

## **Solar-Powered Seer**

### **Gnostic Master of Surya Yoga spread the Sun's divine powers throughout France**

*By Georg Feuerstein, California*

In this Deepavali month, it is appropriate that we honor a man of light. For thousands of years, pious Hindus have recited the Gayatri mantra in praise of Savitri, the quickening aspect of the life-giving Sun. In our own time, this ancient solar teaching has had a most ardent and convincing spokesman in the person of Omraam Mikhael Aivanhov. The Bulgarian-born European master made the life-bestowing solar being the focus of his whole life and teaching. Mainstream Christians denounced him, for Aivanhov was a follower of Gnosticism, a pre-Christian Pagan, Jewish and early Christian esoteric tradition regarded as heresy by many orthodox. Over the centuries, European mystics have often turned to the syncretic Gnostic theology as a system within which to expound their realizations.

Aivanhov was born in 1900 in the village of Serbtzy in Macedonia, a small Balkan country just north of Greece. He early on became fascinated with spiritual matters. At the age of sixteen, he was plunged into a state of ecstasy in which he experienced everything bathed in, and suffused with, light—an experience that left a lasting mark on his understanding of the nature of existence. Aivanhov had learned Hindu philosophy and yoga through the books of "Swami Ramacharaka"—pen name of the erudite American writer William Walker Atkinson—published at the turn of the century.

Aivanhov's yoga without a guru's guidance proved hazardous. He later said, "I had thrown myself totally into certain yoga exercises of breathing and concentration. One could say that I had lost my head. I spent days and nights studying, fasting, meditating, concentrating, breathing, and I became thin, pale and very weak." He experienced the awakening of *kundalini*, the primordial cosmic energy which lays dormant at the base of the spine. "It was a terrible sensation, as if my head was on fire. I was very afraid. I then made gigantic efforts to make it go to sleep again, and I succeeded. As I was so young, it would have been the greatest disaster for me if I had not been capable of making this force go to sleep once again."

A year later he found his teacher in the saintly Peter Deunov (Beinsa Deuno), a Gnostic master who had a following of tens of thousands organized as the "Universal White Brotherhood." At his teacher's behest, Aivanhov immigrated to France in 1937 to spread the teaching of light outside his homeland. He lived and tirelessly taught in France for nearly half a century until his death in December of 1986. He also traveled widely, saying once he thought he'd visited nearly every country in the world.

When touring India in 1960, Aivanhov was welcomed by several renowned Hindu sages, including Swami Nityananda, as an accomplished master from Europe. The title "Omraam," bestowed on him by Neemkaroli Baba when visiting that Indian sage, is the French spelling of the two sacred syllables *Om* and *Ram*. His devotees remarked upon

his return from India that he seemed a deeply changed man, different even in physical appearance.

It was on the basis of his own spiritual realization and of his reading of what he called the "Book of Nature" that Aivanhov discovered in the Sun a great secret. He observed, "Deprived of sunshine, men could never have existed. Without his light, men could never have had the faculty of sight, and not only on the physical level but also on the intellectual level: they could never have had understanding, for understanding is a higher form of sight." Aivanhov taught that, as a supremely intelligent being, the Sun is responsive to our spiritual intentions and aspirations, able to reply "in a flash, like an electronic machine." Thus his teachings parallel the Gayatri Mantra, "We meditate upon the glorious splendor of the Vivifier divine. May He Himself illumine our minds."

Aivanhov gave the name Surya Yoga, "Solar Yoga," to the conscious cultivation of that solar umbilical cord to the Divine. He explained: "By the practice of Surya Yoga you establish a link between yourself and the power that governs and gives life to the whole Universe: the Sun. That is why you must necessarily get results! No book can give you what the Sun gives you, if you learn to have the proper relationship with him. If you want to create a bond between you [and the Sun], you have to look at him in all consciousness. If you do that, there will be a communication of vibrations between the Sun and you in which forms and colors, a whole new world, will be born."

Master Aivanhov never wrote anything, but his countless talks were recorded and collected by his disciples. Over forty volumes of these impromptu talks are in print in English and other languages, with hundreds more being planned for publication over the coming years.

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