

# pentagram

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The Upanishads say with great emphasis: 'Know thou the One, the Soul. It is the bridge leading to the immortal being. This is the ultimate end of man, to find the One which is in him; which is his truth, which is his soul; the key with which he opens the gate of the spiritual life, the heavenly kingdom.' The quest for this one that is within a human being is the theme of this issue of the Pentagram lying before you. You will perhaps say: 'But don't all texts published in the Pentagram deal with this?' Let us then formulate it differently: The theme is the unmasking of this quest. On the basis of an article by the Grandmasters, J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, a large part of the misleading methods, based on false emotions, is separated from what is true and meaningful. The article Vistas also tries to shake us awake from a complacent self-consciousness; therein the author states: 'We actually have hardly any idea of where we are, who we are and what we have come to do here. We live in a kind of dream state, in which the moment of awakening is continuously on the brink of occurring, but is time and again postponed.'

Socrates taught that 'He who knows that he does not know anything is wiser than all other people.' Through this insight, the way is paved for us to understand the article, titled: The temple, a working place. A temple of the Rosy-cross may be seen as an ideal representation of the inner temple, waiting to be realised in every human being. In the serene atmosphere of a temple, a person is able to link himself with the truth. If we have learned to see the world as it really is, we know that the truth of the world is finite. Then we are open to a higher truth, a new seeing: we see what can and must occur in a temple working place as well as in our inner being.

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Cover: The sculptor Lucca della Robbia succeeded in representing in a very graceful way, what beauty, truth and joy are unlocked, when the soul (here to be seen as the children) perceives the fama (the blasts of the trumpet) of the original life. Della Robbia's sculpture Cantoria may be admired in the Museo di S. Maria del Fiore, Florence, Italy (1432)

# clairvoyance, faculty of the old man

*J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri*

In two articles, the founders and Grandmasters of the modern Spiritual School compared the essence of popular occultism, practised in our world, with the knowledge and teachings of the modern Rosycross. By these latter concepts, they referred to a universal mode and directedness of life, and showed that these two points of departure and goals could not be reconciled or identified with each other. They confronted the 'higher' faculty of the old man and the faculty of the new man with each other. They wrote:

**B**oth faculties can be realised by anyone who wants to realise them. We will extensively show the limitations, the finite nature and the great danger, ensuing from the higher faculty of the old man. Equally extensively, we will deal with the faculties of the new man, as far as we are able to do so.

The material sphere, in which we currently live, has various properties and behaves according to various laws. The reflection sphere of our planet, or yonder side of the veil, also possesses various properties with regard to its substance. The occultist distinguishes a total of seven properties, seven manifestations of matter and also seven dimensions. Corresponding to this sevenfold aspect of our planetary abode, a human being possesses seven sensory organs, by which he is able to react to the sevenfold material nature.

Through the seven senses, a human being is, therefore, wholly able to express himself in this world and be active in matter. This sevenfold, sensorial state actually is a theoretical possibility, because in ordinary, real life, a per-

son only knows and uses five senses; the other two are only hypothetically present.

This applies to a person on this side of the veil. However, when a human being sojourns in the reflection sphere, he possesses the power of using the other two senses, although he then lacks the physical and the vital body, so that he is no longer able to express himself wholly sensorially in the material sphere. Consequently, we continuously see a broken reality in this world, which will be paid for both in the material sphere as well as in the reflection sphere.

Man has always been inclined to neutralise this broken reality by trying to build a bridge between two worlds that are foreign to each other, but which are theoretically nevertheless two halves of one world. The inclination to bridge them is called occult. The attempt to build this bridge sensorially and structurally, in order to be able to draw various advantages from it, is called occultism.

The existing occult movements show the differences between the advantages people try



Jan van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri were the founders of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross. In this School, they explained and exemplified the path of the liberation of the soul to their pupils in all kinds of ways, often on the basis of original texts from the universal teachings.



The hero Isfandiyar defeats the dangerous bird Simurgh. Illustrations from the epic *Shahnameh*, in which the hero has to accomplish a number of heroic tasks. For over a thousand years, storytellers in Iran taught people wisdom, virtue and courage on the basis of the stories from this epic. *Book of Kings, Persia, around 1530*

## The Spiritual School of the modern Rosycross does not focus on the reflection sphere or on any of its realms in any way

to garner from them. These differences correspond, by the way, to the different human types. Thus there is an occult movement that is religiously oriented and believes itself able to forge a conscious link with the light land on yonder side. There is also an occult movement that is scientifically oriented and only strives for knowledge. In addition, there is a movement that is focused on matter, which solely uses the occult faculties for obtaining financial benefits. Finally, a fourth group of occultists should be mentioned that concentrates on self-maintenance and self-cultivation. The modern Rosycross is not interested in any of these movements. For many years, we have emphatically stated that our goal is not in any way focused on the reflection sphere or any of its realms, because such a goal does not offer any liberating aspect, while our inner drive is to neutralise any interest in this respect.

The true human being also has seven faculties, corresponding to the seven substances of the world, provided he is free from the limitations and the broken state of his abode.

These seven faculties may be best described as follows.

Firstly: the highest human faculty can be referred to as the power of love. We only refer to the power of love, by which everything truly becomes Light. In all Holy Scriptures, we can read that Light is the most sublime. God is Love and therefore, God is Light. It is held out before the seeking human being that

he will one day walk in the Light that is as God.

The second human faculty is wisdom that can be received and assimilated mentally.

The third human faculty is the will. Here we solely refer to the will that is standing in the human temple as the High Priest, and accomplishes God's will, sustained by love and wisdom.

The fourth faculty of the true man is the power of thinking, through which a human being, sustained by love, wisdom and intellect and propelled by the will, forms his mental conceptions, down to all details.

The ancients called the fifth faculty the 'kundalini shakti'. It is the higher, general principle of life. It means rotating or revolving energy, referring to a hidden power in the human constitution. It is a result of the elementary forces of nature. As to its higher aspect, it is a power that follows tortuous ways and carries along or transmits forces and thoughts, stemming from the higher triad. It is one of the elementary energies of the different kinds of prana (ethers). Intervening in their normal effect may lead to insanity or serious diseases. In our philosophy, we speak of dynamic energy that is concentrated to provide the mental conceptions with vital power.

The sixth faculty is the form manifestation, the divine power of speech or the mantra. By speaking the creative word that has a magical effect, the mental conception, provided with vital energy, is realised in matter. The

seventh faculty is the sum of the six preceding ones. Only in this sum of the different energies is the seventh faculty expressed, which is then able to make proper use of everything that has been realised in the service of what is universal and divine. The powers extracted from the first six faculties form the irradiating, universal Light that is concentrated in the seventh faculty. The focal point of each of these seven powers is a consciousness nucleus from which the power or energy is emanated, as discussed above.

If we now take this ideal, sevenfold human being, who is active with his whole microcosm, as our starting point, every right-minded person will understand that a human being is absolutely unable to fulfil such a task, and that the content of these universal teachings far surpasses his possibilities. This implies that, even in the best of circumstances, this ideal will be replaced by a poor caricature. We would like to explain this by a few examples. We already said that the second faculty is that of wisdom that can be received, transformed and assimilated mentally. Now the situation is as follows: even if the link with this wisdom would not exist and the intellect would be strongly denatured, people might still achieve clairvoyance. But we will all understand that this faculty has nothing in common with the divine intentions, but belongs to the biological structure of a human being.

Clairvoyance may be described as inner perception; it is seeing what happens at an unde-

termined distance from the observer. This is why clairvoyance is not something like etheric sight, which is a refinement, an extension of our physical power of perception.

Some thoughts and some sounds travel a long way, as is demonstrated by the following. Someone thinks of you: 'I will visit him or her this week.' This thought reaches your auric sphere, the subtly attuned pituitary gland senses the impression, begins to vibrate, and this vibration causes in its turn the pineal gland to vibrate, too. As a result of this, you will inwardly see the image of the friend who is thinking of you, receive his impression, and know that he will come one of these days.

Therefore, a surprise is impossible. Because virtually all people have experienced similar sensations, it will be clear that we, without exception, are to a certain extent clairvoyant or clairaudient. Now a negative or a positive clairvoyance may develop.

We become negatively clairvoyant, when we allow external influences to penetrate our auric field and we retain these influences, so that they ultimately wholly occupy our thoughts. The concentrated thoughts, by which we are bombarded, and our retaining what others project into our auric field, cause the streams emanating from the pituitary gland to lead the pineal gland to clairvoyant perception. We develop positive clairvoyance, when we keep, in our turn, our thoughts strongly concentrated on a subject. By our deliberately directed thinking power, we penetrate the

## All these so-called natural, higher faculties do not mean anything other than the cultivation of the endocrine system

auric sphere of our object, and the object of our interest becomes an open book to us, as described above! It is unnecessary to add that various training methods may expand this natural faculty with amazing, but hardly ever positive results.

If we observe these developments with the soberness of a higher point of view, we will discover that all these so-called natural, higher faculties do not mean anything other than the cultivation of the endocrine system. For such cultivation, a person does not even have to be good or decent or to change his life.

Anyone interested in it can practise this form of occultism, provided that his blood and his biological structure do not pose too many impediments.

The activity of the endocrine system may be developed in various ways and involves the greatest dangers, not only for the person concerned, but particularly for others. In this way, ample opportunity is created for not only material, but above all moral and spiritual exploitation. And the tragedy is that this pre-

vents the truly seeking person from walking the true path. If someone has surrendered to negative or positive training of the endocrine system, or if he possesses such a body that is sensitive from birth and he is not protected by a healthy and morally high-minded mode of life, he will open his auric sphere to all kinds of forces that will dominate and control him through the power and the activity of the endocrine system ✪

# the rose of st. john

**D**rawing your attention to the higher faculties of the old man, we considered with each other that, when a person of this nature has or will have any higher faculty at his disposal, this concerns a certain activity of the two endocrine organs in the head, namely, the pituitary gland and the pineal gland.

After all, the pituitary gland is the sensory organ of the emotions, of the impressions of the auric sphere, and the pituitary gland feels everything, either entering or even only touching this auric sphere, as being present. This organ also perceives everything that a person himself evokes in his life and that consequently lingers in his environment. Through this touch, the pituitary gland begins to vibrate, and its vibration arouses the dormant organ, the pineal gland or the third eye, to increased activity, resulting in the initial emotional impressions to be stimulated to inner sight.

The activity of these two organs can be cultivated in a purely natural way, if only we possess the key to drive them onward to increased activity. Therefore, the increased power is a rather extended, natural power and is wholly of this world. This is why the pupil on the path of transfiguration wholly rejects this expansion of his visual faculty, because he completely sees through the result of such a development as it means the cultivation of the personality, binding it more tightly to the earth. In this way, he would achieve the very opposite of the goal initially envisaged.

What, then, are the higher faculties of the new man?

If we want to understand anything of the activity of these higher faculties of the new man, we should first of all determine and outline the fundamental principle of these faculties. It is total, fundamental I-demolition. This I-demolition does not mean that we should become less egoistic and a bit more humanistic, or that we should become more attuned to religious or other standards. No, by I-demolition, the Spiritual School of the Rosycross refers to a total break-up of the whole complicated human system of this nature. On this basis, we may begin the preparatory work. First of all, it is the intention of this preparatory work to change the life streams of the earthly figure completely. This change of the basis of life is, therefore, the first condition, because these streams keep the whole being together. The forces and substances in the earthly human being are binding and hence maintaining. This is why a person should, once he has set his foot on the liberating path, focus his attention on giving up everything that binds and maintains the 'I'.

This is a radical, but inevitable process, because the auric sphere, this extremely important respiration field of the human being on the path, must be liberated and become free from any lower, ordinary material influences. Not until the respiration field satisfies this condition can the work begin in the correct Light.

## The new faculties bring the superconscious memory, located in one of the brain centres between the cerebrum and the cerebellum, into a state of intense vibration

In view of the situation in which we find ourselves as human beings living in this world, it is quite well possible that we may wonder whether this total purification of the auric field, this becoming wholly immune to any harmful influences, is based on any form of certainty. However, this certainty is absolutely ensured because we know that the auric field has three faculties at its disposal, each of which can be controlled by the human consciousness nucleus.

The first faculty that the auric field has at its disposal is attracting; the second faculty is rejecting, and the third faculty is able to neutralise everything that wants to stay in the auric field. What obviously matters is that we do not use these faculties in a negative way, but in a positive way and with rational insight. In this way, we ensure the possibility of liberation for the beginning pupil. Under ordinary circumstances, a person is wholly free to control these three faculties.

First of all, he must realise that the consciousness nucleus continuously rotates in a vicious circle and after an ascent, always experiences a decline, so that he remains imprisoned in the limitations of this world.

Secondly, he should discover that a human being will have to decline, so that the new life will receive an opportunity to be manifested and the heavenly other one will be able to develop in his microcosm. However, gaining this insight into the process of self-decline can only be controlled by the 'self' to

a certain extent. It is not possible that a pupil can wholly accomplish this process of renewal on his own, because his consciousness nucleus can only act according to its own nature. This requires a wholly new power!

When someone decides to walk this path, leading to the correct insight, very soon a power that cannot be explained from this nature comes and fills his being. This supernatural power, making him aware of a higher world, then enables him to perceive in a fraction of a second how his current being is anchored in an unchanging state of his blood. This insight is needed in order to make him conscious of the process of reversal that has to be accomplished within him.

We may state that a pupil makes his decision on the basis of a certain link with a power, not stemming from this nature, which in the meantime has been forged between him and the original fatherland. We refer to this power, this link, as the superconscious memory that is stimulated to a certain activity by Divine love. In and through this superconscious memory, the pupil begins to use the three faculties of his respiration field consciously. Then the pupil will very consciously fend off all attracting influences that he has learned to recognise as harmful to the attainment of the goal.

The pupil is able to carry out this whole activity through the third faculty of the auric sphere, the faculty of neutralisation. When he is involved in this and has to fight in a great struggle (after all, two different life forces

cannot be associated with each other), a wondrous process develops. The superconscious memory, located in one of the brain centres between the cerebrum and the cerebellum, is brought into a state of intense vibration. This vibration opens the seven brain cavities to the universal prana, to the breath of the divine life. The rose opens forth to the heavenly sunlight and the seven faculties of the rose feed on the power of the Holy Spirit, so that through this spiritual power the victory over the old life will be gained.

Many of our pupils, who have fought this spiritual power struggle, or who are still doing so, know that our philosophy calls this struggle the process of John the Baptist, and the related sevenfold faculty is called the rose of St. John. The feast of St. John is the feast of the pupil who is able to prepare his auric sphere for the process in which the I-consciousness will wholly give up its course through nature, so that the heavenly consciousness within him can be taken up into the works of the Kingdom of God. This is why the climax of the feast of St. John is the transfer of the white rose.

By this, we mean that the rose in the head sanctuary is opened by the intense vibration of the superconscious memory. It will now be clear to the reader why a pupil in whom such a transfer, this receiving of the white rose, has taken place, shouts that 'he, the inner heavenly being, must increase and the I, the human being of this nature, must decrease.'

In this way, the preparatory process and the struggle against the self and its drive, has begun in and through the Holy Spirit. In whatever way, the pupil can and must first of all become a knight of St. John.

It would, to a certain extent, be superficial if we were to tell you that everything had been said concerning the higher faculties of

the pupil on the path of transfiguration. This is why we would like to go deeper into the appearance of the rose of St. John. This rose is sevenfold, and we can, therefore, also speak of a sevenfold higher faculty, a sevenfold fire, corresponding to the seven brain cavities. When this fire has been ignited as Light, we also speak of the seven harmonies, which in their turn correspond to a sevenfold development.

The first of these harmonies is the song of love, the love that is God himself. God is Light and God is Love. The second song is the song of wisdom. The third one is the power of the will of the high priest, singing his hymn before the inner altar. The fourth song contains the power of thinking. The fifth song expresses the forces of a dynamic energy. The sixth song is that of the new form manifestation, and the seventh one is the cohesive power of the six preceding ones unto perfect 'being'. From this we may therefore draw the conclusion that in the rose of St. John, the pupil receives a talisman for opening the seven eternal doors. Through the sevenfold higher faculties, the pupil gains access to the original, divine community, from which all elements for a truly new construction of the heavenly man stem.

The brothers of the Rosycross, with their purely Christian conviction, have always professed the way of the cross through the magic of the crucified rose, which is coloured red by the blood sacrifice of Jesus the Lord. For the pupils of the Rosycross, it is therefore the talisman, symbol of the removal of the veil, by which the access to the sevenfold human microcosm is unlocked. Of course, this does not mean that the removal of this veil has enabled the use of the divine powers. However in this way, we do receive a sevenfold link with absolute 'being', and through this link, the pupil is

Textile fabric with sunflowers, Persia, 17th century



able to continue the great work of construction.

In the first place, a work of breaking up is necessary, and secondly, a work of a wholly new genesis. We know the winged words: Where the Light appears, darkness must flee. The break-up that must be accomplished is not a dramatic event. Through the universal Light that has touched the pupil, any material compound that is not in accordance with it will be dissolved and another metabolic process will begin. The dissolution as to this nature simultaneously means total renewal, in other words: transfiguration. The death of what is old is at the same time the birth of what is new, and the higher sevenfold faculty of the new man is, to the extent that transfiguration continues, a gradually growing faculty. Guided by the Holy Spirit that communicates itself to the human being, the microcosm is led back to the lost fatherland.

Finally, we would like to make a comparison with the power of the old human being. We have seen that the power of the old man concerns a natural cultivation of the pituitary and the pineal gland, wholly within the context of this world. In this new power, the pituitary and the pineal glands are two factors, or two petals of the sevenfold rose. These two organs are very closely linked with two of the seven brain cavities.

In the new power, they do not function as natural organs or as sensory organs for feeling and observation of everything that is manifested in the auric sphere, but they are linked with the Holy Seven-Spirit itself! They have opened to what no ear has heard and no eye has seen. They are linked with the five other petals of the rose or the lotus, and together they constitute the seven flames of the fire of the Holy Spirit.

The outlined path therefore manifests the sev-

enfold rose as to its overall cohesion. Natural training of both endocrine organs means playing with supersensory powers. It is evoking a phenomenon, like a nerve tremor of a divine faculty, buried in a human being!

Think in this context of Moses' serpent and of its imitation by the Egyptian priests. Moses, appearing before Pharaoh with the staff of his own holy fire – the symbol of his being superhuman – proved to the world that his way was a way of freedom, while the priests of Pharaoh tried to prevent this freedom by their sham phenomena of the unholy serpent fire. Many very holy matters and powers may be imitated in this way and we may become so familiar with this caricatural imitation that we consider it to be the true essence. Isn't this what also happens in ordinary human lives? We call it 'life', but it actually is only pain and grief. This is why, if a pupil wants to grasp these things, he must rise above the ordinary narrowness of his understanding to be able to receive the white rose of St. John.

It is certain that, once this white rose, this higher sevenfold faculty, is manifested as the opening of the seven eternal doors, the pupil will understand something of Christ's words: 'The Kingdom of God is within you.' On the basis of the white rose of St. John, through the sacrifice of John, the Jesus man is realised: the higher faculties of the New Man will enable the pupil to become perfect again as his Father in heaven is perfect! ☸

Borobudur is a temple complex of eminent beauty from the ninth century, near Magelang on the isle of Java, Indonesia. The symbolism of its round form is that of the perfect, sevenfold human being (the Buddha), who has returned to the unity. The square terrace represents a throne; the square harmika symbolises the radiant head sanctuary, with a crown on top of it. It is the spiritual creation of one brilliant artist, of one who 'knows' and who was able to express the ideal, spiritual aspect of everything. The building speaks the language of the path; its deeper, sober, spiritual beauty rather touches the receptive, seeking soul more than only what meets the eye.



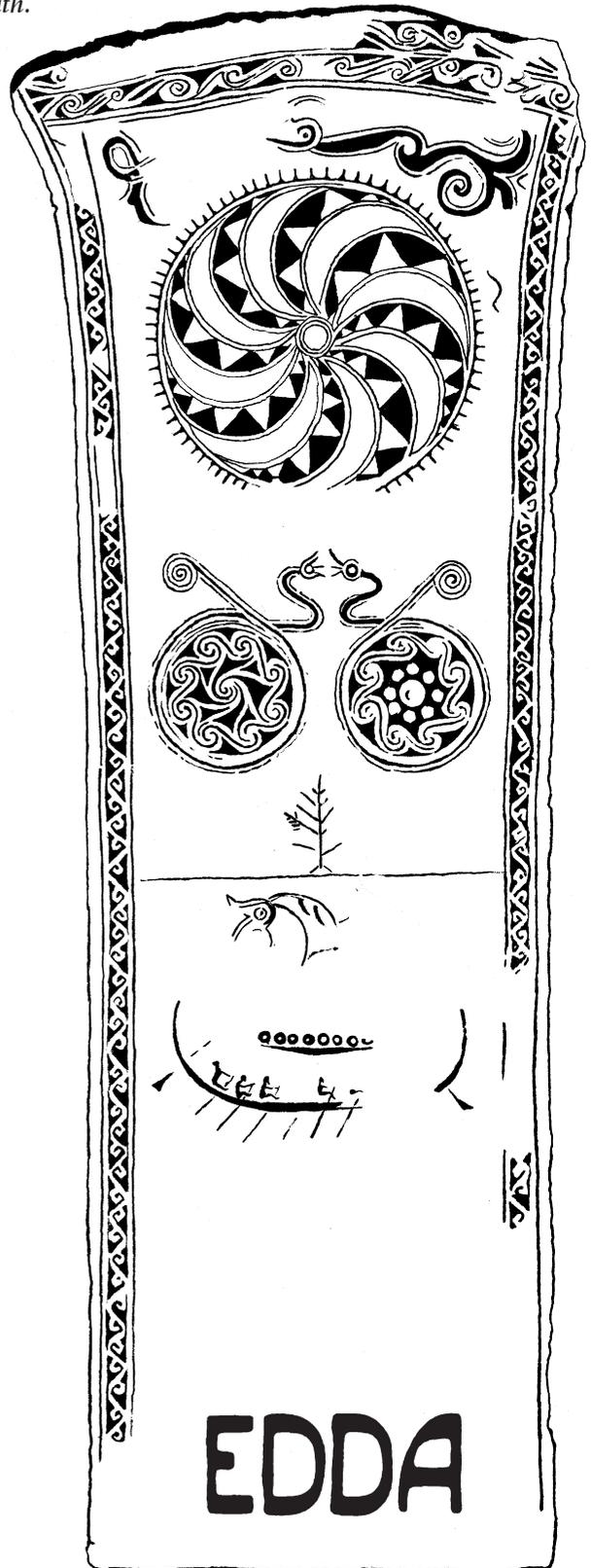


Countless myths have been passed down to us from the most diverse cultural periods. They contain images of early humanity depicting the origin of the world, the activity of the forces of nature, gods and also about the human fate after death.

# the vision of the seer

The myths collected in the Edda speak about the mysteries relating to the development of the world. The Edda transmits the one universal truth by various images, in accordance with the power of imagination of the listeners at that time. Part two of our series about the Edda deals with a lengthy prediction of the seer Volva or Voluspa. They are mythical images, and this is why we are not always able to understand them immediately. The Edda is an early-Germanic drama about the gods, the subject of which is the end of the whole world.

The epic *The Vision of the Seer* consists of sixty-six verses, and is considered a milestone of proto-Germanic poetry, in which the sum total of traditional knowledge is concentrated in a few verses. The aristocratic audience that assembled in the Althing (the free tribal meeting), was thoroughly acquainted with this and other odes. The poem abounded with 'kennigar', plays on words, which contained whole series of images. In our time, they may seem affected, but at the time, they were a milestone of West-Germanic literary skill.



The seer, called Volva, but also Vala or Volve, possessed the gift of seeing the past as well as the future. In the epic, she presents a profound image of creation, a proto-Germanic-Nordic genesis, the development of humanity from the whole cosmos: the vision of a total cycle of the world, from the beginning of the world in primordial times and the activities of the gods until their ruin at the end of the world.

*Hearing I ask  
from the holy races,  
from Heimdall's sons,  
both high and low.  
Thou wilt, Odin,  
that well I relate old tales I remember  
of men long ago.*

*I remember yet  
the giants of yore,  
who gave me bread  
in the days gone by;  
nine worlds I knew,  
the nine in the tree  
with mighty roots  
beneath the mold.*

By her supersensory powers, Volva brings her audience into a trance, so that they are able to look beyond the realm of matter.

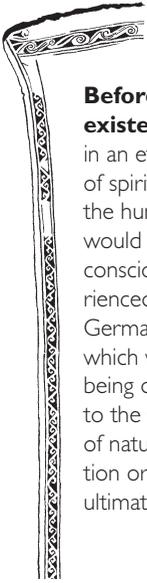
*Necklaces had I  
and rings from Heerfather.*

*Wise was my speech  
and my magic wisdom.  
Widely I saw  
over all the worlds.*

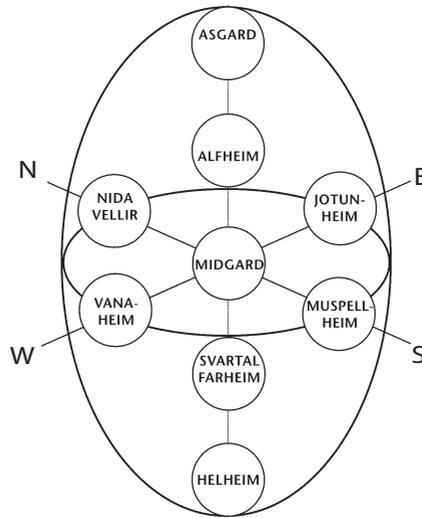


The people, to whom she spoke, belonged to the Althing. At certain times, the eldest member of a family and the free men bearing arms assembled at a place in the open air to make decisions about important matters that concerned all. They were the descendants of North-Germanic tribes that travelled to the far North between 2500 and 1000 BC. They were Indo-Germans, who purportedly were the descendants of the inhabitants of Atlantis that had submerged long ago. In a special way, this group demonstrated the development towards an autonomous, conscious personality.

THE ACTIVITY OF THE GODS IN THE SELF The seer approached the past via the inner path. Through spiritual sight, her consciousness was able to revive what had happened in the past to gods and men and to communicate it to others in whom this memory no longer resided in this way. The primordial past continues to affect every person until this present day, because every human being is himself part of this development. His spiritual origin is buried in him like a pre-memory; the primordial, spiritual forces are also active in the present. The Edda makes us experience them in an awakening consciousness. We might say: we ourselves are able to awaken the seer within us.

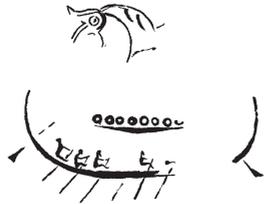


**Before humanity and the earth existed in a dense form,** they existed in an etheric form. They were a reflection of spiritual hierarchies. In his development, the human being followed impulses that would cause him to acquire independent consciousness, which he, however, experienced as 'being separated'. A part of the Germanic gods symbolised spiritual beings, which were taken up into the human being during this process. This was related to the struggle of the gods with the forces of nature. From this often fierce interaction or struggle, the current human figure ultimately developed.



When the seer revealed the mysteries of the development of the worlds, the audience experienced those images in their own souls and in this way, they were able to relate to the hidden history again.

*An ash I know,  
Yggdrasil its name,  
with water white  
is the great tree wet.  
Thence come the dews  
that fall in the dales.  
Green by Urth's well  
does it ever grow.*

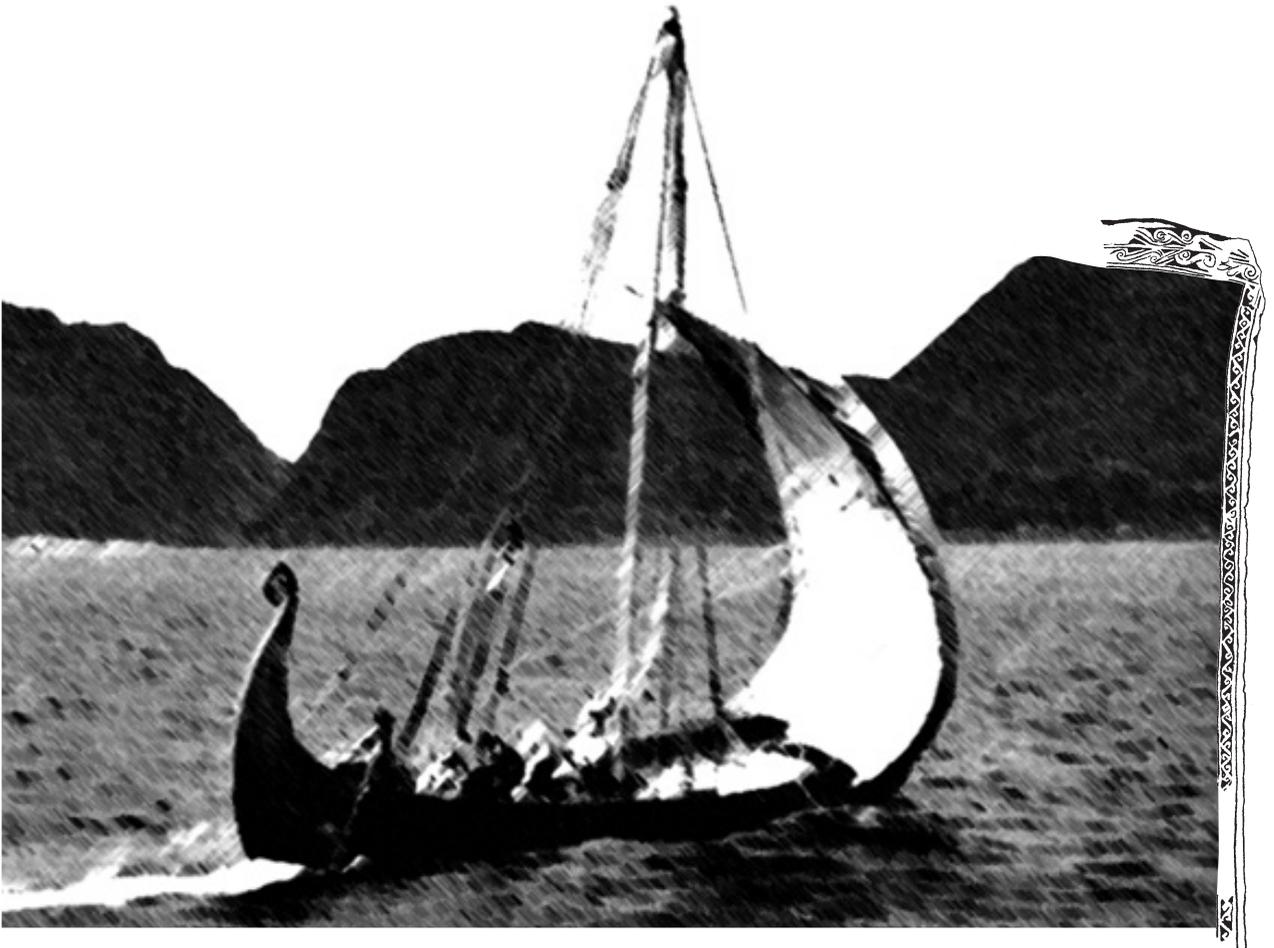


What the seer expressed was the word of the deity. In this way, the developments of infinitely long periods of creation became part of the consciousness as if by an accelerated account. The people of that time were able to assimilate the divine impulse because they saw this activity in nature within and around them. People did not feel far removed and separated from the gods, but they experienced the fate of the gods like their own, as if the deeds of the gods occurred within them. What mattered at the time was to behold the transmitted messages inwardly. In our time, countless opportunities are presented for achieving this vision in a new way. The seer captivated her audience, and in the first fourteen verses of the Edda, the people experi-

enced a splendid retrospective of the periods of the creation of the world, the original history of the gods and the development of man. Subsequently, the seer, as if clairvoyant, described the origin of the first wars in the verses fifteen through fifty.

*Brothers shall fight  
and fell each other,  
and sisters' sons  
shall kinship stain.  
Hard is it on earth,  
with mighty whoredom.  
Axe-time, sword-time,  
shields are sundered!  
Wind-time, wolf-time,  
ere the world falls;  
nor ever shall men  
each other spare.*

This struggle, full of dangers for gods and men, and the arrival of the chaotic events of the time of the end, would lead everything during the 'Ragnarok' (the ruin of the world) to its doom. The world would be destroyed by a tremendous fire and by great floods. The verses fifty-one through sixty-six describe a new world that will emerge. New life will be breathed into gods and people, and they will, with their newly acquired, original glory, inhabit the unspoiled earth again in peace and harmony:



*Now do I see  
the earth anew  
rise all green  
from the waves again;  
the cataracts fall,  
and the eagle flies,  
and fish he catches  
beneath the cliffs.*



divine (formative) forces. To the consciousness of the ancient Germans, the gods and the nature forces – energies of a high and a low quality – were figures and persons. They experienced how they were increasingly formed and developed by the interaction between spirit and nature.

The struggle of the gods with the forces of nature resembled that of a sculptor, who represents himself in a sculpture. Nowadays, it is important to raise this interaction to a higher level. What matters is a more perfect reflection, a soul body, in which the spirit is reflected more comprehensively, and in which an intimate, conscious cooperation of body, soul and spirit becomes possible. To this end, we have to seek in our inner being for the spirit, the sculptor, who is able to shape the new soul and the new body ✪

The verses of the Edda were taken from  
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/poe03.htm>

We may consider this last image a sign of peace and harmony. In times of peace, the eagle can only catch fish, because there are no longer battlefields, on which the fallen heroes lie...

In this way, each image in the Edda absolutely has its own meaning. Many images have been passed down to us with their original power – as a reflection and expression of the one eternal truth. The human personality, still wholly in the process of development, became ever stronger and more active through the



‘He who possesses sufficient soul quality, soul nobility; he who has sufficiently developed the immortal soul vesture, will see the world of phenomena in a radiant clarity, like a fire, just as the aurora borealis of the Christ vibrations alarms some, while others experience this sign of the approaching blast of the trumpet with joyful yearning.’

The Call of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross



# the temple, a working place

Why do modern Rosicrucians speak of a temple working place? To them, a temple is a room, in which light of an unearthly vibration is present in a concentrated form. By intensely experiencing this Light, it may gradually become clear to a person, who he or she really is. It is this Light that reveals what is negative and what is positive in a person.

In this Light, we also see the building plan of the inner temple that may be erected in a person's essence, wholly in accordance with the words: 'Do you not know that your body is a temple, in which the Spirit can live?' We can enable this construction by a new mode of life corresponding to this Light. There is a mighty light treasure, but this light treasure must indeed be received.

Pupil: Master, how can I behold the Light?

Master: Nothing is simpler than that, dear pupil. If you want to see heaven, you only have to raise your head, and avert your eyes from the earth below you. Therefore, if you want to see the Light, you only have to avert your eyes from the darkness.

Pupil: Yet, why does it seem so difficult to me?

Master: The earth seems close by and heaven seems far away.

This is why the things of the earth seem closer by than those of heaven, and why you are more inclined to pay attention to them.

Pupil: I know, Master, that nothing is more than the Light.

Why, then, do I find it so difficult to see the Light?

Master: Know that many are the ties that affect your eyes and force them downward. They are called fear, worry, anxiety, pride, faint-heartedness, desire

and lack of understanding.

But all these ties only exist in the thinking of your darkness; in the Light, they disappear as shadows before the sun.

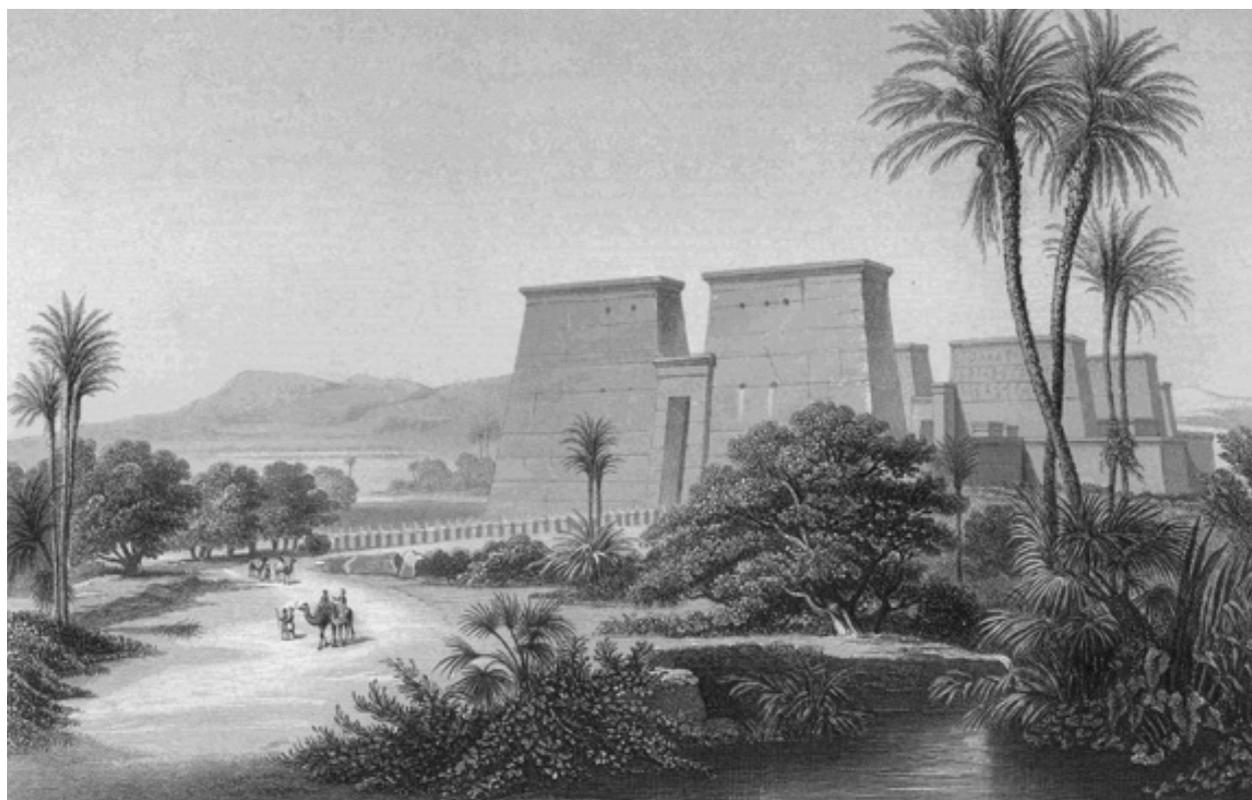
Why should I join a Spiritual School; does the Divine Light not shine everywhere?

Think of the sun. The light of the sun shines in the entire space of the solar system. The light, and therefore, life on earth, stems from the sun. However, without the atmosphere, the sunlight would be fatal; just think of the holes in the ozone layer. Outside the earthly atmosphere, the light of the sun is present, but invisible: the extraterrestrial space seems black as the night. Only if we look straight at the sun, can we see its light, but then it is blinding.

The powerfield of a Spiritual School is a cosmos. This cosmos makes the light of Vulcan, the divine Sun, visible. We speak of Light that flows in vertically and of Light that spreads horizontally. Neutrinos, subatomic particles, are present everywhere in space, but cannot be observed, because they do not react to anything. The Light, flowing in vertically, is also present everywhere, yet it is not of this world. Nothing of this world can react to it. And because we, our senses and our consciousness, are wholly of this world, we are unable to observe the Light.

There are also many forms of light in this nature, visible as well as invisible. To us,

## AN IMPRESSION FROM THE TEMPLE OF THE LECTORIUM ROSICRUCIANUM



**Nineteenth-century impression of the Temple of Karnak, in Luxor (Egypt)**

ultraviolet light is invisible. TL tubes emit ultraviolet light. Just like that, it is not of any use to us, but the powder on the inside of the tube transforms the ultraviolet light into visible light. This concerns, therefore, a kind of transmutation. The central point in our being, the heart atom, is able to receive the Light of the Gnosis that flows in vertically. In us, this received light is converted into Light that is

spread horizontally, into a radiation fullness in the atmosphere of our earth that can be perceived by all.

In *The Seal of Renewal*, Catharose de Petri quotes a few lines from chapter 15 of the Gospel of John: 'You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you.' The Gnostic Spiritual School speaks to us about the Light through the focal points, and



while we listen and are, therefore, focused on the Light of the Gnosis with our senses, and while we open our souls to what comes to touch us, the link becomes stronger than ever before. Then the process of purification, the great process of healing, can fill us with the grace of Christ more intensely than even before.

We, beings of space and time, measure everything in terms of time and distance. This is why to our consciousness there is an immeasurable distance and an immeasurable time period between the now and reaching the goal. However, to the eternal Light of the Gnosis,

the touch forms an absolute link, and the link means absolute purification. We are already made clean when we link ourselves with the Gnosis. We receive everything when we give ourselves away to the Light. And it is only as to the dialectical state of our personality, that a result will be shown which, due to the slow progression of time, is manifested as a succession of events. This is why Jesus could say to the murderer: 'Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

WHAT IS GNOSIS? Gnosis is knowledge, but not the knowledge of this world, not the

## If ‘Gnosis’ cannot be spoken, why, then, did many great ones teach lessons and why did they publish books?

knowledge gleaned from books, not knowledge heard from someone else’s mouth. Gnosis is not the knowledge that we can acquire at a university, or the knowledge gathered from lifelong experience. Gnosis is not knowledge welling up from a source outside ourselves or knowledge that we store and save. No one is able to grant this knowledge; it cannot be purchased.

Gnosis is sometimes called ‘knowledge of the heart’. The wellspring of this knowledge can be found within ourselves. It is not created by protracted and profound contemplation, but rather by beholding. It cannot be dug up from the depths of our memory, but it rather is a revelation. Its seat is the pure soul and its source is the Spirit, or the Light itself. It cannot be thought up or expressed by words; it is manifested directly to the consciousness.

If Gnosis cannot be spoken, why then, did many great ones teach lessons and why did they publish books? Undoubtedly, the words they spoke and the books they wrote are gnostic, but gnostic is not the same as Gnosis, as similarly airy is not the same as air.

When we connect a lamp to a power source by two copper wires, it will produce light. However, the copper wires are not the electricity that makes the lamp burn. They only conduct the electricity. Therefore, a gnostic book is never the Gnosis. It may link us with the Gnosis that is in us. This is why it is said: ‘Do not take the garment of the Gnosis to be the Gnosis.’

When Mani speaks about the sun, he refers to the Light, with which we can link ourselves in the temple. He refers to Vulcan, the sun behind the sun. We can read about this in the Kephalaia:

*Many aspects has the Sun:  
There is its light, with which it illuminates the world and all creatures in it.  
There is its Beauty,  
which it spreads radiantly over all creatures.*

*There is its peace.  
When the world is illuminated by it,  
all people receive its greeting.  
And they give each other the greeting of peace.*

*There is the life of the living soul,  
which is liberated by the Sun  
from all chains and ties.  
It gives the elements their power  
and it gives smell and taste  
to the whole cross of Light.  
Just as its Light is more radiant than all lights in the world,  
so is also its beauty mightier than any human beauty.  
Its peace defeats all powers of the world.  
The liberation, by which it liberates the living Soul,  
signifies infinitely more than any other liberation.*

*The power it gives to the Soul,  
is stronger than any other power.*

*The Sun possesses an even deeper threefold aspect with regard to the mystery of its first greatness. There is the load of its ship. It does not wane like the ship of the moon. This fullness manifests the mystery of the Father of greatness, from whom all divine powers originate. Unassailably, it never decreases.*

In the temple, the Rosicrucian pupil is linked with the truth. To him, truth is what he observes, what he sees. To him, the world may be the truth.

If we have really learned to see the world as it is, we know the truth of the world as to its limitations, its tides, its rising and falling, its illusions, and its hopelessness. Then we are open to a higher truth, a new vision. Revelation is observing, seeing something that was hidden before. Revelation, seeing a higher truth, a higher reality, is not the knowledge gathered from a book or a course or learned from a master. Revelation is seeing this higher reality, seeing with other organs than the eyes. This seeing of the truth occurs in three ways:

- as faith on the basis of the activated heart atom,
- as hope on the basis of the sanctified head sanctuary,
- as love on the basis of the renewed sanctuary of life.

Faith is like recognising the reality of the Supernature in, for instance, words, texts or images. Hope is seeing the reality of the Father.

Love is living in, from and for this reality. Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Faith is from the Father, who has created the all. Hope is from the Son, who explains the Father to us. Love is from the Holy Spirit, who is the one life itself.

*You are not who you think you are. Fundamentally, you are the spirit human being, who was, and who is, and who is to come.*

*You have received the gift of the Spirit.*

*Did I receive the gift of the Spirit?*

*No, you did not receive Him in this sense, but He lives in your centre.*

*It is your task to live increasingly in Him, as He lives in you ✪*

# the value of we

Former World Bank director and current co-chairman of the Worldconnectors, Herman Wijffels, is cofounder of the Renaissance Group, a movement of people whose aim it is to support processes of awareness and change in all sections of society.

The Renaissance Group works with people and their current convictions, and not because of their lofty positions. To Wijffels, the main points of departure are development and empathy, the power to put ourselves in someone else's shoes. This was the topic of his Verkuil lecture 2010, which will in many respects be recognised by the readers of the Pentagram. A brief report, and a reflection.

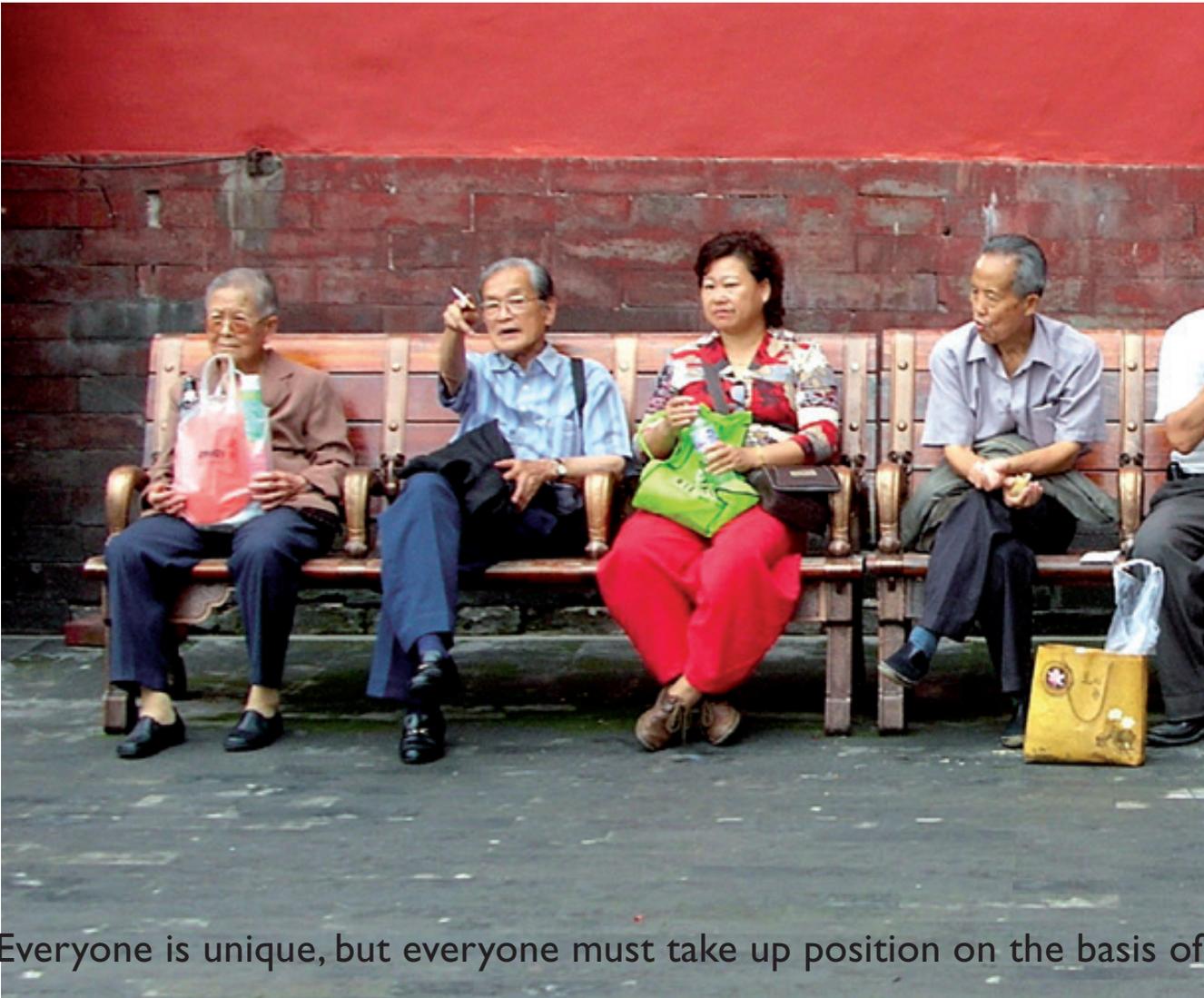
What does the world look like in 2010? There is a continuous population growth; the differences between grinding poverty and great wealth sharpen, and there is an overburdening of between 30 and 40 percent of the carrying capacity of our planet. Gradually, we squander our natural capital. This concerns desertification of farmland, excessive use of freshwater sources, deforestation, catching the last reproductive fish in the world seas and exhaustion of the stock of raw materials. In addition, our species is also busy exterminating other species systematically. We run the risk of shortages of everything if we continue the way in which we are living now. Our economic system is based on departmentalised, egocentric rationality. As humanity, we still live as if this earth has inexhaustible resources. A financial-economic, ecological, social and institutional crisis is developing, but also a crisis of the values on which our current way of life is based. That is the deeper background.

During the coming period, it is important to develop a way of cohabitation on our planet, by which the natural resources are distributed more justly and are better managed, so that all people may live with dignity. It is also important that the way in which we meet our needs, is kept in balance with the earth's sustainable carrying capacity. This requires global cooperation. It is actually necessary to develop a global awareness, on the basis of the idea that we depend on each other and on

the earth as our starting point. This means the development of a 'we' concept on a global level along with the development of empathy on a personal level. This also implies working on the way in which we live. Relational ethics is the basis of the values upon which we have to work, and upon which decisions are considered against the background of their social and ecological effects.

There are different sources that may help us in this respect. In her book *The Great Transformation*, Karen Armstrong speaks about the golden rule, originating from prehistoric times: Deal with others as you yourself would like to be dealt with. There is also a Christian version of it, and this is what this is all about. We should seek and rejuvenate the deepest roots of our ethics. This raises the question of competition versus cooperation. The beauty of it is that quantum physics says the same. Everything is linked with everything, and when we do something, this has consequences for others and in other fields of life. This supports the need to reason and operate on the basis of being connected and not on the basis of discord.

Another factor is the 'potential', the field of possibilities that originated during the big bang, or creation, if you like. At that moment, 'potential' was created, which subsequently was gradually inserted into matter. Every time we look back into history, new impulses, new parts of this potential were inserted into mat-



Everyone is unique, but everyone must take up position on the basis of

ter through ideas so that great transformations could take place. The last factor that should be mentioned is common sense, the 'enlightened self-interest'. It operates in such a way that we serve our own interests by also serving the interests of others.

To sum it up, we can state: this time appeals to us to insert a new set of possibilities into matter again, in radically changed circumstances. As human beings, we are meant to do this in such a way that we will pass on life in all its forms to the next generations in the best way possible. This is the essence and purpose of life, and at the same time, it is the spiritual dimension of life. We are instrumental in this continuous process of creation. By

acting, we develop this potential (of the big bang) along with that of ourselves, because they belong together.

Therefore, as human beings, we are now called to shape the next stage of this continuous process of development. This has considerable consequences. From linear processes, based on fossil fuels, we should switch to cyclical processes based on permanently available energy, to an economy, based on flows and not on stocks. This means decentralised energy production from sustainable sources: sun, water, wind, biomass, through a system of production and supply via intelligent networks.

Another consequence is a cyclical economy that will operate much more regionally and



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more comprehensive relational ethics and empathy than ever before

locally. This requires cross-border forms of laws and regulations. A monetary system is needed that is anchored in the real economy, i.e., the carrying capacity of the earth. Then we are earthed in life again. We have to switch to a multidimensional government, with a balance between social, ecological and economic issues.

Concerning development cooperation, it is important that the community is structured upwards from its base. Money used via women proves to be effective more often. Investing in the education of women has been shown to limit the number of children per family. From all kinds of research, including research concerning how plants grow, we know that the

relationship between male expansive energy and female cohesive energy should be optimised, namely, according to the golden section, 1:1.6180. This means that the feminine aspect has to be dominant to a certain extent. This is a major cultural task, and it therefore gives rise to the thought that our culture's going off the road is related to disturbing this ratio. We live in a time in which great issues on a global level present themselves. How we deal with them is decisive for the future of life on this planet. We must take up a position, the basis of which will have to be: relational ethics and empathy that are understood more comprehensively than we have been able to do until now. We are actually confronted with



**The offices of the World Bank, New York, United State**

the question: What is our answer to the question 'to what end are we on earth'? It is to experience the spiritual, the vertical dimension of life. This time calls us to form a new stage in the ongoing process of civilisation. All insight, knowledge and technology that we

need are in principle available. It is up to us; and if we cooperate, it will also happen.

**EMPATHY AS THE POWER TO PUT OURSELVES IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES** Herman Wijffels considers it the essence of our learning on earth to

## The vertical dimension opens to dialectical man a window to a universal, cosmic field filled with soul life

contribute consciously to the continuous process of creation on this planet. If we work on a common interest with empathy, we also work on our own interest, and therefore on a decent life for everyone. This is a beautiful striving, absolutely logical and self-evident; many will endorse it – but it is not easy to realise.

He who lives in this way, releases soul values, and by respectful compassion with others, the deeper essence of a higher, spiritual life can begin to become visible. Whatever way we look at it, the earth remains a training school, an irrevocable cycle of rising, shining and fading, a world of opposites, of joy and beauty, *and* of illness, suffering and death, while no one is able to make it his permanent abode. According to the Rosicrucians, the earth is a training school that explains to us that matter itself changes, and that in matter everything is first formed and is subsequently destroyed again. The human being, culture, civilisations, humanity and finally the earth itself – everything is variable and subject to continuous change, while the essence, which is rooted in the spirit, is permanent. Human longing and striving are focused on this essence, because this is where lasting values can be found. The essence of being human cannot be found in earthly interests, regardless of whether they are individual or collective, but is rather to be found in a mode of life in which being responsible for the well-being of others – love – is the major point of departure!

A Rosicrucian wants to attune his mode of

life to this insight: in the world, working for the world, but not subordinate to the world. Certainly, his mode of life, in which he tries to contribute to a decent life for everyone, constitutes an important part of this. Yet, it is not everything: his inner eye is continuously anchored in another, purely spiritual life. His guide is the inner Christ who, filled with unconditional love, controls his heart. Global consciousness will result in universal soul consciousness, that is, in a truly sustaining sense, linked with all.

Herman Wijffels is right. In the continuous process of creation of the earth, humanity has arrived at a stage in which a quantum leap of our consciousness is needed, otherwise survival of life on earth is threatened. It is extremely important that people like the chairman of the Worldconnectors and the members of the Renaissance Group point this out, thus contributing to the growth of the collective awareness that another mode of life is necessary. If we then add the vertical dimension, we open to dialectical man a window to a universal, cosmic field that demands wholly new conditions of life from humanity. We evolve from self-interest to general interest, thus penetrating to the consciousness of ‘My kingdom is not of this world’ – but of a new, sevenfold universe – a wholly new perspective!

Rabindranath Tagore wrote in *Sadhana, The Realisation of Life*: ‘Man’s history is the histo-

'Our great Revealers are they who make manifest the true meaning of the soul by giving up self for the love of mankind. They face calumny and persecution, deprivation and death in their service of love. They live the life of the soul, not of the self, and thus they prove to us the ultimate truth of humanity. We call them Mahatmas, the men of the great soul.' Rabindranath Tagore, *Sadhana, The Realisation of Life*, 1913

ry of his journey to the unknown in quest of the realisation of his immortal self – his soul. Through the rise and fall of empires; through the building up gigantic piles of wealth and the ruthless scattering of them upon the dust; through the creation of vast bodies of symbols that give shape to his dreams and aspirations, and the casting of them away like the playthings of an outworn infancy; through his forging of magic keys with which to unlock the mysteries of creation, and through his throwing away of this labour of ages to go back to his workshop and work up afresh some new form; yes, through it all man is marching from epoch to epoch towards the fullest realisation of his soul, the soul which is greater than the things man accumulates, the deeds he accomplishes, the theories he builds; the soul whose onward course is never checked by death or dissolution. Man's mistakes and failures have by no means been trifling or small, they have strewn his path with colossal ruins; his sufferings have been immense, like birth pangs for a giant child; they are the prelude of a fulfilment whose scope is infinite.

Man has gone through and is still undergoing martyrdoms in various ways, and his institutions are the altars he has built whereto he brings his daily sacrifices, marvellous in kind and stupendous in quantity. All this would be absolutely unmeaning and unbearable if all along he did not feel that deepest joy of the soul within him, which tries its divine strength by suffering and proves its exhaust-

less riches by renunciation. Yes, they are coming, the pilgrims, one and all – coming to their true inheritance of the world; they are ever broadening their consciousness, ever seeking a higher and higher unity, ever approaching nearer to the one central Truth which is all-comprehensive.

Man's poverty is abysmal; his wants are endless till he becomes truly conscious of his soul. Till then, the world to him is in a state of continual flux – a phantasm that is and is not. For a man who has realised his soul there is a determinate centre of the universe around which all else can find its proper place, and from thence only can he draw and enjoy the blessedness of a harmonious life. [...]

The Upanishads say with great emphasis: Know thou the One, the Soul. It is the bridge leading to the immortal being. This is the ultimate end of man, to find the One which is in him; which is his truth, which is his soul; the key with which he opens the gate of the spiritual life, the heavenly kingdom.' ✪

**Reference:**

Rabindranath Tagore. *Sadhana, The Realisation of Life*,  
[http://manybooks.net/build/iliad\\_HTML.php/tagoreraetext04sdhna10/zip/custHTML/tagoreraetext04sdhna10custHTML.zip](http://manybooks.net/build/iliad_HTML.php/tagoreraetext04sdhna10/zip/custHTML/tagoreraetext04sdhna10custHTML.zip)

# vistas

The range of action of our perception is enormous. We look over distances of light years into the starry skies; from afar, we hear the wind rushing up; days and weeks in advance, we sense a threatening earthquake, and we experience the shiver of a tension field. But the silent grief of the man standing next to us in the streetcar wholly escapes us.

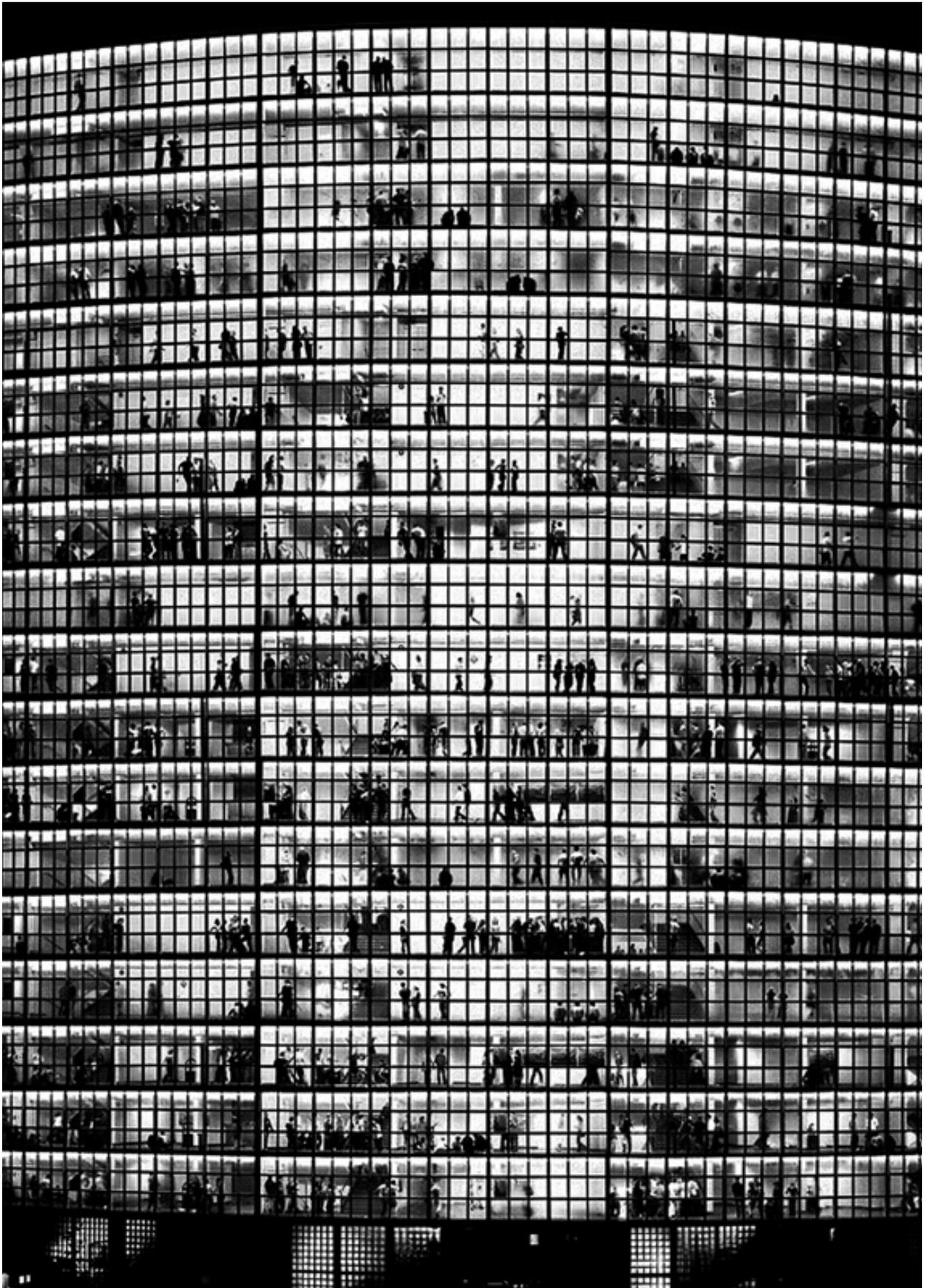
Perception is limited by a natural, innate faculty that we call 'consciousness'. What falls outside it, doesn't even exist for us, or at best, we only vaguely imagine it. Nevertheless, we have a very high opinion of this consciousness, due to the range of action of our seemingly immense field of perception. This is not wholly unjustified, at least considering the line of development of the personality, but it is and remains self-consciousness; it actually only looks around in its own small world, into everything that concerns itself. We have built a wall around our private universe: this is I! Through time and within this world, a considerable potential of knowledge, experience and insight may have been assembled, but we actually have hardly any idea about where we are, who we are and what we have come to do here. Virtually daily, we are confronted with incomprehensible, impossible, and absurd situations and events that we accept grudgingly. We live in a kind of dream state, in which the moment of awakening is continuously on the brink of occurring, but is time and again postponed.

This dream keeps us within the borders of a realm that is described as 'locked within itself' or as 'the ring pass not' by those who were allowed to cast a glance past this border. Then we see this enclosure, this limitation almost as a geographical fact, and we understand that it is not 'the sky that is the limit', but rather our consciousness is. And we somehow know this.

Our wondrous human brain has discovered that what it thought to be unlimited access to all knowledge and understanding is, in fact, its very limitation. This insight must once have generated the concept of 'consciousness', in dictionaries described as 'the awareness of oneself and one's environment', a definition that does not suggest such a wide view.

Yet, in this environment, invariably persistent rumours and suspicions crop up that there is more between heaven and earth than what our perception causes us to surmise. This refers to another reality that lives in us, but which we are not (yet) allowed to behold with images and suggestions from a realm which our mind is unable to grasp. These images and suggestions, consequently, will remain moot points forever – like the existence of a supreme being and a corresponding hereafter, populated by historic-legendary entities. It is the intangible vista of the remote corners of our perception with archetypes and symbols that, surpassing intellect and proof, incessantly keeps the memory of another reality alive. To some people it is real; others believe in it; the majority laughs it off as food for simple souls.

He who nevertheless would like to explore this 'hereafter' and everything around it, sticks to the existence of a fourth dimension. However, reality does not stop at multidimensional theories. Reality is a single unity; it is what is. Sometimes it is also called 'the all' or 'the



So many people, so much inspiration, so many vistas...© Andreas Gursky

[...] And as they were speaking Jesus appeared in their midst and said: 'Truth, one and absolute, is in God alone, for no man, neither any body of men, knows that which God alone knows, who is the All in All. To men is Truth revealed, according to their capacity to understand and receive. [...] When one climbs a mountain and attaining one height, he says: This is the top of the mountain, let us reach it, and when they have reached that height, lo, they see another beyond it. [...] So it is with Truth. [...] Therefore condemn not others, that you be not condemned. [...] Be faithful to the light you have, till a higher light is given to you. Seek more light, and you shall have abundantly; rest not, till you find.

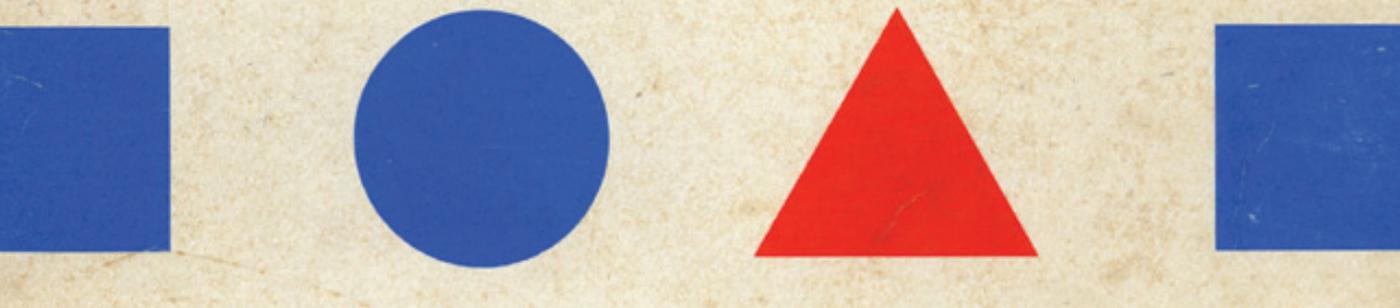
From: Gospel of the Holy Twelve, chapter 90

word', without apparent form or place, yet all-pervading and omnipresent. There is – beyond our perception – an unimpeded interaction between the world of matter and the world of the spirit. After all, they were never really separated; the wall that we imagined around our own world appears to be an optical illusion, nourished by the overwhelming supply of matter that hides the reality from our view like a veil. As long as we are not aware of it, we continue to comb our little kingdom for something new, for something of true value, for an experience of *'that is it'*. We can keep this up for a long time, but ultimately, it will time and again *'just not be it.'*

By the way, in our stage of development, this is the ordinary course of events, including disbelief, doubt and mockery. According to universal cosmology, the earth period is only the initial stage of construction of self-consciousness, a stage in the human development that enables us to discover a new phase in our development behind the delusion of this world. It is a lengthy and tiresome process through the temptations of matter to a new, higher form of life, the path to our true destiny. This is also true for our consciousness: behind matter, the Spirit stands; behind our old consciousness, the all-consciousness stands, also called cosmic consciousness. One day, the cup of our experiences will be full and we will be tired of this world: nothing is what it seems to be, nothing is perma-

nent, and everything comes and goes in never ending repetition. This turning point may lead to resignation or bitterness, but it may also lead to an awakening, a shift in our attention from the familiar possession-honour-power, the attributes of the old ego, to the silent signs from the borderland of our consciousness, which had been drowned out by the noise of the earth for so long. This is also a shift from 'I' to 'we', by which our little ego gradually loses itself, and rediscovers its place and purpose in the great Ego, the basis of our true being. Expressed mystically: it becomes a self-consciousness that can be transformed through love.

What was vague conjecture before, now crops up in the human heart as a living reality. Although we seem to be robbed of any perspective, a new perspective awaits us. Primordial images appear and merge into a light, in which the delusions of our old consciousness gradually disappear. Walls crumble, borders fade and in a great vista, the old and the new consciousness pass into a radiant morning ☀



## BOOK REVIEW: THE UNIVERSAL GNOSIS

# the primordial pranic light

During the stage of development of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum, six books were successively published between 1948 and 1952, together constituting the Cornerstone series, because they formed the cornerstone, in which the ideas of the Rosycross were elaborated. The Universal Gnosis, part four of this series, is a book that turns our idea of God and our view of humanity and the world upside down. This was indeed the purpose of the authors.

**O**n the basis of the twenty letters, of which this book consists, we will gradually begin to understand what Gnosis actually is, what the Rosycross is, what a path of initiation actually is, and what our task here on earth is. And this is only the first part. In the second part, the authors, J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, make us above all experience how profound the symbolism of the Christian gospel is, and what it wants to tell us. We are confronted with quite a lot, and it is placed before us in fiery language.

The authors are so enthusiastic about transmitting what our task as human beings is that they approach it in all kinds of ways, wholly convincing us of it and taking us along in it. Each chapter begins by repeating something of the previous one, which is logical, as these letters were not written simultaneously. However, this also works well for us when reading them.

The first seven chapters present an extensive explanation of what gnosis really means, what true and what false gnosis is and what the relationship is between gnosis and Holy Spirit, between gnosis and the church, and between gnosis and the great poets and thinkers. Starting with the primordial longing that should be a person's basis for becoming acquainted with the gnosis and preserving it in his heart, the holy language of all times deals with the seven spirals of consciousness. This does not concern grasping it intellectually or emotionally. Words and writing are only a means of contact; true gnosis cannot be described. It is power, radiation, and Light that seeks what is lost.

The arts, science and religion make people cross the borders of dialectics. Gnosis leads human beings back to true life, back to the divine nature, to which human beings actually belong.

**THE SYMBOL OF THE SERPENT** It is not only in the story of creation that the symbol of the serpent appears. The Egyptian priests wore the golden serpent as the symbol of wisdom. The Old Testament, too, speaks of the fiery serpent and the bronze serpent. It concerns the choice between 'eating' from the tree of knowledge of good and evil or from the tree of life. The serpents may be considered the two nerve strings on either side of the spine. Every human being who wants to be a pupil of the Universal Gnosis, will himself build the bridge, the light vesture. In and through the link of faith, he gains true wisdom.

**GNOSIS AND CHURCH** In a chapter about gnosis and church, the authors list the various religious points of view. We have fallen, and are at the hands of mercy, the ecclesiastical authorities say. God lives in an invisible part of this nature and we live here. The authors call this an animistic faith. They show that there is a tremendous chasm between the universal Christ spirit of the holy language and the Christ of the church. According to them, the Old as well as the New Testament are at odds with each other.

Gnosis cannot be approached through religion, occultism, mysticism or philosophy. People have lost their susceptibility to the truth, to Gnosis! Spiritual knowledge cannot be transmitted; we have to find it again ourselves, driven by soul distress, by a holy longing that burns everything away. A splendid example

from world literature is Dante's quest in the *Divina Commedia*. At the top of Purgatory, Beatrice appears, the inner other one, as the new soul.

The pivotal point of the book is the part that once again deals with the Gnosis as Light, power and radiation. J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri call this new energy the primordial pranic Light. This is a beautiful concept. We know the word prana from oriental religions, by Buddhism represented as the god of the wind, the Great Breath, the vital power.

Prana is breath of life, vital power, Light. The primordial pranic Light is the power of the Gnosis. The following chapters deal with this primordial pranic Light that we may assimilate through the regeneration of the original human faculties that are spiritual.

**THE SEVEN STAGES OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUL** In the chapters about the seven liberating actions, the authors describe the seven steps of building the new soul, the ensoulment that is conditional for receiving the primordial pranic Light. They do so on the basis of the gospel. Firstly, it is explained that all aspects of the evangelical story, from the birth of Jesus, the baptism by John, the wanderings with the disciples up to and including the whole story of the crucifixion and the resurrection, have a profoundly symbolic meaning, and that they should be situated in the present, in our own human system.

## Will, intellect and emotions cannot but fall asleep, because what happens on the Mount of Olives surpasses their consciousness

The seven liberating actions refer to erecting 'the Grail cup in the human being' who is in this way prepared to celebrate the Holy Supper inwardly. Here, too, we are struck by the profound symbolism of every aspect of the act of the Holy Supper. Subsequently, the authors analyse the events in Gethsemane, in the garden on the Mount of Olives. Jesus takes three of his disciples with him to pray, but they fall asleep. Peter, James and John may be seen as the human will, the intellect and the emotions and as such, are unable to rise up into the realms of the original life. The Jesus man, the human being who is prepared to completely surrender to the divine, links himself with it when he prays for strength. They, on the other hand, cannot but fall asleep, because what is happening surpasses their consciousness. It is one of several examples presented in this book of how typically human, but also how profoundly symbolic the evangelical aspects can be interpreted. Finally, the last chapter, Compendium, shows by a number of statements how we can find all topics from the Universal Gnosis again in the book of wisdom par excellence, the Bible, particularly in the New Testament.

This is a brief summary that may be seen as a string of pearls reflective of the rich literature of the modern Rosycross. In this special work, these pearls are strewn and sowed as it were. In later books, J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri further elaborate this ✪

J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, *The Universal Gnosis* (Cornerstone library No. 4), Rozekruis Pers, 1980

