

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

Angels

*and other Mysteries of
the Tree of Life*



Izvor Collection



P R O S V E T A

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Chapter One

From human to God: the notion of hierarchy

Human beings are often like rudderless boats adrift on the tide. Fortunately, thanks to their family, their studies, their profession, or simply their social life, they have a few rules and an external frame of reference to guide them, but inwardly many of them are like little boats floating in mid-ocean without compass or chart. You will say that many people have a religion. That is true, and religion would help them tremendously if its official representatives were able to teach them how to understand and control their inner life. It is not my intention to criticize the churches or the clergy. In any case, many others have already done so with greater eloquence than I could muster. All I want is to show you how to achieve the goal of all religions: to establish a link with God.

It is often said that the word religion comes from the Latin *religare*, meaning to tie or link. So religion is what links us to God. But what is our idea of God, and how is this link established? You will say, 'Oh, that's easy. You can link yourself to

God through prayer.’ If only it were that simple! If only it were enough to say, ‘My Lord and my God...’ for us to be immediately in contact with God!¹

If anyone thinks they can make direct contact with the Lord, it shows they have no notion of who or what God is. I am not saying we cannot get anywhere near him – we can – but we certainly cannot have direct contact with God in person. A very simple example illustrates this. When you write to a friend, your letter has to go through various intermediaries: the employee behind the counter who stamps it, and those who transport it by road, rail or air. And when it reaches the town where your friend lives, it still has to be carried by a postman, who drops it in your friend’s letterbox or gives it to the janitor to pass on. And if you are writing to a very high-ranking person, it will probably end up in the hands of a secretary. And that secretary may or may not hand it on, for if your letter is not really important, it will never reach the dignitary you addressed it to. It will be read and answered by an assistant.

This is how things are organized on earth, and those who disregard this and think that their messages or prayers will reach the Lord directly are simply ignorant. They know they cannot approach an important person on earth without going through intermediaries, but they think the

Lord can be approached directly. Oh yes, the Lord is a kindly old man; anyone can go up to him and tap him on the shoulder or tweak his beard. He is always ready to listen to all your complaints and petitions, and he answers them himself! How can people be so ignorant as to think that their thoughts and prayers will fly directly up to God and that he will make a special journey to come and take care of them? Do they think that he is all alone in heaven, that he has no servants or workers to do things for him and has to do everything himself? They even think that he set to work and created the world in six days – all on his own... Poor God; what a job that must have been! And with no one to help him.

Even the least important manager or director on earth has one or more secretaries and teams of workers, and yet people imagine that the Lord has to do everything himself, and every Tom, Dick and Harry can approach him directly. There are people who will tell you in all seriousness that they go and discuss things with God and he answers them. Or sometimes it is the other way round: God comes and discusses things with them and they give him their opinion! Poor ignorant wretches! If what they imagine actually happened, they would have been ground to dust and blasted out of existence long ago. There would be not the tiniest trace of them left on earth. God is an energy of indescribable

power; no human being has ever touched, or heard or seen him. You will say that Abraham, Moses and the prophets of Israel spoke with God. Yes, the Old Testament recounts many dialogues of this sort, but in reality they are no more than images, figures of speech.²

As a matter of fact, there is one image that can give us an approximate idea of God, and that is electricity. We use electricity for light and heat. All kinds of tools and appliances function thanks to electricity. How could our homes, factories and cities get along without it? But at the same time, as we all know, great care has to be taken to avoid short-circuits or other accidents leading to electrocution or fire. Direct contact with an electric current can be fatal, as it is extremely powerful. When we want to make electricity safe in our homes so that we can use it with a minimum of risk, we have to use transformers to step down its power and pass it through a system of wiring that is sometimes very complicated. Well, the same is true of God. God can be compared to unadulterated electricity, which, in order to be brought down to our level, needs to be passed through transformers. And these transformers are the countless luminous beings that inhabit the heavens, known traditionally as the angelic hierarchies. It is through them that we receive divine light and are able to be in contact with God.

Yes, it is very important to know that there is a great distance between us and God, a space so vast, so immense, that no human mind can comprehend it. But that space is not empty: it is made up of different regions that are inhabited by spiritual entities. In their own way, all religions mention the existence of these regions and entities, but to my mind it is the notions contained in the Jewish tradition that are the clearest and most exact. Both Christianity and Islam have inherited some elements of the Jewish tradition.

Most human beings behave as though they were the only highly evolved creatures in existence. Below them, they think, are animals, plants and minerals, and above them, very far away, is the Lord – always supposing that they believe in him! They have no notion of the existence of all those beings that bridge the gulf between the Lord and ourselves. Or if they know that they exist, because they heard them mentioned in their childhood, they rarely think of them or attempt to make contact with them. Catholic and Orthodox Christians pray to the saints, and this is good, but even the greatest saints are only human beings, and the veneration they receive often resembles pagan idolatry: St Anthony of Padua is called upon to find lost property; St Christopher is asked to protect his devotees from accidents, and so on. Almost all the saints in the calendar have their own special

function. There are countless representations of the Virgin Mary, for example, each with its own speciality: to heal the sick, to give protection in danger, to ensure a successful childbirth or a rich harvest, to bring an absent husband or an erring wife home, and so on. Christians tend to despise polytheistic religions with their numerous gods. They do not realize that, in their own way, they too have a veritable pantheon.

This custom of invoking spiritual entities who are believed to possess certain specific powers has its origins in the remote past, and Christians have done no more than adopt and continue it. The fact that they have done so shows that, even for them, God is so far away that they feel the need for intermediaries. This is why it is important to be better informed about the angelic hierarchies – to know what they are, how they relate to God and to ourselves and what powers they have.

In *Genesis* we find the story of Jacob's ladder, which is a symbol of the angelic hierarchy that links humans to God:

Jacob came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the

angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him.

The notion of a ladder or scale is worth exploring, for it expresses not only the idea of an intermediary between the higher and the lower, but also that of hierarchy. When we speak of a social scale or ladder, we are expressing the notion that there is a hierarchy, a difference of degree, in the positions human beings occupy in society. We speak also of a scale of values, a scale of colours, and so on. Everything in life points to the need for ladders or scales, if for no other purpose than getting up to the roof. You will say that there are other means of getting on to the roof. True, but whatever means you use it is the equivalent of a ladder.

The Christian tradition – which follows the Judaic tradition in this – teaches that there are nine orders of angels: angels, archangels, principalities, virtues, powers, dominations, thrones, cherubim and seraphim. Each angelic order represents one aspect of the powers and virtues of God. Above all, they represent something that is more accessible to us than the notion of God. We need to know about these higher entities for our spiritual development, as they are the beacons that light up our path.

Of course, there is no reason why you should not continue to speak to God, but you must realize

that you will not reach him directly. He has servants who will transmit your prayers and supplications to him. On the other hand, it is as well to know that these servants may not forward every one of your prayers. Many prayers never reach their destination, because the entities in charge of sorting them take one look at them and say, 'There is no point in delivering this one to the Lord. He has better things to do than to listen to petitions of this kind. Into the waste-paper basket with it!'

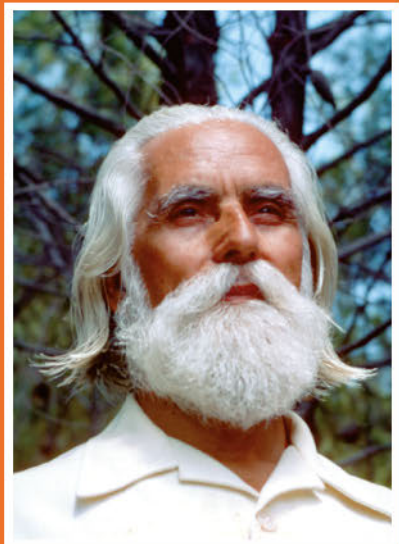
Nor is there any use deluding yourself that God will come and visit you in person. It is possible that an archangel may come and bring you a message, an atom of light, and even that would be an immense grace. Who do we think we are that God, the Lord of the universe, should put himself out to visit us? In any case, if he ever did, we would not survive the infinitely powerful vibrations of his presence. The *Psalms* tell us that '*the mountains melt like wax before the Lord.*' As I have said, the angelic hierarchies are the transformers that step down that power so that we can receive it without being pulverized by it.

Yes, let this be quite clear in your minds: there is, of course, no reason why you should not speak directly to God – I do so myself – as long as you know that your prayers will be carried to him by other beings, and that if they are not truly pure and unselfish they will be thrown into the waste-paper

basket. They will not be answered. It is better to know in advance how these things work. In this way you need not delude yourselves or wait in vain for an answer. We can receive no more than a ray of light, a faint fragrance from far, far away that filters down through the angelic hierarchies to us. It is always God answering us, for God is present on every level of his creation, but he does not answer us directly.

Notes

1. See *La prière*, Brochure n° 305.
2. See *The Philosopher's Stone – in the Gospels and in Alchemy*, Izvor Coll. n° 241, chap. 1-II: 'The word of God'.



The French philosopher and spiritual Master, Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov (1900-1986), was born in Bulgaria and came to France in 1937. Although his work addresses many aspects of initiatic science, he explains: 'The questions with which we are faced will always be the same: to understand who we are, to discover the meaning of our lives and to overcome the obstacles which we find on our path. So, do not ask me to talk to you about anything else; I will always return to the same subjects: our development, our difficulties, the path to be followed and the methods we need to follow it.'

'Think for a minute about what electricity is and how we use it, and you will have some notion, however approximate, of God. We use electricity to light and heat our houses, and power all kinds of machines and appliances, but we have to be very careful of how we handle it, for it is easy to cause an accident. Direct contact with an electric current can be fatal. In order to harness and use it without danger, we have to channel it through transformers. The same can be said of God: God is like a pure current of electricity which has to pass through transformers before it reaches us. And the transformers that God uses are the countless luminous beings that populate the heavens, known to tradition as the choirs of angels or angelic hierarchies. It is through them that we receive divine life; it is through them that we can be in contact with God.'

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