

Chapter One, Zosimos

Story told in the present moment by King Zosimos.

@@@@@@5

“Would you mind if I ask some questions about your and Mahá’s Buddhist philosophy?”

“Why did you stop calling him father?” she asks. “You still call me mother and mom, but since you were three, you’ve called him Mahá.”

“It’s simple,” I said. “You are more like my actual mother than he is like my real father. My father is more aligned with The Source energy than Mahá. When my father and mother possessed your bodies and copulated, they planted me in your womb. I remember everything from that moment. Consciousness immediately manifested in my mind. Mahá doesn’t live in the mind the way my father does.

“He is driven by the subconscious mind. I mean, Mahá lives his life in his body, always relying on feelings and emotions to drive his actions. But you are more like my mother, like The Source. You live life in the mind, using thoughts to drive your performance. You do things by thought rather than waiting for an emotion.

“Does it bother you that I call you mom or call him Mahá? I’ll call him father if it makes you feel more comfortable.”

I can feel her relaxing as her body begins to accept the usual comforts of the familiar bed and the soft cues from the butter lamps. A gentle hint of the smell of warm gee fills the air.

“No. My intention in asking isn’t a request in disguise. I’m not wanting you to change the way you feel about him. Just as you said, your father, Mahá, is more hurt by it than he should be. His feelings do drive his emotions, and yes, those feelings give rise to his personality towards you. Don’t change anything. I was curious, that is all. Go on and ask what you wanted to ask before I interrupted.”

After placing the dagger on the bed beside my right leg, I fold my hands over my chest and ask, “What happens when a person dies? I mean, besides the obvious, the body no longer

functions and begins to decay. What happens to a person's consciousness, the awareness of who we are? Does it simply disappear?"

"No consciousness never ends," she says. "The Source energy that fills the body has no beginning and no end. Death is a transition state or what we call, bardo existence. The bardo is a passage between one existence and the next. As consciousness leaves the human body, there is a clinging and craving for the habits and the comforts that have been part of human existence. For a while, consciousness is aware of the routines, it's like you can still want that first cup of tea in the morning, the conversation in the kitchen with all the sharecroppers, a slice of warm zucchini bread, and so on. But now, it can't materialize those desires anymore. There is no manifestation of the familiar, and so craving and desire begin to permeate.

"Many believe, and it has been written in the Tibetan Book of the Dead and the Tibetan Book of the Matrix, that our consciousness can see and hear for several days following death. This can cause confusion because no one can see the dead person or reply to them even though they are speaking. Consciousness isn't aware of death. Not right away. This awareness is keen to our practice. We are diligent in our daily practice and, through meditation, become aware of awareness and conscious of consciousness. With the single intention of preparing for this entrance into a death bardo.

"The moment our consciousness realizes itself, by recognizing the illusions are manifestations of its own thoughts, then there is instant liberation from existence. We make our own reality through our thinking. However, the longer consciousness remains in the bardo in a state of confusion, the more likely it will remain trapped in this three-dimensional universe. First, we are engulfed by confusion and then craving and desire, and eventually, fear and terror consume us until, in an act of desperation, we grab hold of the first resemblance of anything that looks familiar. This grasping has consequences that can lead to hell, rebirth in the animal or insect realms, or possibly even worse."

"So then, if I am understanding the death bardo correctly," I interject. "When a person such as your uncle, our former King, who has had extreme alzheimer disease for years and then dies, what chance of liberation for him? None?"

While she takes a moment to consider what I've asked, I feel eager to take the next step. There's so little for me to gain from this conversation. This is all for her benefit and for her transition into the bardo of death. Because I already know how this conversation will end, and I know everything about the philosophy of Buddhism and its simplistic here and now -- present moment -- that fails everyone. People are too ignorant, they're too weak to know the truth of it.

Finally, she answers me.

“The worst case of death is to die in terror or pain. Then there is death that comes when a person is unconscious. The best case is to know when death is close at hand, and it is then that a person can more easily recognize and prepare for the entrance into the bardo.”

My hand slides across my chest and down my side to again find the dagger. I put the handle of it in a tight grip. The adrenaline courses through my every cell and fiber.

“Mom, why did the oracle tell you you wouldn’t see my sixth year, and here I am, almost twelve years old now?”

She turns herself toward me and partway onto her back. “That’s an odd question, Zosimos. I suppose that we all realize the oracle isn’t always correct. That is to say, her interpretation of The Source isn’t always obvious.”

“Do you want to know what I think, Mother? I think the oracle was correct. You see, it was five years ago when Mahá made me king.”

It was then, in an instant of one quick motion, I pulled the dagger across her neck. I could feel the blade cross the hard bone of her spine. The bed covers are turning red so fast that I am surprised.

She never said a word or tried to say anything. She closed her eyes.

“Goodbye, mother.”