

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

‘You Are Gods’



P R O S V E T A

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Part I

‘You
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Part I - 'You are Gods'

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‘Be Perfect as
Your Heavenly Father is Perfect’

Human beings are weak, wretched sinners. This is what the Church has been telling Christians continually for centuries. Original sin, the fault committed by their first parents, has condemned them for ever to a life steeped in darkness, error and misery. Human beings are conceived in sin, born in sin, and are not able to break away from this sinful state. Well, let me tell you, by continuing to stress and propagate such an idea, a person's hope and desire to cast off the shackles of his limitations is diminished. We should dismiss these ideas that keep human beings deeply mired in their weaknesses. Human beings are sinners... human beings are malicious... that is understood, but nowhere is it written that they should remain so for all eternity. You will say: ‘But what about original sin? No human being can escape the consequences of original sin.’ Where did you find such an idea? Not in the Gospels, that is certain. Did Jesus speak of original sin? No. And not only did he not speak of it, he spoke these unprecedented words: *Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect.* How can fallen beings achieve this ideal of divine perfection?

By affirming the reality of one God, Moses brought something fundamental to religious consciousness, and in a

wider sense also to the understanding of man and the universe. But this God was an implacable master, an all-consuming fire. Human beings were mere timid creatures who trembled before him, slaves who had to fulfil his commandments on pain of being annihilated. And then came Jesus saying this one God is a Father and we, his children. This notion reduces the distance separating us from God: family ties unite us to him. Everything is changed. And where exactly does that change lie? In our perception. But how many Christians have really understood what it means to be the child of God? How do they picture their heavenly Father? As an old man with a long beard, watching them, noting the good and bad things they do? Or as a kindly indulgent old man, on whose knees they climb to pull his beard and hair? Even if Christians have been saying for centuries: *Our Father who art in Heaven*¹ they have not yet understood in depth the consequences of this divine filiation. If we are children of God it means that we are of the same nature as God (a child cannot possess a nature different from that of its father) and original sin should no longer be invoked to explain the pitiful state in which we find ourselves... and in which we would necessarily remain.

You will say that this idea of an original sin, which led our first parents, Adam and Eve, to be banished from Paradise, is in the Old Testament, the Church did not invent it. Yes, indeed, and their punishment was coupled with these terrible words, which God addressed to Adam: *Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.* Then, at the entrance to the garden, the Lord God placed angels armed with a flaming sword to guard the way in.

Does this mean that humankind was rejected for ever? No, the conception of divine punishment inflicted on human beings because of the disobedience of their first parents corresponds to the image of the merciless vengeful God of the Old Testament. By teaching us that God is a Father, Jesus not only brought us to a better understanding of the Deity, he also helped develop our understanding of man and of his predestination. Even if he did not openly talk about original sin, he alluded to it in the parable of the prodigal son, in which he showed that the son who had left his father’s house was also able to return. If he understood the fault he had committed, his father would welcome him, and not only welcome him, but would lay on a feast to celebrate his return and reinstate him in his previous dignity.

Those who are not aware of their dignity as children of God expose themselves to losing their way and falling into despair because they will never find that which, deep within themselves, they are really looking for. How can human beings really blossom if they ignore their true nature, that divine nature with which they must identify? This is what Jesus brought to light when he said: *The Father and I are one.*

Of course you will say: ‘Yes, but Jesus is Jesus, not us. He is truly the son of God, whereas we ...’ Well, listen to me carefully. If the Church made Jesus equal to God himself, the second person of the Trinity, Christ – a cosmic principle – that was its business, but in doing so it committed a grave error, for this put an infinite distance between God and us. And this error has had appalling results.² Jesus, for his part, never said any such thing. He never claimed to be different in essence from other human beings. When he said he was the son of God, he was not implying that he was by nature superior to the rest of humankind. On the contrary, while saying he was the son of God he also emphasized the divine nature of all human beings.

Otherwise, what would be the meaning of his words in the Sermon on the Mount: *Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect*, and, *the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these?* To interpret these words correctly, however, you have first to recognize the reality of reincarnation.*

If Jesus said that we can accomplish the same works as he, it must be that we possess the same nature, the same quintessence as he. Why do Christians neglect this aspect of his teaching? First of all, because they are lazy. They are not prepared to make an effort to follow in Jesus’ footsteps. They say: ‘He was the son of God, so he was perfect and there is nothing extraordinary about him having exceptional knowledge, virtues and powers. Whereas for us poor sinners it is normal to be weak, selfish and malicious, and we shall therefore remain so.’ Well no, it is not normal, not normal at all! We are children of God just as Jesus was the son of God. The only difference is that Jesus was aware of his divine nature and predestination and he had already worked towards this in his previous incarnations. He came to earth with immense possibilities and a very clear idea of his mission, but he too had to work hard on his inner self, he too had to resist temptation, fast, and pray. Have you had a look at the Gospels? Why did he have to wait until he was thirty before receiving the Holy Spirit? And why did the devil try to tempt him?

Both in his words and by the way he lived Jesus never ceased to accentuate his divine filiation and his divine filiation is also ours. As long as we do not realize this we cannot know who we are, neither can we manifest ourselves as truly free beings. Yes, because the worst kind of slavery human beings

* On the subject of reincarnation, see Part IV, Chap. 2: ‘Reincarnation: the teaching of the Gospels’.

can be subject to is to be kept in ignorance, unaware of their dignity as children of God. It is because Jesus wanted to reveal this great truth to the people that he was crucified, for to say that all human beings are children of God was to say that they are all equal. And this would have been to deprive a small minority of privileged people the right to consider themselves superior to others and so strip them of their powers and prerogatives. This, of course, the Pharisees and Sadducees could not accept.

Jesus was the most revolutionary of God’s messengers. He was the first to defy all the ancient customs, and his audacity in proclaiming that he was the son of God and that all human beings are equally sons and daughters of God was expiated on the cross. The insistence with which Jesus accentuated man’s divine filiation offended and irritated the Scribes and the Pharisees to the point that they attempted one day to stone him. But Jesus said to them: *I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?* Then they answered, *It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.* And then Jesus reminded them of the verse in the Psalms: *Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, you are gods’?*

So by insisting on man’s divinity, Jesus was only restating a truth already written in the Old Testament. This truth had been intentionally disregarded, and to some extent continues to be so today. Even the Church, whose task it is to pass on the teaching of Jesus, does not concern itself greatly with promulgating this knowledge, which would enable human beings to understand and feel that they are brothers and sisters sharing the same divine origins. Yes, indeed, all men and women are brothers and sisters because they all share the same divine origins. And Jesus not only disclosed this through

words, but through deeds as well. He did not frequent the rich, eminent, and educated, but sought out the humble, the poor, and the uneducated, even those who led ungodly lives. He welcomed them, talked to them, ate with them – and this exasperated the Pharisees.

You know the story of the Samaritan in St John's Gospel: *He left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.'* The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him,

‘Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am he, the one who is speaking to you.’

So Jesus did not make these revelations – which give us the key to spiritual life – to an important man, not even to an educated man. He made them to a woman, a simple woman who asked him simple questions, a woman who, judging from common moral principles, led a dissolute life, and furthermore, a woman who belonged to a people hostile towards the Jews: the Samaritans. It was to her that Jesus spoke of the water that gives eternal life. It was to her that he said that the place of worship did not matter, be it mountain or temple, because God could only be worshipped beyond all material form: in spirit and in truth,³ that is, in the most sacred and most secret depths of human beings. And it was to her that he disclosed that he was the Messiah: *I am he, the one who is speaking to you.*

Why did Jesus adopt this attitude? Because the truths he brought did not concern only a few doctors of the law or a few powerful individuals. They concerned all human beings. They concerned the very essence of human beings, the essence that can be touched by those truths whatever their education, social class, sex or nationality. Jesus provoked the anger of the political and religious authorities of his time with this attitude,

because with it he undermined the very basis of their power.

Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect. What was Jesus thinking of when he spoke these words? Was his knowledge of human nature so inadequate? Why did he give human beings an ideal that is seemingly so unattainable? Because he knew that a person’s true nature is his divine nature, and in every person he saw that which is eternal and all-powerful: their spirit, a spark from the bosom of the Creator.

But then why is the Christianity community such a sorry sight? Two thousand years ago Jesus said: *Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect*, and yet, all over the world Christians fight and annihilate each other in all manner of ways as if they were animals. They continue to be weak, wretched, selfish, and evil. This proves that the knowledge and methods they have been given are inadequate and ineffective; they need something more. Everything is in the Gospels. The Gospels contain treasures, but treasures which they have not yet discovered, let alone put into practice. Yes, the Gospels contain everything; but the heads of Christians contain very little.

No book can teach us more essential truths than the Gospels.⁴ You say you have read them and they did not reveal a great deal; that is why you are now turning to Eastern religions and philosophies in an attempt to find your way. Well, you simply have not understood anything about the boundless wisdom contained in the Gospels. Yes, of course I realize that you are fed up with well-known texts and feel like a change of diet. But it is dangerous to seek out teachings you do not understand, because they are not suited to your make-up and your mentality. Some Westerners have studied and practised them to good effect, but they are rare. We Westerners have the Gospels. You have neither read them seriously nor thought about them in depth, but you are looking for something else. For what purpose? Very often people follow an Eastern teaching

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in order to boast about it to others or simply to feel themselves different. But there is no point in that. It only proves that you like the exotic, and not the simple, straightforward truth. People turn their backs on Jesus, but in order to follow whom?⁵

Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The teaching of Christ leads human beings towards the realization of the highest ideal there is: to resemble that divine model they carry within themselves. What more is there?

Notes

- 1 See *The True Meaning of Christ's Teaching*, Izvor 215, Chap. 1: 'Our Father Which Art in Heaven.'
- 2 See *The Splendour of Tiphareth*, C.W. 10, Chap. 16: 'Christ and the Solar Religion'.
- 3 See '*In Spirit and in Truth*', Izvor 235, Chaps. 11 to 14.
- 4 See the commentaries on the Gospels, in C.W. 1 and 2.
- 5 See *Life and Work in an Initiatic School*, C.W. 30, Chap. 5: 'The Spirit of the Teaching', p.152-160.

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Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov



The distinguished philosopher and spiritual Master Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov (1900 - 1986) was born in Bulgaria. In 1937 he moved to France, where he lived and taught for almost fifty years, until his death. One of the most striking aspects of the Master's teaching is the enormous variety of ways in which he presents the one central theme of man and his growth in perfection. Whatever the question under discussion, it is invariably dealt with in terms of how we can better understand ourselves and better conduct our lives.

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