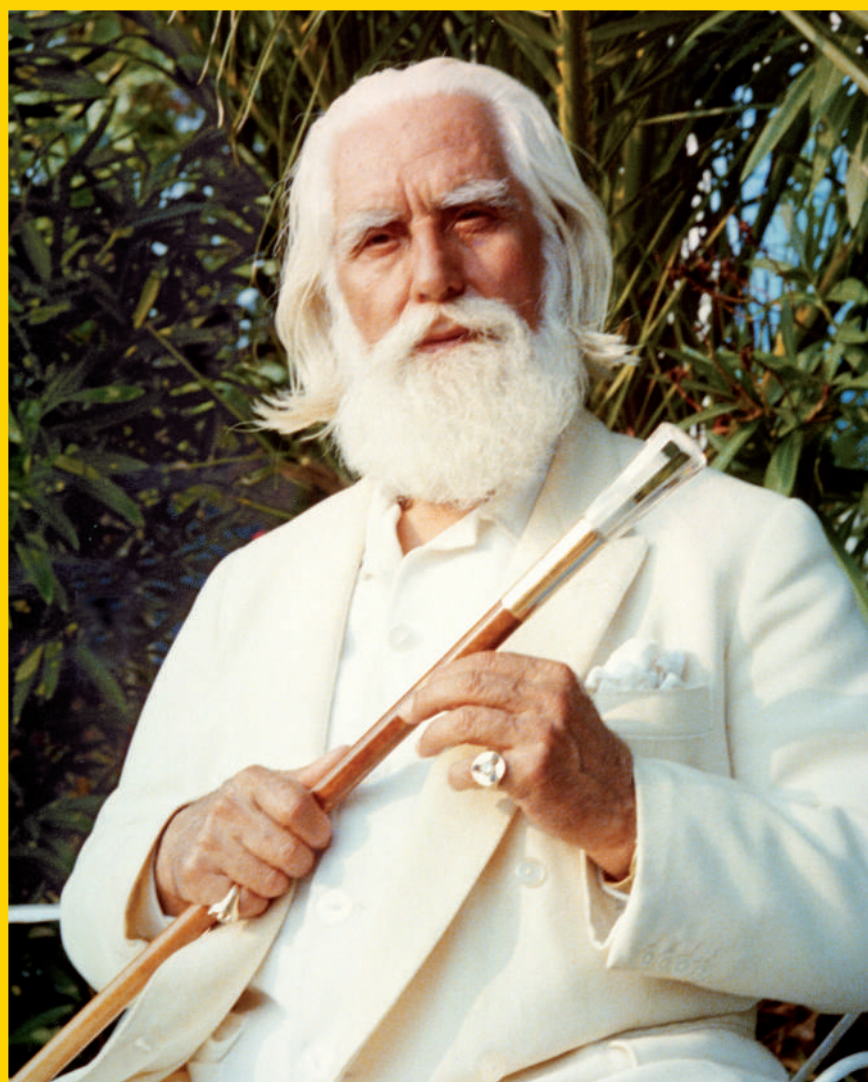


Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov



A Living Book

Autobiographical Reflections 1

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1

*The mysterious pathways
of destiny*

I was fifteen years old... Like many adolescents I was filled with longings to do or be something lofty and heroic. At this age there are no limits to the imagination, and so there are dreams of saving the world, of setting out to help suffering humanity, of making the discovery that will cure the incurable disease, of becoming the greatest poet or musician or even of waking Sleeping Beauty herself. I was not exactly sure what it was I wanted to do, but I knew that it had to be grand and noble and beautiful. I had no name for this ideal, nor did I have any idea of what it would take to accomplish it. What I did see quite clearly were all the obstacles that rose up before me. Since the death of my father some years earlier, my family and I lived in the most miserable of conditions. Great qualities of character would be required to pull myself up and out of these conditions, and yet I had very little awareness of what these qualities would have to be. On top of this I did not like school at all; I was bored by it, and my behaviour was both worrying and distressing to my mother. There was a huge gap between my

actions and the unattainable ideal that I longed for in my heart, and this conflict tore me apart.

At that time, I came across some books on Hindu spirituality which spoke of reincarnation and karma,¹ and I wondered, 'What could I have done in previous lives to deserve such punishment and now have to deal with so many difficulties, suffer so many hardships? Even if I was bored at school, I still wanted to learn so that I would be able to accomplish great things, but at the same time I felt I lacked the abilities that I would have loved to possess, and all paths appeared to close before me. I could not see any way forward, and I was convinced that I alone was responsible. I needed to be enlightened and guided, but I did not know any adult in whom I could confide, not even my mother. She was a truly exceptional woman, very wise, with a wisdom born of her love; she had received little education and could not deal with my anxieties, or answer the questions I asked myself. In fact, what I needed was a spiritual guide, and it was only two years later that I would meet Master Peter Deunov.

But in reading these books about Hindu spirituality, I had learned also that, when we do not have the privilege of meeting a Master on the physical plane, we can be helped if we know how to link to the great beings who live in certain places on the earth. Many of these elevated beings, I read, live in the Himalayas, and by their presence, by their thoughts, they strive to lead people on the path of light. This was a great revelation to me, and from that moment on I began to concentrate on them, to link up with them.

So it was that from the time of my adolescence I accepted the idea that highly evolved beings lived on earth and that, even though I could not meet them physically, I had the means to reach them by thought. I imagined that these wise

and luminous beings agreed to give me their wisdom and their light. And perhaps this is actually what happened; when they saw how much I grieved over my imperfections, and how strongly I wished to improve, they must have had pity on me and agreed to help me. Each day I imagined I was with them, among them, and even helping in their work. I have no idea where this desire came from, or what it was in me that advised me to work in this way. I do know that when I actually linked with these beings I no longer felt alone. I was certain too that I belonged to another family, a spiritual family, and that even if I had not met it, I was living with it.

Thirty years later when I had already been living in France for some time, some friends told me of a well-known clairvoyant who lived in Zurich. Because I am aware of the reality of a world that we cannot see but with which we can be in relationship, I have always been interested in studying the phenomena of clairvoyance and mediumship in people who have been born with this particular gift. I have therefore met a few of them, but this clairvoyant from Zurich particularly impressed me.

In 1945 I had been invited to Switzerland, and I decided to take advantage of this stay to go to Zurich for a consultation with her. As she spoke only German, I had to find an interpreter. I asked the owner of the hotel where I was staying if she could help. She told me that her daughter spoke French fluently and would gladly accompany me, and so the two of us set off together to meet her. She was already very old, but the moment I saw her I was struck by the colour and delicate texture of her skin.² The skin of her face showed that this woman was a saint and that immediately

gave me confidence. She began by taking my hand, although she then confided that it was just a normal gesture for her: she did not see anything in the hand, but saw directly into the subtle realms. Then she said to the young lady who had come with me, 'Tell the gentleman that he comes from a royal family.' I protested, 'But that's not possible! I know my father, I know my mother, there is nothing royal in our family.' She smiled and repeated, 'Tell the gentleman that he comes from a royal family and that he will understand me later.'³ And, in fact, I understood later that the royal family I belonged to was not on the physical plane, but the spiritual plane.

She continued, 'You come from a Balkan country, your father died when you were eight years old and, after his death, you lived a life of extreme poverty. You had a younger brother, and in order to bring you both up, your mother got remarried to a man who already had a child, and together they had three more children. Despite all these material difficulties, you studied a great deal. You have been in France for eight years. You belong to a spiritual teaching established by a Master whom I can see there, behind you. He has white hair and a white beard and he is no longer on earth.' So, it was true, the Master had left the earth! At this time, just at the end of the war, I was not able to receive any news from Bulgaria, but I had had certain feelings, I had had dreams warning me. Now this clairvoyant gave me confirmation of it: the Master had departed.

She continued, 'When he saw that the one he had sent to France was carrying on his work and that he could count on him, he was able to depart. You are his heir, he chose you as his heir... And now, listen to me carefully. In the next few years, you will have to undergo some difficult ordeals, you

will be threatened by mortal dangers, accidents will befall you, but you will come through them all. Then, you will go to India where you will have some very important meetings, and you will live through extraordinary events. The secret of the Queen of Sheba will be revealed to you.' I was totally taken aback: how was it that this simple, uneducated woman could speak of the Queen of Sheba's secret? She told me many other things, which I may tell you about some other time. Everything that she had seen of my past was absolutely true, and what she foresaw has either come true or is on its way to coming true.

But let's go back to that first phrase of hers: that I belonged to a royal family. If I had wanted to be someone who gave orders, to control and rule others, then clearly the conditions I had been born and raised in were not the best. But even if I was not immediately aware of it, as my true ambition was to become king of my own kingdom, that is master of myself, these conditions were the best.

No one arrives on this earth with a clear knowledge of who they are, what they have come to do, and for what reason. For a long time, for me too, nothing was clear. To incarnate is to take a dive into matter, and matter has such a powerful grip on the soul that it drives out memory. We know that the ancient Greeks described the beyond as a land threaded through by different rivers, of which one was the river Lethe, whose name means 'forgetfulness'. They believed that souls drank the water of this river after death in order to forget the events of their earthly lives. And it was also these waters that they drank at the moment of rebirth. You can find an echo of this belief in one of Plato's books, *The Republic*, where he explains that a soul's destiny

is based on the life it lived in previous incarnations. Before descending into matter once again, it knows what awaits it, either because this has been imposed on it, or because it has had the chance to choose, but the moment it descends, this knowledge is taken away from it, for again it must drink the waters of Lethe, and it forgets everything.

Obviously this is only a picturesque way of presenting things but that is the reality; the incarnating soul starts out knowing nothing of its future destiny. Even for the most evolved souls, this remains hidden, but gradually they remember, and that is what differentiates them from others who are condemned to remain in ignorance of why they are here on earth and what they are here to do. Yes, contrary to what some people assert, no one is born with a clear knowledge of their predestination. Of course, at a very young age we can feel drawn in this or that direction, but even so, it still remains quite vague. It takes years and years of research, study, and even suffering, before we discover our true vocation.⁴

So it was after many years and many ordeals that I began to understand how the meaning of a destiny is revealed, and I want what I have discovered to be of use to you so that you, too, will be better able to solve the problems you encounter each day. How many hindrances and difficulties that we meet exist just to force us to take the one path where we could accomplish our predestination as sons and daughters of God! A sublime wisdom rules over all destinies, and we must accept this truth if we do not wish to increase our sufferings. Cosmic Intelligence has no intention of crushing us, but with what it gives us, and with what it withholds too, it puts us in situations where we have to express and produce the best in us.

The mysterious pathways of destiny

Since I could see no way out on the outside, I had to look within myself and work tirelessly with thought, imagination and willpower. Everything I succeeded in obtaining later on, what I became, I know now I owe to these limitations, to these hardships imposed on me. For each person, destiny has a special language that he or she must strive to interpret. Each hindrance, each obstacle that I came up against forced me to look for what I needed in the realm of the soul and spirit. And now I want to give you too all that I have discovered.

After many years, I understood that outer conditions are not the determining factor. Or more exactly, they are the determining factor in the sense that they make us work on ourselves. When we cannot move forward and we do not want to go backwards, we can only go deep within ourselves, like the pearl fisher who dives into the depths of the ocean. Or else, we can soar further and higher until we reach the stars. Now, I can tell you; thanks to all the obstacles I met, I have fished many pearls and I have soared to the stars. We must never become resigned to poverty, we must never become resigned to lack, we must never become paralyzed by difficulties, but experience them only as stimuli to go in search of true riches.

The pathways of destiny are always mysterious. Contrary to appearances, destiny had placed me in the best conditions. But what does a fifteen-year-old know about the paths of destiny? And especially, how could I know at that age that before I came down to earth I myself had accepted these conditions? Yes, for now I know – I had accepted them.

Notes

1. See *Man, Master of his Destiny*, Izvor Coll. n° 202, chap. 8: 'Reincarnation'.
2. See *'In Spirit and in Truth'*, Izvor Coll. n° 235, chap. 9: 'The skin'.
3. See *On the Art of Teaching – from the Initiatic Point of View*, Complete Works, v. 29, chap. 5: 'On perfection', part 4.
4. See *The Wellsprings of Eternal Joy*, Izvor Coll. n° 242, chap. 7: 'Like a fish in water'.

Artists create works that are external to themselves using external materials; they concentrate their efforts on this external matter, and they create marvels. But I will say that, for me, true artists are those who are able to take themselves, first and foremost, as their creative matter. All the methods of the spiritual life are available to them to help and inspire them in this task.

In the psychic world, we can be musicians, poets, architects, sculptors, etc. The work done by disciples of Initiatic Science includes all the arts. What a discovery it was for me, the day I understood that I could work on matter which was not foreign to me – my own matter. That is why I only work at writing my own book, that is to say, myself. I have never written anything other than the book that is me. You will say, 'But what about the books we read?' I don't write them, I have entrusted this work to certain people. My task is only to write my own book, and when I speak I do so in the knowledge that I am also writing. Yes, when I speak I am striving to print heavenly writings on your souls.

... And each one of you is also a book, a book that you yourself are in the process of writing: your thoughts and feelings trace the characters of a script which will be engraved on the matter of your subtle bodies. So, from now on, your work is to become a living book. By applying yourself to this work, you will have a beneficial influence on all those you come into contact with. That is also fraternal love.

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

The spiritual Master, Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov (1900–1986), left his native Bulgaria for France in 1937. He gave several thousand improvised lectures and informal talks, initially recorded in shorthand and later on tape and video cassette. His teaching continues to be published in book form, with more than 80 volumes now available in French and translations into 37 other languages.

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