

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

# The Mysteries of Fire and Water



Izvor Collection



P R O S V E T A

*Translated from the French*  
*Original title: « LES RÉVÉLATIONS DU FEU*  
*ET DE L'EAU »*

*Original edition*

© 1990, Éditions Prosveta S.A., France, ISBN 2-85566-496-9

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Prosveta S.A. – 83600 Fréjus (France)

ISBN 978-2-85566-545-0

Digital edition: ISBN 978-2-8184-0264-1

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# **The Mysteries of Fire and Water**



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## Chapter One

The two principles of creation,  
water and fire

At the beginning of the book of *Genesis* Moses gives an account of the creation of the world in which he enumerates the different elements of the universe – sun, moon, stars, vegetation, animals and human beings – and describes how they came to be. But he also says something whose deepest significance can be understood only by an initiate. He says, '*The spirit of God swept over the face of the waters.*'<sup>1</sup> Why over the waters? Because water represents the original cosmic matter that was penetrated and fertilized by primordial fire, the Spirit of God. Contrary to popular belief, the element that best expresses and manifests the properties and qualities of matter is not earth but water, for those qualities are receptivity, adaptability and plasticity.

Water, then, symbolizes the primal matter that was fecundated by the seed of the spirit; water is the matrix, the womb of life. Life was born of

water thanks to the principle of fire, for there can be no life without the intervention of fire; it was fire that animated this primal matter and set it in motion. Of itself, water, matter, does not possess life; life has to be infused into it by fire. Life on earth came into existence through the action of fire on water. The first germs of life were brought to earth by the sun's rays which reached the water of the world's oceans; and that water, like a loving mother, received those germs of life and continued to nourish them with the light and warmth of the sun.

Once we understand that water symbolizes the universal matter from which the cosmos was created, we can more easily interpret Moses' account of how God separated the waters above from the waters below: *'And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome sky.'* The waters above the firmament, which are known in initiatic science as astral Light or the great magic Agent, represent the primordial ocean in which all creatures are immersed and in which they find the nourishment they need. One might almost say that it is in order to remind us of these primordial waters that a baby is immersed

before birth in the amniotic fluid in its mother's womb. We are all immersed in the immensity of the cosmos just as fish are immersed in the sea, but as the entrances to our inner being are so often clogged with impurities we are not nourished and vivified as we should be by the waters that enfold us.

Water and fire, therefore, represent the two principles of creation, and their action in the universe is symbolized by the cross, a symbol which, as you know, is found in all civilizations and which is very rich in meaning. The horizontal line of the cross represents the action of the feminine principle, water. The natural tendency of this principle is to extend outwards, to spread as widely as possible over the surface and to disappear underground through every available crack or crevice. The vertical line represents the masculine principle, fire, and this principle tends, on the contrary, to restrict its movements on the horizontal plane and to expand upwards. Water, therefore, relates to breadth and depth, whereas fire relates to height. These two directions, horizontality and verticality, of which the cross is the synthesis, are the best expression of the action of the masculine and feminine principles in creation as a whole, as well as in all creatures. The universe is full of this symbol.

To most Christians the cross is simply a reminder of the death of Jesus, they do not realize that by limiting it to this they are stripping it of most of its significance.<sup>2</sup> No one can deny that the death of Jesus on the cross was an event of considerable importance in the history of mankind, but the symbolism of the cross far exceeds that one event, and if you make the effort to penetrate its meaning in the light of the lesson contained in the two principles, water and fire, it will put you within reach of the greatest mysteries of creation. As far as I am concerned, I can tell you that nothing has been of greater importance in my life than water and fire. The memories of childhood that have left the deepest mark on me are all associated with water and fire.

I was born in a village in Macedonia, at the foot of the *Babouna Planina* (Grandmother's Mountain), whose highest peak was Mount Pelister. I still remember some of the events that occurred during the few years I spent in that village, and one of my most vivid memories is of a discovery I made when I was four or five years old. Not far from our house I found a spring of water. The clear, transparent water bubbling out of the ground made such an impression on me that I stayed there watching it for hours on end. The image of that spring is still so vivid in my mind's eye that even now, when I picture it again,



I experience the same sense of wonder and delight that I experienced as a child. I have often asked myself what it was about that water that made such a deep impression on me at such an early age. But water was not the only thing that made an impression on me; I was also fascinated by fire. The only problem was that fire was more dangerous because, of course, when I wanted to see a fire, I had to light one! My family soon learned never to leave a box of matches within my reach!

Why was I so fascinated by water and fire? Because water and fire are the most beautiful, potent and significant expressions that nature has to offer of the two great cosmic principles, the masculine and the feminine. Also because I was destined to spend my life studying and working with them. As a matter of fact, if it were possible to make a detailed study of different people's lives, you would certainly find that many of the impressions, experiences or behaviour apparent in their childhood foreshadowed their principal interests and the areas in which they would have to work in their later lives.

You will perhaps be thinking that no one had ever told you that water and fire were so important. Well, this shows that you have not read the Gospels carefully, particularly the account in *St John's Gospel* of the conversation between

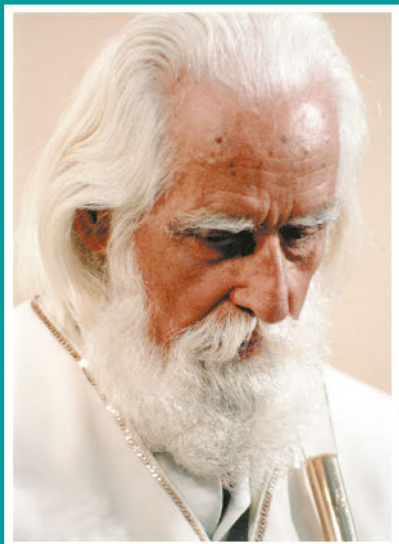
Jesus and Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a doctor of law who came by night to talk to Jesus. It was to him that Jesus gave the answer that has intrigued so many theologians since: *'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.'* There is a certain correspondence between these words and the passage from *Genesis* that we talked about earlier: *'The spirit of God swept over the face of the waters.'* In both instances it is the phenomenon of birth that is involved – the birth of the universe and the spiritual birth of man – and in both instances we find the same elements, fire (the spirit) and water (matter). Just as the universe is born of fire and water, man must be born of spiritual fire and water in order to enter into the higher state of consciousness that we call the kingdom of God, for on the spiritual plane fire is wisdom and water is love. Those few words to Nicodemus are enough to show us that Jesus also possessed this science of water and fire, the science of the two great cosmic principles.

The spontaneous direction of water and fire are, as we have already seen, diametrically opposite: fire tends to rise within narrow limits, to make its flames converge towards a single goal, whereas water flows downwards and, in descending, tends to spread outwards. And yet if you watch closely it is possible to see a certain

similarity in the movements of the two elements. Have you ever noticed how the movement of a waterfall resembles that of a fire in reverse? And the flames of a fire are like a waterfall flowing upwards to its source. A few years ago one of our sisters filmed some waterfalls and gave me the film, and while I was showing it to the brothers and sisters, I projected it in reverse, just to see the effect. It was quite extraordinary: the movement of the water was exactly the same as that of fire! If you ever have a chance to try this do so, and you will see for yourself. It is as though water were a condensation of fire flowing down into the bowels of the earth, and fire were water leaping up to the heavens. It is as though fire and water were one and the same substance manifesting itself in two different aspects.

It is precisely these two aspects that are so instructive. One of the things they teach us is that there are two different approaches to knowledge: the horizontal approach, which spreads its investigations over a broad area, and the vertical approach, which consists in detaching oneself from the surface and seeking truth on a higher level. The first method is that of water, the second that of fire.

He who chooses the method of water must be prepared for a long and painful apprenticeship. You all know what an adventurous life water has:



*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.'*

**'All the ideas, impressions, sensations and mental images that occur to us leave a trace, a permanent imprint in our being. Our psychic life is shaped and moulded every day by the forces and influences we allow to enter and impregnate us. This is why it is essential to have a store of lovely pictures that we can conjure up in our minds often, pictures that are with us day and night, so that our thoughts may be constantly in touch with all that is most elevated, pure and sacred. And what is more beautiful, more poetic or more full of meaning than water and fire, and the different forms in which they appear to us?**

**You can fill your whole life with these pictures, and absorb them until they impregnate every cell of your body. If you had nothing but the presence of fire and water with which to nourish your spiritual life, it would still be enough. If you concentrate every day on these mental pictures, they will vivify, purify and illuminate you.'**

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**ISBN 978-2-85566-545-0**



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