

# Part 1

## Prologue

## 1.

WHEN Zarathustra was thirty years old, he left his home and the lake of his home, and went into the mountains. There he enjoyed his spirit and his solitude, and for ten years did not weary of it. But finally he had a change of heart - and rising one morning with the dawn, he went before the sun, and spoke thus to it:

"Oh great star! What would your happiness be if you did not have us to shine for?"

"For ten years you have climbed here to my cave: you would have become weary of shining and of the journey, had it not been for me, my eagle, and my serpent.

"But we waited for you every morning, took from you your overflow, and blessed you for it.

"Behold! I am weary of my wisdom, like the bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to take it from me. I wish to spread it and bestow it, until the wise have once more become joyous in their folly, and the poor happy in their riches.

"For that I must descend into the depths, as you do in the evening when you go below the sea and bring light also to the underworld, you superabundant star!

"Like you, I must descend - as the men, to whom I shall go, call it.

"So bless me then, you tranquil eye that can behold even the greatest happiness without envy!

"Bless the cup that is about to overflow, that the water may flow golden out of it, and carry everywhere the reflection of your bliss!

"Behold! This cup wants to become empty again, and Zarathustra wants to be a man again.

Thus began Zarathustra's descent.

## 2.

Zarathustra came down from the mountains alone, meeting no one. Eventually he entered a forest, and there suddenly stood before him an old man, who had left his hermitage to dig for roots. And the old man spoke to Zarathustra:

"This wanderer is no stranger to me! Many years ago he passed this way; Zarathustra he was called, but he has changed. Then you carried your ashes into the mountains: will you now carry your fire into the valleys? Do you not fear to be punished for arson?"

"Yes, I recognize Zarathustra. His eyes are clear now, no longer does he sneer with loathing. Just see how he dances along!"

"How changed Zarathustra is! Zarathustra has become a child, an awakened one. What do you plan to do in the land of the sleepers? You have been floating in a sea of solitude, and the sea has borne you up. At long last, are you ready for dry land? Are you ready to drag yourself ashore?"

Zarathustra answered: "I love mankind."

"Why," said the saint, "did I go into the forest and the desert? Was it not because I loved mankind far too well? Now I love God! Mankind I do not love; mankind is a thing too imperfect for me. Love of mankind would be fatal to me."

Zarathustra answered: "Did I speak of love? I am bringing a gift for mankind."

"Give them nothing!" said the saint. "Take rather part of their load, and carry it along for them - that will be most agreeable to them, if only it be agreeable to you. If, however, you want to give them something, give no more than alms, and let them beg for that!"

"No," replied Zarathustra, "I will give no alms. I am not poor enough for that."

The saint laughed at Zarathustra, and spoke: "Then see to it that they accept your treasures! They are mistrustful of hermits, and do not believe that we come to give. The fall of our footsteps rings hollow through their streets. And what if at night, when they are sleeping in their beds, they hear a man walking abroad long before sunrise? Will they not ask themselves: 'Where goes the thief?'"

"Go not to mankind, but stay in the forest! Go rather even to the animals! Do you not want to be like me - a bear among bears, a bird among birds?"

"And what does the saint do in the forest?" asked Zarathustra.

The saint answered: "I compose hymns and I sing them; and in making hymns I laugh and I weep and I hum: thus do I praise God. By singing, weeping, laughing, and humming I praise the God who is my God. So, do you bring us a gift?"

When Zarathustra had heard these words, he bowed to the saint and said: "What could I have to give to you? I should leave now lest I take something away from you!" - And thus they parted, the old man and Zarathustra, laughing like two schoolboys.

But when Zarathustra was alone, he spoke to his heart: "Could it be possible? This old saint in the forest has not yet heard the news, that God is dead!"

### 3.

When Zarathustra arrived at the edge of the forest, he came upon a town. Many people had gathered there in the marketplace to see a tightrope walker who had promised a performance. The crowd, believing that Zarathustra was the ringmaster come to introduce the tightrope walker, gathered around to listen. And Zarathustra spoke to the people:

"I bring you the Superman! Mankind is something to be surpassed. What have you done to surpass mankind?"

"All beings so far have created something beyond themselves. Do you want to be the ebb of that great tide, and revert back to the beast rather than surpass mankind? What is the ape to a man? A laughing-stock, a thing of shame. And just so shall a man be to the Superman: a laughing-stock, a thing of shame. You have evolved from worm to man, but much within you is still worm. Once you were apes, yet even now man is more of an ape than any of the apes."

"Even the wisest among you is only a confusion and hybrid of plant and phantom. But do I ask you to become phantoms or plants?"

"Behold, I bring you the Superman! The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The Superman shall be the meaning of the earth! I beg of you my brothers, remain true to the earth, and believe not those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poisoners are they, whether they know it or not. Despisers of life are they, decaying ones and poisoned ones themselves, of whom the earth is weary: so away with them!"

"Once blasphemy against God was the greatest blasphemy; but God died, and those blasphemers died along with him. Now to blaspheme against the earth is the greatest sin, and to rank love for the Unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth!"

"Once the soul looked contemptuously upon the body, and then that contempt was the supreme thing: - the soul wished the body lean, monstrous, and famished. Thus it thought to escape from the body and the earth. But that soul was itself lean, monstrous, and famished; and cruelty was the delight of this soul! So my brothers, tell me: What does your body say about your soul? Is not your soul poverty and filth and miserable self-complacency?"

"In truth, man is a polluted river. One must be a sea to receive a polluted river without becoming defiled. I bring you the Superman! He is that sea; in him your great contempt can be submerged."

"What is the greatest thing you can experience? It is the hour of your greatest contempt. The hour in which even your happiness becomes loathsome to you, and so also your reason and virtue.

"The hour when you say: 'What good is my happiness? It is poverty and filth and miserable self-complacency. But my happiness should justify existence itself!'

"The hour when you say: 'What good is my reason? Does it long for knowledge as the lion for his prey? It is poverty and filth and miserable self-complacency!'

"The hour when you say: 'What good is my virtue? It has not yet driven me mad! How weary I am of my good and my evil! It is all poverty and filth and miserable self-complacency!'

"The hour when you say: 'What good is my justice? I do not see that I am filled with fire and burning coals. But the just are filled with fire and burning coals!'

"The hour when you say: 'What good is my pity? Is not pity the cross on which he is nailed who loves man? But my pity is no crucifixion!'

"Have you ever spoken like this? Have you ever cried like this? Ah! If only I had heard you cry this way!

"It is not your sin - it is your moderation that cries to heaven; your very sparingness in sin cries to heaven!

"Where is the lightning to lick you with its tongue? Where is the madness with which you should be cleansed?

"Behold, I bring you the Superman! He is that lightning, he is that madness!

And while Zarathustra was speaking in this way, someone in the crowd interrupted: "We've heard enough about the tightrope walker; now it's time to see him!" And while the crowd laughed at Zarathustra, the tightrope walker, believing that he had been given his cue, began his performance.

#### 4.

Zarathustra, however, looked at the people and wondered. Then he spoke thus:

Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman- a rope over an abyss.

A dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous trembling and halting.

What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal: what is lovable in man is that he is an over-going and a down-going.

I love those that know not how to live except as down-goers, for they are the over-goers.

I love the great despisers, because they are the great adorers, and arrows of longing for the other shore.

I love those who do not first seek a reason beyond the stars for going down and being sacrifices, but sacrifice themselves to the earth, that the earth may become the Superman's.

I love him who lives in order to know, and seeks to know in order that the Superman may hereafter live. Thus he seeks his own down-going.

I love him who labors and invents, that he may build the house for the Superman, and prepare for him earth, animal, and plant: for thus he seeks his own down-going.

I love him who loves his virtue: for virtue is the will to down-going, and an arrow of longing.

I love him who reserves no share of spirit for himself, but wants to be wholly the spirit of his virtue: thus he walks as spirit over the bridge.

I love him who makes his virtue his inclination and destiny: thus, for the sake of his virtue, he is willing to live on, or live no more.

I love him who desires not too many virtues. One virtue is more of a virtue than two, because it is more of a knot for one's destiny to cling to.

I love him whose soul is lavish, who wants no thanks and does not give back: for he always gives, and desires not to keep for himself.

I love him who is ashamed when the dice fall in his favor, and who then asks: "Am I a cheat?"- for he wants to perish.

I love him who scatters golden words in advance of his deeds, and always does more than he promises: for he seeks his own down-going.

I love him who justifies the future ones, and redeems the past ones: for he is willing to perish through the present ones.

I love him who chastens his God, because he loves his God: for he must perish through the wrath of his God.

I love him whose soul is deep even in the wounding, and may perish through a small matter: thus he goes willingly over the bridge.

I love him whose soul is so overfull that he forgets himself, and all things are in him: thus all things become his down-going.

I love him who is of a free spirit and a free heart: thus is his head only the bowels of his heart; his heart, however, causes his down-going.

I love all who are like heavy drops falling one by one out of the dark cloud that lowers over man: they herald the coming of the lightning, and perish as heralds.

Lo, I am a herald of the lightning, and a heavy drop out of the cloud: the lightning, however, is Superman! "



## 5.

When Zarathustra had spoken these words, he again looked at the people, and was silent. "There they stand," said he to his heart; "there they laugh: they do not understand me; I am not the mouth for these ears.

Must one first batter their ears, that they may learn to hear with their eyes? Must one clatter like kettledrums and penitential preachers? Or do they only believe the stammerer?

They have something of which they are proud. What do they call it, that which makes them proud? Culture, they call it; it distinguishes them from the goatherds.

They dislike, therefore, to hear of 'contempt' of themselves. So I will appeal to their pride.

I will speak to them of the most contemptible thing: that, however, is the last man!"

And thus spoke Zarathustra to the people:

It is time for man to fix his goal. It is time for man to plant the seed of his highest hope.

His soil is still rich enough for it. But that soil will one day be poor and exhausted, and no lofty tree will any longer be able to grow there.

Alas! there comes the time when man will no longer launch the arrow of his longing beyond man- and the string of his bow will have unlearned to whiz!

I tell you: one must still have chaos in oneself, to give birth to a dancing star. I tell you: you have still chaos in yourselves.

Alas! There comes the time when man will no longer give birth to any star. Alas! There comes the time of the most despicable man, who can no longer despise himself.

Lo! I show you the last man.

"What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?"- so asks the last man, and blinks.

The earth has become small, and on it hops the last man, who makes everything small. His species is ineradicable as the flea; the last man lives longest.

"We have discovered happiness"- say the last men, and they blink.

They have left the regions where it is hard to live; for they need warmth. One still loves one's neighbor and rubs against him; for one needs warmth.

Turning ill and being distrustful, they consider sinful: they walk warily. He is a fool who still stumbles over stones or men!

A little poison now and then: that makes for pleasant dreams. And much poison at the end for a pleasant death.

One still works, for work is a pastime. But one is careful lest the pastime should hurt one.

One no longer becomes poor or rich; both are too burdensome. Who still wants to rule? Who still wants to obey? Both are too burdensome.

No shepherd, and one herd! Everyone wants the same; everyone is the same: he who has other sentiments goes voluntarily into the madhouse.

"Formerly all the world was insane,"- say the subtlest of them, and they blink.

They are clever and know all that has happened: so there is no end to their derision. People still quarrel, but are soon reconciled- otherwise it upsets their stomachs.

They have their little pleasures for the day, and their little pleasures for the night, but they have a regard for health.

"We have discovered happiness,"- say the last men, and they blink-

And here ended the first discourse of Zarathustra, which is also called "The Prologue", for at this point the shouting and mirth of the multitude interrupted him. "Give us this last man, O Zarathustra,"- they called out- "make us into these last men! Then will we make you a gift of the Superman!" And all the people exulted and smacked their lips. Zarathustra, however, turned sad, and said to his heart:

"They do not understand me: I am not the mouth for these ears.

Perhaps I have lived too long in the mountains; I have hearkened too much to the brooks and trees: now I speak to them as to the goatherds.

My soul is calm and clear, like the mountains in the morning. But they think I am cold, and a mocker with terrible jests.

Now they look at me and laugh: and while they laugh they hate me too. There is ice in their laughter."

## 6.

Then, however, something happened which made every mouth mute and every eye fixed. In the meantime, of course, the rope-dancer had commenced his performance: he had come out at a little door, and was going along the rope which was stretched between two towers, so that it hung above the market-place and the people. When he was just midway across, the little door opened once more, and a gaudily-dressed fellow like a fool sprang out, and went rapidly after the first one. "Go on, halt-foot," cried his frightful voice, "go on, lazy-bones, interloper, sallow-face!- lest I tickle you with my heel! What do you here between the towers? In the tower is the place for you, you should be locked up; to one better than yourself you block the way!"- And with every word he came nearer and nearer the first one. When, however, he was but a step behind, there happened the frightful thing which made every mouth mute and every eye fixed- he uttered a yell like a devil, and jumped over the other who was in his way. The latter, however, when he thus saw his rival triumph, lost at the same time his head and his footing on the rope; he threw his pole away, and shot downward faster than it, like an eddy of arms and legs, into the depth. The market-place and the people were like the sea when the storm comes on: they all flew apart and in disorder, especially where the body was about to fall.

Zarathustra, however, remained standing, and just beside him fell the body, badly injured and disfigured, but not yet dead. After a while consciousness returned to the shattered man, and he saw Zarathustra kneeling beside him. "What are you doing there?" he said at last, "I knew long ago that the devil would trip me up. Now he drags me to hell: will you prevent him?"

"On my honor, my friend," answered Zarathustra, "there is nothing in what you speak: there is no devil and no hell. Your soul will be dead even sooner than your body; fear nothing any more!"

The man looked up distrustfully. "If you speak the truth," said he, "I lose nothing when I lose my life. I am not much more than an animal which has been taught to dance by blows and a few scraps of food."

"Not at all," said Zarathustra, "you have made danger your calling; there is nothing contemptible in that. Now you perish by your calling: therefore I will bury you with my own hands."

When Zarathustra had said this the dying one did not reply further; but he moved his hand as if he sought the hand of Zarathustra in gratitude.

## 7.

Meanwhile the evening came on, and the market-place veiled itself in gloom. Then the people dispersed, for even curiosity and terror become fatigued. Zarathustra, however, still sat beside the dead man on the ground, absorbed in thought: so he forgot the time. But at last it became night, and a cold wind blew upon the lonely one. Then Zarathustra rose and said to his heart:

A fine catch of fish has Zarathustra made to-day! It is not a man he has caught, but a corpse.

Human life is inexplicable, and still without meaning: a fool may decide its fate.

I will teach men the meaning of their existence: the Superman, the lightning out of the dark cloud- man.

But I am still far from them, and my sense does not speak to their sense. To men I am something between a fool and a corpse.

Gloomy is the night, gloomy are the ways of Zarathustra. Come, you cold and stiff companion! I carry you to the place where I shall bury you with my own hands.

## 8.

When Zarathustra had said this to his heart, he put the corpse upon his shoulders and set out on his way. Yet he had not gone a hundred steps, when a man stole up to him and whispered in his ear- and lo! It was the fool from the tower. "Leave this town, O Zarathustra," said he, "there are too many here who hate you. The good and the just hate you, and call you their enemy and despiser; the believers in the orthodox belief hate you, and call you a danger to the multitude. It was your good fortune to be laughed at: and verily you spoke like a fool. It was your good fortune to stoop to the dead dog; by so lowering yourself you have saved your life today. Depart, however, from this town,- or tomorrow I shall jump over you, a living man over a dead one." And when he had said this, the fool vanished; but Zarathustra went on through the dark streets.

At the gate of the town the grave-diggers met him: they shone their torch on his face, and, recognizing Zarathustra, they sorely derided him. "Zarathustra is carrying away the dead dog: a fine thing that Zarathustra has become a grave-digger! For our hands are too clean for that roast. Will Zarathustra steal a bite from the devil? Well then, good luck! If only the devil were not a better thief than Zarathustra!- he will steal them both, he will devour them both!" And they laughed among themselves, and put their heads together.

Zarathustra did not answer them, but went on his way. When he had gone on for two hours, past forests and swamps, he had heard too much of the hungry howling of the wolves, and he himself became hungry. So he halted at a lonely house in which a light was burning.

"Hunger attacks me," said Zarathustra, "like a robber. Among forests and swamps my hunger attacks me, and late in the night.

"My hunger has strange moods. Often it comes to me only after a meal, and all day it has failed to come: where has it been?"

And so Zarathustra knocked at the door of the house. An old man appeared, who carried a light, and asked: "Who comes to me and my bad sleep?"

"A living man and a dead one," said Zarathustra. "Give me something to eat and drink, I forgot it during the day. He that feeds the hungry refreshes his own soul, says wisdom."

The old man withdrew, but came back immediately and offered Zarathustra bread and wine. "A bad country for the hungry," said he; "that is why I live here. Animal and man come to me, the hermit. But bid your companion eat and drink also, he is wearier than you." Zarathustra

answered: "My companion is dead; I can hardly persuade him to eat."  
"That does not concern me," said the old man sullenly; "he that knocks at my door must take what I offer him. Eat, and fare you well!"-

Thereafter Zarathustra went on again for two hours, trusting to the path and the light of the stars: for he was an experienced night-walker, and liked to look into the face of all that slept. When the morning dawned, however, Zarathustra found himself in a thick forest, and no path was any longer visible. He then put the dead man in a hollow tree at his head- for he wanted to protect him from the wolves- and laid down on the ground and moss. And immediately he fell asleep, tired in body, but with a tranquil soul.

## 9.

Long slept Zarathustra; and not only the rosy dawn passed over his head, but also the morning. At last, however, his eyes opened, and amazedly he gazed into the forest and the stillness, amazedly he gazed into himself. Then he arose quickly, like a seafarer who all at once sees the land; and he shouted for joy: for he saw a new truth. And he spoke thus to his heart:

A light has dawned upon me: I need companions- living ones; not dead companions and corpses, which I carry with me wherever I go.

But I need living companions, who will follow me because they want to follow themselves- and to the place where I will. A light has dawned upon me. Zarathustra is not to speak to the people, but to companions! Zarathustra will not be shepherd and hound of the herd!

To steal many from the herd- for that purpose I have come. The people and the herd will be angry with me: the sheperds shall call Zarathustra a robber.

Shepherds, I say, but they call themselves the good and just. Shepherds, I say, but they call themselves the believers in the orthodox belief.

Behold the good and just! Whom do they hate most? The man who breaks their tables of values, the breaker, the lawbreaker:- yet he is the creator.

Behold the believers of all beliefs! Whom do they hate most? The man who breaks up their tables of values, the breaker, the law-breaker- yet he is the creator.

The creator seeks companions, not corpses- and not herds or believers either. The creator seeks fellow-creators - those who grave new values on new law-tablets.

The creator seeks companions and fellow-reapers: for everything is ripe for the harvest with him. But he lacks the hundred sickles: so he plucks the ears of corn and is vexed.

The creator seeks companions, and such as know how to whet their sickles. They will be called destroyers, and despisers of good and evil. But they are the reapers and rejoicers.

Zarathustra seeks fellow-creators, fellow-reapers and fellow-rejoicers: what are herds and shepherds and corpses to him!

And you, my first companion, rest in peace! I have buried you well in your hollow tree; I have hidden you well from the wolves.

But I leave you; the time has arrived. Between rosy dawn and rosy dawn there came to me a new truth.

I am not to be a shepherd, I am not to be a grave-digger. No longer will I speak to the people; for the last time I have spoken to the dead.

I will join the creators, the reapers, and the rejoicers: I will show them the rainbow, and all the steps to the Superman.

I will sing my song to the lonesome and to the twosome; and to whoever who still has ears for the unheard, I will make his heart heavy with my happiness.

I make for my goal, I follow my course; over the loitering and tardy I will leap. Thus let my on-going be their down-going!



## 10.

This had Zarathustra said to his heart when the sun stood at noon-tide. Then he looked inquiringly aloft,- for he heard above him the sharp call of a bird. And behold! An eagle swept through the air in wide circles, and on it hung a serpent, not like a prey, but like a friend: for it kept itself coiled round the eagle's neck.

"They are my animals," said Zarathustra, and rejoiced in his heart.

"The proudest animal under the sun, and the wisest animal under the sun,- they have come out to search for me.

They want to know whether Zarathustra still lives. Do I still live?

I found it more dangerous among men than among animals; Zarathustra walks dangerous paths. Let my animals lead me!

When Zarathustra had said this, he remembered the words of the saint in the forest. Then he sighed and spoke thus to his heart:

"If only I were wiser! If only I were wise from the very heart, like my serpent!

But I am asking the impossible. Therefore I ask my pride to go always with my wisdom!

And if my wisdom should some day forsake me:- alas! it loves to fly away!- may my pride then fly with my folly!"

Thus began Zarathustra's down-going.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

