

“It happens, my friends, that what is valid for the world of nature is also valid for the world of the spirit, because these worlds are not separate, but rather are the same Universe.

“We are not to blame if current morality and a few scientific lines continue to be Manichean<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>64</sup> Cyclotrons accelerate charged particles using a high-frequency, alternating voltage. A magnetic field causes the particles to spiral almost in a circle so that they re-encounter the accelerating voltage many times.

<sup>65</sup> Manichaeism taught an elaborate cosmology describing the struggle between a good, spiritual world of light, and an evil, material world of darkness. Through an ongoing process which takes place in human history, light is gradually removed from the world of matter and returned to the world of light from which it came.

“Good and bad, antimatter and matter are aspects of the same reality and not separate entities.

“Now mankind is in condition to think in a global way, to start to see things as a whole, understanding that polarities invert according to the electrical cycle, that neutral polarities exist, that everything changes all the time and that this apparently-violent change, depending on the circumstances, is harmonic, ordered and structural.

“To finish with this, I’d like to refer once again to the tale.

“The legend insinuates that at the end of time the human family will be communicating among themselves and that all people will know in an instant what is happening in other regions, however far away they may be.

“Therefore, when that delicate skin of consciousness covers the planet, right from the very beginning a handful of beings will emerge whose number and characteristics allow mankind to awaken, like a new species, with the dignity to carry life throughout the Universe in collaboration with the plan of the Creator.”

Then Rama finished his presentation while sharing a few complicit looks.

A few seconds passed and then someone in a foreign accent said, “Through the story and the explanations we understand that you have done your part, but what must we do?”

“Produce the number that’s missing,” Rama replied.

“There is a sufficient number?” the foreigner asked.

“Without doubt, but it is necessary to obtain a highly qualified number and distribute them in the most convenient place. It is from the United States (before it falls) from where our message will blow...” and observing a certain discomfort in the group added slyly, “For those who look at those people with contempt, it is worth remembering what they say in Galicia: ‘God writes straight with crooked lines’.”

In this moment Fernando entered the room, a comrade from the first times.

“What happened?” asked someone.

“They have decided on today at 8pm. But they will do it from tomorrow. For now they are trying to measure our capacity to react.

“Good,” interrupted a young man addressing Rama, “Tonight at midnight it is necessary that you are on the corner of Ayacucho and Paso in Vicente Lopez. Our people will arrive and do their thing.”

Rama, seeing that the night was well advanced looked at Fernando and said to him with urgency, “Hurry, there’s no time to lose.”

The young man looked at Rama and at the others peacefully and making himself ready to leave remarked, “It’s a shame that in these countries of South America there is no death penalty. A public trial, instead of the news that the press will set, would have been highly educational. Besides an assault has neither the moral strength nor total commitment to the system of an execution that then serves to feed the complex of blame of an entire society.” He made a derisive gesture and left.

“We will always advance towards them, forcing the consequences,” the young man added in a quiet voice.

Everyone approved.

Once more they listened to the Song of Creation<sup>66</sup>. Then Rama bid farewell to everyone and left through a side door.

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<sup>66</sup>The Benedicite (also Benedicite, omnia opera or A Song of Creation) is a canticle that is used in the Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Hours, and is also used in Anglican and Lutheran worship.

## ***The Plot***

All day the Boss had been pulled by different sectors who were demanding a position. No one was ignorant of the fact that it was in his hands to decide the matter.

While the petty bourgeois of the lower services were coming and going filling in papers that in their understanding constituted decisive proof, the hierarchs of the clergy were threatening him with a reprimand for the protection that he was providing to the “corruptor of morality and underminer of Western and Christian culture.”

The Left in turn could not feel disturbed if he threw the book<sup>67</sup> at this fascist disguised as Rama.

The North American consulate had phlegmatically insinuated that in their country these things didn't have great importance and had given by way of an extreme example the case of Che Guevara. At the end of their short conversation he had said, “dead dogs don't bite.” And that had driven him crazy.

After all, it was something that was not understood well and in no way had even the shadow of a minor crime appeared. No one had been harmed either in person or in property and it was supposed that all citizens had the right to express their ideas as long as they didn't upset morality or public order.

This was precisely in Rama's favour. When they prevented his harangues, thanks to the state of emergency, he kept silent without resisting. Every time he had requested authorisation to publicly express his thought to that crowd that asked him. And on three subsequent occasions he had been officially encouraged to do so, explaining that the state of emergency did not affect him because he was speaking on religious matters that did not affect National Security. He knew that they incited him in order to, firstly, accuse his followers, secondly to detain and terrorise anyone who would dare to listen to him, and thirdly to portray him as an agitator, forcing dispersion of the crowds with clubs, gas and an onslaught of paid provocateurs.

The Boss was ignoring how they had prepared and executed these indignities that disgusted him. From the first moment he had understood that those who today walk the floors of his Centre and mobilise the pressure groups in his departments and even in the ministries did so out of spite because Rama in any case had thwarted them with changes of subject that they could not assimilate then, and feared in the future.

They had thrown the first stone, accusing him of forming closed groups that had not declared their intentions to the public, and when these groups came to the surface to satisfy the public (and how they came out!) they stepped back scandalised because they never expected this show of discipline and organisation.

Yes, he knew all of this.

He could see in front of him scores of inconsistent records, piles of letters from Ramaists illegally sequestered from the mail. They counted on phone recordings, photographs, material taken from meeting houses they had entered by breaking down doors and windows, without even showing a search warrant.

Here among the mountain of papers was recorded the illegal deprivation of liberty that Rama and twelve of his companions who were found building a house in Jujuy had been subject to. He knew of the ten days in prison, of the illegal pressure, the insults,

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<sup>67</sup> For non-native English speakers, ‘to throw the book’ means ‘to use all legal means’.

around August 1966. He knew of the corruption of the Judge who had provided everything under the pretext of guerrillas.

Here was recorded the armed assault that another twenty Ramaistashad been subjected to in Melchor Romero<sup>68</sup> in September 1967.

Here was shamelessly detailed the illegality of the procedures used in Cordoba, Rosario and Buenos Aires in 1968; the assault and sequestration of 25 followers and the humiliating things that had happened to them over 48 consecutive hours on finding them in the delta in 1968.

“Documented” with derision in Rosario were the outrage and the campaign against a young follower whose father was a judge and who, in order to avoid his prestige being compromised, had his son pronounced insane after buying witnesses and holding him in torment in prison for a fortnight. Here appeared the detentions of another twenty in Mendoza and here was reported what happened in a ridiculous trial, in which a “witness” was disqualified on discovery of his criminal activities.

And what had happened in all these cases? Despite the pressure, the buying of witnesses, the “proofs”, the defamation campaigns in the press, Rama had always been released, declaring that the police were his brothers, that they had been treated marvellously well and that it was nothing more than a misunderstanding.

All of this had worried the Boss since the time he met Claudia with a print of Rama’s effigy. That day he had asked her why she kept it and she had replied with this childish freshness that he loved so much, “Rama is good.” And this had fallen on him like an incomprehensible enormity. That night he had repeated, “Yes he is good, he is not bad. They say that he is good and no one can prove otherwise. If he is not bad, why such a story? Could it be that everything is upside down? So who do I serve? Who? Rama is good and the argument is so primitive and so solid...” Until she had calmed him down by reading the Gospel. Then everything had been much worse.

He wasn’t a believer, he never was. But now he read the Gospel because of that Northerner who pursued him in his consciousness.

But who really was this person who suddenly went to the mountains to meditate and stayed there for four months until he was once more detained for being alone, hundreds of kilometres from the cities? The atmosphere was prepared against him over five years of continuous persecution, by what was said from the pulpits, by what was published in the papers and magazines, by the denunciations of good men, by religious men and politicians.

So, it had gone from the sublime to the ridiculous. Rama had been ready to speak publicly in the mountains. It was his final elimination. He couldn’t have chosen a worse situation. On top of that, he had attempted it on his own land, in which no one is a prophet. It was mid-winter and the roads were blocked by snow storms. Nothing, therefore, was in his favour.

But then what happened disconcerted the whole world. Four days beforehand, the main cities of the country were plastered with posters, graffiti, flyers and papers alluding to the sermon. In the Centre they were receiving reports from Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Brazil. There was also something about the hermit of the mountains.

Journalists were even sent from the United States. No one understood anything and in Europe they were already talking about the psychological impact of the “Rama

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<sup>68</sup> Melchor Romero is a district of the La Plata region in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

phenomenon". La Jeune Afrique<sup>69</sup> had been mobilised and it was known that in five Spanish cities conferences were being given. All of that could not be understood and the sermon much less.

Dressed like someone from the mountains, Rama had harangued a diverse crowd in that mountainous spot.

He, for his part, had sent his investigators into the wall of armed custodians who were besieging the crowd. But the idiots had made a defective recording and of course brought back instead contradictory data and mountains of hearsay.

He tried several times to listen to the message, but he couldn't manage to understand anything, unlike Claudia who repeated entire chunks by heart.

Then Rama disappeared, emerging once again in Rosario and then in Cordoba and finally in Buenos Aires without being able to speak in any of these three places. No one knew how many followers he had, because they were always dispersed in the riots that were provoked by the security forces and the paid provocateurs. Also, many of those who were suspected of following the Doctrine never appeared in public events.

The harangue in the mountains had disorganised the opposition and then despite the bans, Rama's followers had used the media in conferences, making them publish exactly what was needed to be known: contradictory news.

"How was it possible," the Boss asked himself for a while, "that having everything against him he was able to increase day by day the expectations in his favour?"

To tell the truth, throughout his career Rama had not spoken publicly for more than 40 minutes and yet he continued to create chaos.

But the Boss believed he could see the game: while his adversaries were fighting among themselves, Rama outraged people and awakened supporters (in a fanfare that had started like Zarathustra, but that day by day was orientated towards the neighbourhoods and the unions), his companions were growing the underground groups more and more rapidly, using this absurd preaching about Awakening, internal harmony and things like that.

The Boss had put the picture together and said:

1<sup>st</sup> step. With everything against him he cannot win the people to his favour and nevertheless he had to come into the light like bait before the pursuers in order for the pressure to be lifted from the underground groups. If he was attacking the government in order to capture the discontented, they would rapidly remove him. If they weren't talking about him, the people who had political urgency would have accused him of being an agent of distraction by the government itself. And here is what he did: he attacked the clergy – with a violence unprecedented in the country – that in these moments were creating their own scandals as a result of celibacy, desertions and many other things. And Rama knew how to do it mixing all of this with a miracle breath that the press tried to turn against him. The indignant clergy felt the darts and without showing their face took advantage of the resources they had for discrediting to denigrate him in the face of public opinion.

2<sup>nd</sup> step. He took advantage of the disturbance provoked by his enemies to schedule press conferences in which he touched on widely diverse subjects and supported undefined regimes in that moment such as those of Peru and Bolivia, while his friends were weaving the plot even further.

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<sup>69</sup>Jeune Afrique is a weekly newsmagazine published in Paris, founded in Tunis by Béchir Ben Yahmed on October 17, 1960.

3<sup>rd</sup> step. He started to violently repudiate all parties and all politicians, neutralising the government who had the same enemies. And logically, he managed to polarise the clergy against him and the politicians.

4<sup>th</sup> step. Calls were launched to the new generations, developing his theories of “political void” and “non-participation” in a world destined for collapse and thereby setting the youth – who gradually felt the instinct of contemporaries – against his enemies. But saying this, his opponents tried to make his followers appear like simple hippies. Then he disappeared swearing that he wouldn’t return to speak in public and that he wouldn’t give any more declarations to the press. With such an attitude the discomfort increased, but also the interest of young people.

How could he leave everything unfinished? Where was this leading? Anychildknew that in a short time the people would have forgotten even the biggest disturbances.

The months passed by and the phenomenon slowly dissipated. Tenacious enemies started to rub their hands together, although with envy... This was the situationuntil two days ago. Yes, two days ago and then everything had been unleashed at the speed of light.

It was the 5<sup>th</sup> step. A distant order was starting to be known in hushed voices in the country’sunions and already the consequences couldn’t be measured, nor was it known what strings Rama was pulling.

For two days, this evil Northerner had moved around Buenos Aires, denying all versions of the new subject. In these moments in which the workers’fighting plans were shown someone stupid had circulated the story (surely false) that Rama had strange overseas contacts and that he wasn’t alien to the Argentine social phenomenon and maybe the whole Southern Cone<sup>70</sup>. All of this did not pass for trickery.

The informantsspoke of an Anael Lodge<sup>71</sup>, of an inclined “L” and other such nonsense.

What was certain is that tension in the country was great, many interests opposed each other and all of them knew that they couldn’t control Rama in the supposed case that he would control some process.

Then, all his enemies formed an alliance to pressure the Boss to take an absurd decision that couldn’t be accommodated or justified in law.

The ultimatum was launched and the time was up at midnight tonight.

At that moment someone knocked on the door.

“Come in!” said the Boss.

At once a priest entered who the Boss recalledtogether with two officials. Then a fourth person.

“Sir,” one of them said, “Father Simone has come on behalf of Monsignor Cardenas... And this is Doctor Robledo, one of our collaborators.

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<sup>70</sup> In terms of political geography the Southern cone traditionally comprises Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay

<sup>71</sup>The Anael Lodge (Logia Anael) is a mysterious group from South America in the times this story was set in that were said to have influence in Argentine politics, especially through one José López Rega, who was Peron’s private secretary. This comes from the internet in some very strange looking websites and there are strange documents from this group also floating around. One of these odd sources even says: “Esta persona nos confirmó que “Silo” (con quien le unía una buena amistad), consideraba a la Logia Anael como su principal enemigo personal y que incluso temía ser asesinado por sus sicarios.” Translation: “This person confirmed to us that “Silo” (with whom he had a good friendship), considered the Anael Lodge as his principal personal enemy and that he even feared to be assassinated by their assassins.”

After greeting them with courtesy he said, "Take a seat, gentlemen," indicating the chairs.

On of one of the official's signal Robledo, who was considerably altered, opened a portfolio and without explanations started to read. "The Pacifist Movement has links in their programme with other movements in different parts of the world.

"Their basic points are: physical nonviolence; economic nonviolence, racial nonviolence and religious nonviolence.

"The following points are the bases of the total pacifist revolution:

"1) The right to strike in all kinds of employment and at any time.

"2) Participation in political power.

"3) The destruction of the apparatus of persecution and pressure, whatever the supposed legitimacy of their origin may be.

"4) Socialisation of medicine.

"5) Socialisation of education.

"6) Distribution of wealth.

"7) Right to a public defence in the face of organised slander.

"8) Obligation of the media to take responsibility for their publications.

"9) Brotherhood between all peoples and all races.

"10) Equality to preach alongside the official church.

"11) Free private and public religious practice.

"12) Right to the free research and dissemination of unofficial sciences.

"The Pacifist Movement underlines that no system, no man, no State on Earth has the right to prevent religious displays of the human spirit."

And having finished reading he added with a face of importance, "Judge Dormemulo of Salta assures you, just as I do, that this communist-associated Movement is following Rama. We know it from a good source. This is the proof that we are dealing with an extremist.

The visitors exchanged intelligent looks and the Boss thanked them with a hint of sarcasm for their spontaneous collaboration.

Robledo, proud of his contribution added, "Sir, we must imprison him for 30 years to avoid troubling the families of Salta."

"We're on to this," replied the Boss, smiling because of the stupidity of the thing. After getting out of his seat and shaking the hand of such an illustrious visitor, Robledo left the office with an almost angelic smile accompanied by one of the officials.

"Sir," said the priest affably, "How much integrity there is in the world! I can see how good people (although the panorama is not very clear) go out of their way to collaborate with Justice. I come on a much more humble mission, proper to my ministry."

"Tell me, Father," replied the Boss.

"It's to do with, how can I say, to do with..."

"... this Escobar delinquent," finished the colleague with a squint.

"Oh yes, Mr Escobar has concerned the Monsignor," added the curate, "and he would like to know if there is something decided about this matter."

“You see, Father,” responded the Boss with a stifled voice, “we are about to conclude the case. I think that today it will be over.”

“You ‘think’, Sir or you are sure?” demanded the squinter with an air of malice.

“Well, we are lacking some information.”

“If you allow me, I will contribute some,” said the squinter.

With the benevolent look of the priest, the squinter opened a folder and before getting ready to read, he argued, “This is what the hippy followers of the delinquent Escobar have written. They are the exact words and refer to us, productive people, mature and honourable.” Then he cleared his throat and read, “In a research nucleus, one thousand files were studied. They contain personal data of one thousand individuals from different provinces of Argentina. The common basis for them (and the reason I group them together) consists of the defamatory activity towards Ramatism. The ages, genders, occupations and economic background are varied.”

“The results were these:

“1) 65 percent were married and had got married to solve economic problems. The rest were single or separated, without this kind of concern.

“2) 55 percent had some family member that had been in prison for petty crimes. Of those, 12 per cent have had personal problems with the local police.

“3) An amazing 80 percent called themselves ‘practising catholic’ although it was evident that only 40 percent fulfilled the ritual (and this half-heartedly).

“4) 40 per cent had managed to get their job thanks to political influences. Of those 70 percent had come from parties of opposing ideologies.

“5) Only 2.5 percent had passed through one of our groups without accessing levels of Higher Work. Nearly all of them had received veiled threats of being sacked from their daily work if they continued in their groups.

“6) 3 percent received a salary for their defamatory activity, and 5 percent were officially used by those interested in these kinds of campaigns.

“7) It was discovered that nearly 100 percent felt horrortowards being slandered.

“8) Finally it couldn’t be considered, but it was simple to intuit, a higher percentage of people frustrated and irregular in their sexual behaviour.

“During the investigation it was proved that by putting the percentages in decreasing order a few people filled all the boxes, but in the measure that the less-populated boxes decreased, the number of repetitions grew according to the precise formula.

“There was a not-insignificant percentage of individuals with a defective physical constitution. Of course such a percentage was above what is normally registered in the total population.”

He finished reading and opening his squinting eyes more than usual, added, “They say that they have us on file, Sir. They are pursuing us and are meddling in our private lives which is the most sacred thing that the father of an honourable family can have.”

“This is very serious,” replied the Boss. “Can you leave this folder with me?”

“Of course,” replied the squinter, and held it out nervously while knocking over an ashtray.

“God is great and knows how to forgive,” the curate pushed on, “the bad thing is that, in His name, iniquities are carried out, and tradition, the family, the homeland and religion are put in danger.” He left a venerable pause and continued, “I personally believe that Mr

Escobar is a well intentioned man, but possibly led by his temerity and imagination he has lost his sound judgement, exposing himself and others to grave dangers.” Another pause, a gesture of remembrance and then, “The Monsignor has indicated that maybe with appropriate psychiatric treatment he could reintegrate into society and have the evil he is suffering from removed. As close to us and having been baptised in the religion of his elders, we see an obligation to help him and to suggest these measures to you.

“Very reasonable and humanitarian, Father,” the Boss responded.

The priest continued, “It’s a great sadness (that the Monsignor and I feel) to see a young man throw his life away who maybe could have served higher purposes. But after all, the Lord moves in mysterious ways... To believe oneself to be the Messiah, the son of two indigenous! To say that nothing is known of his life since he left college when it was proved that he has a criminal record and was arrested several times. And, Sir, he has put together an indigestible salad of Plato, Marx, Freud and Nietzsche, trying to pass it off as “his” doctrine. Obviously he’s gone astray; something must be done for him.”

“Indeed, Father,” the Boss added coldly.

At that moment the phone rang. The Boss picked it up and a voice said, “Listen, stop thinking it over. There are no valid arguments.”

“Yes, sir,” the Boss replied.

“Do you understand me? This subject is not good for us and we have to get rid of him. That’s all,” the metallic voice concluded.

“But, how should I do it, Sir?”

“You know how! No one will create problems afterwards. I will take care of everything.”

“Very good, Sir, I will comply,” said the Boss in the tone of a disciplined official.

“All the responsibility will fall on me. Remember that I’m not alone!” added the voice and hung up.

The Boss, evidently shocked, put the phone down and excused himself from the priest and the squinter. Then he opened a side door that lead to a bathroom and splashed his face while pondering in silence. He turned off the taps, dried himself and came back to sit once more with his visitors.

The Father continued arguing, but the Boss was no longer listening to him. He looked at his watch. It was 8pm. He looked at the two men and interrupting the curate’s speech said, “Gentlemen, it has been a great pleasure to attend to you. Be sure that this will be decided today: the prophet will get what he deserves.”

“What the prophet has self-chosen!” replied the squinter.

Almost as a reflex, the Boss confirmed, “Just as I said: the Prophet will get what he deserves.”

He bid farewell to the visitors, showed them the door and fell dejectedly onto the sofa.

Shortly afterwards, the Boss called Fernando from a public telephone and gave him the particulars. At the end of the conversation, he returned to his office.

## ***Death and Resurrection***

It was around midnight. In the distance a few couples were in the shadows.

A man was standing at the corner, waiting. A car driving at great speed came to a halt next to him, but from the windows came several shots, a body could be seen slumping to the floor. The attackers left quickly and several people ran towards the shot man.

Almost at the same time another car came to a halt and from among all those present the wounded man was put into the vehicle. Someone who called himself Doctor Jimenez said that the victim had died.

The next day, the media published the following article: "The religious fraud Rama has been killed in a dispute with other thugs." And continued, "Last night around midnight on the corner of Ayacucho and Paso de Vicente Lopez an incident occurred between various individuals who had presumably been to a night club. For some reason that the Police are trying to ascertain, one of them pulled out a gun and shot five times at the victim, who collapsed in the process. The rest of the outcasts escaped in a car. Almost at the same time a patrol car arrived together with a doctor from Hospital Cabanillas to where the injured delinquent was driven, passing away a few minutes later. The police are trying to clarify the facts and will bring the corresponding charges."

Some papers added these considerations: "The deceased had several bullet wounds from a calibre .38 weapon. This journalist could see and photograph three wounds on different parts of the body. Upon issuing the death certificate, the body was handed over to four people who, after giving a declaration, placed him in a coffin and took him to the airport for transfer to Salta, the city where he will receive a Christian burial.

"Rama," as he was known, "was Juan Carlos Escobar, Argentinean, single, 33 years old born in the city of Salta. Without occupation or a fixed address. He was famous as a healer among the people of the suburbs, but it seems that that activity was a cover for his extremist manoeuvres.

"Some remember that he caused several scandals in Salta, Rosario, Cordoba and Buenos Aires last year when he was arrested with several hippies and elements of the extreme left for organising protests in the slums.

"Several young men and women who initially followed this new "messiah" with enthusiasm came out against him on discovering the lies they had been the victims of.

"The Catholic Church which was the target of his invective treated him with tolerance, considering him a "lost sheep" according to the priest Vicente Lopez. Such an attitude is allowing his remains to receive a Christian funeral in the Salta cemetery."

And so the case for the public was closed.

Provincial magazines published two or three funeral announcements and invited people to the internment the following day.

Four people were on watch that night while a policeman guarded the door of the ranch.

Around 2am they opened the coffin, took Rama out and gave him a liquid to drink in order to ease his discomfort.

The same doctor who had taken him off the street and prepared the death certificate was now cleaning a few superficial wounds and changing the bandage.

Then, the group positioned a few lead weights in the bottom of the coffin and welded the box with a blowtorch; he adjusted the lid and got ready to leave, with only one person remaining inside.

Three individuals got into a car, while another further back gave money to the policeman with these words, "Later they will say that I sold him for money. How funny!"

And once said, herejoined the group and left rapidly.

The following morning the "remains" were buried by a small number of acquaintances. Some women cried and one of them in a nervous breakdown affirmed that Rama was still alive. Then she was brought back to reality with a few slaps on the cheeks.

There was no priest and no cross contrary to what they said in the press.

Almost at the same time, Rama and his friends met up in Antofagasta, all ready to set sail.

## *Epilogue*

When the threads of the puppet men were cut, of the stick men, all the gibberish became calm and a great silence fell.

Only a few remained suspended and alive, hanging from the big trees, from the tree-fathers of the forest.

The puma said: no.

The jaguar said: no.

The tambo cat said: no.

The fox said: no.

All the animals separated, sniffing and sticking their tongues out, but they didn't touch the stick men because something was protecting them and they didn't want to die.

Then, above the burning mountains and burnt cities and the bodies of the puppet men, of the burnt stick men, arrived the celestial boats, brilliant as the sun, friendly like the sun.

And the awakened Lords of Agartha<sup>72</sup> and Shambhala<sup>73</sup> covered the Heavens and Earth and brought food to everything that was good.

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<sup>72</sup>Agartha is a legendary city that is said to reside in the earth's core. It is related to the belief in a hollow earth and is a popular subject in esotericism.

<sup>73</sup>In Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Shambhala is a mythical kingdom hidden somewhere in Inner Asia. It is mentioned in various ancient texts, including the Kalachakra Tantra. It is sometimes said to be the capital of Agartha.