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By Will Alone
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Deshi: Sensei, we train by ideals. We place the highest aspirations we can imagine before us and then we orient our actions, our words, and our thoughts according to those ideals. What do we gain by such a life? Others speak of peace, of joy, of love, of Heaven, but you do not mention these things as motivations for such a living. You say, “The practice is Awakening.” Still, your practice is filled with ideals. How can this be?

Sensei: We do not relate to ideals because of the lofty things they can provide us with. From the correct point of view, those things are merely consequential. They are just as consequential as are the negative things that come to us for living in relation to an ideal. For the spiritually minded, the relation is enough. It is all that matters because it is all that cultivates the spirit. It has been said that our proximity to God is proportionate to our distance from the material world. When proximity becomes that which we seek, then we have made proximity of the material world. In our quest for proximity to God, we have only moved further away. It is like this with every ideal. When we practice charity for the adoration it will bring from those we are charitable toward, then our charity is not of the spiritual world. It is of the material world. When we practice courage for the admiration it will bring from those we are courageous for, then our courage is not of the spiritual world. It is of the material world. All that there truly can be are the ideals and our efforts to relate to them with all of our being. The practice is Awakening.

Deshi: What of motivation? Should not something motivate us – something pulling us forward?

Sensei: We cannot be pulled into the spiritual world. We can only be repulsed from the material world. So rather than seeking a pulling energy, we must find this pushing energy.

Deshi: What is the engine of such energy?

Sensei: It is our will alone.