

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

Love Greater Than Faith



Izvor Collection



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Chapter One

The uncertainties of modern man

If you listen to the conversations of men and women around you, to radio and television programs, or to public speeches you cannot help but be struck by the fact that in spite of the strong convictions often expressed – and which fluctuate considerably depending on circumstances – people today are not really certain of anything. They have many philosophical, religious, scientific, political, and artistic opinions, but they give the impression of never feeling quite sure that they are treading on firm ground. Why is this?

For hundreds and thousands of years, the progress of science and technology was very slow. New discoveries were made every now and then, but the means of diffusing them were very limited, and even when they eventually began to be known and used they did not really change people's view of the world. No scientific or technical discoveries could undermine the notions of God and creation instilled in them by a religion that was based on the

literal interpretation of scripture. For this reason, even when their lives were devastated by disaster, human beings still had an intimate sense of being part of a well-defined world in which the ground under their feet was solid and safe. They were upheld by a few unshakable beliefs. However happy or unhappy they might be, however disastrous their circumstances, they saw no reason to question their conception of the order of the world.

With time, however, the pace of scientific discoveries gathered speed, and with these discoveries doubt began to creep in. During the 20th Century, particularly, a great number of scientific convictions were swept away and supplanted by others. In the fields of physics, astronomy, and biology, for instance, each generation seems to have called into question the attainments of their predecessors, and whenever a new theory modified the foundations of our understanding of humankind and the universe, our conception of the God who created human beings and the universe was also modified. Religion, to which human beings had always turned for answers to all their questions, could no longer give them what they needed. The rapid proliferation of discoveries and theories – there is no need to mention specifics, you all know them – have contributed to creating a climate of uncertainty so that today no one is

sure of anything anymore. Since people are always expecting some new theory to turn up, they are less and less inclined to believe that any absolute truths exist. They say, 'Let's wait and see... there is more to come.' And this mentality is rapidly gaining ground in every domain.

This, then, is the source of the malaise of modern human beings: the world in which they live is no longer familiar to them. As they can be sure of nothing they drift in different directions, always looking for something, but with no clear idea of what they are looking for. Indeed, uncertainty has now gained science itself, the one area that seemed most secure, so what credence can anyone give to moral, religious, or spiritual notions which have no foundation in objective fact and which even conflict with scientific discoveries? Things are in a state of suspense, and in the absence of any certitudes, those who are not really satisfied by materialistic science and philosophy begin to take an interest in the many kinds of spirituality that exist, going from one to the other, guided only by their feelings. The predominant state of mind today is curiosity, the appetite for novelty: 'What else is there to discover?'

Of course, there is nothing wrong in showing interest and sympathy for all forms of spirituality. It becomes dangerous only if you spread your interest too thin, if you never make up your mind to

choose one method of work and stick to it. Please understand what I am saying: it is not a question of being Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Buddhist, Taoist, or none of the above. It is a question – and it concerns each one of us, believer and unbeliever alike – of adhering to a few essential spiritual truths and of putting them into practice. About this there can be no uncertainty.

Spirituality is not something that we are free to choose or not choose as with other disciplines such as sport, the languages, the arts, and so on. Given the way human beings are constructed, spirituality is a vital need, and as long as people refuse to acknowledge that need they will continue to engage in all kinds of activities that are not only absurd but also dangerous both for themselves and for others. Because of their nature, if they do not find the nourishment for which their souls and spirits clamor, they will be continually tormented by a sensation of inner emptiness and hunger which they will try in vain to satisfy.

A human being is a bottomless pit which can never be truly satisfied by material possessions, social success, pleasure, even great intellectual satisfaction. It should not surprise us, therefore, to see that so many extremely intelligent and gifted people end by falling into the worst kinds of aberration. Unable to find what they are looking for – unaware, even, that they are looking for

something – they are caught up in an endless quest for ever more public exposure, more power, more money, more territory, more forms of pleasure, and to get these things they are ready to subjugate or destroy all who stand in their way. But even when they achieve the goal they lusted after, they are still not satisfied, for they never succeed in filling the void that is like a yawning chasm within them.¹

The only way to fill that void is to accept to live in uncertainty but with a spiritual ideal. A spiritual ideal links us to a higher world from which we receive nourishment. And those who have once tasted – if only for an instant – the elixir of divine life receive more than they can ever get from years of study, success, power, glory, or pleasure. Does this surprise you? If it does, it means that you do not understand the nature of the spiritual world. The spiritual world is concerned with quality, and this distinguishes it from the physical world, which is concerned with quantity. It is the quality of the life of your soul and spirit which can, in an instant, fulfil you in a way that no accumulation of material possessions could ever achieve.

There is no reason, therefore, to be so full of admiration for all the brilliant, opulent, powerful people who have no room in their lives for the soul and the spirit. Above all, you must never trust them. Since they are not looking for spiritual nourishment, the only kind that could satisfy them,

they are like ravening beasts, and their ambition, their lust, their gluttony lead them inevitably into paths that are dangerous for themselves and those around them.

Unfortunately, many so-called spiritual people are no better. They want the same prizes as materialists, and in pursuit of them they use the means of initiatic science. This is why I say they are even more blameworthy than materialists, for they degrade the most sacred principles. They may be visibly satisfied and pleased with themselves for succeeding with these means, but heaven, which does not appreciate being used for selfish ends, will one day demand a reckoning, and their punishment will be very severe. The truth is that even though such people called themselves spiritualists they do not really have faith. The first concern of those who have faith is to avoid transgressing the divine laws, the laws of self-abnegation, love, and sacrifice.

The one thing that can give you true certainty is to realize that you are, each one of you, a spiritual entity whose life is linked to the universe and who can obtain whatever you desire in the infinite worlds of the soul and spirit. Once you understand this you will no longer need to pursue ephemeral satisfactions. So be on your guard! Even though social and material success may seem, more and more, to be the only security you have, you must at all costs avoid making it your first priority, for

it would be the ruin of you. If you are offered an important position in a particular field because your competence has proved your worth, accept it if you wish, but take care not to abandon the only thing that matters. You are not on earth for the purpose of becoming a chief executive, employer, director, minister, or president. You are on earth in order to work within the sphere of matter to become a fully conscious son or daughter of God. This is the only certainty you need.

It is excellent to explore matter and work on it and with it in order to organize, embellish, and vivify it. I would be the first to counsel you not to abandon matter. But it is even more important to begin by vivifying, organizing, and embellishing your own inner matter, so as to feel yourself confident, free, and in peace. Once you have learned to work on yourself with the powers of the spirit, not only will you make certain discoveries, but all that you accomplish outwardly will bear the mark of the spirit, of the light, the love, and the power of the spirit.²

Some philosophers, reflecting on the question of faith, have said that a little knowledge distances us from God, but more knowledge brings us closer to him. This is true, but only if it is understood that we are not talking about the same kind of knowledge. A little more knowledge in the domain of biology, chemistry, or astrophysics will not bring

you closer to God, it may serve only to increase your sense of uncertainty. The kind of knowledge on which faith is based is quite different. It is a knowledge that concerns you yourself, by which I mean your deepest self with all its wealth, all its infinite possibilities.

If you are still looking outside yourself for what you need, it means that you do not really believe in the divine power that flows within you. In your subconscious mind there is no faith, only uncertainty. This is why you are still hungering and thirsting for something, still in a void. Faith has to reach down into the very roots of life. As long as you have not learned to draw on that inner source, you will continue to drift in different directions and will be an easy prey for charlatans and fake purveyors of healing and happiness. The true freedom of human beings lies in this God-given power to find all they need within themselves.

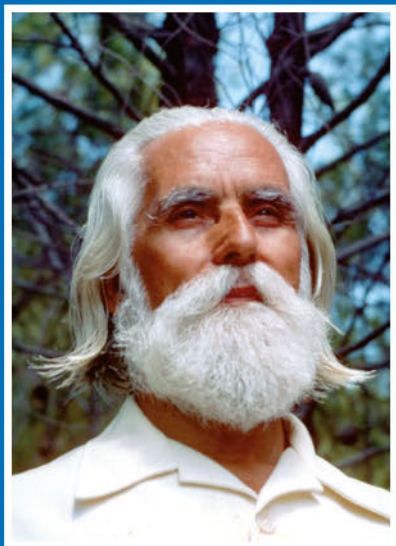
I shall never tire of repeating this truth to you, for the sole task of a genuine spiritual guide is to liberate human beings. Many people suppose that a spiritual Master is a despot who uses his powers to impose his convictions on others. Well, they are wrong; it is exactly the opposite. A spiritual Master has no desire to impose his own will or convictions on others, or rather, he has only one conviction to impose on them, the conviction that their salvation lies exclusively in themselves. After

that, all he does is show them the methods to use and the experiences they need in order to get there.

You often hear me say, ‘Believe me...’, but that does not mean that I want you to trust me blindly. I am simply asking you to take what I tell you seriously, to meditate on it, to try it out and verify it for yourselves. For if you do so I am certain that you will believe me, whereas if you believe me blindly and without reflection, at some time or another anyone or anything could sway you. Contrary to what most people imagine, faith is not a blind, baseless belief. In fact, it is because they think this that they are still in the grip of uncertainty. Faith, like science, is based on verification, experience, and lucidity.

Notes

1. See ‘*Cherchez le Royaume de Dieu et sa Justice*’, Part IV, chap. 6: ‘À l’origine de l’or, la lumière’.
2. See above, Part II, chap. 3: ‘Sur la terre comme au ciel’.



The distinguished philosopher and spiritual Master, Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov (1900 - 1986), was born in Bulgaria. In 1937 he moved to France, where he lived and taught for almost fifty years until his death. One of the most striking aspects of the Master's teaching is the enormous variety of ways in which he presents the one central theme of man and his growth in perfection. Whatever the question under discussion, it is invariably dealt with in terms of how man can better conduct his life.

‘When you decide to embrace a religion, a spiritualist philosophy and to apply its principles, you not only encounter difficulties with yourself because of all the efforts to be made, but also with those around you who do not understand necessarily the changes that have taken place in you. Well, know that it is how you resolve these difficulties that will reveal the quality, the authenticity of your faith. You shouldn’t say to yourself: «I’m going to completely change my life and too bad for what my loved ones think, it’s none of my business. Yes, that is your business, because your spiritual life will depend on how you solve this problem. As much as you can, don’t hurt others or let them down. Remember that love is always greater than faith.’

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

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