

PETER DEUNOV'S PANEURHYTHMY

Dance movements and musical scores



*With descriptions and commentaries
in the light of the Teaching of
OMRAAM MIKHAËL AÏVANHOV*

BY **Muriel URECH**

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Introduction

It was Master Peter Deunov who gave us the paneurhythmy, and we remain immensely grateful to him. He was a musician, and friends who studied music in India told me they were astounded at his knowledge. The melodies he created on his violin form the basis of the present repertoire of songs in the Universal White Brotherhood.¹ This music quite obviously bears the imprint of Initiatic Science, and those who have practised it for many years have appreciated its positive effects. But according to our Master, the music of the paneurhythmy is most particularly effective when it is sung every day, because then it brings our cells back into harmony, neutralizing every cause of illness.

Our Master and other Bulgarian brothers and sisters have talked of their memories of being present when the paneurhythmy was created. This all took place in the foothills of the Rila mountains, by the lakes, where the Bulgarian Brotherhood held its summer camps. Every day, Master Peter Deunov would show the musicians the music for a new part of the dance and demonstrate the movements to the brothers and sisters. Imagine hundreds of participants dancing next to a lake, with the Master in the middle of the circle demonstrating, correcting and inspiring their dancing... What beauty, what poetry, what radiance! And what work for good in the world!

I have danced the paneurhythmy in pastures so densely carpeted with crocuses, anemones, buttercups, rock roses and violas that you didn't know where to place your feet on the short grass. And all around us were rocks and high alpine peaks still covered with snow... Those were unforgettable moments!

Master Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov had not long settled in France when he personally saw to it that the brothers and sisters learned the paneurhythmy correctly, so that it could become a spiritual exercise for them. Once, after watching a rehearsal,

he said, 'One day you will truly understand the power of the paneurhythm. The little go you just had shows me that we can take it further. Dedicate yourselves to this beauty – it brings inspiration and peace. The wonderful forces hidden deep within you are not yet awakened. So many possibilities remain unused, wasted! We must bring together all the forces available to us in order to touch hearts and minds. There is no lack of forces or physical means, but we have to learn to activate these to achieve something divine, instead of keeping them for our own pleasure or personal interest.'

Master Peter Deunov shed light on the deeper meaning of the word 'paneurhythm' when he said, 'It is the supreme cosmic rhythm.'

The word 'paneurhythm' comes from the Greek. It is made up of the adjective *pan*, 'everything', the adverb *eu*, 'good' and the noun 'rhythm', which comes from *rythmos*, 'rhythm'.

'Everything in the universe is rhythm,' said Master Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov, 'and human beings themselves are part of this great cosmic rhythm. All their biological and psychic functions are subject to the laws of rhythm, even if this is not obvious. Depending on their way of life and on their thoughts, feelings and actions, they will harmonize to a lesser or greater extent with the universal rhythm. Music and dance are simply attempts to return to this universal rhythm or to remain within it. This is the reason why every culture attributes a divine origin to music and dance.'

'By creating the paneurhythm, Master Peter Deunov gave us the means to harmonize with those rhythms in the universe that are the most beneficial, and only an initiate can discover the movements and sounds that correspond to these rhythms. If you study these movements and sounds in depth, you will discover principles or rules that correspond to those in the life of the psyche. So, you must think of the paneurhythm as a teaching aid: when you dance the paneurhythm, you are learning to adapt your thoughts, feelings and actions to the most harmonious rhythms in nature.'

We are now at the dawn of a new age, the age of Aquarius.² The great Universal White Brotherhood above, who oversee the earth's evolution, are giving us, through their messengers, a teaching suited to these new times, a teaching designed to expand our consciousness. If we are to survive, we will have to make the shift from the limited, egocentric life of our lower nature to the fuller, more beautiful and fruitful life of our higher nature, a life in harmony with the cosmos and with the whole of creation. Within this life the soul can blossom and the heart open to all humankind and to the

inhabitants of all realms, while remaining in constant connection to the Source of all existence, which we call God. The results of such an expansion are indescribable.

But it is not an easy step to take, and so the Teaching offers us many methods for working on ourselves. Paneurhythmy is one of these methods.

‘Although the paneurhythmy movements are very simple,’ the Master said, ‘each of them is very beautiful in its form. They are the fruit of deep knowledge of the correspondence between the psychic structure of beings and acoustic laws. It is worth knowing the meaning of these movements and understanding how they bring us in touch with the harmonious forces and currents in nature. Even if you do not know their meaning, you feel the benefit of them, that they bring you greater peace and strength.’

So, I will endeavour to show you how rich this method is. You shouldn’t, however, mistake paneurhythmy for a ‘universal panacea’. It is easy enough to take classes and to dance it, and it will certainly do you good – there will be a moment of joy and perhaps wonder, you will feel more at peace, in harmony with nature around you, and your body will feel lighter, suppler, more alive and freer. But if you then return to ordinary life, mundane preoccupations, stressful activities, noise and emotional conflict, all you will know is that momentary benefit. You won’t feel the more sacred, more profound effects, even if the theory has been explained to you beforehand.

‘And why is that?’, you will ask. The explanation is to be found in the law of affinity. You are aware that two tuning forks of identical pitch will respond to each other. In the same way, for your television to pick up a signal, it must be tuned to the right wavelength. And paneurhythmy can put us in touch with the higher spheres whose ideas it conveys, but only if we are capable of attuning to their vibration. An ordinary life does not prepare us for this, and so we fail to pick up those vibrations. We have to make the effort to find the right attitude for receiving these higher currents. For example, when we seek to develop purity within ourselves, we are setting up an antenna that will connect us to the world of purity. We are creating a channel, through which blessings from this heavenly region can flow a hundred times more strongly.

If we study the Teaching and strive to live it in our daily life, paneurhythmy proves to be an extremely effective tool. We truly experience the connections it allows us to establish with the higher world, helping the beneficial currents to flow and spread through our being and awakening latent possibilities in us. What we draw from these currents is not just a momentary sense of wellbeing but a lasting and increasing one. **‘Paneurhythmy’, the Master said, ‘exerts its influence on the body and the spirit at the same time. Each movement accumulates more forces within us and spreads them harmoniously throughout our being.’**

It takes years to truly appreciate the effects of the paneurhythmy. One never tires of it. True, it's always the same music and the same movements, but our increasing awareness of the riches it offers, which grow as we grow spiritually, means that the life that flows through the music and the movements is always new to us.

The Master said, **'You find having to repeat the same exercises boring... Why don't you find it boring to eat the same bread three times a day? Every day you eat the same food so that you are able to learn, to work, to live. Well, it's the same with spiritual food as it is with physical food. Every day you have to take in the same spiritual food to be able to live the new life. Those of God's children who are able to eat the bread of heaven every day feel nourished by it and able then to bring a few morsels of this bread to all their friends.'**

In this way, the sacred dance of paneurhythmy helps to form our individuality, as understood by Initiatic Science, meaning the progressive emergence of our higher self.

We will see how this dance expresses the different phases of this process. Over a period of thirty-five minutes, it teaches us how to make the efforts required of humankind at the dawn of the Aquarian age in a harmonious way. Every time we dance it, we experience the evolution we are seeking to achieve as we work on ourselves over the years, but in an abbreviated, poetic form, supported by the music, the beauty of nature and the forces of spring. A groove begins to form within us, which becomes deeper with each repetition, speeding up the attainment of our ideal! But I will say it again: this can only happen if the dancing is sustained and nourished by a mental attitude and lifestyle in complete accord with a true initiatic Teaching.

Notes

1. A Prosveta recording is available, called Chants de la Fraternité Blanche Universelle (Songs of the Universal White Brotherhood) (2 CDs).
2. 'We are coming to the end of the age of Pisces. Soon we will enter the age of Aquarius, when great changes will take place. You shouldn't think, however, that the whole of humankind is suddenly going to change. What will change for everyone are the possibilities. There are new currents flowing from Aquarius, but only the people who make the effort to harmonize with these currents will change. Heaven will send us energies, but they will not impose wisdom upon us. We are entering the Aquarian age, but those who do nothing to benefit from its influence will receive nothing. Everywhere we go we hear the phrase, "the age of Aquarius, the age of Aquarius". That's all very well, but if you really want to enter the age of Aquarius, you must be prepared to accept the new ideas it brings with it – ideas of brotherhood and universality.'

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov



Paneurhythmy in the Rila mountains, Bulgaria

The place of paneurhythmy in the Teaching of the Universal White Brotherhood

I would now like to show you where paneurhythmy sits in the Teaching of Master Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov. The simplest way is to refer to the synoptic table created by the Master, in which he shows how spiritual life is sustained in the different subtle principles that mirror physical life and go to make up the human being.

This table is a synthesis of a human being's structure and the methods needed for development.

PRINCIPLE	IDÉAL	NOURISHMENT	PRICE	ACTIVITY
SPIRIT divine consciousness	time eternity immortality	freedom	truth	identification union creation
SOUL superconsciousness	space immensity infinity	impersonality selflessness	fusion expansion ecstasy	contemplation adoration prayer
MIND self-awareness	knowledge learning light	thought	wisdom	meditation study deepening
HEART awareness	joy happiness warmth	feeling	love	music song, poetry harmony
WILL subconscious	domination power movement	strength	movement breath	breathing gymnastics, dance paneurhythmy
PHYSICAL BODY unconscious	vigour health aliveness	food	money	activity dynamism work

Where is paneurhythmmy on this table? It is one of the activities that help to develop the will; there is no disputing that movement forces us out of inertia. It is also closely connected to breathing. And those two activities together heighten exchanges of energy and enhance aliveness.

We must understand that the ‘power’ mentioned here as an ideal consists mainly in being able to exercise self-control, in mastering our body, feelings and thoughts. In this way, we seek to control our lower nature, so that it becomes a willing instrument for the spirit.

By performing the rhythmical, harmonious movements of the paneurhythmmy, we get rid of our blockages and tensions and allow higher energies to move more freely through us – that is where true power lies. «*Niama sila kato silata na Douha, samo silata na Douha e sila bojia*», said Master Peter Deunov – ‘**There is no power like the power of the Spirit; only the power of the Spirit is the power of God.**’ Isn’t the final goal of disciples to merge their will with the will of God?

We are constantly called to show willpower in our life, and even more so on the path of evolution. Nothing can be achieved without the will. This is why the gymnastic and breathing exercises¹ and the paneurhythmmy are such valuable methods! But to see only that aspect of them would be to minimize their contribution.

Like most of the other methods offered by the Teaching, paneurhythmmy has specific effects, but it also acts in every area. It affects the whole of our being, and that is why it has so much to offer.

The physical body

It is excellent for our health to dance in nature early in the morning, when the prana is plentiful and we are caressed by the sun’s rays. Our blood is sure to acquire a few particles of gold!² ‘Paneurhythmmy’, our Master said, ‘is an evocation of nature’s awakening in springtime. Through the music and the dancing, we take part in this renewal, and it is as if we were drinking the elixir of immortal life. Movement combined with music has great power. In Bulgaria, brothers and sisters in their eighties were dancing the paneurhythmmy and becoming younger – you could actually see them getting younger!’

The heart

Because the music for the paneurhythmmy was composed by a great Master, it affects us deeply. Bear in mind that sound shapes matter. Try to sing a very pure sound, then analyze its effect on you, and then sing it again. You will feel a deep sense of calm through your whole being, as if everything has harmoniously fallen into place. When we sing ‘Aoum’ together, have you never felt as if you were in a temple formed around us

in the ether? It is not by chance that cathedrals were built at a time when the West was discovering the triad and four-part singing.

So, the paneurhythmy music is a powerful tonic.

In the 1940s, in the early days of the Brotherhood in France, the Master would often get us to sing the music without dancing. 'Learn the music and the words of the paneurhythmy', he would say; 'learn them at home. If you apply yourselves, you will create vibrations that can dispel any darkness. According to Master Peter Deunov, illness is a shadow that follows us because of something wrong we did in the past. By singing the paneurhythmy songs one after the other from beginning to end, you do a whole inner work of release and purification. That takes time, of course, but it is worth doing until you know it well.

'... When you sing the paneurhythmy, you amass elements of immortality. Without realizing it, you are storing elements within you that you will be able to draw on during stressful times or even times of illness. As with prayer and meditation, singing and practising the paneurhythmy connects us to sources of energy that enable us to withstand anything.

'... All the dust, symbolically speaking, that has found its way into you, slowing down your inner movement, is swept away by these songs. This is why you need to know the paneurhythmy perfectly from beginning to end, so that you can work with it, that is, enhance the activity of your inner life. There is nothing more dangerous than allowing yourselves to become sluggish. Slowness allows dust and impurities to stick to the matter of our physical body.'

See for yourselves: try singing 'Awakening', for example – which could actually be a mantra – or the delightful melody of 'The square'. Sing them several times as you try to visualize and fully experience the meaning of the words. You will feel a lightening, a freeing up, which will make you ashamed of your habitual heaviness. True spiritual life is one of elation! We should always be living in that state.

The words of most of the paneurhythmy songs were written not by Master Peter Deunov but by a Bulgarian sister. They evoke springtime, the forces and joys of the new life it brings, which are also those of the spiritual life. Our hearts open then, and subtle currents move between us. Have you noticed how joyful 'Acquaintance' is? It makes you want to hum...

The mind

The words of the songs do not show the deeper meaning of each exercise. I will say more about this later. I will just say, as regards the realm of the mind in the synoptic table, that you need to have learned the movements and their relationship to the music

well for the mind to be free to concentrate on their meaning. This creates favourable conditions for fresh revelations to emerge.

Make the effort to learn the paneurhythmy movements well straight away, so that you don't have to think about them while you perform them. Your mind is then free to take your consciousness to higher realms, and your movements will become an expression of only the subtlest feelings. They will emit powerful waves, which will spread out around you for the good of everyone.

The soul and the spirit

What can I say about the soul and the spirit? You can only be convinced by something you have experienced. It has to be something you can remember or imagine. Paneurhythmy is danced out of doors and in good weather. Our soul is nourished by light from the heavens; it expands and communes with the universe... Master Peter Deunov calls paneurhythmy a 'prayer from the soul'. He speaks of forces from the living circle of the paneurhythmy radiating out into space, forces that work to build a new world. So, we are entering the realm of the creative power of the spirit, symbolized by the circle with a dot at its centre.

Our Master has often mentioned this subject in his talks and explained that the circle represents matter, the feminine principle, and the dot at its centre, spirit, the masculine principle:

'The circle with its central dot is the symbol of the universe sustained and animated by the cosmic spirit. There are constant exchanges taking place between the central dot and the periphery, exchanges that bring life to the whole area of the circle.'

'So the central dot represents the spirit and the masculine principle, and the circle represents matter and the feminine principle. Matter is the vessel for all riches, but it is the spirit that brings it to life, that works on it and organizes it so that all the possibilities contained in it can begin to manifest. The circle without its central dot is symbolic of chaos.'

'This law can also be understood as relating to the inner life. The worst thing human beings can do is to sever their connection with the centre, with the spirit. Then all they are is the circle – unorganized matter, arid land, a desert. In order to become an organized world and fertile land, you must always connect to the central dot, to the spirit.'

This is the cosmic dimension of paneurhythmy. The dancers' circle represents the feminine principle, and at its centre, invisible but present, is the masculine, creative principle.

Yes, every time the paneurhythmy is danced with full knowledge and awareness, it allows us to relive the miracle of the world's creation.

I have heard our Master say, **'Later I will speak to you about the paneurhythmy.'** Perhaps he was waiting for us to be mature enough to hear about it. And according to a Bulgarian text, Peter Deunov said, **'This is the meaning of the exercises, but there is a still deeper meaning I cannot reveal to you now.'** And, apparently, he also said, **'Paneurhythmy has more evolved forms, which will be made known at a later time once humanity has evolved.'**

For the time being, let us think of this dance as something very precious, very sacred. Let us study it with love and respect and dedicate the power it generates to the glory of God and the good of humanity!

Notes

1. See *'Know Thyself'*, Complete Works, vol. 18, chaps. 11 and 12, by Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov.
2. Light is the quintessence of the universe. In the morning at sunrise, we have the opportunity to magnify the living light in us through the 'prana' found in the air. Prana is a life energy found everywhere in nature, in the earth, in water, in air and in fire, but it is mainly conveyed by the sun's rays, and through deep breathing we can pick it up and take it into ourselves.

Some initial thoughts

Where and when to dance

The best place for dancing the paneurhythmy is on a large lawn, such as those at the main Brotherhood centres, or else in a field or a clearing. Of course, it is possible to study and practise the paneurhythmy as an indoor exercise all year round. But the dance itself is performed in the open air, in the morning, during the spring and summer months. The Master Peter Deunov explained that this is to do with the way the earth is polarized in relation to the sun. In spring and summer, particularly in the morning, the earth is more receptive to the sun's rays. It follows, then, that every living thing on earth – plants, animals, human beings – receives the currents of solar energy at their best.

Clothing

Dancing the paneurhythmy does not require special clothing. You just need to be able to move freely. For a harmonious effect, however, it is recommended that the brothers wear white and the sisters plain, pastel clothing.

Walking

The first ten exercises are done without a pause and simply involve walking. Usually when we walk we place our heel down first, and this is characteristic of the materialistic times we live in. You will probably have seen a 'map' of the sole of the foot in certain books or magazines, showing the areas corresponding to our different organs: the tip of the foot corresponds to the head; the middle, to the lungs and heart; the heel, to the belly and sex organs. In other words, the toes correspond to heaven, the heel to earth. The ideal way to walk would be to place the toes down first, and the Master Peter

Deunov expressly indicates this for the paneurhythmy. This is obvious, isn't it, since the aim of this dance is to fill us with heavenly currents? Try walking toes first – I am sure you will feel lighter.

Still on the subject of walking, our Master suggested this exercise: connect to love as you move forward on the left foot, and to wisdom on the right foot.

Polarity

You will find this polarity throughout the paneurhythmy in the movements of the body, arms and legs:

- The right, positive side connects us to the masculine, creative currents, to wisdom, strength and firmness.

- The left, negative side, connects us to the feminine, formative currents, to love, kindness and gentleness.

In the same way, when we turn to the right or to the left, it means we are addressing the creative or the formative forces. It naturally follows that all but two of the paneurhythmy exercises begin on the right foot.

The planes in which the movements are performed present the same polarity: the vertical plane for the masculine, positive, creative, heavenly forces; the horizontal plane for the feminine, negative, formative, earthly forces.

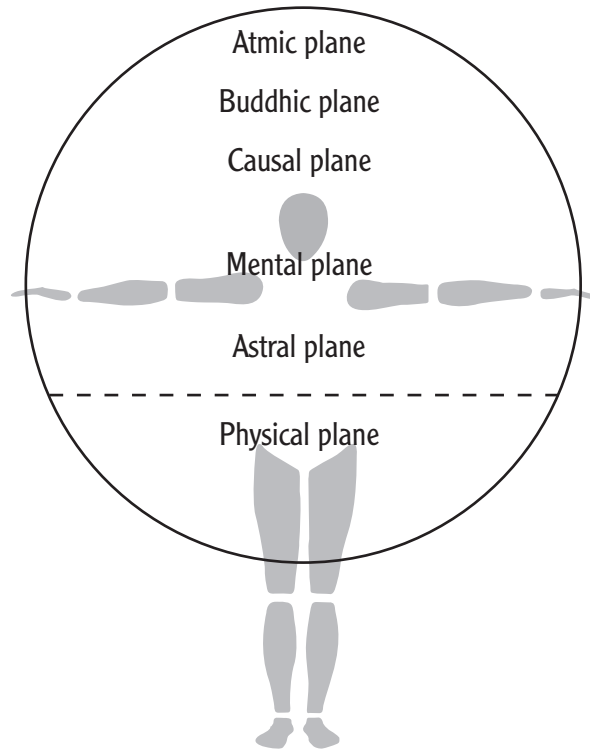
It was not until human beings first stood up on their feet that the brain developed, and we feel more clearheaded, aware, active and in control when we are standing or sitting rather than lying down. As soon as we are tired or slightly unwell, however, the first thing we do is lie down, allowing mother nature's recuperative forces to take over.

Finally, movements in straight lines evoke the masculine principle, electricity; movements in curved lines evoke the feminine principle, magnetism. Undulating movements express the vibrations of light.

The three worlds

Sister Stella also made it very clear that the space in which movements are made is also significant.

The space from the shoulders up corresponds to the mental plane and the spiritual planes – the causal, buddhic and atmic. The space from the shoulders down to the diaphragm corresponds to the astral plane, and the space below that corresponds to the physical plane. This relates to the hierarchy of the way our body is designed: head, heart and belly. So, it matters in which plane the movements are made.



Simple and natural

So, the direction of the movements, the shape of the line they create and the plane in which they are performed all tell us something, as does their energy and firmness or their delicacy and gentleness. Everything has meaning, but the movements are above all simple and natural.

One fine spring afternoon, I watched from a distance as a group of young brothers and sisters studied a few of the paneurhythmy movements. I couldn't hear the music, and they were not in a circle, but watching the movements themselves made me realize the beauty of the shapes and how well they harmonized with the surroundings. They stem from the basic movements of nature, and they blend with nature, with the swaying of the branches in the wind, with the gushing spring, with the sunrise – there is nothing artificial about them, nothing 'technical'.

Paneurhythmy should be danced with utmost simplicity, but with the knowledge that a movement is only effective when it expresses an idea, accompanied by a feeling of generosity and supported by the subtle life of our aura.

Dancing the paneurhythmy requires us to be fully awake, attentive and watchful, and it demands the utmost concentration.

In this book, there is an interpretation given for each exercise, accompanied by a fairly precise description, which was drawn up by a working group. These are intended as an *aide-mémoire* following a course and not in any way for learning the paneurhythmy on one's own. It also offers a few practical suggestions for those who will one day teach it.

Extra care has been given to the transition between the exercises, as the recording of the music¹ doesn't allow for pauses, so it is possible to pass quickly from one movement to the next. So, as well as taking care with how we perform the movements, we are able to experience the paneurhythmy as a whole, which seems to help to keep the ideas flowing. It also helps the dancers to maintain concentration and to experience a gradual, continuous raising of the level of consciousness. The results are certainly greater.

Note

1. A CD of the *paneurhythmy* music is available from Prosveta.

The awakening of higher consciousness

Our Master has shed brilliant light on the psychic phenomenon of the transition from self-awareness to super-consciousness. To understand the psychological scope of the paneurhythmy, you should study his amazingly thorough, detailed and subtle analysis of the dual nature of human beings.¹

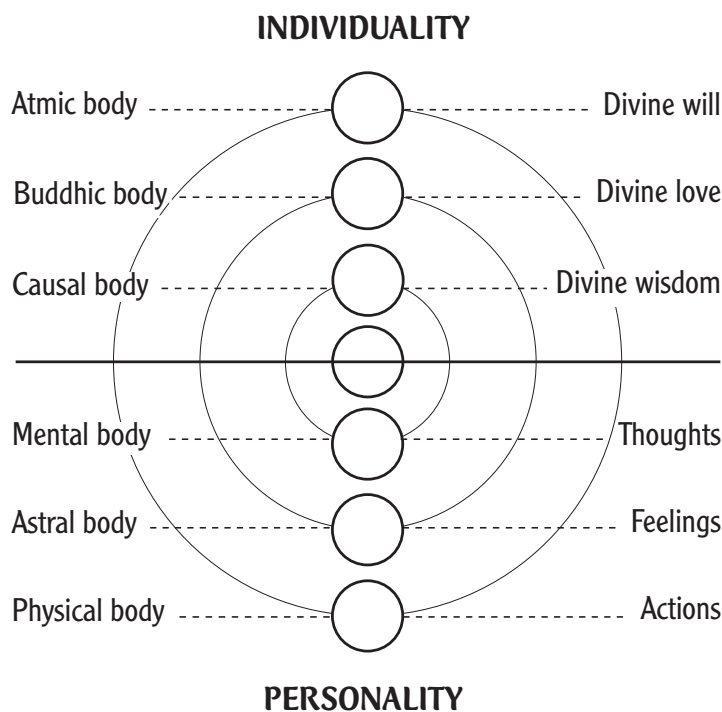
‘Human beings’, said the Master, ‘have a dual nature – a lower nature and a higher nature – which have the same ability to think, feel and act, but in opposite directions. I have named these two natures the personality and the individuality.

‘The personality and the individuality can be defined by two words: taking and giving. The personality only wants to take, and if it comes up against forces that stand in the way of its selfish tendencies, it engages all the resources of the mind, feelings and will to achieve its ends – it stops at nothing. The individuality, on the other hand, wants to give, to help and support. It thinks only of enlightening, of giving something of itself to others and showing generosity and selflessness. This is why it doesn’t hold on to what it has and doesn’t become irritated if someone comes to take it away. On the contrary, it is happy to see that others are nourished because of it, that their thirst is quenched and their being is brighter.

‘Human beings are constantly appealed to by both of these natures. So, what are they to do? They should give the individuality every chance to express itself and keep the personality in check. They shouldn’t try to do away with it, for it holds the keys to underground safes and cupboards full of wealth, full of the raw materials – the instincts and appetites – that enable us to live on this earth. If we seek to destroy it, we ourselves will die. As the repository for all kinds of riches, the personality is useful and even necessary. It should be outwitted, made to obey and put to work.

‘The personality has tremendous forces, which we should learn to use, just as we have learned to use natural forces such as water, wind or electricity. All the while human beings didn’t know how to use these forces, they remained at the mercy of them. Now that they are able to harness them and make use of them, they work wonders. Why shouldn’t it be the same with the primitive forces within us? Once disciples know how to put to work the instincts and passions that rage deep down inside them, water will begin to flow through their whole being and lamps will be lit... This is what is taught in an initiatic school. Forces such as selfishness, jealousy, vanity, anger or sensuality are not there for us to give in to or do battle with; they are there so that we can learn to put them to work.’

This diagram clearly shows the relationship between our two natures.



Divine wisdom must be able to express itself in our thoughts, divine love be able to spread through our feelings, and divine will manifest in our actions.

Only then will the ideal expressed by Jesus in the words of the Lord’s prayer become a reality: ‘Hallowed be your name’ (by a great light in our mind), ‘Your kingdom come’ (establishing peace, love and harmony in our heart) and ‘Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven’ (through our willingness to bring about the kingdom of God within and around us).

‘Awakening’, the first exercise of the paneurhythmy, expresses the idea of giving, of radiating something from ourselves – of giving and receiving, of course, and so of making exchanges on a higher plane. So, holding firm to the idea of giving is the first step towards the awakening of super-consciousness, the start of the new life, in which the soul, which aspires to the infinite, stirs and begins to manifest.

‘To live the unlimited life of the Whole’... There are degrees and degrees, the highest of which is to become so pure, transparent and radiant – in a word, perfect – that we become one with God! The high ideal will motivate, sustain and direct our efforts all through the paneurhythmy... and throughout many lifetimes!

Note

1. See *The Key to the Problems of Existence*, Complete Works, vol. 11, by Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov.

‘Everything in the universe is rhythm, and human beings themselves are part of this great cosmic rhythm. All their biological and psychic functions are subject to the laws of rhythm, even if this is not obvious. Depending on their way of life and on their thoughts, feelings and actions, they will harmonize to a lesser or greater extent with the universal rhythm. Music and dance are simply attempts to return to this universal rhythm or to remain within it. This is the reason why every culture attributes a divine origin to music and dance.

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