

**Trilogy 'Lessons of Master G'. Book I**

# **Follow Me**

**Konstantin Serebrov**



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### *Illustration 1. Follow Me (Cover image)*

*A Master-chemist, which is indicated by the monk's habit and a book, the symbol of Tradition, in his hand, meets on his journey a spiritual seeker, an amateur-chemist, who at his own risk tries to transform his Materia Prima. Materia Prima is symbolized by the ore hill, on which the amateur-chemist stands, and wherein his masculine and feminine origins are concealed. With the help of fire he tries to smelt these origins out of the ore. The amateur-chemist holds in his hand a wand, symbol of will power.*

*The Master-chemist points out to the amateur that the fire which he uses is not the heavenly fire, the principal power in the Art of Alchemy, but an earthly one, and that the amateur lacks spiritual knowledge. Because of this the alchemical reaction, which the amateur tries to launch, that is the smelting of the origins, purifying them and alloying them in order to obtain the androgenic substance Rebis, will not have a correct outcome. The Master-chemist invites the amateur-chemist to study the traditional alchemical Art and thus obtain in abundance alchemical, inner gold. Obtained gold means in symbolism of alchemy that the Holy Spirit can now abide in the purified and elevated heart of the alchemist.*

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## **THE AUTHOR'S FOREWORD**

The concept of inner development has always attracted me. Since my early childhood I have wanted to plunge into the mystery of our existence, to look behind so to say an unseen curtain which limits our perception. The majority of people do not believe that there is mystery behind the visible world. Therefore I could discuss these matters and my experiences with just a few friends who just like me had more questions than answers.

I once met a person who pointed out to me a very unusual spiritual Path to which my heart felt irresistibly attracted. However it took me a year to put aside my old views and intentions and leave behind my old life and follow him on his continuous journey. The adventures and new experiences and the growth of my being were necessary in order to accept an incomprehensible teaching that this man has been carrying in his heart. The best definition of this teaching could be in my opinion 'Russian Christian Hermeticism', and its main practice was spiritual alchemy. However it did not seem to me appropriate to write another condensed and incomprehensible alchemical treatise and I just described it all as it happened.

Finally, I should like to express my gratitude to my friends Gouri and Maria for their help in writing this book. They did a great job of preparing and editing the materials for this book and Gouri, in addition to it, has enriched the text with many details which had almost disappeared from my memory.

Konstantin Serebrov,  
Moscow, January 2001

## CHAPTER 1. THE MEETING WITH A MYSTERIOUS MAN

From my early childhood I felt the presence of another reality. I almost felt it at the tips of my fingers and I was getting into it spontaneously in my dreams at night as well as waking. I was born on the Caucasus in a small resort town high in the mountains and I lived there until I was seventeen. At the age of twelve I became acquainted with my first spiritual mentor who could clarify my astral travels to me. He taught me a meditation technique and the breathing technique of Kriya yoga. However several years after I moved to Kishinev<sup>1</sup> my meditations and Kriya breathing exercises no longer gave me inspiration. I continued doing them, because of my innate stubbornness, for hours, sitting in the pantry of my flat which I had transformed in a secret meditation cell. On the very first day of my meditation there I hung on the wall in front of me a small photo of the great Teacher of Kriya Sri Yukteswar.

His imperturbable gaze gave me support in my generally cheerless life, preventing me from turning into a fussy agnostic. At that time I was a leader of a small group of computer programmers at Kishinev University and thus I could lead a relatively secluded life, without being burdened with problems of everyday life. But still, despite all my efforts, I did not come any closer to the Spirit. The meditations did not give me the result that I longed for, and the search for esoteric knowledge had become a fruitless collecting of rare treatises. Studying them carried me into the world of dreams, but it always ended with just another bitter disappointment and several dry mental schemes in my head.

With a long and solitary search of several years behind me, I began to wonder where I could find someone who would be able to guide me through this shroud of perception.

The carefree life in the world behind my window was still beckoning and enticed me with the silver lace of its many pleasures.

One fine summer night, when I had been contemplating the photo of Sri Yukteswar I felt suddenly as if he were talking to me.



*Illustration 2. The Call of the higher Worlds*

*This engraving represents the heavenly angels who descend from their summits on earth, in order to rouse the sleeping disciple. It is time for him to wake up and look at the Lord and climb the ladder towards the heavenly spheres.*

'If you really want to discover the mystery of yourself, then hurry up and go to Odessa<sup>2</sup>, to your friend. You will find there what you are since so long looking for. You have only three days left.' Yukteswar's eyes on the photo had become alive, as if confirming the message I just heard.

'Which friend of mine in particular?' I asked him in my thoughts. 'I have lots of friends there...'

But the sensation of his presence was gone and the photo looked out as usually.

I continued to focus my attention on it for a while but the invisible door remained closed. I stopped my attempt and went to sleep.

When I woke up the morning sun shined happily on me. I sprang to my feet and opened the window wide. The tomtit twittered on the branch of the poplar tree. I remembered the words of Sri Yukteswar that he said to me this night and a sort of light electric current flowed through me.

I got dressed in a hurry and went outside. The warm rays of the morning sun played on the green leaves of the trees and on the brown tiles of the roofs. Strolling down the street I was thinking about Jukteswar's advice. The desire to follow it grew stronger. 'Even if this vision is just a play of my sub-consciousness, I can lose nothing by making a small trip to Odessa,' I thought. 'As a last resort it might even have a positive outcome: a holiday by the sea and a pleasant visit to my old friends. But if it was really advice of Sri Jukteswar then I have a golden chance.' I phoned from the telephone booth to my deputy and told him that I was going underground for three days and that he must take care of current issues by himself. He received regularly such phone calls from me and I knew that I needn't bother about my laboratory.

I could reach Odessa, which was spread lazily on the shore of the Black Sea before noon. I went to the railway station, bought a ticket and after settling myself on the wooden bank of an old carriage, opened the book of Steiner *How to Know Higher Worlds*. The train pulled out and a free-and-easy Gipsy woman of about 50 years old in a colourful dress arrogantly entered the carriage, and after quickly glancing over the passengers came up to me.

I disliked Gipsy women and their natural feel for magic. She glanced at me spitefully and said in a cheeky voice: 'Give a rouble to a poor woman and she will tell your fortune.'

I did not trust these rogues; they used the most cunning ways to get money out of one's pocket. However, giving in to her I put one rou-

ble in her dark palm. She took hold of my hand firmly: 'Your fate will change,' she said, 'and the far road ahead will open up to you, walk it and don't look back. Forget the past and don't get stuck in the future. And if you give me some more money, I will tell you more.' 'I have nothing left,' I said and turned my empty pockets inside out. She flapped her colourful skirt in my face, spat on the floor and disappeared from my view to the next carriage. 'What a despicable woman,' I thought, with an intense feeling of disgust.

Three hours later I found myself walking the pavements of Odessa towards Babel Street, where my old friend George lived. He was an unusual person. His flat was always filled with the local mystics and mystics from all over the country: hermits, followers of Rad-jneesh, Aurobindo, Castaneda and other spiritual teachers. I knew that George sometimes became so tired of his guests that he did not even bother to answer the doorbell, or escaped through the back window. The guests knew this simple trick of him and merely waited for an hour or so for his inevitable comeback. George also sometimes made the decision to start a 'new life'. It was always one and the same start: he would keep the doors of his flat shut and let nobody in while he meditated and fasted for three or four days, hoping to come nearer to God. However when he felt that his strength was restored somehow, he would immediately throw himself in the same old maelstrom again.

The summer heat clung to the streets and the light breeze stirred the leaves of the huge chestnuts on the Primorski Boulevard. I walked onto the small cosy patio with a feeling of joy and looked around. George's large red cat sat next to the front steps and watched me guardedly. I walked up the dark stairs with the worn steps to the gallery on the first floor of the house and glanced into the window and saw a rather unusual sight.

The esoterics of Odessa, who were acquaintances of mine, were sitting behind a long table, and before each of them stood a chessboard. They were attentively studying complicated situations, smoking long cigars while their eyes glistened unnaturally. A well-built man with grey curls stood in front of the table with his back to me. He seemed to radiate the tranquillity of a sage, which was in stark contrast to the tense smoke-filled atmosphere of the room. I heard him saying: 'Check'. The red cat climbed onto the window-sill and purred with pleasure. 'Monsieur, checkmate to you,' said the voice of the stranger again and I thought to myself that I had never heard a self-confident citizen of Odessa utter such defeat. The door

of the George's apartment was almost always open and I entered the room without knocking.

'At last you have also come to visit us,' said George. Wearing a light blouse and worn jeans he lay sprawled in the old armchair. He got to his feet lazily while his light coloured eyes looked at me with curiosity.

'If you are still looking for someone to direct you to the Path, then consider yourself lucky because he is here.'

'And what about yourself?' I said astonished.

'Let's see first what will come out of you,' said George and led me to the stranger.

The guest stood out against a background of relaxed Odessa inhabitants dressed in jeans and colourful T-shirts, because in contrast his style was formal: he wore an elegant light shirt and dark tailor-made trousers. His upright posture was dignified and I realised that his face with its refined and noble features and friendly glance had the look of a noble medieval knight.

'Let me introduce to you Kasyan, a mystic from Moldavia, who promises very well, said George grinning slightly. The stranger looked at me and I felt that nothing was hidden from him. 'Just call me G,' he said and offered me a hand. His handshake was firm and warm. He returned to the table with the chessboards. I picked up a 'samizdat<sup>3</sup> novelty from George's collection and I took a seat on a bench in the corner, glancing through the book and at the same time watching the simultaneous chess contest.

I spent several hours there. At the chess table those who lost the game had been replaced by new competitors while G remained invincible. The losers however didn't leave: they stood around G, telling him some stories in turn or all together, and with great enthusiasm. Judging by some phrases that reached me, I could figure out that these were quite intimate details of their mystical experience. Knowing these people well, and their usual ironical way of treating each other and their scepticism, I couldn't understand how G could gain their favour to such an extent. George was however tensed and his troubled eyes were anxious.

When late in the afternoon the contest came to an end G said: 'I'm going to have a stroll on the beach. Who wants to join me?'

A short silence followed.

'I gladly will join you,' I responded quickly.

I walked in silence for a while, looking for words to put my most important question properly, and after summoning up the courage,

asked him: 'I've been trying for a long time to understand what the highest Self is? Do you perhaps know how I could come into contact with it?'

'It seems to me,' he answered looking at me, 'that you are confident that you can have access to the place behind the Mirror while still in your raw undeveloped state.'

'What exactly do you mean?' I asked listening intently.

'You will never reach the highest Self if you remain the same as you are now,' he declared while his eyes passionlessly studied my reaction.

'What is that unsurpassable barrier you have found in me?' I asked in astonishment.

'The highest worlds are no place for undeveloped people,' he said. 'Speaking in the terms of Alchemy you are spiritually a neophyte. You can be compared with untreated ore, where the Materia Prima is hidden. The alchemical engravings show the Materia Prima as Uroboros or the mighty Dragon. The Brimstone, or your essence, and the Quicksilver, your soul, are present in the Dragon in a potential form. It is necessary in the first phase of the alchemical Work to smelt from Uroboros those Brimstone and Quicksilver and purify them thoroughly. In fact Uroboros will be smelted partly and from it Brimstone and Quicksilver are extracted. When they appear in a state of the required grade of purity then it is possible to begin the second phase of the Work. It implies placing your stable male origin, which has spiritual aspirations, and your female volatile origin, into the alchemical egg and sealing the egg with the Seal of Hermes. It is then put into an alchemical furnace, which is called atanor, and is heated by a moderate yet constant fire for about several years. After a long process of transmutation this mixture will result in a matter called Rebis, which is a heavenly androgenic substance that has qualities of both Brimstone and Quicksilver.'

'Wait, I cannot take it all in anymore!'

'What can possibly be unclear about my explanation?' he asked surprised. 'The androgenic substance is by nature unstable and might evaporate quickly under the pressure of life. That is why it should remain in the sealed alchemical egg under vigilant guard. However, if through negative doings the androgenic substance escapes out of the vessel and, if you would allow yourself to express yourself negatively, you will lose this substance and will thus have to start the whole process all over again. But, if by God's mercy, everything goes smoothly, then the third phase of the Great Work can be started.'



*Illustration 3. Uroboros in the Fire*

*The engraving represents Uroboros, who is immersed in the alchemical fire. Materia Prima is symbolized by the Dragon which contains the power of man. Anyone who walks the Path of Perfection must undergo an alchemical transformation. In the first phase an alchemist will try to extract from the Dragon, which is placed into Atanor the Brimstone – a fiery male ingredient, and Quicksilver – a volatile and moist female ingredient. The experienced Master who understands the process of obtaining the Philosopher’s Stone, should watch the changes which take place.*

The matter Rebis must undergo further transmutation for another several years. Only then can the Philosopher’s Stone be obtained from it or, using the terms you are familiar with, you will find your Highest Self.’

Right then something hit my head. G bowed and picked up a chestnut from the pavement in its rough green shell with furry long spines.

'I'm sure he is going to tell me now that the fall of this chestnut is a sign that my Uroboros needs to be put on a trial of fire,' I thought. 'I think that the chestnut unexpectedly overheard our conversation and has decided to remind someone of his ignorance!' said G.

'His way of putting things is rather sophisticated,' I thought and confessed one of my deep problems:

'I have reached a deadlock and the meditations and breathing techniques which I practised have not given me the desired results.'

'Only when you are completely transformed will you reach the highest worlds,' said G.

'What do you mean by 'being transformed'? I asked. 'I see nothing in myself that is so awful that it needs to be transformed.'

'What I mean,' smiled G, 'is that you lack an inner culture.'

'I graduated from university. I am a mathematician and chief of a laboratory,' I said offended. The conversation with this man began to wound me to the quick.

'With all this I don't think that you studied yourself.'

Suddenly we came across a smart looking girl who sold grapes on the street. G smiled at her and said: 'Do you think that this young man looks like a mathematician?' She glanced at me quickly and said with an affected shyness: 'I hope I will be forgiven if I say that he looks more like a wood-goblin!'

I turned scarlet with embarrassment while she exploded with laughter. It seemed that G was extremely pleased with her answer which made me indignant. 'How this market girl could possibly have even in the least a correct estimation of me!' I exclaimed.

G paid no attention to me and turned once more to the girl:

'Do you know the children's song about the chicken?'

The chicken was baked; the chicken was boiled  
The chicken went outside for a walk  
He was arrested; and he was caught,  
And was ordered to show his passport

The girl sang for a while in a clear voice and looked at me spitefully. 'It is of course far more entertaining to mock customers than to sell grapes,' I grumbled, feeling hurt by this vaudeville-like exchange of remarks at my account. G did not however let me continue, having asked the girl:

'Who does my companion remind you of?'

'Surely a raw chicken,' she said and burst out laughing.

I was certainly not expecting a street salesgirl to assist G to such an extent, but at the same time it seemed ridiculous to me that they were in some sort of collaboration. G smiled at the young elfin and said:

'Well, Kasyan, you should buy several kilograms of grapes from this nice girl, in return for her help in this exercise of your self-observation.'

'I want this bunch, the small one,' I said to the girl, pretending to smile politely.

We soon arrived at the beach and after leaving our belongings on the beach, plunged into the cool waves. A white and lonely sail was to be seen in the distance and G swam from the shore towards the distant horizon. I followed him. We swam in deep water for more than half of an hour. The seashore was far behind us in the distance, and it was then that I put a tricky question to him, the right answer to which would drive away my doubts about G:

'What does a man meet, when he reaches the state of super consciousness?'

G had turned to me with his firm look and answered:

'When a man comes into contact with the highest Self, he sees the senselessness of the earthly life which serves the realisation of the family tree programmes. He sees clearly at that moment, that by living only in the interests of the physical self, he lives his life as if he were asleep. He sees that all people are sleeping and their sleep is so deep it's impossible to explain to them, let alone to let them experience it. Only very few are able to wake from the dream of maya and discover their Divine origin, their highest Self. The dream of maya is so strong that it totally dissolves the longing for the highest worlds.'

I recognized in the atmosphere of G's words the glimpses of states of superconsciousness that I experienced in my youth and with my entire being I felt that he wasn't quoting from one or other guru but that G spoke from his experience. I had no doubts anymore that G was that very person about whom Sri Yukteswar told me yesterday night and I dived into the deep from joy. The shimmering of the cool water has calmed me down. When we were exhausted and returned to our belongings, I discovered that the bag with grapes had disappeared.

'Do not worry,' said G, 'it is a sacrifice to the spirits!'

'More probably to petty thieves,' I said feeling vexed.

‘They are also spirits incarnated in bodies; only they are not aware of it,’ commented G.

We soon returned to George’s apartment, which had by now been abandoned by the visitors; only the stubs of cigars in the plates and on the floor reminded of them. The door of the second room opened and a graceful lady appeared with golden hair reaching down to her shoulders. Her greenish eyes were glistening with the brilliance of another world and her figure reminded me of the statuette of a Chinese princess which stood on my desk in my room. Her step was light and noiseless and there seemed to be a sort of silver shimmering around her waist. After gently sinking into the chair she lit up a cigarette and watched the smoke attentively. I suddenly realised that she was in the state of inner bliss that I had experienced now and then in my deep meditations. Her eyes shone mysteriously like two emeralds.

‘May I introduce to you a new acquaintance of mine,’ G said to her. ‘This is Kasyan, a mystic from Kishinev.’

‘Leena,’ she said casting a quick, piercing look at me.

George allowed me to settle myself in the kitchen for a night and gave me a mattress and a blanket.

That night I was lucky enough to have an unusual dream. I was in a garden with exotic plants and strolled amongst magnificent flowerbeds. I had a desire to pick a red carnation with a long stalk, and had already stretched out my hand, when I suddenly heard: ‘Hands off, stranger, I forbid you to pick the flowers in this garden.’ I turned around and saw a fairy. She was amazingly beautiful, with golden hair flowing down to the shoulders, but her greenish eyes looked sharp and hostile. She looked familiar to me. She waved her hand and all the flowers turned into elves. Then she majestically turned around and walked towards the forest, escorted by her retinue. The meadow was deserted. I wanted to follow her but she turned back and stopped me dead with her icy look. Since then I have thought of G’s lady as a fairy – the queen of elves in a magical garden.

The next day I tried to tell her about the meeting in the dream, but I couldn’t say more than a couple of words having met her gaze, which instantaneously became weary and indifferent. It was raining outside and the trees, tired from the summer heat, gladly gave their weakened branches to the running water. I had just returned from the supermarket, loaded with the bags of different provisions, and after leaving them in the kitchen I entered the room. G had settled himself cosily in the armchair and was reading the ‘Philosophy

of Freedom' by Berdyaev<sup>4</sup>. I circled around him several times and finally decided to interrupt him by putting another question: 'As you said that I have to study myself, could you then please give me a clue as to how to start self-investigation.'

'Have you already overcome your scepticism?' he asked amazed.

'I have no scepticism in me,' I said, 'I always aspire towards my Highest Self.'

'Your answer made clear that you never studied yourself properly indeed. Have you ever noticed that many different 'selves' live in you?'

'I have up till now always considered myself quite integral,' I answered suddenly feeling uncertain.

'Look at this tree standing so big in the yard. You are the trunk and the branches of the tree, while its leaves are comparable to your different selves. Each self has its own wish which differs from the wishes of the others. You will find your integrity only after you have united them all.'

'Are you saying that I should make one huge leaf out of all these leaves?' I joked. G just looked strangely into my eyes. His look stirred me and I felt as if hundreds of small entities, which had been dormant at the bottom of my soul, woke up. Dozens of contradictory wishes came bubbling up in me, like the urgent desire to get acquainted with some pretty girl and embark on an incredible love affair; squander all the money left in the restaurant, or just run away anywhere and keep a low profile. 'Keep away from this ridiculous quest for Enlightenment!' a nasal voice shouted in me. And somewhere deep inside me a timid whisper of a small self could be heard, which accepted G's words and wanted to undergo the necessary transformation. I started to run about the flat as if I had been stung by something and noticed suddenly that G watched my bewilderment with obvious interest. His cool gaze stunned me. I rushed out of the flat. A powerful gust of wind hit me in the face with rain, and driven by the chaos I rushed around at random until all my strength had vanished. I saw a huge acacia not far away from me and I stood under its crown and leaned against its trunk and the tree consoled me in a motherly way, and the gentle noise of the branches quietened my different 'selves'. The cold humidity made my consciousness clearer and I returned to the flat where I found George sitting alone with the bottle of wine. When he saw me he took a large gulp from the bottle and said gloomily: 'All the money has been squandered on drink. In addition, the situation has

become so tense that I will be forced to keep the doors of my house shut for guests and I will have to go underground deeply. Thank you for having done the shopping but I have to ask you to leave my apartment. Please do not feel offended. And don't forget to take your Master with you.

'It would be a pleasure for me to have G and his companion as guests', I said happily.

'Well,' he said, 'in this case you may leave tomorrow already', and his look became glassy. I left the stuffy room and went out again. I roamed the empty streets and tried to realize what had happened to me. Having put together all the facts I became firmly convinced that G is that very person who can show me the way to the Highest Self.

I waited for their return and asked him cautiously: 'May I invite you and your companion to Kishinev? I will help you to become acquainted with local esotericists and wine in Moldavia is excellent.'

'I'll discuss it with Leena,' he said and he went to their room.

For a couple of hours I lay awake on my mattress in George's kitchen. With all my heart I wanted that G and Leena would stay at my place for a while.

## CHAPTER 2. THE CRYPTIC MAP OF THE PATH

Next morning G told me that they accepted my invitation.

'We should leave quickly then,' I said. 'George has decided again to start a new life and he wants to get rid of all the guests as soon as possible.'

After packing our belongings the three of us left for the railway station and bought train tickets to Kishinev. I put our bags under the wooden seats and wanted to take a nap for an hour or so, when G suggested that we play chess. After five minutes I realized that there was no chance of me ever winning the game. My sleepiness disappeared in a jiffy and when G checkmated me so effortlessly I was completely confused. Leena, after seeing that I had lost, smiled sympathetically. I asked G my next important question: 'How should I see the spiritual Path?'

'Your Path, which is of an infinite length, starts with a bad chess game,' he said and burst out laughing. 'According to an ancient custom, samurai, before their life and death combat, played a game of Go, and the one who won the game won the combat as well. During the game a duel of intentions takes place and the one whose intention is stronger is the winner.'

'Why do you call our combat 'mortal'? I asked feeling threatened. 'Because it is exactly how the struggle against your Uroboros will be,' G answered looking intently at me.

I winced because of his intonation which was like a spear piercing something in my belly.

Leena seemed bored and she sat in her light summer dress beside the window with her eyes closed. Her loose golden hair fell on her naked shoulders.

'In which part of Kishinev do you live?' she suddenly asked curiously.

'I have a big three room apartment, not in a very pleasant area, but close to the railway station. Every day the rumble of the trains passing by reminds me of the Path. The only problem is that this part of the city is situated in a hollow, and at night the muddy grey fog which is filled with the heavy atmosphere of the workers, accululates there. When I wake up in the morning and breathe the air poisoned by negative emotions I become as dull as a piece of glass.'

'Why did you choose such an idiotic area then?' asked Leena in amazement.

'It was actually the area that picked Kasyan,' commented G.

Several hours later our train approached the railway station of Kishinev where crowds of people were languishing under the scorching sun. We took a cab and soon came to the five storied-flat building where I lived. While G and Leena were settling in the small room I prepared some tea. Leena wanted to rest from the journey and she went back to their room.

'Would you like to look at my place of meditation?' I asked G and he nodded. I took him into my secret cell. G glanced at a portrait of Babaji and Sri Jukteswar's photo and said:

'I see that you are quite comfortable here.'

'That's true,' I said, 'I meditate here for hours almost every day.'

'What have you achieved?'

'Sometimes I was able to enter into the state of satori. Lately, however, my meditations have been unsuccessful and this has been the case for several years. I have lost my way in this labyrinth and I almost have lost my courage.'

'The way out is on a completely different plane,' said G. 'You struggled on by yourself, trying to penetrate the highest spheres through the backdoor. However, even if you had succeeded to enter and to stay there for a while, you will not be able to hold your ground there. It's exactly the same with a stable-boy who tries to join the high society. He may of course get a glimpse of such a splendid life, but no more than that. You must learn how to enter the highest worlds by the front door. If you succeed then you will be invited to take by rights a worthy place there.'

'Why do you see my meditations as a back-door? Is it not true that all the esoteric teachings promise that through meditation full Enlightenment will be achieved?'

'It's certainly true that in order to enter the highest worlds it's necessary to master both outward and inward culture. That is why you need to understand the earthly culture very well and only then should you try to reach for the heavens,' he said.

I became rather confused by what he was saying and said irritated:

'I really would like to believe you, but never in my life have I met a cultured person who is also connected to the highest worlds.'

'Did you not know,' he said, 'that the building of our earthly civilisation was inspired by the highest spheres?'