

THE SPACE OF LOVE by Vladimir Megre

Book 3 of *The Ringing Cedars Series*

Translated by: John Woodsworth Edited by: Leonid Sharashkin

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Chapter 23: “Re-creating Shambala”

“For some reason it all happens like that in Novosibirsk — it just happens that most people who are critical of me and my book come from there. Indeed, that's the only place people criticise me.

“My first book is already being published in three foreign countries, and in many others contracts are being drawn up. But in Novosibirsk all they do is curse it. My daughter Polina is there — I can only imagine what she's going through. And as for a collection of readers' letters, they'll only say: ‘What new thing are you dangling in front of us now? Why don't you go back to your own business?’

“They did a programme recently on Novosibirsk TV about the early entrepreneurs.¹ I was included, and in the course of an interview with my daughter they asked her about my absence from my business. Polina tried to explain something about my spiritual interests, but they cut her off.”

“Just a little more time will go by,” Anastasia replied, “and most residents of Novosibirsk will think highly of both you and the book. The best of the friends you had last year will come back, and new friends will appear.

“In one of the city centres a short way from the Eternal Flame² your friends both old and new will plant a brand new avenue and name it *Cedar Allée*.”

¹*the early entrepreneurs* — i.e., following *perestroika* and the collapse of the Soviet system in late twentieth-century Russia.

²*Eternal Flame* — in memory of the soldiers from Novosibirsk who fell during World War II.

“Sure they will! Come on, now! You’d better think again — a ‘Cedar Allée’ near the Eternal Flame? You’re really quite the schemer, Anastasia, dearest little dreamer of mine!”

She jumped up from the grass and stood on her knees, beaming all over, throwing up her hands, and all of a sudden whispering:

“Thank you for those words so fine — ‘dearest’, ‘mine’. That *is* me you were talking about here, Vladimir, right? Have I indeed become dear to you?”

“It’s more just a figure of speech we use. But still, your dream is very beautiful.”

“And it will come about, believe me, it will. Just as I dreamt it, that is how it will turn out.”

“But nothing comes about in the world all by itself. Now if you could attempt to create some kind of miracle in Novosibirsk... No, not just any old miracle — what’s the point of a miracle which leaves people neither hot nor cold? If only you could grant, say, that every resident of the city became just a little bit richer and healthier — in other words, so that everyone in Novosibirsk could be happier — now for that, perhaps, people might plant an allée. But I have an idea that all your forces of Light, even all told, would still not be able to bring that about, Anastasia. That is not within the grasp of anyone’s might.”

“You are right, Vladimir, nobody has power over Man’s will. Man must still work out his own plan, his own destiny, whether it be for joy or sorrow. Each one’s conscious awareness will point out the path to follow.”

“But who then is toying with our awareness? Who is impeding us from choosing the path leading out of sorrow to joy?”

“Why grope for causes outside your own self, Vladimir? In accusing others, what do you hope to change? A feeling so great has arisen within you: to create something good for the citizens of your city — I find it very appealing. It is a thought I myself now must dream with...”

“Ah! Great indeed! I have it! Yes, that is it! All the people of Novosibirsk will go down in the history of our nation, for it is there that a generation of happy people will be born. Every one living there today will become happier right away.

“Let us think together what we can say to the people of this whole city you are concerned about, how we can learn to break through to each one’s heart and soul...”

“And what do you want to say to each one of them?”

“That together they will all be able to re-create Shambala.”³

“And just what might this Shambala be? Elaborate more precisely.”

“People have been looking for æons for a holy place on the Earth. They think that it is called Shambala, that anyone there can link with the wisdom of the Universe. But no one has ever been able to find Shambala, though seekers have galloped through many foreign nations looking for it. And find it they will not, as long as they look for it therein, for ever since time began, Shambala has been re-created — both within each one and in its outward manifestation — by Man.”

“More specifically,” I interjected, “what must be done to establish a link with the wise Universe and to make one happier — show me a step can we take here that lies not within ourselves? All that’s within ourselves is somehow unclear. Show me some outward things we need to sow, build or break?”

“Let each resident of the big city obtain a little nut from a resinous cedar cone, place it in his mouth and hold it there in his saliva. Let him plant it in a little pot of earth in his home and water the earth every day. Before watering he should put his fingers in the water, and should be in a good humour. And

³*Shambala* — a Tibetan word indicating ‘the source of happiness’. See footnote 1 in Book 2, Chapter 27: “The anomaly”.

the main thing — he should be wishing good for himself, his children and descendants, and a conscious awareness of God. This he should do every day.

“When the seed sprouts, one may share with it one’s innermost thoughts. On summer days and frost-free nights the little pot with the little sprout should be placed outdoors among other plants growing in the ground so that it can commune with stars, the Sun and the Moon, so that it may know the rain and the breeze and the spirit of the blades of grass all ‘round, and then come back again to its friends, its parents. This may transpire many times now, while the desire is there and time allows.

“The seedling will grow and develop through the ages — a cedar, after all, will live more than five hundred years, beget offspring and tell the young cedars about the soul of those that cultivated them. When the sprout has grown in the home to about thirty centimetres, it may be planted in the earth in early spring. Have the city authorities allot at least one square metre of earth for their sprout to all those that have no plot of their own.

“And these sprouts will be planted around the edge of the city, among the houses and in the centre of busy squares. Let each person take care of his sprout and help each other in this.

“From the ends of the Earth people will come to this city to see and touch the sacred trees, and exchange at least a word or two with these happy people.”

“Why would people suddenly start coming here from all over the world?” I asked. “Now if only you could discover some kind of new sacred sites in Novosibirsk! Dolmens, for example, as in Gelendzhik. You told about the dolmens of Gelendzhik, and now seekers from various Russian cities and other lands are flocking to see them. I noticed that every day now they have tours to the dolmens.

“And every year in September readers from many places come together for a conference. Artists organise exhibits, and they record things on video. And now, surprise of surprises, trees are growing in the city. Well, not actual trees yet, just cedar seedlings.”

“These will not be ordinary seedlings,” Anastasia pointed out. “They are like the *ringing* cedars. Warmed by the kindness of human hearts, having touched the human soul, they will take in the best rays the Universe has to offer and start giving them back to Man. And Man and the Earth together will begin to shine once more in that place — now and forever. And there will come a new conscious awareness, and discoveries of universal importance will go forth from such people through the whole Earth!

“Do you know what a sacred site is? Believe me, Vladimir, you will come to know one in your own native city.”

“That’s all very tempting, of course,” I said. “But you know, Anastasia, there’s hardly anyone that’s going to take your word alone. There’s no way this can be known from our history books, and it’s not something our modern science is going to condone. Now, if there were just something a little more influential than you, someone better known with the proper credentials, who could show this...”

“The Koran makes some wise statements on the significance of trees. Buddha too got this wisdom when he went off for a long time into the woods. Tell me, Vladimir, you have been reading the Bible, have you not?”

“Yes I have, what of it?”

“The Old Testament notes that long before Christ Jesus’ birth the wisest of the Earth’s rulers, King Solomon, used cedar wood to build a temple to the glory of God and a house for himself. He hired a work force of considerable size to cut down the cedars and bring them in from far-off places. King Solomon was very wise, as the Bible says, and the Song of Songs he wrote has come down to us as an oasis of wisdom in the present day.

"The Old Testament also tells us that toward the end of his days the wives of his harem from various lands and various faiths began leading Solomon away from his faith. He came to know a variety of faiths. And do you know which one satisfied him the most?"

"Which one?"

"The one where trees are not only cut down but also planted. And on his death-bed this wise king comprehended that his temporal house and temple would be destroyed, that his descendants would not be able to maintain their power or greatness. It would mean that the might of his kingdom would lapse into a void. And it all came about exactly as he had foreseen.

"And to this day his soul is dismayed by the great mistake he had made. And the wise king realised that it was impossible to do a deed pleasing to God, and at the same time take the life of any of His own creations. The torment that affected his soul and many human souls extends through whole millennia, as they watch one mistake making itself again and again over thousands of years. But the mistake can be corrected, and then a splendid dawn will once more rise over the world. News of your city will spread through all the channels of the Earth and the Universe.

"Of all the miracles on Earth that have come down to us today, nobody has ever heard of a city where every citizen thereof cultivated trees such as these this way — with extraordinary love and tenderness of soul, thereby transforming their own city of stones into a true, living temple of the Universe, into a Space of Love. For this a whole conscious awareness is needed of the Divine, so may it, oh may it rise up so fine and good within each one's heart, and do its destined part to help the Universe be understood."

"Perhaps, just perhaps, there is a germ of rationality in what you've said, Anastasia, and I shall, perhaps, write about it, so that people may determine everything for themselves, but I must warn you that you're missing something here. You spend all your time carrying on about trees... But... well, how can I put this? You'll never be able to get married officially. You don't have the documents you need to take your turn at the Civil Registry Office, and here you're talking with such earnestness about trees. As it is, the church clerics consider you a heathen, and when I write these words of yours, they won't even let you in the nearest church, and certainly will not officially wed you to anyone."

"Vladimir, *do* write down my words, let people read them and decide for themselves. And do not be ashamed of these words, humble your pride. Not everyone, perhaps, will understand the meaning of these words, and not right away. But in your city there are many scholars who will supplement in scientific words what I have begun to say, if you believe that people will understand them better than my own words. And then there are the journalists. Do not be angry over their criticism; not all the journalists have had their turn. And if the time should ever come for me to wed, believe me, Vladimir, one will be found to hold the crown above my head."

"And what if people create something like that in another city, other than Novosibirsk?"

"Any city can be reborn. For achievements like these to be fulfilled, a different conscious awareness in people must be instilled, and when it appears, the face of cities will be changed for years to come. But among them there will be a first to perceive the Grace."

"Blessed Anastasia, you are so naïve, it seems, you never have anything but bright dreams. Well, okay then, I shall write what you say, so that people will know these things too."

"Thank you, thank you! I do not know how else to thank you."

"What for? That's not hard to write. You can add something more, if you like."

"I ask you, people, do not just read what I say as empty words, you need to make sense of what you have heard."

“Here you are, Anastasia, answering questions from readers, and you speak of Man as a creator, but you’re a woman, don’t you see? You know what the leader of one of our religious denominations said about women?”

“What did he say?”

“He said that women are incapable of creating — their proclivity, then, is to look beautiful and inspire men to various achievements and creativity, but it is only men that do the actual creating.”

“But you, Vladimir, do you agree with statements such as those?”

“One could agree with them, I suppose. You know about statistics, which is an impartial science. Well, if you go by statistics, you come up with this:”

“What?”

“Andrei Rublev, Surikov, Vasnetsov,⁴ Rembrandt and other famous artists were all men — there simply aren’t any women among them — at least, I don’t recall any women-artists. The inventors of the airplane, the car, the electric engine, the space satellite, the rocket-ship — they’re all men too. Right now one of the most popular art-forms in our society is the cinema, and in order to produce a film you need a director, and he’s one of the most important figures in film-making. And once again, all the best film directors are men. Occasionally you find a woman director, but they’re very rare. And unlike men, they don’t produce any really outstanding films. And the best musicians are invariably men, just like the philosophers — both the ones we know from antiquity and in our modern world — they’re men too.”

“But why are you telling me all this, Vladimir?”

“Well, I just had a thought. Maybe it’ll help you.”

“What is your thought? Could you share it with me?”

“It’s like this. Maybe you, Anastasia, should concentrate more on some kind of home improvement here, along with child-raising, and not burden yourself down so much with concerns about the outside world and other people — after all, *men* can take care of everything there. Men alone, according to statistics, which is an exact and impartial science. Historically, too, all the important things have been done by men, and we can’t get away from history. Do you understand how irrefutable this argument is?”

“I understand what you are saying, Vladimir.”

“Just don’t you go and get upset, now. Better understand everything right off the bat, so that you can busy yourself with your own affairs and not with those that others can do better. You’re trying to change the world for the better, but only men can do *that*, you see — they are better inventors and better creators than women. Do you agree?”

“Vladimir, I agree that men appear outwardly to be creators. If you look at it from a material viewpoint, that is.”

“What do you mean, ‘outwardly’? And from what other viewpoint can you look at irrefutable facts? You’d better not get philosophising here. Just tell me out-and-out: can you at least create *something*? For example, can you at least do embroidery? Can you embroider a beautiful design on a piece of fabric with a needle?”

“I would not be able to embroider a design with a needle.”

⁴ *Andrei Rublev* (pron. *roob-LYOFF*) (1365?–1430?) — one of the best-known early Russian painters, known especially for his icons and frescoes. His images are considered to convey a sense of humanity and deep spirituality. *Vasily Ivanovich Surikov* (1848–1916), a member of the *Itinerant* (*Peredvizhniki*) school of Russian art, known for his huge paintings of historical Russian battles. *Viktor Mikhailovich Vasnetsov* (1848–1926) — another Itinerant, who also painted monumental historical canvases (his younger brother Apollinari was not only a fellow artist but an archaeologist as well).

“Why not?”

“I would not be able to take a needle in my hands. A needle that has been manufactured out of the depths of living Nature. What is the point of creating something if it involves first destroying a great, living creation? Think, Vladimir, when a demented person takes a work by one of the Great Masters, as you said, and rends the canvas to pieces to cut out rabbit figures, would you call his actions *creativity*, making an allowance for his dementia? But if another person, this one rational and aware of what is around him, did the same thing, then his actions would be defined in quite a different way.”

“How?”

“Think about it. For example, his actions could be termed vandalism.”

“Come on, now, you’re not serious?! Does that mean that all creators and artists are vandals?”

“They are artists and creators in their perception of the world as seen on their own level. But if their consciousness should rise to a higher level, they would create by entirely different means.”

“And what ‘different’ means would these be?”

“The means by which the Creator has created all in His own impulse of inspiration. And the power to perfect His creations and to make new creations of their own is something He has given to Man, to Man alone.”

“And just how did the Creator create everything? And what instrument did he give to Man for creativity?”

“Thought is the chief instrument of the Great Creator. And thought has been given to Man. Creations are true when thought is brought to fruition through the soul and intuition and feelings, and the main factor here is and will always be: the purity of one’s awareness.

“Look how the little flowers thrive at our feet — their splendid shapes and colours and tints are constantly changing in creation alive. These are something you can perfect with your thought. Concentrate, try to change them, give them a better look.”

“What look? For example?”

“Indulge your fantasy, Vladimir.”

“Well, I can at least do that. Let this camomile here, for example, take on one red petal, and the next one stay as it is, so the alternation will make it better, more cheery.”

And all at once Anastasia fell stock still. She began concentrating her gaze on the white camomile. And you know, the camomile — slowly and quietly as could be, but still, right before my eyes — began to change its colours. There they were, alternating — first there was a red petal, then a white, then a red one again. At first the red petals were barely noticeable, then the colour became stronger, and the red hue kept getting brighter and brighter until finally they were simply blazing with a shining red radiance.

“You see how it happened, Vladimir — you came up with the idea, and I created it all with my thought.”

“What are you saying, Anastasia — that everybody can do this?”

“Yes! And they are doing it. But they use material for this, which they first slay, and dead material can only deteriorate. So mankind through the ages has struggled to stop his creations from deterioration, even as human thought becomes more and more preoccupied with just plain rot, and Man has no time to think about what constitutes genuine creation.

“Every thing is preceded first by thought. It is only with time that it gets embodied in matter or the changing strands of the social order. But whether they are creating for better or for worse — they do not immediately understand.

"Look how you wanted to change the colour of the camomile's petals. I changed them with my thought — the camomile obeyed Man's thought. But look closely now, did you really think up something better? More perfect than it already was?"

"In my view, it's splashier and more cheerful."

"But why are you not excited when you talk about the new Creation?"

"I don't know, maybe it's because there's still something lacking, maybe some kind of colours — I can't tell right now."

"The colours have come into conflict with each other — the tenderest tints have paled for the sake of splashiness. A loud splashiness fails to evoke calm and tender feelings."

"Okay, okay. Try to change everything back the way it was."

"It is not *I* that shall do it, but the camomile itself will be able to. The red will fall away. After all, we did not slay the camomile. It is alive. Nature itself will bring everything back to a state of harmony where it can thrive."

"So, in your view, Anastasia, are all men ignorant vandals and are women the creators?"

"All men and women are one — in each of them two principles merge into a single one. And in the creativity they feel, they are inseparable — earthly existence is there for them both."

"But how can that be? I don't understand. I, for example, am only a male of the species."

"And what do you consist of, Vladimir? The flesh of a male and the flesh of a female have merged into one, they are united in you; similarly the spirit of two has merged into one spirit within you."

"Then why do people go and state in treatises exactly what a woman is and what a man is, and state which of them is stronger and more important?"

"Think about it yourself, who would want to, and for what purpose, replace your awareness — your consciousness which the Creator gave to everyone in the beginning — with his own dogma?"

"Well maybe the Creator just happened to give someone more than others, and this person, as a teacher, is striving to share his wisdom and awareness with everyone?"

"Every little sprout on the Earth — the seed of a birch tree, a cedar tree or a flower — is filled with the knowledge of the Creator. So how could the thought come to you that the Creator could deign to withhold something from His Supreme Creation? What could be more insulting for a Father than a complaint like that?"

"What are you talking about? I'm not complaining about anyone. I was just consulting with myself, thinking out loud."

***The Ringing Cedars Series* by Vladimir Megre**

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