

**Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov**

**THE KEY**  
*to*  
*the Problems of Existence*



*Complete Works – Volume 11*

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## Chapter One

# The personality

Question: Master, you say that the personality is not divine by nature but how do you explain that, since nothing exists outside of God?

The question is an important one, but difficult to answer. The word 'divine' has two meanings. When I say that the personality is not divine by nature, I mean that it is not infinite, not eternal, and that it has none of the divine attributes such as light and stability. That is the sense in which the individuality *is* divine. Nevertheless both are part of the same reality, God.

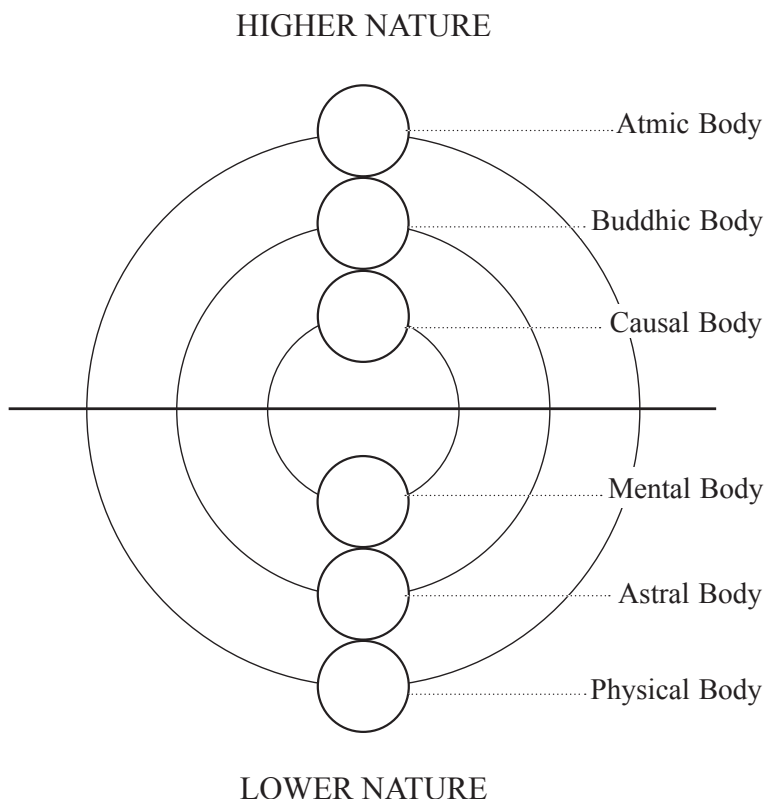
Let us glance at what the ancient Sacred Books said on the subject of good and evil. God declares in one of the Hindu Sacred Books, 'I am both good and evil. All things were made by me.' And in the Bible, *'I am the Lord and there is no other; I form the light, I create darkness, I make peace and create evil. I the Lord, do all these things... I will not tolerate evil, I am indomitable, I will punish the wicked.'* Since nothing exists outside God, then evil (or what we think of as evil) is as much a part of him as good. Are we to believe then that God is the Author of human sorrow, of war and devastation, wickedness and cruelty? Astonishing as it may seem, it is so. We need

considerable light to be able to accept this apparent contradiction... that God created evil and yet strives continually to overcome it!

Once I suggested that perhaps God created man as a sort of diversion, that perhaps He was bored and sought distraction, and now He sits back and with vast amusement, watches the way humans carry on! This does not alter the fact that He alone exists, that Creation is part of him and nothing created exists outside of him.

Now, let us look at the way our lower nature, the personality, was formed. Originally, it was a secretion, an emanation of the Spirit. When the Spirit wished to express itself it had to form an appropriate vehicle for each one of the spheres through which it had to pass in its descent to earth... vehicles which we call bodies. Going from the subtlest and finest vehicle down to the densest and coarsest, these are the Atmic, Buddhic and Causal bodies which constitute the higher Self, the individuality, and the mental, astral and physical bodies which constitute the personality or lower nature. The mental body (seat of our thoughts), the astral body (seat of our emotions) and the physical body (the material plane) are reflections, respectively, of the three higher bodies.

Someone will ask, 'But why, if the personality reflects the individuality, is it so weak, why is it so blind and limited, so subject to error?' The answer is that the individuality, which is common to all men, is divine indeed, all-powerful and entirely free in the heavenly regions where it bathes permanently in light, peace, and happiness... but it is unable to express itself in the dense regions of the material world except to the extent it is permitted to do so by the personality, or the three lower bodies. Thus it is possible for someone to be weak, ignorant and cruel on earth and at the same time to be full of wisdom, love and power on the higher planes... limited and ineffectual below, and quite the opposite above.



We are told by esoteric science that man is a being who possesses a great variety of riches, that he is far more complex than he appears. This is where the esoteric science differs from the official science, which says, 'Man is what you see, you can study him, learn all there is to know about him, by dividing him into so many organs, cells, chemical substances, all numbered and designated by name... that is the whole man... no more, no less.' Esoteric science recognizes the existence of other bodies in man beside the physical.

The individuality, wishing to manifest itself in the dense and dark regions of the personality, is for the time being extremely

limited. It will take time and more study and experience, more development, for the lower bodies or personality to be capable of expressing the qualities and virtues of the individuality. When it does, the mental body will have become subtle and penetrating enough to understand the divine Wisdom; the astral body will be capable of feeling more noble, more selfless emotions and the physical body will have the power to act as it wishes, with nothing standing in its way.

The two natures are not really separate. The individuality keeps trying to bring its good influence to bear upon the personality but, since the personality is interested only in being free and independent, it listens only to itself and seldom obeys the higher impulses. Although it is vivified, fed and sustained by the individuality, it remains opposed to it, and will continue to be so until the individuality finally is able to control the personality completely. Once the personality gives in and is submissive and obedient, at one with the individuality, it will be a marriage, the only real marriage, the true love.<sup>1</sup> In esoteric science this union is described as 'joining both ends'. The personality with three heads, like Cerberus, the dog guarding the entrance to hell, is at one end, and the individuality, the Trinity of our divine nature is at the other end. The longed-for fusion, union or marriage, is bound to take place sooner or later in every case, but when it will be is difficult to know, for no two people are alike. In the meanwhile, the task of the disciple is to learn, as he experiences the trials and tribulations of life, to submit the personality to the individuality, becoming the willing servant and the instrument of the divine Will within himself. That is the goal, the aim of all the instruction, methods and exercises offered by an initiatic school.

Most people however, would rather bow to the capricious demands of the personality, rebellious, self-centred, anarchistic as it is, because they are convinced that is the attitude to have in order to evolve. People who are more intelligent and advanced, who have lived through many experiences in their numerous

incarnations, prefer the way of self-control, self-mastery and the loftier qualities of the individuality. Thanks to their willingness to obey the higher Intelligence, or thanks to the Light within if you prefer, they receive divine help in overcoming the chaos and anarchy of their instinctive nature. The divine Will manifests itself through them, expressing Itself in the celestial colours, forms, rays, fragrances, and music that surround them.

The question is, when we know what to do in order to become liberated and we know how to gain complete control over ourselves and progress in our evolution, why do so many of us give in to the personality and allow ourselves to be carried away by it... why? Because of the fact that even when we choose a higher level of consciousness, it may still be a product of the personality! We must reach the superconscious level, the level of the individuality. The individuality is characterized by an expanded consciousness, we reach it only when we understand that all creatures, all life is one, that all living creatures form a unity in the ocean of universal life in which all are immersed. Then our feelings change, we are filled with feelings of joy, wonderment, infinity. Human consciousness has its roots in the three bodies of the personality, it is therefore limited. Consciousness is the result of thoughts, feelings and actions: the more we think and feel and act, the more developed our consciousness becomes, but as long as we are tied to the personality our consciousness is limited to desire, we believe we are separate from others, from nature, from the Whole.

The reason for prayer, meditation and all the other exercises taught in an initiatic school is to establish the communication between man's lower nature and his higher one, the personality and the individuality, thereby stretching his consciousness and lifting it so that it may perceive the Truth.<sup>2</sup>

Now let us suppose you are looking at a prism. With the eyes of the personality you will see no more than an object, a three-sided transparent crystal from which, when the light hits it, seven wonderful colours come streaming forth. This is wonderful

indeed, but it is still on an ordinary level of consciousness. That is the way the majority observe things. But once you develop the higher consciousness of the individuality, you do not see the crystal as an object separate from yourself, you put yourself *inside* the prism and enter its essence from within, you feel and understand its nature because you are *within*.<sup>3</sup> This makes a great difference in the way you think about the prism. It is the same for plants: if your consciousness allows you to enter a plant, you become one with the life flowing through it, one with the plant as if you were it... you *know* its properties, healing virtues and potential. And the same with animals, if you can penetrate an animal in your consciousness, you become one with it (without of course losing your human consciousness) and then whatever the animal feels, you feel.

The kind of education and upbringing which people receive today does nothing to prepare them for life, the real life. Their vision is limited to form, dimension, distance, weight and length... a limited scope at best! To enter a higher consciousness, they must now enlarge their sight and pay attention to the individuality, the higher Self, where neither time nor space exists, where you are one with all creatures, where past and present exist in your soul as the eternal present,<sup>4</sup> and you can learn anything you want to know that has ever happened.

The reason for all the dire events and problems encountered by man during his life is that he allows the personality to dominate him, he lives in the personality. A small minority only make an effort to go higher, further, beyond their limits, to see with the eyes of the Spirit. For them the results are different, they have other sensations and feelings, other conceptions. As you see it is difficult to describe these things; although they are perfectly clear in my head, I cannot find the words to describe them to you, they belong to the fourth and fifth dimensions. I have the same difficulty explaining them to you as I would have in explaining third dimensional ideas to those who live in the second dimension. The fourth dimension is inexplicable.

When I say the personality is not divine by nature, it is a manner of speaking, for certainly God is at the origin of everything. Suppose for the moment that you are a gold seeker. If you are lucky you may come across some ore one day, but you still have to know how to extract the gold. The ore and the gold originate from the same source, but still they are not the same thing. All matter has the same origin. You will be able to extract the gold from the matrix if you know how, but it is another matter to transform the matrix into gold... or to transform the gold back into base metal. These changes occur before our eyes in nature. You can melt a piece of lead to make it brilliant and shining as silver, but not for long... very quickly a dull film forms and the bright silver like metal vanishes. Again it will reappear momentarily if you scratch the lead, to disappear as quickly as it appears. Right before your eyes, the lead becomes transformed back into earth-matter.

The personality also comes from God, 'What!' you say. 'If God's nature is so utterly different from matter, how could He form anything as dense and dark as matter, as the personality?' My answer is the following example: have you ever watched a spider weaving its web? God proceeded in exactly the same way to make the world. We can learn from a tiny spider how God created the world! 'Spiders?' you say. 'Are they so clever?' I have no information as to how many diplomas are awarded annually to spiders, but if you will take the trouble to observe one as it spins its web, you will, if you understand what it is doing and for what reasons, be able to draw some wonderfully philosophic conclusions! The spider's web is a mathematical, geometric, perfect construction, a whole universe! How does the spider do it? First it secretes a liquid which hardens, forming a fine tenuous elastic thread with which the spider then builds its web.

Snails are also very instructive. One day I stopped one, 'Tell me, dear snail... I am not stopping you for the usual reason, to cook you for lunch... no, I am seeking information. Tell me,

why do you carry your house around with you on your back?' 'It is the most economical way.' 'Isn't it tiring?' 'Not at all, I'm used to it.' 'What made you form the habit?' 'Oh, I don't trust people, I'm afraid that if I leave my house, a stranger will get inside, and that will be the end of me for I have no arms to fight with, I am too soft, too delicate and helpless. And so I avoid danger by carrying my house around with me.' 'Oh', I said. 'This is a whole philosophy! But what is your house made of?' 'Of saliva. The saliva hardens when exposed to air, and that is what I build my house with.'

You see how interesting it is to converse with snails, besides which it helps you to understand how God created the world. He emanated a very fine subtle matter, his own essence, which then solidified. Between yawns you are thinking: silly bedtime story! One day everyone including the most learned and erudite will stay awake to hear such stories.

On the surface the snail and its shell are two separate things, but in fact they are one and the same, for the snail himself secretes the matter his house is made of. It is exactly the same, for the personality and the individuality, although the personality is dark and heavy and thick, hard as a shell, and the individuality is light and alive, quick and mobile... as different as night and day! Yet originally they were one. The individuality must form a vehicle, an envelope for itself exactly as the snail forms its shell, by emanating a substance which hardens... into the personality! We carry our physical body as the snail carries its shell, and we live inside it. The trouble is that man has never been told that he must not identify with this shell, his body, but rather with the power that formed it, the Spirit, the individuality. For that reason he remains weak and powerless, limited and mistaken. The body is not the man, the man is not his body! It is available for his use as a car, a horse, an instrument, a house. Man is pure Spirit,<sup>5</sup> not matter, but all-powerful, infinite, omniscient Spirit. If he will identify with the Spirit, he can become outwardly what he already is inwardly, enlightened, powerful, immortal... divine!

You should understand that you are all divinities. Yes, divinities, and you live on a high plane free of limitations, shadows and darkness, sorrow and suffering, in the midst of abundance and joy. Do you want to know what prevents you from manifesting the splendour of those higher regions here below? The personality. Your personality is too unadaptable, too self-centred to capture the subtle messages from those regions... like a radio that cannot pick up all the stations. The waves and vibrations released by cosmic Intelligence in the higher spheres are swift as lightning, and the matter of the personality is too dense, too hard of hearing to vibrate in tune with them, and so it cannot seize the divine messages. They flash by without making an impression and we continue to live in ignorance, far from knowing or experiencing the wonderful joy of our higher Being.

There are ways of changing this situation. If you choose to lead a pure life and become once again a child of God, then your heart will open and become generous, your mind will clear and your will become indomitable. The personality will become the willing instrument with which to express the divine life of the individuality more and more fully and correctly... until the day comes when both the personality and the individuality become fused with each other, the personality ceases to exist and becomes one with the individuality.

Until you can bring about that unity, you will go on receiving occasional revelations, but they are momentary, you will have intuitive glimpses of the dazzling reality, but they will not last, the clouds will return. Then again whilst reading a book or contemplating a landscape, whilst praying or meditating, you suddenly are aware of living a great moment. Again it does not last. A man's life is made up of such alternations between light and dark. When at last he becomes a true expression of God, a divine manifestation of Reality, then he embarks on the new life, he is *reborn*.

Someone will object, 'What nonsense! There is neither rhyme nor reason to all that... I don't believe any of it.' Well,

let them go on leading the life of the personality! Sooner or later they will realize how much time they wasted. Far better to make a break immediately, yes, and believe, and start at once to practise self-control, to learn to dominate your instincts. Then you will go forward! But this does not mean you will be divine at once. No. You try and you fall, you try and fall and get up, you alternate between discouragement and confidence, until finally you allow the divine impersonal consciousness to take over and install itself inside you.

Sometimes we are weary and begin to doubt. There are so many bizarre philosophies in the world, ideas that are contrary to divine tradition, and sometimes we feel like forgetting it all and going back to the ordinary way of thinking. Those are times during which we must be very careful, very vigilant; we must realize what is waiting for us if we do slide back, and say to ourselves, 'I feel this way because I am tired, that is why I have lost my appetite for praying and meditation and even reading... but it will pass, I will wait for this moment to pass.' Everything passes. After the spring comes summer, and after summer comes autumn, followed by winter... and then spring again! Why wouldn't it be the same with us? Tell yourself to let the wintry moment go by, because spring will follow in no time. That is the way to reason, not to abandon hope as many do, and let go... which only makes matters worse, for it is very difficult to recapture a state of light and peace once you give up... very difficult indeed.<sup>6</sup>

The fact is we have no choice, we must learn to cope with the personality and continue to work with it until we dominate it. Never forget that it must not have the last word *ever*. If we keep working diligently toward the High Ideal, things gradually change of themselves, we become recharged, our strength is renewed, the bad days are behind us, Spring is here, rivers are flowing, birds are singing, flowers fill the air with perfume, and all is well!

If you will do as I have been telling you, even when you are tired and listless, even if you lose hope you will still emanate a particle of light, a radiance, something sweet and gentle and harmonious. If not, you may be superficially strong and vigorous and sure, but, if you are one with the personality, then inside you are musty and mildewed, full of dust.

Videlinata, 23 February, 1966

### Notes

1. See *Langage symbolique, langage de la nature*, Complete Works, vol. 8, chap. 8: 'Le vrai mariage'.
2. See *La prière*, Brochure n° 305, and *Meditation*, Brochure n° 302.
3. See *The Splendour of Tiphareth – The Yoga of the Sun*, Complete Works, vol. 10, chap. 12: 'The Prism, Symbol of Man'.
4. See *Langage symbolique, langage de la nature*, Complete Works, vol. 8, chap. 4: 'Le temps et l'éternité'.
5. See 'Know Thyself': *Jnana Yoga*, Complete Works, vol. 17, chap. 3: 'Spirit and Matter', part II.
6. See *Love Greater Than Faith*, Izvor Coll. n° 239, chap. 2: 'Destructive doubt: Unification and bifurcation'.

Contrary to most esoteric thinkers, whose aim is to give their disciples a better intellectual understanding of religious and philosophical doctrines, the Teaching of the Master Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov points in another direction, to a higher goal that is more important for mankind. His ideas are accessible to everyone and applicable to their daily lives as well as to the life of the spirit.

This volume presents a choice of talks given by the Master Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov which are pedagogical in nature: the reader will be surprised to see himself reflected in this light, his behaviour is explained to him in a way both graphic and highly imaginative. He will be able to size himself up and overcome the faults and weaknesses that are his limitations. That force within us which leads us astray is our 'personality', and thanks to the wisdom contained in this volume we can learn to use it properly so that instead of being our enemy it becomes a precious ally. Instead of condemning ourselves to certain failure by struggling against our own nature, we can learn to control and use it in order to rise to greater, nobler heights. Little by little each one of us can discover his own higher Self, his 'individuality' which not only is above all the contradictions of his lower nature but is capable of using them to create inner harmony and truly brotherly relations amongst men.

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