

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

Harmony and Health



Izvor Collection



P R O S V E T A

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Chapter One

Life comes first

I

In the beginning is life. Look around you and observe the creatures of the earth: before anything else they have life, and only after that do they begin, to a greater or a lesser degree, to feel, think and act effectively.

Life! The word sums up all the undifferentiated, unorganized wealth of the universe before an organizing force disposes and apportions it and puts it to work. All future developments are potentially present in the word 'life'. As in a seed that needs only to be planted, watered and tended in order to produce fruit, a living cell already contains, potentially, all the future limbs and organs of the body. And just as, after a certain time, a tree begins to grow from a seed, so from this magma, from this chaos, from this indeterminate reality that is life, all this hidden potentiality gradually emerges and takes shape.

That is how the organs that we now possess first appeared, and many others will appear in the future. As our physical body is built in the image of our astral body, our astral body in the image of our mental body and so on, up to the divine plane, and as we have five sense organs on the physical plane (touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight), we also have five senses on the astral and mental planes.¹ These subtle senses are not yet developed, but they are there, waiting to manifest themselves, and once they are fully formed, we shall have untold possibilities to see, hear, taste, act and move. Life, living beings, living cells, micro-organisms, contain in themselves all possibilities for their future development but it will be thousands of years before they manifest themselves fully. This is the mystery, the splendour of life!

Look at human beings: they come and go, work and play, and busy themselves with all kinds of things and, all the while, their life grows fainter and drains away because they don't care about it. They think that, since life has been given to them, they have a right to spend it to obtain all the other things they want: wealth, pleasure, knowledge or glory. So they draw on their reserves without restraint until, finding themselves bankrupt, they have to abandon all their activities. What a senseless way to behave! When we lose life we lose everything. The only thing that matters is life, and this means

that we must protect, purify and sanctify it and eliminate whatever hinders it or gets in the way of its development, because life gives us health, strength, power, intelligence and beauty.

In my lecture about the wise and foolish virgins² I explained that the oil that Jesus spoke about symbolized life: when man has no more oil his lamp goes out and he dies. And in every domain you can find other symbols of life: for plants it is water; for the creatures who live on the surface of the earth it is air or, more specifically for human beings, blood; for commerce it is gold or silver; for a car it is petrol, and so on.

Life is the primeval matter, the reservoir from which new creations constantly emerge with ramifications stretching out to the infinite. And from this faceless, undifferentiated life which is no more than a potentiality, the spirit continues to create new elements and new forms.

But men and women are interested in everything except life. As a matter of fact, if life were their first priority, if they were really concerned to cherish and protect it and keep it absolutely pure, they would find more and more possibilities for obtaining all the other things they desire, because it is that enlightened, intense, luminous life that can give them everything. But as this is alien to their philosophy, they fritter their life away in the belief that, just because they are alive, they have

the right to do whatever they please with it. They all say, 'I'm alive and I mean to make the most of it!' but how many actually achieve what they set their sights on? Very few; most of them simply plunder their own resources. It is time to adopt a different philosophy, it is time to realize that your way of thinking has a direct effect on your life, on its reserves, on the very quintessence of your being, and that a wrong attitude distorts and damages everything.

Let me give you an example: take the case of a young man whose father is very rich. As long as he studies and works well his father gives him an allowance. But then, one day, the boy begins to get into trouble and wastes his father's money on amusements and, when his father responds by cutting off his allowance, he suddenly finds himself penniless! What is the boy's real fault in this case? The greatest possible fault: he has endangered his own life by cutting himself off from the conditions, energies and vital currents of which money is the symbol. And when we do the same thing by using and abusing our life as we please and allowing ourselves to break all the laws, we, too, exhaust our reserves and end by finding ourselves destitute: not materially, physically, destitute perhaps, but inwardly destitute. Life is the only wealth there is, and whatever we call it:

money, subsidies, oil, quintessence, it comes to the same thing, for the word 'life' can be replaced by any of these terms.

Human beings squander their lives in the pursuit of all kinds of things that are less important than life itself. They work for years to achieve their ambitions and end by being so exhausted and jaded that, if you weigh up what they have gained against what they have lost, you will find that they have lost everything and gained very little. They are so constituted that they are ready to lose everything because they have never been taught that it is more important to have health and joy – even if one has nothing else – than to have great wealth and be incapable of enjoying it because one has worn oneself out running after it! There is a proverb that says, 'A living dog is better than a dead lion!' Yes, but there are a lot of people who would rather be dead lions!

What is lacking is the true philosophy. Human beings should be taught from their earliest childhood not to fritter away their life but to dedicate it to a sublime goal for, in that way, it becomes richer, stronger and more intense. Life is a capital which you can invest in a bank on high so that, instead of deteriorating and being wasted, its value increases continually and, thanks to this wealth, you will have the possibility of learning and working to better purpose. Whereas, if you

give yourself up to pleasure, to your emotions and passions, you will be throwing away your life, because everything has to be paid for, and you will be paying with your life! Nothing can be gained without the sacrifice of something else. As the French say, 'You can't make an omelette without breaking some eggs!' But I am telling you that that is not true: you can make an omelette without breaking eggs. I know the secret of how to do it: put all your capital in a bank on high and then, the more you work the stronger and more powerful you will be. Yes, instead of growing weaker and exhausting yourself, you will become stronger because you will continually receive new elements to replace those you spend. But, of course, this will be true only if you place all your 'money', all your 'capital', in a heavenly bank!

This is why it is so important that you should know whom you are working for and what goal you are aiming at, for it is this that determines the direction your energies will take. If, for instance, you are working for your father – symbolically speaking – you will not lose, you will gain. What matters, therefore, is to know exactly what you are spending your energies on, in what direction you are working, for your future hangs on this: you are getting either richer or poorer.

Without realizing it, most people work for an enemy within who is robbing and despoiling them.

A true spiritualist* is more intelligent: the person he works and expends his energies for is his true self; it is he who gains. This is the intelligent thing to do: to know how to enrich oneself, not to become poorer. And this is not selfish; on the contrary, it is truly impersonal**.

Suppose, for example, that you decide to work, not for yourself but for the collectivity. Yes, but you have ties with the collectivity, you are an integral part of it, and everything that improves and embellishes the collectivity improves and embellishes each individual member – including yourself. You gain because you have placed your capital in a bank called ‘family’, ‘community’, ‘universal brotherhood’, of which you are a member. If you decide to work for yourself, on the other hand, for your own mediocre little ‘self’, your

* The word ‘spiritualist’, in the language of Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov, simply means one who looks at things from a spiritual point of view, whose philosophy of life is based on belief in a spiritual reality.

** This use of the word ‘impersonal’ may be misunderstood if it is not placed in the context of Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov’s teaching concerning the two natures in man, the human and the divine, the lower self and the higher Self or, as he terms them, the personality and the individuality. For a fuller treatment of the subject, see *The Key to the Problems of Existence* C.W. 11, and *Man’s Two Natures, Human and Divine*, Izvor 213.

energies will be wasted and do you no good at all. You will object, 'That can't be true. I'll certainly gain from all that work I'm doing for myself!' No. That is where you are mistaken, for your personal, separate, egotistical self is a bottomless pit, and by working for it you throw everything into that pit. That is not how you should work! Those who are too individualistic and selfish have no notion of what they might gain if they worked for the collectivity. They say, 'I'm no fool. I'm working for myself and I'm getting on nicely...' and that is precisely how they lose all their capital.

When I speak of 'the collectivity', I am not speaking only of mankind, but of the whole universe, of all creatures in the universe and even of God Himself. This Universal Collectivity, this Imensity for which you are working, is like a bank, and all the work you do for it will be paid back to you many times over. For the universe runs a very prosperous business! It is continually acquiring new constellations, new nebulae, new galaxies and, one day, all this wealth will be yours.

Those who work for themselves instead of for the whole, impoverish themselves, and nobody remembers or loves them, not even their own family, for they are far too egocentric. They never think of others, so why should others think of them? They end their lives in disappointment, bitterness and grief. You might think that it would

occur to them that it was their own philosophy of life that was at fault, but no, not a bit of it! They have always been in the right and everybody else is wicked and unjust! They deserve to be loved and helped! 'Deserve, deserve!' But what have they ever done to deserve anything good? Those who are full of love, kindness and self-denial may be considered ridiculous to begin with, and people may exploit and take advantage of them for a time, but they will gradually be recognized and loved for what they are: truly exceptional human beings. And then they will be cherished and rewarded. They work for the good of the universe and, one day, they will get their reward. But not at once, of course.

When you put money into a bank you don't receive the interest on it the very next day. You have to wait, and the longer you wait the more interest you get. The same law applies in the spiritual domain. You may have been working with much love, patience and faith and to begin with you see no results. But don't be discouraged; if you give way to discouragement it shows that you have not understood the laws that govern your daily life. Yes, you have to know the rules of banking and administration! If you knew them you would realize that one always has to wait. In the long run, riches will rain down on you from all sides; the whole universe will fling fabulous wealth at you.



The distinguished philosopher and spiritual Master, Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov came to France in 1937. Although his work deals with many aspects of initiatic science, he makes it clear that: 'Each one of us must undertake his own self-development, but only if his goal is not solely for himself, but for the good of the collectivity. Then, the collectivity becomes a brotherhood. A brotherhood is a collectivity where true unity reigns, because by working on himself, each individual is also consciously working for the good of the whole.'

'If you are ill it means that you have entertained some form of disorder within: you have nourished certain thoughts or feelings, certain attitudes which have ended by affecting your health. The best defence against illness is harmony: night and day you should be mindful to synchronize yourselves, to be in tune, in harmony with Life, with all Life, with limitless, cosmic Life. Only this is true harmony. It is not enough to be in tune with a limited circle of human beings: one's husband or wife, one's children, parents, neighbours and friends. You must be in tune with Universal Life.'

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