

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

The Laughter of a Sage



Izvor Collection



P R O S V E T A

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Chapter One

The sage lives in hope

During the course of a day we meet different people, and it is interesting and sometimes amusing to observe how they talk about events and life in general. While some people only dwell on what is going badly and what, according to them, will continue to go badly or even worse, others only notice and remember what is good and encouraging and continue on their way exclaiming: 'How beautiful life is!' So we call some people pessimists and others optimists.

For pessimists, the whole year is filled only with cloudy and rainy days, with, they will grudgingly admit, a few rays of sunlight. For optimists on the other hand, they only see sunny days interrupted by occasional beneficial rainfalls. If we were to present a project to the pessimist, they would immediately see a mountain of obstacles lying in their way. Optimists on the other hand, accept the project enthusiastically, leap over any objections that might be raised and immediately see the

project as successfully completed to the greatest satisfaction of everyone. Pessimists always feel as if ill health is just around the corner; as soon as they are not feeling well, their thoughts turn to the hospital and the cemetery – they have of course already written their will, and they are ready to invite their friends to say their last goodbyes. Optimists always feel healthy, and if they fall ill they will be back on their feet again in no time.

And because the world is going badly, and since people are malicious and all good plans are more or less bound to fail, the pessimist concludes that it's not really worth doing anything or working for others. They content themselves with taking care of their own business and leave other people to their sad fate. And it gives them great satisfaction when they see that the troubles, difficulties or misfortunes they foresaw actually come true! Pessimism leads to selfishness and even hardness, but also to laziness. Yes, since the pessimist is convinced there is nothing to be done to improve the situation, they become lazy, except when it comes to explaining all the good reasons they have for being pessimistic; then their tongue is extremely active!

And quite often, pessimists are writers. So many books have been written by people who needed to point out that the world is doomed to failure, that life is absurd and that nothing is worth

anything. But, my God, if good should never triumph, if nothing has any meaning and if nothing is worth doing, why then even make the effort to talk or to write? It makes no sense. The only logical thing to do would be to keep quiet. Yes, why do these authors need to bring dark clouds into the hearts and minds of all those who read their books?

Of course, medical science has observed the influence of the state of our body on our state of mind; a pessimist will often have an illness of the liver or stomach. But we mustn't mistake causes and consequences. In reality, these liver or stomach ailments are caused by certain pernicious mental habits that these people have harboured in this life, or even in a previous life, and now their digestive complaints are reflected by their state of mind. Our psychological state constantly influences our physical state, and vice-versa.¹

And where does pessimism originate in humans? Some will claim it is their clear-sightedness. Not at all! It is caused by their ambitions and the disproportionate desires they have been unable to achieve. And so, disappointment after disappointment, they have ended up with a jaded outlook on the world. We often see pessimism present in the older nations, which have evolved on the basis of great projects they thought they would easily be able to bring to fruition. Certain successes

led them to believe they would not only be able to dominate neighbouring countries, but also extend their influence to distant lands. And that's where they're mistaken! They want to devour the entire world, but they would do better to ask themselves first whether they would be capable of digesting it; and even if they start off with some success, little by little, difficulties, stalemates, defeats and losses arise. So, how then can the future be seen in a favourable light?...

Young nations, on the other hand, which have not yet had these experiences, are full of hope; they believe they can succeed where others have failed. Of course they may succeed, but only if they behave with wisdom and moderation, otherwise they will also end up like the others, disillusioned and pessimistic. Nations are just like individuals: they are governed by the same laws. Those that nourish ambitions exceeding their capabilities are destined to fail, and these failures ultimately taint their entire view of the world. For many – countries or individuals – life can be defined as a transition from optimism to pessimism.

For the young, the possibilities are endless and many doors are waiting open, and if one closes, others still remain open. But little by little, one after another, the doors have closed, and so the faces we previously saw smiling and confident

about life end up becoming masks: expressions darken, features droop, and bitter lines appear at the corners of mouths. Yes, youth makes plans and old age takes stock. And the balance sheet isn't always great.

Master Peter Deunov used to say, 'If humans fall into pessimism, it's because they do not know how to give their movement direction.' What type of direction was he talking about? To put things simply, we can say there are two directions: upwards to the spiritual world, and downwards to the material world. The material world and the spiritual world offer us their riches; in both cases, they are not easy to obtain, but, depending on which ones we seek, our experience of the difficulties they present is not the same.

Those who focus on material accomplishments, possessions, money and power and who do not achieve their goals are left with the bitter experience of their failures, as if they had lost everything. Whereas those who are driven by spiritual needs always feel supported. By aspiring to a higher life, they have constantly woven connections with the divine world, and these connections produce secret vibrations within them. Even if they do not fully accomplish all they aspire to, these vibrations they feel in their inner being protect them by shielding them from discouragement.

There is only one instance where you are allowed to be pessimistic, and that is when you are planning to do something bad. And then, it is a good idea to envisage failure; in fact, it would be better to do so! Failure is the best thing that could happen to you in this instance; it will spare you complications.² But when it comes to a good project, a generous project, even if you encounter difficulties in making it happen, you should be optimistic and remain convinced that you will eventually succeed.

So you see, this question of optimism and pessimism goes a lot farther than one might have thought at first sight. Only those who seek spiritual advantages can be truly optimistic; those who seek material advantages, even if they are optimistic at first, will have to abandon their illusions one day or another, and they will succumb to pessimism. That's why, I repeat, pessimists are often very ambitious people who have become disappointed. Their ambitions were burdens that weighed them down since they did not know the true path to follow, the path that leads to the heights. And, faced with failures, what can we do if we have already expended all our energies to no avail?

So, optimism and pessimism should not be seen just as a question of temperament; they imply a true philosophy. Pessimists concentrate on small mundane things, while optimists open their soul to

the vast expanses of heaven. In an initiatic school, there should never be pessimists. So, be aware that if you are pessimistic, it means that within you have not yet taken the right direction, your feet have not yet stepped firmly onto the path of spiritual science, for from the threshold of this science, you should have discerned that the true future of human beings is light, beauty, joy and fulfilment of their soul. Along the way, of course, you will come across difficulties, you will be confronted with obstacles, and so, in order to overcome them, you should not lose sight of your goal but instead delight in the anticipation of this joy awaiting you.

Only consciousness of our divine predestination enables us to keep hope alive. Otherwise, of course, when we see what the world is like, we all have good reason to be pessimistic, disoriented, anxious and overwhelmed. And so what should be done? Some people will consult psychologists and psychoanalysts... Others will consult astrologists, mediums, clairvoyants, as they do more and more nowadays, in order to be reassured. That goes to show that they have not understood where and how they should look for true certainties and real reasons for having confidence in the future.

I am not denying that there are people who know how to read the future, but they are rare.³ And even if they inform you of forthcoming events, it will still be up to you to decide how to act

so as not to waste all your chances and to face the ordeals to come. So, instead of going to ask others about your future, it would be more intelligent if you took the time to create something solid in yourself that would enable you to use everything that happens to you – your sadness and your joy, your successes and your failures alike – for your evolution.

I have met so many clairvoyants, especially female clairvoyants, in my life! My first recollection of this was when I was nine years old. There were many gypsies in Bulgaria, and the women told people's fortunes. One day, while walking in the street, I passed one of them and she stopped me. She told me I had many enemies. Can you imagine that – at the age of nine! Surprised, I asked her, 'But why? What have I done?' She added that I also had many friends. Then she looked at my hand and declared that she could see a girl, who was pretty but overweight and curvaceous, and who loved me. And again, surprised, I asked her, 'But really, as fat as that?' She then told me she had fallen off her donkey that very morning and the fall had prevented her from seeing well. And then it was her turn to give me her hand so I could pay her.

The Bulgarians, however, try to tell the future in the coffee grounds instead. I can still remember a woman in Varna whose neighbours all invited her to come for coffee so she could then examine the

dregs left in their coffee cups. If you do what she did, you'll never die of thirst!

And when I arrived in Paris, so many clairvoyants came to see me! Especially during the war, when the whole world was wondering when and how that tragedy was going to end. Some people asked me questions about the accuracy of their predictions. And I replied, 'If you are not sure about what you say, how can you be sure about what I am going to tell you?'

Of course, each of you can do as you please. Clairvoyants and astrologists are more often than not quite skilled, especially when it comes to predicting success, love, fortune and health, otherwise no one would consult them; and it goes without saying that at some time or other, something good eventually happens, even if it does not last. So, for those who need to resort to such practices to feel reassured about their fate, let them do so if it does them good, but I have to tell you that the only effective method you can trust is to move forward with the awareness of the future of light and joy that God has intended for his children.

According to a commonly widespread opinion, pessimism is supposedly a form of wisdom: when we know that evil can arise at any moment and from anywhere, we have to be vigilant and take precautions. Well, no, this is such a negative

view and there is nothing wise about it. It is even harmful for the psyche: when you concentrate on evil, everywhere and all the time, you do not see it when it really does appear, and the vigorous forces that would allow you to react become paralysed. So where then is the wisdom and the lucidity?

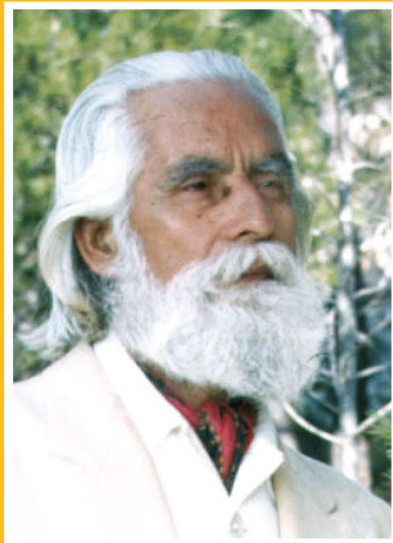
Wisdom, true wisdom, is something else, and what does it tell us? In the book of Proverbs, wisdom introduces itself: *'I, wisdom, ... the Lord created me at the beginning... when he established the heavens, I was there... when he assigned to the sea its limit... when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always...'* That is how wisdom talks. In participating with God in the creation of the world, wisdom has explored God's intentions and confidently sees the future in bright and magnificent colours. And not only is wisdom not sad, it is also cheerful and joyful because it plays alongside God.

The sage knows that humans' destiny is to go back one day to their heavenly homeland. And along the way, humans will obviously come across evil of all kinds, they will suffer, doubt others and themselves, and they will become discouraged. But even in the worst moments they will not flounder, because engraved in their heart and soul there remain these truths: God created them in his

image, and this image of God contains the potential for all riches and all victories.⁴

Pessimism is therefore not a child of wisdom but rather of the greatest ignorance. Of course, it is not a question of setting oneself against pessimism by pretending that there is nothing wrong; that would be ridiculous; not everything goes well, and sometimes many things go really badly. But optimism is a philosophical outlook founded on the knowledge of God, the universe and human beings. So, it is not the word ‘optimism’ that we should be using; given the way we use it in daily life, it is too often confused with a certain naivety and casualness that have nothing to do with anything philosophical. The optimism I am talking about is in actual fact hope – the certainty that the future can always be better. Even if the present is not great, the forces of life and good are so strong they can always triumph over the bad, from the moment a human being decides to join forces with them.

Someone might ask, ‘But what hope do I have? Everything I begin fails; my future is blocked!’ That of course depends on what you call your future. If you see this future only in terms of material and social success, or as a love story like in fairy tales, then maybe your future *will* remain blocked. But your true future, your future as sons and daughters of God, is wide open before you.



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.'

The sage's laugh is a laugh of freedom. For what the sage has understood has freed him from the pointless burdens of life and propelled him to regions where an eternal sun shines.

And the sage's only wish is to impart this hard-earned light to those who are with him or who come to visit him. But it takes so long for them to integrate it! The only thing therefore that the sage can communicate immediately is the joy he derives from this wisdom – the joy that fills his heart to overflowing – and his laughter is the expression of this joy, which we can also call love.

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

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www.prosveta.co.uk
www.prosveta.com
international@prosveta.com