

THE PATH OF THE HEART

Ivan Vuković



As taught to me by my teachers, from different planes of existence, for whom I am forever grateful. Dedicated to all my Spiritquest brothers and sisters and the seekers who yet have to hear the calling of the rainforest. May only good come out of this text. Para el bien de todos.

Ivan Vuković
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Heart medicines

The plant mind in communion with the human mind

Entheogens

The ones that reveal the Divine within

The ones that provide clarity and insight

Helpers

Healers

Teachers

Three of them supreme

Ayahuasca

Huachuma

Peyote

Heart medicines

Opening and cleansing

Teaching the consciousness of the Heart-mind

That state at the core of our being

In our very center

Through which we can tap into

our original Godly oneness

The peaceful, plant-like state

Deep rest

Softness

Elegance

Strength

Protection

Security

Humility

Concentration

Focus

Forgiveness
Gratitude
Feeling of being fully immersed in Life
Nature
Awe
Washed over by God's rain
In there Love is the only measure
Once aware of it
You want to stay there forever
Maintain the Heart-mind connection
React from there
With unconditional acceptance and understanding
From Love all other life-nurturing feelings originate
The opposite of it is Fear
Which we provoke with actions, words or thoughts
But every time we hurt someone
We hurt ourselves the most
There's always a choice between Love and Fear
Life is a series of choices
Down to every breath you take
So try to be kind, considerate and gentle
Because those are the true characteristics of a gentleman
A gentle man
Vibrating more joyously, positively and calmly
That is what Mother Earth needs from her children

The deep mystery of Ayahuasca

When I first drank Ayahuasca
I thought everybody should do it
Now I know better
After seeing people
Heal
Cry
Die
Rise
Suffer
Laugh
Feel absolutely nothing
Get to know themselves for what they really are
Go crazy
Go really crazy
Pack up the next morning and leave
Be confused
Grow in humility
Scream the silent screams
Relive the worst moments of their lives
And forgive
Break down
Gain strength
Now, I think you shouldn't do it
Because I don't know you
And even if I did
I wouldn't have a clue what's your experience going to be like
(as much as I don't know what's mine going to be like)

And will you be able to bear it
Also, if you don't feel it in your bones
As a calling
And my opinion is enough to talk you out of it
Then I'm glad to have stopped you
Because this really isn't for you
Because this really isn't for everybody
Because this has never been a joke
This has to be yours only conscious choice
Just know this:
Ayahuasca is the holiest of the holy communions
And if you willingly step into the ritual
Be prepared to lose everything except LOVE
What that means we'll all see for ourselves
Ayahuasca is not about purging or visions
Even though those are some of the elements
In Her teaching and healing repository
However, the Whole is greater than the sum of its parts
Once you have been blessed with the opportunity
To make contact with Her presence
If you happen to receive the gift of a single vision
Meaningful for your life
Bow down in gratitude
And cherish that vision as a precious gift
Which needs focus, silence and time to be truly lived
While the unnecessary retelling of it to others drains it of
its power
Nurture what you've received in your heart
Because it's only a recently planted seed
And the winds are strong outside

This is the Holy Communication
The quiet path of the Heart
The scientific mind will never understand it
Dissecting the experience biochemically
Trying to figure out the Mystical
The esoteric
The unexplainable
All those parts where the healing, the teaching
and the miraculous happen
The Universe within
We arrive in the jungle
With all our gadgets
Thinking we need something which we usually don't
We claim we want change, but do we really?
Besides, can we handle it?
The knowledge we receive and do not apply in everyday
life becomes poison
That's why Ayahuasca is only to be lived
Not advertised
Her domain is the Mystery
Which cannot be properly grasped with words
Only feelings
When asked why he had dedicated
Only a short paragraph in his book *Tawantinsuyo 5.0*
To Ayahuasca
A well-respected curandero Alonso del Rio said
"The whole thing is too complex
To be addressed in a book
Only words that can describe Ayahuasca are
Too much

Too much love
Too much intensity
Too much clarity
Too much profoundness
Too much confusion
Too strict with some people
Too lenient with the others”
The more we drink Ayahuasca
The less we now
But ever more willingly we surrender
Like empty vessels waiting to be filled
Silent
In deep concentration and prayer
It's a gift in one's lifetime
A mission
A responsibility
A point of no return
We will never know
But once we feel it, we're there
Once you drink the holy teacher plants
They are a part of you forever
Your whole being becomes intertwined with theirs
Their every atom and molecule becomes a part of you
Never lose this connection because it is based on trust
Imagine two hands,
Fingers intertwined
Holding each other firmly
The spirit whispers
“I won't let go if you won't”

Zoila

Ever since I first saw Zoila
The chief and the matriarch of the Muruy tribe
I wanted to speak to her
Her presence is magnetic
Radiating strength, wisdom and beauty
One morning after a powerful ceremony
I was writing my journal
And I saw her tending the garden in the Sanctuary
As she usually does
She told me
“Ayahuasca is a Mystery
And to deal with the Mystery
You’ve got to have Faith
Faith in the Medicine
Faith in the maestros
Faith in yourself
And faith in the omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent
God
Who always takes care of us in all situations
Nurturing us in the palm of His hand”
Or as she originally said it in Spanish:
“...*el Dios Omnisciente, Omnipresente, Omnipotente...*”
Then she repeated those three words
More slowly
With a pause after each one
Omnisciente...
Omnipresente...
Omnipotente...

As if she wanted to engrave them in my memory
They will stay with me forever
Until we meet again, Zoila

Icaros

For the good of all
With these words we start the holy Huachuma ceremony
When working with master plant teachers
Sooner or later man will be tempted with power
And will have to choose
Whether his actions will be dedicated to obtaining
personal, selfish gains
Or to helping and healing others
Guided by nothing but love
That's the basic distinction between *brujería* and pure
curanderismo
Which is the dedicated way of selflessness
Once the *shakapa* is in your hand
Providing a protective Circle of pure sound
Over the sacred space where the ritual is to take place
Personal problems disappear
And what remains is the care for the fellow being
Icaros
Healing prayer-songs of the *curanderos*
Set the intent for pure healing
Arkana
A special *icaro* providing spiritual protection is sung first
Then the concert begins
I once asked don Rober
If there was a difference between the *icaros* he sings
He told me
“*No hay ninguna diferencia,*
todos son medicina”

They are all the same
All are pure medicine
A grid of healing vibrations
Descending on our bodies
Restoring harmony
A specific musical code
A vibration changing us subcellularly
Unlocking and harmonising our energy centers
We soak the sound in through our skin
Through the palms of our hands
Down to our every cell
Filling them with light
Purging out chaotic and dark patterns
Icaros are prayers
Incantations
Calling on God's healing of his children
Calling on the healing spirits of the plants
Calling on healing spirits of the earth, the water and the
skies
The little doctors
("Once the *doctorcitos* come
Remain very calm")
And they do come
And start rewiring your circuits
And performing operations
And it's amazing
Icaros are moments of pure energy and transformation
They are vehicles of contact with our Divinity
According to don Rober
Ayahuasca sings 45 *icaros*

45 visions
Relevant for our individual life
Which we have the opportunity to see
If ready
Back in the old times
Not all people who came for healing drank Ayahuasca
Only the healers would drink
And the rest would receive the healing nevertheless
Through *icaros*
And blowing of the *mapacho* smoke
Thus, Ayahuasca is only *chakaruna*
The bridge
Who sensitizes us to finer vibrations
So that we hear
Listening to the *icaros*
Listening to the Plants
Listening to Nature
Listening to Life which is sacred
Listening to our Heart
Listening to the Great Spirit
It is not the healer who heals
He only sings and prays to a higher power which heals
He sings to the nurturing, healing, caring power of Life
All-powerful, merciful and benevolent
He sings the song of vitality
Of a world where everything is imbued with Life
And vibrates its pattern
And thus everything has a spirit and is sacred
He sings of a wider picture
The sacred geometry of Creation

Of the inherent strength of a Human Being
Going through suffering and purification
In order to know the Truth about oneself
And to surrender fully to It
He sings of unity
He sings of a transformation
Which ends in Love and Compassion
It is all there encoded in the *icaros*
In the feeling behind the sound
Listen
Listen, listen, listen to One Heart's song
Follow your intuition and intelligence
Until you find your own *marirí*
Your own strength within
Your own song

Oración a Ayahuasca

solo a los respetuosos
les es permitido entender
solo los respetuosos pueden ver
el Misterio profundo
Ayahuasca, Ayahuasquita
poderosa doctorcita
linda doctorcita
gracias por su sabiduría
gracias por curarme
y por amarme
saca todo lo malo de mi cuerpo-mente
penétrame cada célula
yo soy tu humilde aprendiz
que crezca tu flema en mi pecho
tu marirí
Tú, que revelas la magia de la vida
la magia de la selva
los momentos de oro
inestimables
irrepetibles
la eternidad en el momento que pasa
la niña con el pelo de ángel
sabor de manzana
gusano en la hoja
bufeo colorado
la mujer hermosa que se acerca a la mesa de la Medicina
el concierto de la Amazonia
cantos de insectos

la risa de amigos
que hace unos días eran extranjeros
el poder de verdaderos curanderos
y su tecnología suprema
gotas de lluvia cayendo en el río
flor de Bobinzana
humo de Mapacho
danza de mariposas
danza de las almas de los amantes reunidos
silencio profundo entre los icaros
la serpiente en las aguas oscuras
la silueta negra del curandero orgulloso
mareación fuerte
visiones en la noche
doña Eliana diciendo: “hermanito”
doctorcitos de agua
doctorcitos de tierra
doctorcitos de cielo
doctorcitos extraterrestres
luz de la vela
don Rober rezando en voz baja
icarando y soplando botellas de medicina
Camalonga
arkana de protección
las nubes flotantes
hablando con tu amor antes de dormir
baño de flores
tantas bendiciones
tantos dones
Madrecita

Tú eres el ojo del Universo
gracias
por abrir mis ojos
mi nariz
mis orejas
y mi corazón
dame fuerza
libérame del dolor
libérame del miedo
libérame de las cadenas
pa' que pueda respirar
pa' que pueda cantar
tus cantos de curación
pa' que baile mi shakapa
con el sonido puro
para el bien de todos
guíame por mi camino
eres luz en la noche siniestra
Tú, que vienes del Padre Poderoso
enséñame a escuchar a las plantas
y cantar sus canciones
enséñame a vivir desde el corazón
pa' que ayude a todos los que lo necesiten
muéstrame como servir a mi prójimo
como vivir en la consciencia de Jesucristo
tantas veces estoy perdido
confundido
y tú me has dicho:
"Queda en tu corazón
siempre suave y humilde

Yo soy sangre de la Tierra
siénteme fluyendo por tus pies
hasta tu cabeza
penetrando tu cuerpo
dándote fuerza
relájate
relaja tu mente
relaja cada músculo
déjate ser
húndete en la tierra
se ligero como el aire
y se feliz
porque crees
y creces
y sabes amar
y sientes la belleza
eres hijo de la única Fuente
eres polvo de estrellas
todo será bonito
todo es bonito
todo siempre ha sido bonito
confía en ti
confía en Dios
confía en la Vida
yo te apoyo
el mundo te espera
solo haz el bien
y nunca tengas miedo
todo está en tu cuerpo
estás bien preparado

y protegido
todo te va a salir bien
solo ama
ama más
y más
y más
perdona
trabaja y reza
ahora te vas
pero con la Medicina en tu cuerpo
y el Padre Poderoso
el mundo te espera y necesita
yo estoy contigo pa' siempre"
gracias, Madrecita
pura medicina
pura, pura luz divina
amén

The three *mesadas* of Papá Huachumán

Papá Huachumán

Grandfather Huachumán

The supreme wise teacher of the Andes

All-knowing

All-powerful

Never will I bow down in front of another human being
again

I bow down before you and your Lanzón

The words do you no justice

One needs to experience the unspeakable

And remain humble and silent in your presence

From the temple of Chavín

All the way to here and now

Till the end of time

You reveal the deepest teachings of the Heart

So, teach me, Papá Huachumán

Teach me the secrets and the truths of the three worlds

I am listening

I

The boat gliding through the river Momón

A tributary of the mighty Amazon

My hand touching its surface

The refreshing droplets spraying all around

Yacumama

The mother of the waters reigns here

Bear witness to Her power
The perception is cleansed
The senses sharpen
Everything slows down
So that, finally, we can feel the world in real-time
Birds circling the skies
Majestic clouds
The wonders of the rainforest
The symphony of colors
The thick green
The bright blue
Nothing but awe
Music in my ears
I've heard this song many times before
But never did it sound so wonderful
I turn around
My beautiful sister with tears in her eyes
Tears of beauty too great to bear
"So much love", she says
The reflection of the forest in the waters
Like a parallel world turned upside down
Everything is perfect
Because God's creation is perfect
Created with ease of unconditional love
The pristine paradise of Mother Nature
Soiled only by human edifices
And plastic bottles floating in the river
Why are we turning this paradise into hell?
Why are we destroying our own happiness?
We need this

Our children need this
Clear and clean seas, rivers and streams
To swim in them
To cleanse ourselves
To play in them like children
How is it possible we don't see that?
When did we detach ourselves from the Universal Law?
How strange are we humans
An old boat passes next to us in the opposite direction
Red letters on it say: *VIDA*
Life
Human life with its dual aspects
Animal life
Plant life
One life
Worried and tired people's faces
There is a hidden air of sadness floating over the Amazon
Air of bloody history
Tragedies
Atrocities
Genocide
The conquest of paradise
Eradication of cultures
Sadistic missionaries
Enslavement
Rubber-tapping
Oil extraction
Oil spillage
Deforestation
Yet, there is only compassion and forgiveness

at the end of the road
Stolen souls become puppets of dark forces
"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"
The boat stops
We have arrived

I'm floating in the Enchanted stream
Of the Muruy tribe
Quebrada encantada they call it
The water cools me and soothes me
Such pleasure
Papá Huachumán takes me down the spiral of Evolution
I can feel my body transforming into an amphibian
Only my eyes remain above the surface of the lake
Contemplating ancient times
When life surfaced in the dark seas
Changing form
Fluid
Everchanging
Evermoving
Evergrowing
Everflowing
Until we finally decided to step onto the ground
I don't want to get out of the water yet
I grab a chunk of medicinal clay
And start rubbing it all over my face and body
I take another chunk
And start molding it with my fingers
Caught in the moment
Completely focused

There is nothing in this world except this clay in my hands
I mould and sculpt
For the first time in my life
Suddenly I stop and look at my creation
It looks like a bird's head
I place it on the nearby rock
And ask my brother
"What do you see?"
"A bird's head", he replies
So, I think to myself
This is how a man made the first sculpture
By playing
My brother reaches to the bottom of the lake
And pulls out an old tree branch
Full of holes
He examines it closely
Sniffs it
Then he puts his mouth on one of the holes
And blows
And the branch utters a squeaky sound
He turns towards me and says:
"So, this is how a man made the first flute"
Indeed, my beautiful brother
These are the original ways
Creation by playing
Open-minded
Open-hearted
No goal in mind
Just childlike innocence and curiosity

Observing nature, the supreme creator
Noticing similarities and metaphors
Flowing freely
Listening to one's intuition
Forgetting about time
Enjoying the moment
When exactly did it become a rule
That we should go to school
To learn how to paint, sculpt, write, draw, move
When did we become afraid to simply do it
Spontaneously
Without paying attention to what others say
Or if they're going to judge it
All the rules are man-made
And thus are an unnecessary convention
Suffocating creativity
In fact it is not the man who creates
Only God creates
Through us
We just have to channel that energy
So, play, God's children
In His heavenly fields
And create
Like the first man who sees something for the first time
Create your art
Create your story
Create your life

A small waterfall is falling on my head
The sound of rushing water

The perfection of a moment
The inevitability of its end
I look up and see Howard watching us
Watching over us
I look at my brothers and sisters
Still playing in the water
I want to freeze this precious moment
And save it in a special shrine of my mind
But in reality, it is already saved
Anything that happens is forever
Recorded in the collective memory
And always there to inspire
The one who knows how to access it
The mixture of joy and sadness
When something is so beautiful
But you know it's going to end soon

The joy and laughter are gone
The sky darkens
The clouds look ominous
The sun is setting
Bugs are everywhere
Rain is starting to pour
Draining our clothes as we rush to the boats
The sun sets
And suddenly the rainforest looks menacing
The river turns black
The dark serpent
The black boa
The blood of the Earth

The sound of a rainstorm
The lamp lighting our way as we carefully return to the
Sanctuary
Rain pouring relentlessly
Water everywhere
The water of life
The primordial birthing place
The womb of life
Our bodies
Made of water
Our blood
Water
Our lymph
Water
Our sweat
Water
Our tears
Water
Spirits of the water dancing around us
The lower shamanic world
I can hear our ancestors
Inviting us to pray for them
Calling for unification

II

The rainforest is lush and fertile
A place where teeming life
And everpresent death

Go hand in hand
Sachamama
The mother of the forest reigns here
Bear witness to Her power
My shoes become too tight
So I take them off
They are like coffins around my feet
I want to walk barefoot
And feel the soggy and muddy soil under my toes
Right next to the colony of ants
who go about their business
Working tirelessly
Relentlessly
I offer my blood to the mosquitoes
And greet the elegant butterflies
And colorful caterpillars
Ancient trees
The carriers of wisdom
We've set out from point A to point B
But what really matters is being present in between
And listen intently
Rushing towards the goal is an illusion
I'd rather slow down
And soak in every single sound, smell and color
My sister holding me underneath my arm
Walking and breathing heavily
She's seen many sunrises and sunsets
Many days
But none so beautiful and unique as this one
She needs me

And I equally need her
We're sharing a path
And tomorrow she'll be gone
And we're never going to see each other again
Which makes this even more special
The virtue of patience
The lessons of brotherhood and sisterhood
No man is an island
Maybe a peninsula
But nevertheless no one can make it on his own
The rainforest sings a song of interdependence
Interrelatedness
The web of life
Where everything is connected
And everything is sacred
Sweet scent of plants fills up my lungs
The same lungs that breathe out carbon-dioxide
That the plants breathe in
And in exchange they breathe out oxygen
That we breathe
This simple fact of life
Should alone be enough never to cut down another tree
Without need and without saying thanks

The Alamas tribe greets us friendly
I'm lost in the train of thought
Feeling unable to speak or move
But three little girls bring me back to the present moment
Lucero, Adi and Hilary
Inviting me to play catch with them

Next thing you know
I'm running barefoot through their village
Chasing them
Sweating profusely
Laughing
Happy as happy can be
Oh, the joy of being a child
At that moment I already know
That some day I'm coming back here
The young chief of the Alamas decides to give us a speech
He starts talking about their history
And how they came from Ecuador to Peru
And many other things
The only problem is he is talking in *quichua*
Incredibly fast
Not even pausing to take a breath
Gesticulating frantically
Verbal torrent pouring out of his mouth
None of us *gringos* understands a single word
But we understand everything
The surrealness of the moment
When he finishes it's Howard's time to translate
And he does so with only three words
"What a life!"
What a life indeed
Glorious and full of blessings
And humor
It's time to leave
Hilary gives me a bracelet as a gift
Her beauty is astonishing

Sweet little woman-child Hilary
Never will I forget you
I give her a few coins
And she's runs away happy
To give the money to her tribe
So that they can buy rice

As we head back into the forest
I pray silently:
Papá Huachumán
Transform me into a jaguar
So that I can roam this middle world
With courage and strength
To rise above dualities
Into oneness
Ever since we've eaten the fruit
From the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
We've separated ourselves from the Whole
And started to judge
But now I see
There is no good without bad
No pleasure without pain
No up without down
No right without left
And what we initially perceive as a curse
Is really a blessing
A necessary stop on our way
Without which we would have never reached
new blessings
Met new souls who enrich our lives

So I give thanks for every single moment of my life
I no longer see the individual waves crashing
Only the ocean in its majestic totality
Dancing the ecstatic dance of life
Rejoice, earthlings,
For being blessed with life on this Earth
Earth under my toes
Our mother
Earth
Our food
Earth
Our bodies
Earth
Spirits of the forest dancing around us
The middle shamanic world
Place for transformation

III

The Amazonian sky
I've never seen so many stars in my life
Their light hypnotizes me
Filling me with a mixture of wonder and fear
Huairamama
The mother of the skies reigns here
Bear witness to Her power
The vastness of the Unknown
The mystery to which we can only surrender
A burst of energy shots through my body

My eyes fill up with tears
As the realization dawns on me
There are as many Universes as there are grains of sand
And there is no difference between me and these stars
My body is made of stardust
And the same light that they emanate
Is in my very core
Even though I covered it with layers of thick mud
years ago
The layers that are now starting to break
Which is painful, but liberating
My lungs open up and fill up with refreshing night air
I breathe freely after so long
The spirits of the skies dancing around us
Whispering:
“Blessed is the child with the innate ability
to love endlessly”
The upper shamanic world
Place of transcendence

The *mesadas* have ended
Howard is sitting in deep meditation
Resting
Another group of pilgrims irreversibly transformed
Time to set them on their way
To spread the lessons learned into their lives
My brothers and sisters gather around in a circle
I join them in a group hug
We smile in silence
Words are unnecessary
We just are
Gently swaying as one being
Our hearts fully open
The adventures we've been through
Have changed us completely
Bonded us for life
We took a trip around the world
And came back exactly where we'd started
But not quite
Slowly, one by one,
People start leaving the ceremonial *maloca*
The feast is waiting for us in the dining room
I stay behind
Hypnotized by the stillness of this sacred space
And Howard's amazing *mesa*
Watching the power objects on it
Artes, they are called
Which taught me so much
(Especially the skulls,
Pray, they said,

Pray for your ancestors)
Thank you, papá Huachumán
For all the teachings
One by one
The candles on the altar go out
Until there's only one left
Its flame flickering
Almost extinguished
But then rising again
As if it is fighting to stay alive
Finally, it surrenders
Transforming into smoke
Darkness enshrouds me
Peace

Plant teachers' advice

Live honorably
So that you die peacefully and gracefully
Eat the right foods to keep your body and mind nourished
And 'food' is not only what we eat or drink,
But also what we listen, watch, experience
Everything that we intake to our system
Every kind of vibration that reaches our being
That is what we call pure life

PURA VIDA

Pray to keep your Heart pure and open
And Prayer in its elevated form is nothing but a sincere
expression of gratitude
To God for life and the abundance
that we receive each day
Respect all (nature)
Forgive, because the forgiveness is at the end of the road
Love
Love with all your being
Unconditionally
Passionately and compassionately
That special one
Your family and friends
And, eventually, all living beings
Because at our core there is no difference between us
And we are all One
Even though you might not realize it
Yet



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