

Table of Contents

I The Existent, or the Alternative

The Existent.....	5
Seeing Yourself in Others.....	12
Death During Life?.....	19
The Alternative.....	27

II The Mystery of Thinking

Between Two Forces.....	38
Why Can't We Think for Ourselves?.....	48

III The Foundation of Life

Why Do We Tire?.....	52
The True Meaning of Being Helpful.....	55
You Aren't Looking for Love, but Someone to Share It With.....	59
Mass Production as an Indicator of the Lack of Love.....	66

IV The Transition

The Objective as well as the Flow of Life.....	69
Cooperation or Competition.....	73
Being the Centricity of Force.....	80
The Clever Moving of Energy.....	82
The Invisible Assistants.....	85
The Departure.....	96

The Existent

All answers and questions have always existed. Two ends just need to be connected. And that is our purpose as human beings.

Sometimes, it is necessary to experience an adventure, to comprehend the adventure itself. That's what happened to me a few years ago, when I spent a week in a place known as Village of the Sun. Although, right after coming back from there nothing had happened to me, life, later, had a whole series of surprises in store for me. I might have a chance to chat about these occurrences some other time. That Friday, when my adventure began, I wouldn't have been able to imagine anything like that even in my wildest dreams.

Friday was my favourite day. Probably because it already had the whiff of the coming weekend, the whiff of freedom. And so what, if the weekend lasted only two days? Better than nothing! The weekend, for me, was like a small islet in the middle of a stormy sea, where I could put to shore for some time, build a bonfire, dance, and then, again jump into my boat, and go back out to sea. To resume, teeth clenched, the eternal race against the waves and the other boatmen.

Especially enjoyable were Friday afternoons, when things had, more-or-less, been straightened out, there was a slight freedom-tremor in the stomach, and you finished your tasks. You took your coffee or hot chocolate, sipped it a bit, chatted with your colleagues in the corner of the kitchenette, filled time with various trivial activities, and when the time was ripe, scurried out of the office, to submerge yourself into the chaos of traffic. I noticed that Friday's departure from work was always many times more energetic than on other days. It was as if some force was drawing me away from the office. But, on the other hand, the arrivals on Mondays were the total opposite of the week's last working day. Something held me back, insinuating that, for God's sake, whatever you do, don't go to work now.

When I started to contemplate all this, I came to the realization that I'm travelling in an eternal circle, running like a squirrel in an exercise wheel – 11 months of work and a month of vacation, and then, the same thing all over again. Just the thought of it weighed me down, to no end.

I often asked myself if life had to be just an endless commitment, without there being any possible alternative. I started wondering, if this was what was known as so-called normal life, what everyone seemed to be striving for, or, if there was, somewhere, some kind of an alternative that I wasn't aware of yet. At any rate, I felt as if I was on a merry-go-round that's spinning at full speed, and from which I just can't jump off. Even the thought that I'll have to ride on this merry-go-round for 30-40 years straight, made my hair stand on end. Do I really want to do this for all those years?! No, and once again no, pounded through my head!

My friend had once told me that, actually, life doesn't have to always follow the same enforced circle. That things can also be done otherwise.

I'd always, up until now, responded to My Friend that, after all, it's not possible to do things in any other manner. Everyone lives like this, so this must be a normal life.

“Yes, precisely, normal. This is the norm, the expected behaviour. That you would be predictable and act in an expected manner. And, a lot of work has gone into preparing you, so that you would behave like this. Let's say, about 20 years of brainwashing. Beginning at the moment when you start to comprehend human speech, the metamorphosis begins. You, as a creative subject, gradually, become an object. You're transformed into an implement. This has become rooted so deeply, that

it's no longer realized. Think about how we've acquired our knowledge up until now. We go to school, and we're told how things function in the world. What's possible and impossible. We're given a thorough overview of how man has developed from the ape. We study history that doesn't go back further than 10,000 years before Christ. Besides, we're informed that two plus two is four, and nothing else. But think, if we'd been told that two plus two could, actually, also be five? I'm just starting to comprehend how stuck in a "box" we are with our thinking," My Friend told me once.

At the time, I didn't comprehend My helpful Friend, and I, obviously, didn't even, especially, want to. Everything that he said remained, somehow, distant and incomprehensible for me. And obviously, I wasn't, then, ready to accept all that. All that I was able to say to him at that time, was to express my suspicion that he had, obviously, read too many weird books of all kinds, which, unfortunately, didn't have much to do with real life. He offered them to me, to read, but I thought it better to politely refuse, and, prudently, kept my distance from them. It all seemed to be the kind of irrelevant stuff upon which it was pointless to devote your valuable and tangible time.

At the same time, there was nothing wrong with my life – everything seemed to be in place, and it would have been a sin to complain about anything. This system that promoted a conventionally normal life style was injecting me, also, with the hope that it's possible to achieve happiness even earlier than at the age of 60. You run like a squirrel in an exercise wheel, ever faster and faster. You strive a little bit more, and you'll become happy, already at the age of 55. This seemed to be a much better perspective – I could start enjoying life five years earlier! Imagine that you have a realistic opportunity to go travelling, and that you're even in sufficiently good health to fully enjoy it. You drive through African photo-safari parks, visit the Egyptian pyramids, and enjoy the sights of Rome. But, if someone should inquire, in the Coliseum, why you didn't come there 30 years earlier... You'd have to answer, that then you didn't have the time, since you had to work like crazy. But, that's not what we want. Nevertheless, I kept struggling. And the more I did it, the further away the perspective drifted from me. At the same time though, logically, it should have been doing the opposite. And, so that our life would be even more complete, we are given the opportunity to partake of the supposedly normal life, which encompasses a home mortgage, a car loan, as well as many other do-now-pay-later services. These are also part of the 30-year cycle, since life is supposed to be like this.

At any rate, all of a sudden, the concept of toiling and suffering just didn't seem to be at all humane any more. Instead, I felt that this was some kind of contemporary slavery that was being presented in just a little bit more of a civilized manner. This was what I felt, despite everyone's assertions that this all was quite okay. So, maybe the problem lies in me. Some colleagues said that I just need a change. That I should maybe think about changing my job. One thought that he could detect the signs of burnout. Who knows what it was, but I just didn't want to go on in the same old way.

I wanted to know what should be done, and how, to bring some winds of change into my life. For a moment, I thought that maybe I'm also one of those people who jumps from spot to spot, without being able to stay in one place. Maybe I was also one of those eternal seekers.

I also noticed that a yearning had surfaced in me. Some kind of a tiny and quiet internal voice. The whisper of which was, unfortunately, so timid that, in everyday life, it could barely be heard. Only when that exercise wheel slowed down, could the voice, from time to time, make itself, somewhat, heard. For instance, on the weekends. Especially, if it was supposed to pass restfully. It was, perhaps, particularly because of these confusing feelings that I was finding it very difficult to be with myself. But, concerning this matter, there had recently been a little change. When others preferred to go to a party, then I would rather go jogging in the woods, and spent most of my time reading books. Although I was no stranger to parties, as such. My attitude had always been that if,

then completely, and if not, then not at all. But recently, I hadn't felt at all comfortable at these parties. I no longer fitted into this environment. I couldn't be myself.

I felt that I'd become an actor on life's stage. And acting can, sometimes, be very tiring. This can be verified by those who've personally experienced it.

I was often overwhelmed by a sudden desire to go somewhere, to escape. Although I was unable to find a direct reason for this urge, I was weighed down by this wish to just go, wherever – abroad, somewhere far away. This was the most disturbing thing about the whole business. Sometimes, I just couldn't tolerate the existing reality. But, the belief that it wouldn't be possible, in any way, to flee from yourself, no matter where you went, left me at a standstill.

An irresistible desire to leave this so-called normal life behind me had sprung up in me. But I was unable to determine what this could be replaced with. This all was very strange for me. I was looking for answers, but I couldn't find any. Sometimes I looked under the bed or the sofa, but, should I, perhaps, have looked on top of the cupboard?

And then, on a wintry day, when I happened to be sipping tea with My Friend, in a café, around the time of the winter equinox, he handed me a gift certificate – seven pleasant days in the Village of the Sun.

“Now, what the hell's this?” I enquired.

“This is your spring adventure and belated birthday present. Better late than never,” he responded, smiling.

“Hey, are you kidding, or what? How much money did you waste on this? Besides, I'm always at work. Where do you imagine that I can come up with a week's vacation? I'm firing from the hip every day. For God's sake, I'm a journalist!” I exclaimed.

“Your boss will give you time off. In the summer, instead of four weeks, you'll rest for just three. No big difference. Don't worry about it ahead of time,” he reacted calmly, drinking his tea.

“After you left your job, you've changed quite a bit. What's up? Is everything still hunky-dory at home?” I enquired.

“Oh yeah, I'm happier than ever before. I can even say that my happiness is boundless. Now listen. Be a pal, and accept this gift certificate. I'd be really delighted, if you did,” insisted My Friend, leaning upon the table.

“Hmm, as I can see, this is taking place at the end of May. So, I'll just tell my boss about this unexpected development. He might oblige, and be willing to make some changes in my vacation schedule. Damn, this sure was a surprise, you giving me such a present. But what'll happen if I can't manage to get a week off?”

“Then I'll come and talk to your boss myself,” scoffed My Friend, and took a subsequent sip of tea.

“Well, you're quite an impossible guy!”

Everything went smoothly, the vacation schedule was changed, my boss was sensible about it, and I was happy that I'd accepted the gift certificate from my friend. My internal feeling said that I'd reached the threshold of some kind of a new beginning. That same quiet little voice, which had become stronger, said that to me. It seemed to be a signal indicating that I have to raise my sails and leave the harbour, but no longer for just a small pleasure trip, but for serious sailing on the ocean.

Critical events in life remain etched in memory. And that's the way it was with that memorable day, when I stormed into the most drastic transformation of my life, but, without having the slightest realization of what was actually happening. I took a comment from a source, put it into my

overview story, smoothed the text out a bit, and sent the article off to the editor. With that, the work week was finished. Over and done with. *Finito*.

“So, I won’t be here for all of next week. For the beginning of the week after next, I already have a couple of story ideas germinating. We’ll see what happens meanwhile, but, they’re not at all urgent, so they can wait,” I said to my boss, when I’d shoved my laptop and some necessary papers into my bag.

“If necessary, would you be able to access your e-mails?” he asked.

“I think so. At any rate, I’ll be taking my laptop with me. If nothing else, I can at least be reached by phone. And if the mood should strike me, I might even do a human interest story about it all. A little bit of writing wouldn’t do me any harm.”

My boss gave a friendly smile, and wished me an intriguing adventure. And I scurried from the office. I dove into the traffic jams, since rush hour was at its peak. I’d just squeezed myself in through the bus doors, when, at the very moment that I barely had enough room to breath, My Friend phoned.

“Listen, I’ll drop you off there. Don’t bother with the bus! And we’ll be able to chat a bit too.”

“Great! I’m already on my way home by bus, so I’ll try to force myself off at the next stop. Where’ll we meet? I have to pick some things up at home, and then I’ll be ready to go even to the ends of the earth.”

“Whatever you do, don’t waste time on packing! Actually, I’ve been to the Village of the Sun twice, and both times I didn’t need to use my own clothes. There they supply you with specialized garments,” explained My Friend.

“Specialized garments are generally given to you to wear when you end up in a hospital, a prison, or a loony-bin. So, in the case of this village, what are we dealing with? Some kind of religious nuts’ sanctuary?” I mocked, having made some room for myself in the bus.

“Actually, you’re right. I’ve realized that normal people don’t go there, and those in between, absolutely never.”

“So, let’s meet, in a quarter of an hour, in front of the café where we had lunch the last time. I’ll scurry along. Who knows, I might start liking that village so much that I’ll stay there.”

My Friend just laughed.

At the next stop, I squeezed myself off the bus, onto the street, and took off at a quick pace, to arrive on time, at the agreed upon spot.

“So, how do you feel?” asked My Friend, after I’d settled myself, breathing heavily, into the passenger seat, with a stream of sweat pouring down my backbone.

“To tell you the truth, I’m starting to have serious doubts about this Village of the Sun project. On the phone, I was just blabbering. For some reason, every time I end up on slightly unknown territory, I really start appreciating customary activities and habits. After all, maybe the life that I’m living is just right for me? Actually, I’d like to laze on a beach right now. And, to tell you the truth, there’s nothing wrong with my job either. I shouldn’t be complaining about anything. Nevertheless, I tend to keep doing it, again and again. And then, as you know, I’m not the happiest person, or the most pleasant of conversationalists.”

“Whenever I see you, the first things that come to mind are your bloodshot eyes and your complaining about how life is not to your liking. How everything is you-know-what. Now listen, how long do you plan to keep blasting away without loading? Although it’s true that lately you’ve been somehow calmer, which is a bit surprising. Looking at it logically, I would’ve assumed that your situation would get worse,” my friend was forced to admit.

“I’m afraid that I’m flipping out. Changing, just like you. Seeing you today, and comparing this to what you were a year ago... Well, it’s like day and night. But, be that as it may, one thing’s for sure – I don’t want to be a monkey in a cage, who’s fed bananas by visitors. I’d prefer to, rather, be among the visitors,” I remarked, looking out the window.

We kept moving, slowly, along the car-jammed streets.

“Why do you even think that it’s the monkey who’s in a cage? Maybe it’s the people, imagining that they’re free, who’re actually, without even realizing it, the totally imprisoned ones. Sometimes, everything isn’t the way it seems to be on the surface. Doubt, and being doubtful, are actually good signs. They indicate that you’ve reached the limits of the comfort zone that you’ve created for yourself. It’s like crossing a country’s border, only that sometimes you’re asked for your passport, and another time, to be ready for anything.”

“And do you think that I’m ready?”

My friend shrugged his shoulders.

“You tell me. But I can tell you one thing for sure – the majority of people can’t spend even a day in the company of doubt and uncertainty. They’ll do anything to get back their former feeling of security. They sense fear when confronted with the unknown,” he explained.

“Well, the good thing is that, at least, I don’t have to go to work next week. And if this village really is for loonies, then I’ve just gone from one nuthouse to another. I don’t have much to lose,” I remarked, and stretched myself out, comfortably, in the car seat. So-o-o, a week away from the city. That’s not a bad perspective at all. After all, there’s life elsewhere too!

We drove on, for some time, in silence. We were part of the traffic flow pouring out of the city.

“So, how should I make sense out of this feeling of uncertainty, this doubt? Is it, in any way, comparable to running? At a stadium, you have a track, definite circumstances, and you know the precise distance involved. But, if I should go jogging in the forest instead, the uncertainties are much greater,” I debated, when we had gotten beyond the city limits.

I noticed, as I had many times previously that this internal feeling of anxiety had again left me, as soon as I left the turmoil of the city. It had disappeared, as if excised with a scalpel.

My Friend was silent for a little while, before he answered: “Yes, running at a stadium is a good example. An effective observation. In a forest, we have trees and bushes, the ground is uneven, and so on. But actually, a lot of us spend our whole life, figuratively speaking, in a stadium, doing laps. Once there, people don’t want, or don’t have the guts, to leave any more. As a sports enthusiast, you should know what it means to run a long-distance race at a stadium.”

“I know, I know. First of all, it’s boring. And, at some point, just doing laps becomes damn tedious, and finally, even obnoxious. There’s no doubt that it’s a bit more interesting to run in the forest.”

“Nevertheless,” My Friend continued after a pause, “most of us prefer a stadium. We hope to find a sense of security there, of predictability, even stability. It’s strange perhaps, but we hope to find, in the environment surrounding us, something permanent. We believe in this concept to such an extent, that if something ever changes, then we can spend endless amounts of energy on trying to turn back the hands of time. We attempt to preserve our comfort zone, thus being in constant conflict with change.”

“That reminds me of Cervantes’s Don Quixote’s battles with windmills.”

“And people try to claim that, since then, the world has drastically changed. But actually, no real change, except for the technological, has taken place. Value judgments are all the same as before, although lately, winds of change have started to blow, which is quite to my liking. Instead of letting

the windmill vane go, we're holding onto it, attempting to, thus, maintain the status quo in our lives. Actually, we should let go, and accept everything as it comes along. This would help to free us of all kinds of tensions."

How true. Out of the twenty-four hours that a day consists of, we spend eight at work; an hour or two being shaken around in some means of transportation; if we're lucky, we can sleep for seven hours; and the remaining hours we attempt to be able to fill with something pleasant. Just like work is destined to be a commitment that has to be performed against one's will.

But I don't have a choice, responds that voice within us – I'm too lazy, I don't have enough knowledge nor money, I can't take a risk, I've got a family. Very well, I can somehow accept that last excuse, but the rest?

"Hmm, but it's interesting that none of us says that I'm scared to do this or that. We always tend to say that we don't have enough knowledge, money, or inclination. Few of us have the guts to admit that we lack the courage to deal with something new. What could that be caused by?" I inquired, after we had turned off the main road, and proceeded along a narrow asphalt road bordered by dark fields. A few groves of forest added some variety to the landscape.

"We don't know ourselves well enough. Life itself is, actually, much simpler than we can imagine. We see the great number of things and events that surround us, but we don't know how to find their roots, their common source, their basic cause. Once we figure that out, then the rest is simple – you've acquired, for yourself, a compass and a map, and will no longer be lost. The example that you brought forth, before, concerning running around, is quite eloquent, actually. Every day we encounter situations of that kind. And sometimes, when we get bored, we make arrangements for various amusements, so as to spice things up. For instance, cheerleaders beside the track to shout and wave; we have a beverage counter put up beside the track so that thirst can be quenched; we even place a big screen there, on which we can watch all kinds of interesting stuff. This is how we justify the fact that we're actually standing still. This is how we stall the flow of life, and thus, our own development."

"You have a vivid imagination. On the whole, I agree with you. But look, if you let life just flow through you – and, if I understand you correctly – then my yesterday's achievements have no meaning. Then I'd be a guy without a history. Just a nobody from nowhere."

"That's what happens if we bind our identity with external factors. But, you'll always be you, no matter what you do or don't have. The question is, why are we even running in that stadium? How do we end up there? Do you have any idea?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"Because, our parents have also been there all the time. So, we acquire this habit from infancy. Every day, we hear the phrase: 'Have a nice trip.' And so, we race around the track like a herd of sheep, chasing medals. And we have no idea that life can be interesting somewhere else too."

"W-e-e-ll," I sighed, not knowing what else to say.

"And you know where all our problems stem from today?" he asked me, when we had, in turn, left the asphalt road for a gravel one.

"I've no idea."

"We can't think independently. Absolutely not. We accept old dogmas as our own, without doubting them. We believe what's written in textbooks. We memorize. We're given a grade. And society praises us for this. We're going to look dumb to the future generations, just like our forefathers do to us. We think that we know everything. That technological development has already been able to provide all the answers for us. But, it hasn't. The saddest thing is that we don't comprehend causes and results."

But what these causes and results were, My Friend didn't say. I didn't understand him, but it, obviously, wasn't even essential, at that moment, if I comprehend him or not. Since, every bit of knowledge becomes apparent when the time is ripe, and we are prepared to receive it. Knowledge about something arrives like dusk, without knocking. You notice it, when it's there. All of a sudden, My Friend slowed down, and eventually stopped, on the edge of the road, altogether.

"What now?"

"We've arrived," he responded solemnly.

I looked around. Trees and bushes grew on both sides of the road, but there were, definitely, no signs of any buildings, least of all, a village.

"So-o-o, this is some kind of a joke, right?"

"See that trail over there?" My Friend indicated a barely noticeable winding path among the trees. "That'll take you there," he stated very seriously.

"O-o-h, come on. You picked me up in the city, almost brought me to the place, and now you're dumping me here, in the woods. It'll be getting dark soon,"

"You'll get there before dark, if you leave right now. It's a Village of the Sun rule -- that everyone arrive there on foot. It's a way of putting your true readiness to the test."

"I see."

"The other possibility is to go back to the city. We'll go to a pub, and have a small beer, for instance. It's up to you. Whether to proceed along an unknown path, and to confront your adventure, or to turn around. Which is stronger – fear or curiosity?"

"Neither," I answered in a little while. "I trust you, damn it. That's why I went along with this whole thing right from the beginning. I want to experience something different. To develop my knowledge, and then decide what I'm going to do with myself." I climbed out of the car, and shut the door after myself.

"How far is it from here?" I inquired, after My Friend had rolled down the window.

"Well, unfortunately, I can't tell you that. For everyone, the distance is quite different. And, to tell you the truth, I don't even know, exactly, how far it is. If you start going right now, you should, definitely, get there before sunset. But, if you start dilly-dallying, then, maybe not."

"I se-e-e..."

"The most essential point is to relate to everything without preconceptions. The best thing that you can do is to just take everything that they tell you about, at the Village of the Sun, as general knowledge. Later, at home, you can make appropriate adjustments to your view of the world. And, if there should be anything that you don't understand, then don't just reject it, as a natural reaction."

"You know me. Journalists don't understand anything. We are the disseminators of misconception."

We both started to laugh. My Friend turned his car around, waved to me, and sped off. I skipped over a small ditch, and proceeded onto the trail.