

Vladimir Antonov

The Jesus Prayer

Translated by M.Shafeyev

We have already mentioned that the self-development of a person is conducted along three major lines: ethical, intellectual, and psychoenergetic. At that, the ethical one is the most important. As Juan Matus put it, God provides according to our impeccability. In other words, He allows us to approach Him, to experience increasing joy, happiness from the contact with Him, and bliss of spiritual life—as we proceed in terms of our ethical self-perfection.

Per Juan Matus, the “impeccability” means ethical perfection, i.e. correctness (objective correctness from the God’s point of view) of our actions, words, and thoughts.

It is also essential to understand that advancement along any of the three mentioned lines of development contributes to mastering the other two. So, the perfect Power must be loving and manifest in a wise way, while Love must be wise and strong, and wisdom can become true Wisdom, only if it is based on the firm foundation of Love, as well as on knowledge and experience, obtained, in particular, in the course of psychoenergetic practice.

Understanding and observance of ethical principles serves as the foundation of all practice. Ethics is the core of the spiritual self-development. It is around this core that everything else that makes up the essence of the spiritual seeker: knowledge, skills, psychoenergetic abilities, and other qualities,—forms and grows, “building up” on that core. The height and durability of this core is what the success of one’s spiritual efforts depends on. It is with this ethical core that we grow towards God. And God allows us to approach Him according to the degree of our ethical perfection.

The basis of ethics is Love: Love primarily in the aspects of compassion, ability to forgive, tolerance, tenderness, self-sacrifice, etc. Love has many aspects: we must remember that and make sure we cultivate all aspects of Love.

We can develop “cordial” love in two ways:

The first of them can be call exoteric, i.e. natural. For example, through motherhood, raising children, sexual relationships, love for nature, etc. In order to succeed, a person has to learn to do everything not out of his self-interest, but for the sake of others, i.e. not in egoistic manner, but in altruistic one. If one’s love is directed in this manner, one has a chance, instead of getting deeper into the mire of sufferings caused by a growing burden of unsatisfied desires, to advance towards increasing happiness, which is a natural consequence of spiritual growth. In this case the exoteric options of development create opportunities for natural growth of the “organ” of emotional love—the spiritual heart.

When there is an organ—there is its function. The system “organ—its function” can develop thorough regular functioning of the organ, or it can be developed by means of direct training of the organ. The most illustrative example is our muscles. One can make one’s body strong by performing physical work. In this case one develops organs (one’s muscles) through letting them function—as a result, the entire system becomes more efficient. But one do another thing—go to gym and work out in order to “pump up” one’s

muscles by lifting weights—this may seem to be a rather dumb activity, which brings no evident economic benefit. But one’s muscles become stronger as a result. And after that they can be used in order to perform useful work for the other people’s benefit. This is an example that explains the meaning and the essence of esoteric, i.e. in this context—“artificial”, “unnatural” approach to development of the “organ—its function” system.

This is the approach used by spiritual schools in their activity aimed at spiritual development of a person, that consists in the usage of “artificial” methods of development of psychic “organs”.

In esoteric spiritual practice, among such organs the primary importance must be given to the “organ” of emotional love—the anahata chakra. Exercises for development of the spiritual heart and its function are the fundamental ones on the religious Path, on the Path to God, to one’s own happiness.

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Passing from rajas on to sattva, man enters the world of tenderness, bliss, and peace. But peace does not mean laziness and idleness. Peace has to do with intensive spiritual doing in the state of inner silence—“hesychea”.

The word “hesychasm” originates from the Greek “hesychea”—“inner silence”. No spiritual work at advanced stages is possible unless one has acquired mastery of hesychea. Only when we have stopped boiling inside from various anxieties and emotions, when we have eliminated internal dialogues and monologues, when we have learned to refrain from “shooting out” with the “tentacles” of our senses—indriyas—at objects of material plane, when we have learned to live without a TV or radio set being permanently turned on, without ceaseless chatting with other people “about anything”—just for the sake of the chatting,—it is only then that the real religious practice can become possible for us to perform. In order to actually direct one’s look—the look of consciousness—in the direction of God, in order to strive towards the Mergence with Him, we have to acquire inner peace first.

There are various techniques for attainment of inner peace. One can start with doing hatha-yoga exercises, Chinese dynamic gymnastics Tai Chi Chuan, or practicing similar systems. But radical solution of this problem can come only through shifting the concentration of consciousness from the head to anahata, followed by expanding the spiritual heart beyond the body in the subtle spatial dimensions.

We know from history that Greeco-Slavic mystics (Hesychasts) were doing something like this. I am talking about the technique, known as “The Jesus prayer”.

Let us look: who was Jesus for the early Christians? He was their Savior. In what sense, how should we understand this word—“Savior”? It is not only because the name Jesus is translated as “Savior”. Jews had many Jesuses, but only One of them was known as the Savior. Jesus Christ was the Savior, because He gave His saving Teaching to people. He gave them ethical Teaching, by following which people could be saved from suffering both now and after the death of the body, get closer to Perfection, to the happiness of cognizing God-the-Father, to the Mergence with Him. Jesus brought a Teaching, which was principally new for that region of Earth—The Teaching about saving power of Love, that declared that it is Love that saves us from suffering and degradation in spiritual darkness.

But various myths sprang up immediately that Jesus was “descending” not only into earthly hell (i.e. to the crowds of sinners here, on Earth), but also in the hell of the “nether world”, and that He took all its inhabitants out of it, that He delivered all Christians from

all their sins in advance—with His Death of the Cross, etc. Everyone interprets the same event in their own way, according to the level of their intellectual and ethical development. If one is intellectually mature, one is capable of adequate understanding of a teaching and applying it in one's life in order to become better. But other people make an idol out of any spiritual leader right away and start praying "to him", asking and demanding material welfare for themselves... Instead of practicing his teaching.

But, be that as it may, historical facts say the following. When persecutions of Christians began in the Roman Empire and authorities began to massively crucify Christians along the roads—Christians started to give themselves up to be crucified so as to become similar to their Teacher at least in this!..

The name of Jesus Christ is sacred—as it has been and it will be. For all developed people it is a synonym of Love. Jesus not only preached Love and did the deeds of Love, be it caressing a child or working wonders, but He also was deliberately going towards His Death on the Cross for three years, knowing that it is this kind of destiny was made ready for Him if He would be fulfilling His Mission on Earth. He sacrificed Himself for those whom He loved—for people, for us.

The image and the name of Jesus invoked a sincere gratitude, compassion, and admiration in His true followers. His image and name were associated with the concept of Love itself.

So, the technique emerged that consisted in pronouncing the name of Jesus in one's anahata, using it as a mantra.

In Orthodoxy there is an acathistus called "To Jesus, the Sweetest". "The Sweetest"—in the old Slavic meaning of this word, as "the most beloved one". Let us address Jesus:

"Jesus—the Sweetest! Jesus—the most Beloved! Come to me! I love You! Help, me, oh Lord, to know You, to know your Love! Help me, oh Lord! Help me to become better! Help me to learn to love like You love!"

Hesychasts would repeat this appeal to Jesus, first in their "mind"—for a very long time, dedicating their entire time to this. (In Hindu tradition this technique is called "japa". It prevents one's attention from getting distracted to one's own "earthly" problems and contributes to stopping the wandering of indriyas, in particular). If this method was practiced with due emotional mood, with time (sometimes, after years) this prayer, as Hesychasts were saying, would "descend into the heart": when the emotion of love for Jesus was reaching its peak, the concentration of consciousness of the seeker would shift to anahata.

From this moment on, the whole world was different for that person. It was as if the person started seeing everything through the "rose-colored glasses": it was not any longer a hostile and frightening world, against which one had to fight and which one had to fear, but the world full of harmony and love. This person would become a true torch of Love, producing the corresponding emotional-bioenergetic field around himself. The attitude of other being towards him dramatically changes: they respond to love with love. These are facts, which we have observed numerous times: relationships in families, at the workplace, in a communal flat change; children are attracted to such people, while adults seek their company just because it feels good to be around them... Such a person becomes a source of auspicious bioenergetic field—and the attitude towards him changes whether people understand anything in bioenergetics or in religion or not. To love almost all people (except a certain category of them) respond also with love.

University students, who attended the groups that I was conducting, were asking me how they could use this at the exams. I recommended that they looked at the examiner from anahata during the exam. Later, after the exam, they were recalling, laughing, how

the examiner had been answering for them himself and gave them the highest mark. Why did it happen? One has to understand the examiner as well! It is not easy for him to conduct examination when every next student who comes to him adds the next portion of his anxiety, exhaustion, and other negative emotions! The examiner grows exhausted in this stressful atmosphere—and suddenly a person comes to him, with whom he... feels good! How can he offend such a person by giving him anything less than the highest mark?..

There are different methods of working with anahata. In the early 80's, when we were just beginning our activity during dominance of man-hating ideology of Communist Party, when no one was allowed to talk about God—we taught people how to work with anahata, and the effect was wonderful: people would transform, they started to search for religious books, accepted Christian baptism by the whole groups...

Even anahatas of stubborn atheists would “open up”, but in their case, the effect could not be lasting, of course. For example, I knew a psychologist who considered himself a “fighter” with other people’s vices. He would “crush” their vices in a fierce and violent manner; when he was leaving the place, people would hope they would never see him again. But he believed that it was the task of a true psychologist... I tried to teach him to work with anahata. He obtained the effect—and was staggered by the fact that he suddenly experienced love for people, whom he had hated and despised before. His surprise was so immense, that he even woke me up in the middle of the night, came over to my place, told me how it had happened. This had astounded him!

But what happened next? He played with this wonderful method for some time as a psychological game—and then reverted to his previous state: his outlook and aspirations remained the same, he even became a member of the Communist Party—right before it collapsed. The following intellectual resolution must form first: “I want to become better, I know that in order to do it I have to learn to love”. Only in this case will the methods of esoteric psychology be of help. Only then these exercises become an integral step of big ladder of the spiritual ascent.

Now, let us invite Jesus into our “spiritual hearts”. Let us sit straight, holding the back in the upright position. Feel the skin a bit beneath shoulder-blades... Imagine that your head is behind the shoulder-blades... Look from behind the back into your chest... Imagine that your head is in anahata, that you are inside it yourself... Let us kindle a fire of Love in there: let this appeal shine with golden light:

“Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God! Have mercy on me, the sinner!”.
“Jesus! Jesus Christ, Son of God! Have mercy on me! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!...”

Let us repeat this appeal mentally or out loud so that this fire gets brighter, so that we feel the presence of Jesus in our hearts, the presence of His Sweet Love... Look at the world surrounding us from our anahatas with the eyes of Jesus, eyes full of Love... Jesus!...

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