The myth of Daedalus and Icarus

In ancient times, Minos, the king of Crete, invited the famous Athenian architect Daedalus to build a labyrinth for him. When the labyrinth was ready, King Minos jailed Daedalus and his son Icarus in the labyrinth because he wanted to have this great architect in his island forever. Daedalus thought that the only way to escape was to fly out of prison. He made two sets of wax wings, one for himself and one for Icarus, and so, they flew away. Daedalus told Icarus “Don’t fly too close to the sun. The sun melts the wax.” Icarus did not remember his father’s advice and flew higher and higher until his wax wings started to melt. He moved his arms faster and faster. The fast movement of arms did not help much and Icarus fell into the deep sea. His father flew over the place where Icarus fell. Daedalus looked hard but he could not find his son. He named the sea “Icarian Sea” after his son’s name. Of course, this is a myth but it is the first flight accident.

Biography -Igor Sikorsky

People call Igor Sikorsky ‘the father of helicopter’. He was born in Kiev, Russia. As a schoolboy, he built several model aircraft and helicopters. He studied in Russia and in Paris, France. Sikorsky built the world’s first multi-engine aircraft. In 1919, after the Russian revolution, Sikorsky emigrated from Russia to the USA. As his money was running out, he taught Russian immigrants mathematics, astronomy and aviation. He worked as an aircraft designer, as well. In 1923, Sikorsky started his own aeronautical company, the Sikorsky Aero Engineering Corporation. Between the years 1925 -1940 he created a series of increasingly successful aircraft, including the first helicopter. Sikorsky died in USA in 1972. The Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation continues to the present day as one of the world’s leading helicopter manufacturers.

The four forces:

Lift (άνωση) pulls the plane upward

Drag (οπισθέλκουσα) pushes the plane down and backward,

Thrust (ώση) pushes the plane forward and

Gravity (βάρος, βαρύτητα) pushes the plane downward.

Air pockets

Jim: How safe are airplanes, father? Father: Very safe. They are the safest means of transport.

Mary: Dad, tell us again about that flight incident with the air pocket

Father: Yes… it happened in 1985. I was travelling on a Boeing 747 from New York to Ireland.

Mary and Jim: To Ireland!

Father: Yes. It was a business trip. Well, we were flying over the ocean when the plane took a dive. The airhostess was serving coffee and the passenger next to me was sleeping. I was reading a magazine. The cup of hot coffee was spilt on the magazine. The passenger next to me woke up terrified. The plane was shaking and many passengers were screaming. I knew that something was wrong. While I was saying my prayers, I heard the captain’s calm voice. “Please fasten your seatbelts. Don’t panic. It was only an air pocket. Everything is all right. We are going to land in Dublin, Ireland in about an hour. Enjoy your coffee.”

Jim: Oh… planes meet air pockets and they also meet stormy weather.

Father: That’s why we should fasten our seatbelts…