

'Sin first detaches a human being from God, then from his fellow human beings, and ultimately it sharpens the sword of warring nations. It forms a process of dissolution. The Christ principle on the other hand, is the life-giving Spirit.'

(What is sin?, page 26)

PENTAGRAM

2003 NUMBER 2

Bimonthly journal

LECTORIUM ROSICRUCIANUM



THE SEARCH FOR PERFECTION

THE NEW THINKING ENCOMPASSES THE ALL

WHY DOES GOD LET THIS HAPPEN?

MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM HAVE THE SAME NUCLEUS

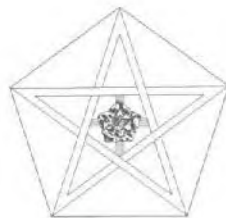
WHO MOULDED THE EMPTY SPACE?

WHAT IS SIN?

THE ALCHEMY OF THE WESTERN MYSTERIES

WHERE DOES THE CONCEPT OF ALCHEMY STEM FROM?

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM



Edition

English, Brazilian, Bulgarian*, Czech*, Dutch, Finnish*, French, German, Greek*, Hungarian, Italian*, Polish, Russian*, Slovak*, Spanish*, Swedish*

Published bimonthly
(* quarterly)

Editorial office

Pentagram,
Maartensdijkseweg 1,
NL-3723 MC Bilthoven
The Netherlands
e-mail: pentagram.ir@planet.nl

Administrative office

Rozekruis Pers
Bakenssergracht 5
NL-2011 JS Haarlem,
The Netherlands
e-mail: info@rozekruispers.com

Printed by

Stichting Rozekruis Pers,
Bakenssergracht 5,
NL-2011 JS Haarlem,
The Netherlands

Address in England:
BM LR7 London WCIN 3XX

Address in New Zealand:
P.O. Box 616, Cambridge
e-mail: lectorium_nz@hotmail.com

Addresses in U.S.A.:

- P.O. Box 9246
Bakersfield, CA 93309
e-mail: lectorium1@bigplanet.com
- P.O. Box 334
Chatham NY 12037
e-mail: chatham@goldenroscross.org

Address in Canada:
RR#1, Inverary, Ontario K0H 1X0
e-mail: ontario@goldenroscross.org

Addresses in Australia:

- P.O. Box 159
Campbelltown, NSW 2560
e-mail: lectros1@idx.com.au
- P.O. Box 234
Emerald Vic 3782
e-mail:
lectoriumrosicrucianum@hotmail.com.au

© Stichting Rozekruis Pers.

Nothing in this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher.

ISSN 1384-2064

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE GOLDEN ROSYCRUSS LECTORIUM ROSICRUCIANUM

Pentagram aims to draw the attention of its readers to a new era which has broken in the development of humanity.

Throughout all ages the pentagram has been the symbol of the reborn human being, the new Man.

It is also the symbol of the universe and its eternal genesis through which the Divine plan manifests itself. However a symbol has value only if it leads to actualization.

The human being who actualizes the pentagram in his microcosm, his own miniature world, is on his way on the Path of Transfiguration.

Pentagram calls on the reader to cause this spiritual revolution in himself.

PENTAGRAM

WHO MOULDED THE EMPTY SPACE?

‘Immaterial is being in the essence.
Being in the essence is not having form.
The brain that thinks in forms of matter
cannot define what has no shape.’

(Lao Tzu)



CONTENTS

- 2 THE SEARCH FOR PERFECTION
- 8 THE NEW THINKING ENCOMPASSES THE ALL
- 13 WHY DOES GOD LET THIS HAPPEN?
- 17 MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM HAVE THE SAME NUCLEUS
- 23 WHO MOULDED THE EMPTY SPACE?
- 26 WHAT IS SIN?
- 29 THE ALCHEMY OF THE WESTERN MYSTERIES
- 36 WHERE DOES THE CONCEPT OF ALCHEMY STEM FROM?
- 41 THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

VOLUME 25 NR 2

MARCH/APRIL 2003

THE SEARCH FOR PERFECTION

'The pride of the cup is in the drink, its humility in the serving.

What, then, do its defects matter?' DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD

According to ancient stories, original man lived from divine impulses, which he had to realise. Today's human being follows an inverse path. He first creates an ideal and then tries to achieve it. Such personal ideals can be reinforced by like-minded people. Thus mental concentrations are created that are sublimated into religious, scientific or social ideals. Within a cultural context, they are generally considered to be stages on the road to perfection. Human beings continually seek a balance between the as yet imperfect reality and the 'perfect' ideal they are striving after.

In the meantime they follow a path punctuated with experiences. Whoever assimilates and interprets these experiences in the right way, can continue his development and will change in the process. If all is well, he will adjust his ideal at every step and finally arrive at a limit. He won't be able to go any farther, or... he will have to take a completely other direction. Because perfection can only be found in the divine world, he should concentrate on the divine reality.

In all times there have been attempts to represent the perfect human being:

- artists have sought the ideal and flawless form;
- theologians have designed ideal ethics,
- scientists have created the image of the human being who is omniscient and almighty.

Human beings of noble physique and character, of irreproachable behaviour and vast knowledge reflect the idea of human perfection as we imagine it. These ideals are adopted as models in the hope of becoming like them, of attaining what they have attained. But this kind of idealisation can also awaken jealousy.

The Swedish statesman, Dag H A C Hammarskjöld (1905-1961) was Secretary General of the United Nations from 1953 to 1961. He died in a plane crash during a mission to solve the crisis in the Congo. In 1961, he received the Nobel Peace Prize posthumously. In his diary he tells how he, as an initially arrogant and profoundly lonely man, had found the path of total self-surrender and unconditional love.



A PRECARIOUS BALANCE

We learn by experience that perfection cannot be realised here on earth, although something stimulates us to seek it. And in spite of all disappointments we continue, individually and collectively, to try and build a better world. Time and again, this 'better world' proves to be ephemeral and the balance reached precarious. Because the opposing forces and powers are constantly in motion, shifts are provoked and thereby the equilibrium is broken. Science and technology aim to maintain

the shaky balance, but whatever we do, the goal constantly slips away; until we reach an impassable limit. Having arrived at this limit, the pioneers are thrown back on themselves, and decline soon begins. Ideals become superficial as we can see in the world of fashion, advertising, movies and television, where only beautiful appearances count. This is not a pessimistic view but a wave-like motion that runs through the whole human course of life. Civilisations are born, grow to unimaginable summits, and are then invaded by other giants or under-

One image of the ideal human being is replaced by another one before the first one has collapsed. Illustration Pentagram.

mined by small groups who attack their weak points.

RECLAIMING RIGHTS

Religiously-inclined people adopt perfect ethics as their aim. But the gap between the imperfect first stage and the sublime ideal may lead to the suppression of certain problems. The accumulated tensions are then released:

- in conflicts with their, equally imperfect, fellow human beings. But they can also lead
- to the splitting of the personality into a high aspect and an aspect attuned to lower, animal life. What was suppressed reclaims its rightful place and, instead of perfection, all sorts of unpleasantness appears.

The ability to store knowledge decreases with age. In addition, the opportunities for learning seem as unjustly distributed

as money. During our short life, we have access to only a minimal part of all available knowledge, without ever reaching the limits of assimilating and processing it. Anyone who would like to know everything, would have to live forever. But in the meantime, he would have forgotten everything he had learned for lack of using it.

The flood of knowledge that swamps humanity – also via the Internet – requires specialisation. Few individuals can see the whole picture. However, specialisation produces more and more individualised experience, which will eventually lead to less mutual understanding. Just as at the time of the construction of the tower of Babel, the striving for perfection and knowledge leads to communication problems, and thus the hunt for perfection always results in unbridled chaos. Then only the outside counts: beautiful people to look at, but inside there is emptiness. The images surpass reality, but sometimes painters like Pablo Picasso, Ossip Zadkine, and many others, have represented them as hollow and torn beings.

It is easy for those who only look at the outside to choose for the obvious ideal of beauty. Even though they know that the promise hidden in it can never be realised. The illusion of this promise is etched in them as a dream, and it incites them to pursue perfection, to the natural limits of their strength.

IS PERFECTION AN ILLUSION?

Is perfection then nothing but an illusion? A hallucination of dissatisfied, suffering humanity? A dream fed by fantasies? The striving for perfection expresses an awareness of imperfection, but also a deep urge for higher life, for a well-spent existence. In the tension field between those two poles, we live our lives and

experience highs and lows. And we look suspiciously at our neighbour when we suspect the least sign of perfection in him.

The least semblance of perfection seems to exercise an incredible appeal. This little nothing in another person is all that is necessary for someone to be raised above his daily routine. But when they notice the emptiness behind the shining appearance, especially young people let the idol fall without pity. Who would not feel relieved and at the same time disappointed to discover that he is not the only one to make mistakes? A truly perfect human being is in fact intolerable!

Yet most people yearn for perfection. Every day and every hour, they cling to the least hint of perfection, and then experience that it is only a bubble. No one has the same standard of perfection. And the minute someone exceeds this standard, he notices how imperfect his ideal was. Thus we see how we spend our time putting on and taking off masks.

'The one who is in the floodlights sees a legend grow around him, as if he were dead. He falls in love with the image that public opinion has forged of him during the honeymoon.' (Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*)

Dag Hammarskjöld describes a widespread situation here. Many people experience the admiration they receive from others, and fall in love with the image others have formed of them. Indeed, is the well-polished image not more beautiful than daily reality? Who would not like to be admired, respected and flattered by others? Yes, even the attacks of our enemies are dear to us because we feel a thousand leagues above them in that we are the object of their attention.

But this image is far from reality. And it will be necessary for these people to be confronted with the hard facts from time

EXTRACTS FROM 'MARKINGS'

1950 – *'A heart pulsating in harmony with the circulation of sap and the flow of rivers? A body with the rhythms of the earth in its movements? No, instead: a mind, shut off from the oxygen of alert senses, that has wasted itself on 'treasons, stratagems and spoils' – of importance only within four walls. A tame animal – in whom the strength of the species has outspent itself, to no purpose.'*

1952 – *'The stream of life through millions of years, the stream of human lives through countless centuries. Evil, death and dearth, sacrifice and love – what does 'I' mean in such a perspective? Reason tells me that I am bound to seek my own good, seek to gratify my desires, win power for myself and admiration from others. And yet I 'know' – know without knowing – that, in such a perspective, nothing could be less important. A vision in which God is.'*

6.7.1961 – *'Tired and lonely, So tired, the heart aches. Melt-water trickles down the rocks. The fingers are numb, the knees tremble. It is now, now, that you must not give in.'*

On the path of others are resting places, places in the sun where they can meet. But this is your path and it is now, now, that you must not fail.

Weep if you can, weep, but do not complain. The way chose you and you must be thankful.'

24.8.1961 – *Is it a new country in another world of reality than Day's? Or did I live there before Day was?*

to time. To discover the abyss between illusion and reality is a disconcerting experience. How many people have not broken down in the process?

Despite laborious efforts, the distance between illusion and perfection hardly decreases, but the efforts continue, although in new directions. For example, we choose perfection of body and soul as an ideal, or seek an environment of noble people and beautiful things. A human being wants to perfect his broken reality

Winged sword on the city gates of Medina, Malta. Photo Pentagram.



and sooner or later discovers that there are cracks.

Jesus said to his disciples: *'Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.'* Doesn't this mean perfection in our earthly life? The perfection of earthly things and values? Where is the border between our idea of perfection and divine perfection? How do we liberate ourselves from the illusions that stop us from attaining this perfection?

THE MYSTERIES OF EARTHLY MAN

As long as a human being tries to satisfy his search for perfection in his outward life, he will fail because each time he tries, he disrupts the fragile link with the source of divine perfection within him. The field of dialectics is vast, and innumerable are the affairs in which a human being can get lost. In *The Gnostic Mysteries of the Pistis Sophia* it is explained that dialectical life takes place within the twelve signs of the zodiac and that each sign has a positive and a negative pole. That makes $2 \times 12 = 24$ fields of life. The biological human being can, if he wants to, explore these fields and study their countless aspects. However, he can also attain the insight that this research is sterile, because the domain of his study lies outside the perfect, divine world. That insight brings him to the limit,

where he must leave behind his biological consciousness. This border is the first real Mystery he is confronted with: the unknowable, the unattainable.

Divine perfection exists in the realm of the unknowable. Earthly man cannot form an impression of it, and hence this 'unimaginable' is called God for example. Usually, he pays a silent respect to this inconceivable and incomprehensible mystery, and immerses himself in his own mystery. He limits himself to the twenty-four fields of nature and serves them as he would idols. How can he end this situation and approach divine perfection?

In the first place, it is necessary to have a deeply anchored desire to become a true human being. In this desire, there is something of this perfect life and something that makes us see our situation more and more clearly. The more clearly this desire is manifested in us, the better we understand that we will never raise our earthly personality to a state of perfection. So, if we observe the world open-mindedly, examine our situation honestly and accept this insight and its implications, we feel an inner liberation. Joy flows through us and we say to our inner God: Yes, Lord, let me decrease as to this nature. Show me the path on which my true being can develop and my true soul can clothe



itself in a new garment, woven of imperishable substance!

Gradually, the true meaning of 'being perfect' penetrates the consciousness. Something of it begins to shine in the seeker for God, while his earthly being remains imperfect. And he becomes increasingly aware of it. He sees the other one growing in him, but he himself is not that other one. As the other one grows in him, his inner joy intensifies. He recognises in the other one his true inner Master, his original form. In the power of this new genesis, he increasingly learns to surrender to the other one and to leave behind everything earthly.

Paul writes in his Letter to the Philippians (3:12-16): *'Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.'*

Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you.

Only let us hold true to what we have attained.'

THE NEW THINKING ENCOMPASSES THE ALL

'The heart of the All is vibrating in your breast. It is Me. He who rules the worlds from the innermost centre is Brahman, Atman, the hidden driver, the immortal one. Whoever beholds the true essence of Brahman with the light of his soul, will recognise him, who lives in all eternity. He will become free from all chains.'
(Upanishads)

Humanity is no longer conscious of the eternal centre of the All. That is why every line of development turns at its peak into a downward one. Cultures come and go. Whoever becomes aware of the spiritual centre in his heart and lives out of it, will be standing in the eternal present and will no longer be bound to rising and declin-



Two entwined cigars in the garden of Selma Lagerlöf's estate Marbacka, Sweden. Photo Pentagram.

ing. His thinking is then focused on the spiritual sun in the macrocosm and the microcosm. The renewed consciousness is then all-encompassing. It turns into a spiral flow of energy between the centre of the microcosm and that of the macrocosm. This flow is a dynamic triple unity of light, love and life, of consciousness radiation, striving for unity and energy.

The centre of the macrocosm is the central spiritual sun that irradiates the whole Universe. The centre of the microcosm is the central spirit-spark in the spherical tenuous human energy system. This spiritual principle corresponds with the heart. In gnostic schools it has always been known that countless spirit-sparks originate as monads from the spiritual sun. They are the divine microcosms descending into the material universe to gather experience and to assist the lower life waves.

During that journey some of them lose the memory of their spiritual origin and slip into the sleep of oblivion. Other monads that have already been awakened have to rescue them. Greek mythology and art portray this path. In the Eleusinian Mysteries goddesses give the human being an ear of corn as a symbol of the path of initiation he has to walk. The grain of seed is the symbol of the soul that must enter the dark earth to germinate and develop into a fully-grown plant. That is why the seed must open itself up, break through the soil and force its stem upward to the light. Other gods are depicted for example with a dove as a symbol of the flight of the soul.



IDOLS TUMBLE FROM THEIR PEDESTALS

Humanity is subjected to new radiations which attack the old and familiar ideas. Thus the crystallised images of the world begin to change in all nations, which causes unrest, insecurity and turmoil. The new radiations break up the old standards and fixed patterns of behaviour from within and authorities and idols fall from their pedestals. Not only

in religions, but also in science, politics, the arts and ethics hardened structures, delusions, exploitation, enslaving of the soul and lust for power are unmasked. Such unmasking is painful. Hence people try over and over again to raise new façades in order to conceal the exposed deception, sometimes temporarily successful, but in the long run these structures do not provide anything to hold on to.

The Empyreum. 'In fashion then as of a snow-white rose displayed itself to me the saintly host, whom Christ in his own blood had made his bride.' *The Divine Comedy, Paradise 31:1-3, Dante.* (Translation: H W Longfellow).

Thus the germ of the new thinking is breaking through the chaos. That is why humanity is now living in an extremely critical transitional period. Many all over the world have more or less prepared for the requirements of those new radiation conditions. By insight and pure desire originating from the spiritual nucleus of the heart, such people will be strongly polarised by the central spiritual sun. Through the new radiations they receive the new ethers which break up their inner barriers, from within, while they cooperate in this process by complete self-surrender! Thus they become conscious of the miserable situation of their soul which is imprisoned in a physical personality. And they are willing to release their indwelling spirit-spark by devoting their personality – and hence their consciousness – to the process of inner liberation and striving for higher consciousness. In this way they can cooperate in the plan of creation.

PROUD PHAETON CANNOT CONTROL THE CHARIOT OF THE SUN-GOD

On the other hand the soul faculties of many people decline by lack of consciousness or wrong directedness. Such people

are still unable to attune their will to the will of God, the Gnosis. Their self-will and their high-handedness cause a mental short-circuit, wrong behaviour, delusion, blood-poisoning, illness and chaos. That is a worldwide tragedy which befalls primarily the younger generation, because they want to break with the old, but do not know how to go about it. Thus these young people striving for renewal can easily become overshadowed and exploited.

Hence, on the one hand there is a reaction to the awakening spirit-spark, on the other a lack of understanding of what it demands. Then the chariot of the sun-god will become uncontrollable. This tragic event is very well described in the Greek myth of Phaeton, the son of the sun-god Helios. Phaeton wanted to drive the horses before the chariot of the sun-god himself, but he did not know how to do it. He was not able to control the four winged horses – his thinking, feeling, willing and acting – because he could not act on the basis of his spiritual centre. Thus the chariot of the sun-god went out of control and Phaeton burned to death and crashed.

Such a critical moment appears during every change. Also nowadays a large part of

humanity is not or not yet prepared for the new. For many the way ahead is unknown, and hence they can easily be misled.

THE KING'S SON RECEIVES THE PEARL

Yet bitter experiences may be lessons for future generations. During the next decades and centuries such new human beings – that means human beings that have been renewed on the basis of the immortal soul – will lead humanity. Kindled and guided by the nucleus radiation of the spiritual sun they will receive the necessary wisdom to lead humanity back on the right track.

Such persons will follow the Gnosis in their heart and act according to its instructions. Statements of Jesus the Christ like 'The Father and I are one' and 'I am in the Father and He is in me and I am in Him', will then be fully subscribed to by many people on the basis of their own inner process of renewal.

The living word from the kingdom of the Spirit becomes an absolute certainty. In this experience the Logos, the omnipresent reason, is revealed to the seeker for the truth. Then he no longer has to seek the truth in books or to accept it as a dogma from others. It is now a flaming reality in the centre of his microcosm. With this self-experienced truth he possesses the precious pearl the king's son managed to capture from the dragon in the Manichaeon myth and with which he returned to the kingdom of his parents. In the language of the modern Gnosis the pearl is the completely opened rose of the heart, bringing the pilgrim home again.

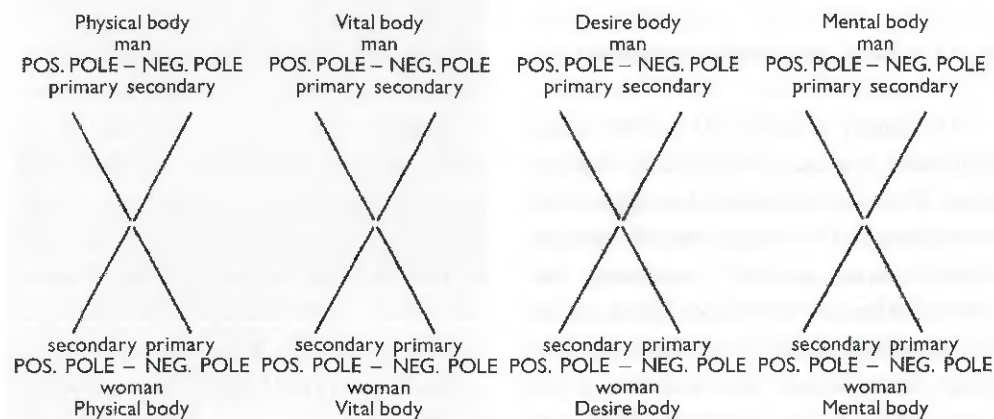
The rose is sometimes used as a symbol for the spiritual sun in the macrocosm and the microcosm. At the end of the *Divina Comedia* Dante describes that cosmic light rose. Whoever, after total surrender of the I, becomes inwardly aware of the relationship between his deepest



self and the nucleus of Creation and acts accordingly, will experience freedom, peace and joy. This is a soul state that has no longer anything to do with the values usually attributed to these terms, but which far surpasses human limitations. This is the miracle of achieving the all-encompassing consciousness, the mystery of the Rose.

Nu Wa, creator of the human race, and Fu Xi, founder of civilisation. Cultural Relics Publishing House, Beijing, China.

OF THE COSMIC TWOFOLDNESS MAN – WOMAN



WHY DOES GOD LET THIS HAPPEN?

Manas, true man, thinks, feels and acts on the basis of that all-encompassing consciousness. He resembles a radiant rose with petals that fan out from its calyx like a spiral. In this small solar system, the seven chakras focused on the Spirit and the twelve new faculties can perform their task. The basis of the calyx symbolises the macrocosmic solar heart, the Father who wants to manifest himself as Son in all microcosms.

Whoever receives and radiates the pure radiation, the word, the Logos from this solar heart, in fact eats the bread of life and drinks the wine of the Spirit. And he shares it. The microcosmic centre, reunited with the solar heart, can now speak: *'I am the bread of life, I am the vine. Apart from me you can do nothing.'* Hence, whoever descends into his heart and consciously makes his 'I' decrease, will approach the true purpose of Creation. In this way the imperfect temporary thinking will be dissolved and be replaced by the All-encompassing thinking. The old is consumed in the eternal new. The eternal new has now been placed in the centre.

THE NEW ERA REQUIRES SACRIFICES

Whoever strives to liberate the spiritual principle in his being, whoever wants to cooperate in the restoration of his microcosm, will also receive the necessary knowledge to go this path. How many all over the world are not consciously or unconsciously hoping for the kindling of the divine principle! The

purpose of true religion is to nourish this longing with the pure wisdom contained in the teachings that make it understandable and acceptable. However, through time this living wisdom has been deformed and ultimately crystallised into unpalatable dogmas. That is why dogmatic religions have had their day for the seeker after the one Truth.

Many have reached the point at which they can discover the truth within themselves. They are standing before the mystery of true human genesis and are going to experience that mystery as a living element in their daily life. During the process of inner liberation they develop new faculties which enable them to help their fellow human beings.

Humanity has been and is always assisted by mystery schools. Gnostic brotherhoods had and have no other purpose but to lift up humanity to a higher level of consciousness. When heart and head are purified by their surrender to the Light, they will form a crystal-clear chalice, the Grail. This chalice can receive and radiate the pure energy from the solar heart in order to help the seekers. Whoever is then allowed to vivify the Manas, the pure thinker, within himself, is set aglow with gratitude and joy. He knows that the centre of his microcosm has been reunited with the centre of the macrocosm.

'The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!' Paul, the pioneer, cries.

In this way the Gnosis heralds the new era in which the world and humanity will be renewed.

Every time catastrophes occur, people ask the classical question: 'Why does God let this happen?' or 'How can God allow this to occur?' The atheist bitterly utters: 'What kind of God is it who lets such things happen?' And the fanatic exclaims: 'That is God's judgement!'

Such questions and remarks resound all over the world and they are coloured by the culture in which they arise. In many countries, the number of churchgoers has declined. In The Netherlands churches are turned into apartments and shopping malls because churchgoers can no longer maintain them... and because the church no longer means that much to them. Others, however, remember the faith of their fathers and try to breathe new life into forgotten standards and values. Thus the wheel turns, while on the one hand loose individual habits develop, and on the other fanatic fundamentalism is spreading in order to curb further social decline.

We could also ask why God allows humanity to develop nuclear and biological weapons that can be used to extinguish life on earth. Why humans eliminate their fellow creatures with unbelievable cruelty, both physically and mentally. What kind of human beings can take such liberties? And what kind of God is their God who gives them a free hand? The Creator could have established different laws and drawn other boundaries to make, for example, nuclear weapons impossible. Then nuclear tests and catastrophes with atomic reactors would be impossible.

All these questions start from the fact that there must be Divine omnipotence, a God who rules over everything and everybody. The question whether and why God has made this world so imperfect seems to be the most fundamental one. This question shows that those who ask it resist the course of events, that they are no longer willing to believe and accept what is imposed upon them from above, and that they resist higher

History books almost always testify of the avarice and bloodthirstiness of humanity. Dark red trails of blood show that there are ups and downs in human development and that we apparently never rise above a certain level. Yet we sometimes find traces of civilisations in which fame, power and wealth did not matter much, but instead were determined by friendship, mutual appreciation, love and un-

forced unity. These discoveries make us wonder and we believe that it must have been a fairyland about which such tall stories are told. Yes, we react in this way because our present consciousness is unable to reach truly higher standards. All standards and values, which are established by the biological consciousness, are always at the expense of the standards and values of others.

The American neurologists Andrew Newberg and Eugene d'Aquili found that the activity of certain parts of the brain of meditating and praying monks sharply decreases. This applies, among other things, to that part which is continually busy determining the position of a human being in space.

powers. They want to find a way of their own and detach themselves from a world that has been thrust upon them.

All these question – even those of the atheist – imply that something or somebody has designed the world in which humanity must live. Is this world the work of an almighty God? Or have the opposites of good and evil been created in and from the human mind? Can we say that God forces us to develop nuclear weapons, to eliminate each other in the most atrocious wars and to foul our own nest? Perhaps we have to delve deeper and ask who 'He' is? Is it perhaps a personal or collective god who looks after individual

or collective interests? Is 'He' a national god or a racial god? Is 'He' a being that humans have created themselves as an ideal they can lean on? A god who blesses the weapons on both sides... as was the case in World War II?

The Almighty, i.e. the power that surpasses all other powers and forces, grants his creatures the freedom to explore their way in His Creation – the freedom to gain experience, to strive for what is good and to make mistakes, to make use of Creation within certain boundaries. The world religions developed as a reaction to the false use of this freedom. In rapturous praise they describe what will happen to those who directly slide into hell. Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims – to name just a few – they all have their own theory, coloured, however, by national and local circumstances.

Can something created by God be imperfect? Why do people actually start from this assumption? It is only due to their own imperfection that they cannot grasp what God has created. The cosmos, to which planet Earth belongs, is a perfect school for humanity. Within this world humanity has created its own world. The world we see today is not the world the Creator intended, but a world that has been created by erring humans who had forgotten their Creator. Therefore, we cannot call human beings in their billion-fold diversity the Manas as meant by God. Man is rather an animal form in which – at best – a sublime principle from the Kingdom of Heaven is expressed. Original man was a pure, unsullied microcosm.



The modern human being inhabits a damaged and soiled microcosm.

Only a Divine seed is left of the original human being. But this seed is encapsulated in matter, so that this original human being cannot restore himself independently. Hence a calling and liberating radiation emanates from the Divine well-spring to show the way back to the origin. The result of the human Odyssey is etched into the image of modern humanity. Until shortly after humanity descended into matter, it still possessed part of its divine faculties. It was used to build the world in which it had to live. But the more humanity went astray, the more it lost its faculties. They were replaced by faculties which were completely attuned to the four elements of this life field. And with them the world as we know it today was built. Hence, this world has not been shaped by God. On the contrary, the Creator just laid down

Prof. A. H. de Hartog, the radical Dutch theologian (1869-1938), of whom the newspapers said when he died, 'A great Dutchman has passed away,' wrote in 1931 in *The Meaning of Our Lives*: 'Those who blame God and humanity, because the destruction of the world has come over us during the past years, should search their own hearts first and ask themselves if they have done and radiated what was necessary, particularly in their own circle. Oh, we believe we are world reformers, but we do not even realise the potential of our world!

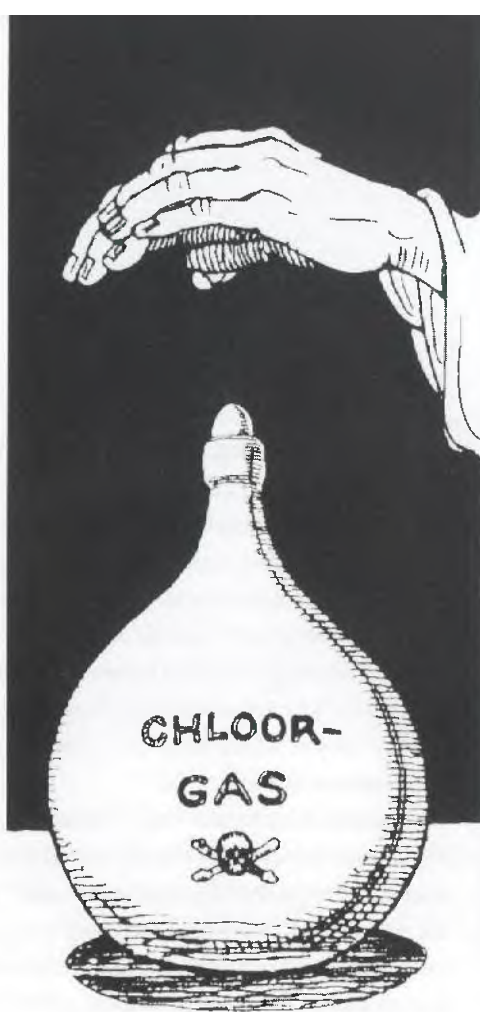
It is, of course, easier and much more comfortable to listen to the complaints expressed in the world than to bring a glass of water to the thirsty. When we remember from our childhood we know how an all-encompassing sympathy can come over us when a cow bellows out in the fields, when cats are caterwauling between the houses, when a child cries out loud in the street; but the world remains a mere show until we see the call rise up when our old mother needs to be supported, a burdensome patient has to be put into another bed and when our temper has to be checked. And the same can be said of the complaints about war: nations and sovereigns, merchants and politicians are generally blamed, but we do not see the war in our own personal world. Hence, the evil of war spreads like a cancerous ulcer as long as we have to be the cock of the walk within the narrow circle of our apartment, castle, workshop, office, study, clinic etc.'

His words are as relevant today as they were in 1931!

the basic principles within which the training ground for humanity should function. However, humanity itself – in interaction with its leaders – formed the world we know today. For this reason, the Gnostics refer to two nature orders: the Original order and the order of time and space.



The blessing of arms. Cartoon by Albert Hahn (1877-1918).



WHAT HAPPENS ON THE OUTSIDE IS A REFLECTION OF THE INNER SELF

The question asked in the beginning should in fact be: What made humanity go astray? Many religious and humanitarian relief organisations try to undo the results of this erring. But this proves not to be enough. Such relief actions always evoke comments like: 'This is the result of this or that. We must pull up the evil by the roots'. But where are the roots? Didn't everything begin by forgetting God and with the kingship of the I? Certainly, and that is why the root is deeply buried in the human heart. What happens on the outside is a reflection of the inner self. Hence, the Divine nucleus calls with every heartbeat: 'I am the way, and the truth and the life.' In many people, this call from the heart is drowned by what

happens in the world. Others react fiercely, they turn away from their Creator and blame him, while immediate commitment is important! Asking and complaining alone is not enough, but helping wherever possible. Then the gate of the heart opens up and the heart can listen to the Divine call. And indeed, with every heartbeat!

Our mode of life is decisive: immediately and directly listening to the Divine inner call and acting accordingly. Only thinking and philosophising about the Fall and how it came about does not bring humanity any further. This will entangle humanity even deeper in the imperfection of the world it is living in. Gautama the Buddha compared the human being, who is poisoned by 'sin', with a man who had been struck by an arrow. Feverishly he tries to find out who could have done this to him, where the arrow came from and what kind of poison it carried. While he is doing all of this, he dies. If he had pulled out the arrow from the wound immediately, he would have survived.

MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM HAVE THE SAME NUCLEUS

'On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you' (John 14:20)

An increasing number of people becomes aware of the fact that their life lacks a central focus. They experience being linked to the rigid standards of religions, philosophies and world systems that determine their thinking, feeling and acting. The endless, superficial role play of the world of illusion in which their daily life runs its course, is becoming intolerable for them. What is the essence and where is the core of their existence?

They begin to wonder what their place is in the world theatre with its often age-old role patterns. They recognise that they have not only played along for too long, but that they have themselves in fact contributed to the present world catastrophe that becomes increasingly more apparent. Many despair and escape into new illusions, drugs, utopias, virtual realities, esoteric philosophies or the cynicism of annihilation, but this is not the way to escape the laws of the cosmos. They are equally unable to withdraw from the confrontation with that unknown, unsettling power that attacks and disturbs their entire being. They flee from the pure, undiluted power from the original source of life that wants to manifest itself to humanity. However, the spiritual law of the cosmic Christ appears before them in fiery writing: 'I and the Father are one.'

Behind the materialistic thinking, our

intellect takes cover behind scorn and sarcasm. The imprisoned heart, however, is afraid and becomes more and more irritated because it suspects that original life will eventually put an end to our impetuous human experimentation.

Among all those people who have to learn to live with this inner conflict, there is a growing group who is granted a peek behind the scenes. That group recognises and experiences that their daily existence is mere illusion and that there is a mechanism that attempts to maintain the world of illusion. They try to break the hard shell of what is old not with their intelligence only, but with all the faculties at their disposal.

Just as a chick cracks its eggshell, this group wants to break through the rigid egocentric ideologies from within. If that happens on a large scale, humanity is going to experience the birth of a new – and here it means: expanded – consciousness. The fruit of innumerable valuable experiences is ripening in us. For a long time, the hard shell of external systems was able to protect the spiritual essence. At the same time however, it also isolated it from reality, which so powerfully manifests itself at the moment. Now the time has arrived to liberate the nucleus of life, the power that links the centre of the macrocosm with the centre of the microcosm. The divine Soul must be awakened again and propel humanity through a process of purification and renewal toward the birth of a truly new spiritual



being. The lofty spiritual law 'I and the Father are one' manifests itself and imposes its terms on straying humanity.

LONGING FOR RESTORATION OF THE FORGOTTEN NUCLEUS OF LIFE

The insight into the futility of the world drama and the longing for the essence of life are the hard blows that can demolish our prison wall. They cause cracks here and there which can eventually loosen the suffocating embrace. Becoming conscious of our weaknesses, wrong behaviour and self-deception remove ancient masks. However, the walls of our prison are much thicker than we thought. The 'fallen angel', the microcosm that has torn itself away from the Father, has erected and reinforced these walls. Hence, the insight that the 'I am' must be broken down for the liberation of the original soul is the driving force behind the work of a true freemason. Becoming conscious means breaking up what is obsolete and no longer can serve those who are renewing themselves. However, the unobstructed vision of seekers is often still hindered by the clouds of dust caused by the demolition. And then they expect help from the outside, while what they desire can only come from within. The glimpse of the new that can penetrate under favourable conditions is soon manipulated by the intellect for its own purpose. Or it is wrongly – mystically – interpreted by the heart.

The longing must flame up from the spiritual nucleus in the centre of the microcosm. That is the hunger that should not be satisfied with the 'stones' of the ego-world, but only with the bread of truth, with the Christ power from the silence. To the extent that the seeker

becomes conscious of his old mentality and emotions, the prison walls will recede. They become transparent and finally even become the crystal-clear outside of the glass coffin in which the newly awakened soul will open its eyes.

But we have not reached that point yet. The freemason meant here discovers to his dismay that all the 'gods' he had prayed to are idols in the form of status, dogmas, crystallised insights and judgments. These illusions are the absolute opposite of the central Spirit which creates and orders the All. The Spirit of the macrocosm is reflected in all microcosms which belong to it. All breathe and live from the same spiritual centre. The longing for this centre ensouls the microcosms and stimulates them – if they have strayed – to restore the link with the Spirit.

THE HUMAN BEING BECOMES CONSCIOUS OF HIS SPIRITUAL NUCLEUS

Becoming conscious of the spiritual nucleus in the centre of our being is the only way to remove the lack of the right foundation of life. This nucleus must be revived again, because only on the basis of this nucleus can true and pure life be awakened. 'The Kingdom of God is within you.' How could we forget that?

Whoever is not conscious of the presence of that spirit-spark, that Rose of the Heart as the Rosicrucians call this principle, beats on the walls of his prison in vain. He floats around as an out-of-control astronaut and travels from one hopeful spot of light to the next, assuming that he has already arrived. He will get lost in the labyrinth of his self-created universe. That is why the faith from the Father, the hope from the Son and the love from the life-giving Spirit will guide him on his inner

Golden Sun
breaks through.
Illustration Pentagram.



Book illustration from *The decorative illustrations of books*, Walter Crane, 1896.

journey. Without these three he will not make any progress, even though it seems as if he could reach immeasurable heights. They point the way through the auric labyrinth to the heart of the universe. 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John 14:6), says the Christ, the universal intermediary between the heart of the macrocosm and the microcosm. Mani says: 'All Holy Ones rest concentrically in one.' At the moment that a human being experiences his spiritual nucleus, he is once again linked with all the other spirit-sparks. These nuclei form a unity, only the 'I' deviates from it and stands on the outside. The Son and the Father, the divine microcosm and the macrocosm are one as to their spiritual centre. Hence, the human being who is liberated from his self-made chains will again be one with his spiritual nucleus.

PIONEERS MAKE HUMANITY CONSCIOUS OF THAT SPIRITUAL NUCLEUS

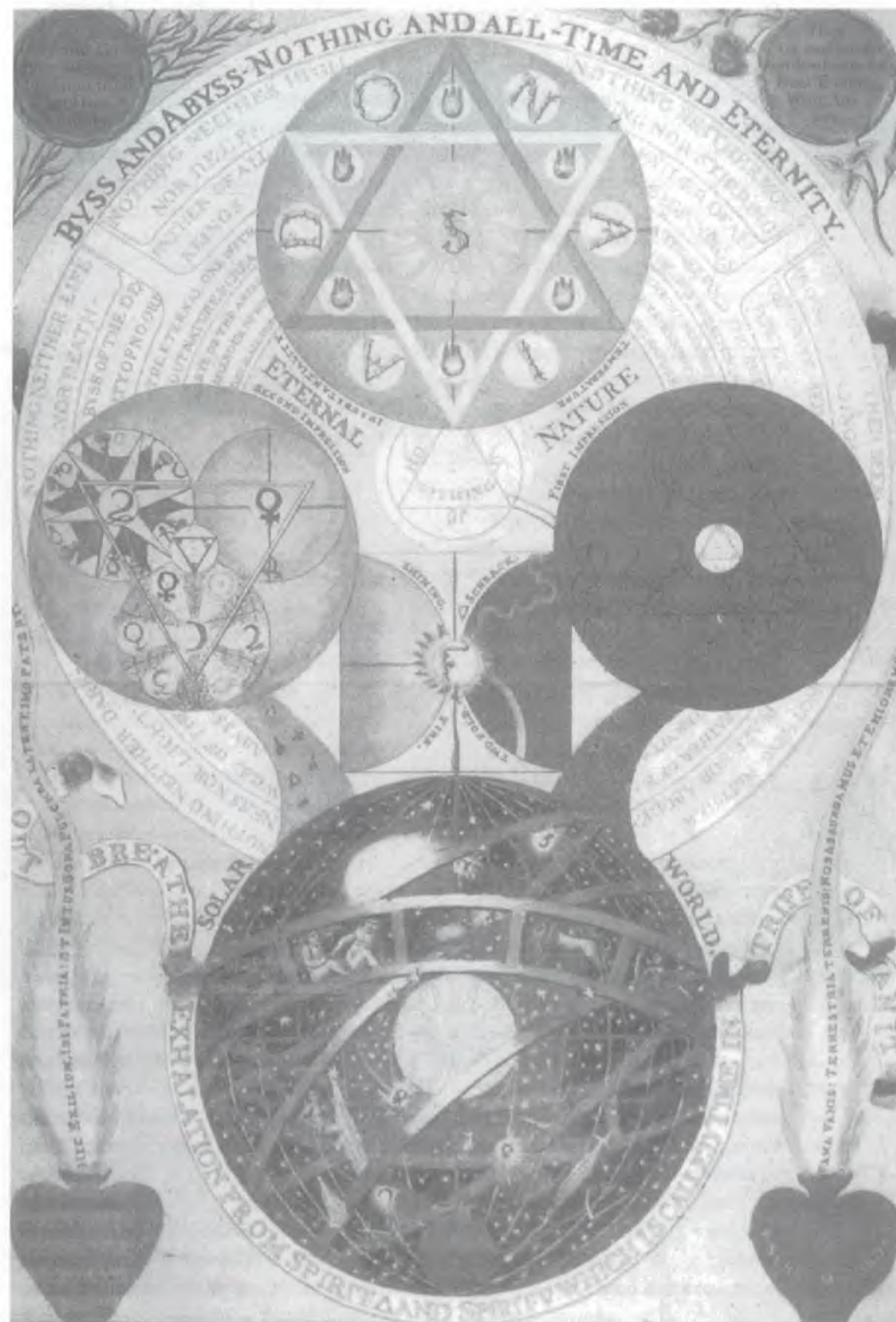
By the longing for inner freedom and the actions resulting from it, this nucleus becomes more and more active. It is now apparent that the earth in which the seed is buried will be able to satisfy the requirements. Infused, nourished and irradiated

by the breath of the Gnosis, by the living water of the original substance and by the light of the spiritual sun, the seed can germinate into a seven-petalled rose.

The candidate on the path of inner liberation is allowed to experience and guide this marvellous alchemical process in all its stages and nuances in ever more conscious service. He will often fall, but also stand up again. Perseverance requires courage and insight, because it is not a simple process to be accomplished in an occasional hour of spare time. Sometimes it can be very tedious and often takes a very long time before results are achieved. But the pioneer on this path will not be deterred and focuses on the Christ Power that liberates him. If many join in this process, a strong pioneer group develops that can help humanity. It collaborates in building a bridge of consciousness across which countless seekers can reach their goal. They call to their fellow human beings: 'Wake up and experience it yourselves! The macrocosm and your microcosm have the same nucleus! The light is not outside but within you. The spirit nucleus in your heart is seeking reunification with the wellspring from which it originated.'

Thus the small group of pioneers helps to keep the path open for the Universal Brotherhood, which prepares humanity for the transition to the new era. Due to the intensifying radiation in the atmosphere the insight is stimulated from within. The spiritual law: 'I and the Father are one', must be recognised by the heart. The power of the spiritual sun propels heart and head to a new consciousness.

The opposites in space and time become manifest. *The Works of Jacob Behmen, the Teutonic Philosopher*, William Law, 1764.



DANGER OF STAGNATION

Experience teaches that we can often understand something without immediately turning it into reality and accepting the consequences. How easily such a complex process stagnates! How easily doesn't a seeker fall back into old mechanisms! The head then runs off with the wisdom of the heart and immediately creates new thought images again. Thus someone could create his own new world system on the basis of this unity of macrocosm and microcosm. He would become bogged down in it without realising all the tremendous possibilities of this cosmic law to the full. He could, for example, study intellectually only the idea of transfiguration that can be found in the metamorphosis from caterpillar into butterfly, without putting it into practice.

For two thousand years, theology has approached the Christ mysteries dogmatically only and projected them into the outside world without striking the spiritual sources in the heart.

THREE HELPERS CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Let us return to our point of departure. The prison of the ego surrounds the human being. This shell was called 'Hyla' by the Manichaeans and envelops a human being with darkness and hard matter. When the 'I' learns to surrender itself to the spiritual nucleus in the heart by attuning thinking, feeling and acting to it, this shell can gradually become transparent. Then the radiation of the spirit nucleus penetrates to the outside and gradually orders the entire microcosm.

The biological human being can help this process by not interfering with it, by serving the burgeoning principle with heart, head and hands.

These three centres can also be

referred to as love, light and life. When we talk about the 'new' mystery planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto which at present apply their influence to help mankind to cross a threshold, we are dealing with the same three energies on a higher spiral. Uranus breaks up sham-love and leads humanity to the all-encompassing pure love of the spiritual sun. Neptune dissolves rigid structures and thought patterns and develops an all-encompassing new thinking that is nourished by the spiritual sun. And Pluto breaks up all the illusions the wandering ego has built and confronts us with the construction of our new, inner temple.

In this threefold process of disintegration and dissolution the old consciousness dies. From that fire of inner consumption the new consciousness rises up like a phoenix.

In the fairytale, Snowwhite lies in a glass coffin, apparently dead. Only after she has spit out the poisoned apple, she becomes alive and sees the son of the king. The Soul encounters the Spirit.

The new temple can only be built when the old consciousness is left behind in the grave. Love, Light and Life, that is, heart, head and hands in a pure state, form the foundation of the new crystal temple with twelve gates, each of which is decorated with a precious gem (Rev.21:22). Each of these gems symbolises a special opening through which the rays of the spiritual sun enter. Once this stage has been reached, the earthly sun and moon are no longer needed. The link between the heart of the macrocosm and that of the microcosm is restored again. The microcosm that is restored in this way becomes the 'Light Rose' on that macrocosmic tree.

'Brothers, I have received the Garment of Light and the Crown of Light again. In this world, yet not of this world,' the Manichaees rejoiced.

WHO MOULDED THE EMPTY SPACE?



'Lao Tzu says: "Do not touch the filled vase." And now we know: that is the key! The child of God possesses a filled vase, the seven-petalled rose, the seven-petalled calyx of the lily, the grail cup of the heart. The child of God is a child of God precisely because he possesses that holy cup. It constitutes the entire Kingdom of God in us; a whole universe is contained within the primordial atom. In that atom lies the All.'

J van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, *The Chinese Gnosis*, p.90. Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1996.

'Immaterial is being in the essence.

Being in the essence is not having form.

The brain that thinks in forms of matter cannot define what has no shape.'

(Lao Tzu)

What is visible is nourished, affected and controlled by invisible forces from more tenuous realms. These forces – radiations – fill the whole universe. Nothing can develop or exist without their activity. Thus the personality depends on forces from the space surrounding it. This space is sometimes called the respiration field. That field is surrounded by a sphere, the auric field of the microcosm. Twelve electromagnetic forces are present in it, which are radiated into the cosmos through the zodiac. The results of previous incarnations are stored at the border between the auric field and the respiration field. Those results form the energy foci that shape the personality with all its idiosyncrasies.

On the basis of this individual image of the karma, the auric being attracts the corresponding forces from the cosmos and rejects the undesirable ones. The attracted forces enter into the pineal gland and the twelve pairs of cranial nerves react to them. Thus the personality is bound to the karma of the microcosm.

But the personality is not only bound to individual karma. The attracted energies of the twelve signs of the zodiac are also coloured by the karma of humanity



Twin soul, Joseph Bofill.

as a whole. Everything that has already been thought, felt and done is stored in it and has affected the nature of the primordial cosmic energies. In that way powerful concentrations have been formed that have changed and are still changing humanity and the nature order it inhabits.

Because the pineal gland is nourished from the cosmic and microcosmic zodiac, the original divine being has been limited, encapsulated in its sphere of action and ultimately reduced to one single, but yet divine, atom. It is sometimes called the last remnant of original, divine life and it forms the nucleus of the microcosm, just

as the axis is the centre of the wheel that revolves around it. That nucleus is sometimes described as 'dormant', just as the Sleeping Beauty and Snow-white are dormant principles. It is a principle that is 'dormant' until, after a series of incarnations, the microcosm has gathered so many experiences – usually unpleasant ones – that the personality begins to wonder what purpose life serves. Or, as the American author Isaac Bashevis Singer has one of the figures in his novels exclaim: *'Who has invented my life?'*

When that desperate cry resounds, this tiny atom in the heart has made itself

heard. It has given an impulse and the tormented personality has been allowed to experience something of another reality. In that crucial moment a new opening lies hidden, namely the possibility to taste something of that other, unearthly life and to catch a glimpse of it. And that might be enough to intensify our eternal quest for Life. Then something of the armour around this tiny spark can be broken through. That causes turmoil in the heart, great turmoil! Because the drive from within is felt, but cannot be recognised as the call from eternity yet. That turmoil stimulates a human being to seeking. He is striving for higher, expands his consciousness, is travelling to gather new impressions and rejoices when he recognises traces of his own quest in ancient civilisations. Thus he will often just be able to grasp it, but many times he will also experience that it escapes him. He seeks and struggles, until his energy gives out and his vital flame is extinguished. A new opportunity is created for him and crowing in the cradle he starts again, but this time better equipped, better prepared, slightly more conscious. And again he wanders through the world in the hope to be touched somewhere in the depths of his soul. Then he can change course. Now he becomes aware that he himself is the vase Lao Tzu is speaking about. That vase will only become useful when it is stripped of everything that does not belong in it and is filled with the eternal power that causes it to produce the right sound.

THE USEFULNESS OF MATTER

'The thirty spokes of a wheel unite around the hub, as results that merge in their cause again.

Radiating back to the centre – thus is the human soul, the navel of emotions, from which our deeds emerge.

The space between the spokes is the "essence" of the wheel.

Hence where form appeared, the "essence" has been pushed aside.

Being encompassed by form creates space around the hole, just as the written song takes shape when it is being sung.

The vase has been moulded from clay.

Who moulded the "empty space"?

Who moulded a vase from clarity?

How develops storm from silence?

The "empty space" has been filled.

From "empty space" creation will begin.

Whoever unveils this mystery, can be awake during sleep.

Doors and windows are made for the benefit of the house.

But the "essence" dwells in it between door and windows.

Trunk, head, arms, legs, united in one body.

But by what binding power did they grow together?

Material existence wants to testify of usefulness,

just as the thought that, if it is to be explained,

is manifested to us by sound or writing.

Thus the reed teaches us to stoop from straight to bent.

Immaterial is being in the essence.

Being in the essence is not having form.

The brain that thinks in forms of matter

cannot define what has no shape.'

Translation of chapter II of *Tao, Universal Consciousness*, C. van Dijk. Amsterdam, 1934.

WHAT IS SIN?

'In the Person of Jesus Christ, the full realisation of the Christ principle is brought to light. This principle is the opposite of sin. Sin first detaches a human being from God, then from his fellow human beings, and ultimately it sharpens the sword of warring nations. It forms a process of dissolution. The Christ principle on the other hand, is the life-giving Spirit.'

Prof A H de Hartog (1869-1938)

Original man left the world of unity and harmony and entered the world of multiplicity and contrasts. He left Paradise and descended into matter. In myths this process is called the fall. The concept of 'sin' points to separation from the original unity. The human being became sinful when he began to develop his I and thus became detached from the unity he had belonged to until then. In that way he placed his thinking, feeling and acting under the laws of duality. In this realm of space and time everything will be broken up systematically in order to protect humanity from further crystallisation and petrification. By his developing I-centrality he became a restless seeker.

In Hebrew texts 'sinning' also means 'lacking, not being available'. In some Greek writings it is also called 'missing

ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA:

To Christians and Jews, sin is wilful opposition to (violation of) God's will.

BROCKHAUS ENZYKLOPÄDIE:

Sin is a disturbance of the relationship between God and man.

the target, not hitting the mark.' This lacking or this lack is the result of being focused on the I, with which human life started in the world of opposites. Due to these opposites we have to choose continuously. And every decision, taken on the basis of our separation, cannot be anything but imperfect, partial, biased. And hence, seen from eternity: sinful. Humanity cannot be blamed for this, because that is the way we have been built, that is our nature. What we think to do well evokes the opposite forces, exactly those we wanted to avoid. Demonstrations and protest actions often achieve the opposite result and new 'failures' present them-

The human definition of sin – as reflected here in several frames – depends upon the cultural context in which it is applied. Sin in a universal sense has no relationship to any ethical or moral standard. Often the idea of sin is linked with the prevalent definition of evil. Since what is good in the eyes of one, is bad to others, disharmony increases and the 'distance' to the original universal unity grows. The Arab mystic Gunaid wrote in the 14th century: 'I asked: where is my sin? Then a voice answered: sin is that you exist, none is more serious.'



BUDDHISM:

People are not guilty, but blind and ignorant. They injure themselves, by their own actions.

selves. With each step a human being distances himself further from the divine order. Yet, eventually he returns to it, because he begins to yearn for a way-out as soon as he experiences that he is gradually so swallowed up in the misery he caused himself that he *has* to seek for a way-out.

Hence, life in the world of opposites can never be experienced without guilt, mistakes and sin. For example, the disharmony etched into our conscience by daily life may be expressed by diseases. For whatever a human being undertakes on the basis of his personality, will remain bound to the limitations of our polarised existence. Also wanting to do or not do something is an act that has effects. This is inevitable. Sinning with regard to eter-

nity is not something to blame someone else for. However, the I-human being feels the need to oppose his fellow human being and to judge or condemn him. And thus concepts as sinful, mistaken or guilty seen from a human perspective are linked with the prevalent morals, with the ethics of the culture in which they are used. What is wrong in one country, maybe a virtue in another. However, beyond that a human being is guided and corrected where necessary by the unshakeable laws of cause and effect.

Where is the way-out? Whoever truly seeks this way-out, not as a pastime or because it might be nice and interesting, but out of pure inner need, can do but one thing: change his views step by step. He understands that there is no point in fleeing again or putting the blame or

Balance disturbed by one single drop. Photo Pentagram.

UNIVERSAL WISDOM:

'That, now, is awareness of sin: that the true, spiritual human being becomes aware of his prison, of his present state of being.'

J v Rijckenborgh, *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis I*, p.62

THE ALCHEMY OF THE WESTERN MYSTERIES

THE MYSTIC AND POET ANGELUS SILESIUS (1624-1677):

*'The man who sins sees nothing;
the more he works and hurries about,
pushed by his own will,
the more he becomes addicted.'*

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE:

*Sin is the state of a human being whose fellowship with God has been broken.
Eerste Nederlandse Systematisch
Ingerichte Encyclopedie, ENSIE, 1952
(First Dutch Systematic Encyclopaedia)*

The eight Taoist immortal ones enjoy eternal life in the green-golden paradise. Woodcarving.

responsibility on others or on social, economic or political circumstances. Only he himself is responsible for everything that happens in his microcosm! Eventually he will see that his separation is the price for the I-central existence

chosen by his microcosm of its own free will.

All these considerations lead to the conclusion that the victory over sin has to be a victory over polarity. The first step away from the opposites will undo the step that made man into a sinner. A religion that wants to heal humanity should show and exemplify the way out of the separation. To overcome sin is to overcome our I-centrality, the cause of separation, illness and death.

HINDUISM:

Sin is deliberate violation of the divine law. What human beings call sin, is ignorance.

Can we actually speak of Western mysteries? It is generally accepted that the West has a culture that does away with myths. It has the reputation of being perfectly sober-minded with respect to mysteries. The Western human being is a rational being. With his mind he attempts to unveil and unravel anything reeking of mysteries, leaving only a sober account of verifiable facts.

The Greeks had their Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries. Pythagoras had his mystery school. Those mysteries still appeal to the imagination because of the mythological elements underlying them. They form a broad base for Western thought and especially for experiencing the Western ideas of reality. The famous myth of Plato's cave is still used to describe the human state of life. That myth clearly shows that the sensory world is a dream world. Greek thinking is permeated with this idea and shows time and again that this dream world does require our attention. Behind this idea lie – historically and culturally – the Indian and Egyptian views in which opposites and illusion play a central role. The Western human being seeks to experience reality on the basis of his soberness and his wakeful and vigilant life. Nothing is wrong with that. Approximately since the time of Socrates, but especially since Aristotle, he has chosen nature as his teacher and his independent thinking has become ever more prominent in society. The Western mysteries

concern the twin powers that keep the sensory world in motion. They are each other's opposites as positive and negative, as impulse-giving and impulse-receiving. Whoever can rise above these opposites – in a spiritual sense – is standing on the threshold of the Western mysteries.

DYNAMIC INNER PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

In the 17th century, interest in these old mysteries was rekindled due to their being presented in a form suitable for the developing European. They are known as *The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross* and were written in German by Johann Valentin Andreae and published in Kassel in 1616. These mysteries, rendered by Andreae in ornate, fairy-tale images, caused a tremendous stream of publications. Because of its incomprehensible nature, there was above all much opposition. This 'fairy tale' may be seen as the foundation of the modern Western mysteries.

However, the Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross is certainly not a fairy tale, but a purely Western description of a dynamic process of inner transformation. The Western character is also expressed by its public nature. Previously, mysteries were not written down and it was not until Luther that the Bible was officially translated into the vernacular, so that knowledge of its content was no longer the privilege of those who knew Latin. The Western approach is also apparent in the Christ-centred essence of the Alchemical Wedding. Amongst other



things this is expressed by the name of the candidate for the Alchemical Wedding: Christian Rosycross. And finally we could say that the mathematical and numerical approach of the transmutation process is typically Western for that time.

What, in fact, is the alchemy of the Western Christian mysteries? Whence that mysterious and inexplicable vitality speaking to us from the Alchemical Wedding? To discover that, it is important to drop the romance attached to this subject and, for example, to take the making of gold not too literally. Yet, there are certainly accounts that physical gold could be made as well. But the 17th-century Rosicrucians clearly indicated that there is only one alchemy and that is the alchemical process of spiritual gold making, the life process in which lower biological life is transformed into higher, spiritual life.

NOT DEFILED BY GOOD OR EVIL

Gold symbolises that which is most noble and pure on earth. The structure of the element is such that one can roll it out under pressure to a thickness of one ten-thousandth of a millimetre, without tearing or breaking. A little lump of gold of one gram can be drawn out to a length of 35 kilometres. Gold is called precious because under normal circumstances it does not combine with other elements and hence will not give up anything of its character. In nature it is rarely found in an impure state.

In the same way, the highest spiritual good is above all earthly taints. It cannot be defiled by human good or evil, it is the absolute good. That is why spiritual gold can only be made when earthly good and evil have reached a balance. In that perfect

balance the human being can have liberated himself from the bonds caused by the opposites of good and evil. Hence, making gold, as intended by the 17th century Rosicrucians, is a process derived from the practice of true life. It is a process of transmutation – alchemy – of the lower into the higher, of that which is the lowest into that which is the absolute highest.

Moral knowledge of concepts like good and evil is no basis for the dissolution of their opposites. This requires a virtue born from life experience, a virtue that cannot be measured by applying the moral concept of 'good'. A mysterious virtue indeed! This foundation of life can – and must – be found in this time in the Western mysteries, for in these mysteries head and heart together can learn how to achieve the required foundation of life. The heart alone is not enough, nor is the head. These mysteries for humanity that has entered into a new era, demand the commitment of the whole personality. Thus thinking and feeling alone is not enough, but rather the ability to act and live on the basis of the balance between those two. Whenever this process can be started on the required basis and with the required means, making spiritual gold begins. The head, our thinking, is needed to learn to see and understand the task of the human being in this new development. The heart is the gate for the development of that process of renewal, and the resulting life of action is the process of alchemical renewal. That conversion process is also called transmutation, as a first condition for transfiguration. Often allusions to metals are used, because their properties can be seen as the different phases of this process.



POSSESSING AND PRACTISING THE
MYSTERIOUS VIRTUE

Hence the purpose of spiritual alchemy, as described in the Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross by the 17th-century Rosicrucians, is the complete rejection of what is useless and attracting what is useful, so that the divine essence can be expressed in the Golden Wedding Garment, also called the 'coat without seam.' That is the vehicle

for the reborn soul, a vehicle consisting of unearthly energy as the basis for the further development of the human being as intended by God.

In this way the human being can practise and possess the mysterious virtue. But he can only do so, if the basis, the imperishable soul nucleus, is present within him. From this basis he receives the power, the Gnosis, which makes the whole process of renewal possible, and prepares the soul for its Wedding to the

*The scholar. Gerard
Dou, around 1630.
Hermitage, St.
Petersburg.*

Spirit, to the highest Good. Then the soul can give away the power received to its fellow creatures and involve them in the process of renewal, ultimately encompassing the whole of Creation. After all, creation is not static, but renews itself every second, with or without the cooperation or the conscious participation of the human being.

In the Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross, this process of renewal is extensively described to create the opportunity for those to whom it appeals and who are ready for it, to participate consciously in that process of inner renewal, and to achieve its ultimate purpose, the restored link with the Spirit. That is the path laid down by Hermes Trismegistus in the Egyptian mysteries in order to prepare humanity for its new development. Hence Hermes Trismegistus can be summarised briefly as follows: *'Receiving everything, giving up everything and thus renewing everything.'*

Material gold appeals to virtually everyone, and so does spiritual gold, though not by its shine and material value, but by the eternal Love of God, the Gnosis, which radiates from this gold and stimulates in human hearts the yearning for higher good. That Love is the perfect Love, the Love that surpasses all earthly standards. Both gold and love can show beauty. True Love shows True Beauty and grants the human being the opportunity to achieve that high state of life.

LONGING FOR SALVATION IS THE BASIS

Where does making gold start according to the Western mysteries? That point can be found in a balanced mind, totally focused on receiving the spiritual gold. The modern Rosicrucians call this basis the longing for salvation. The transmuta-

tion of metals is only possible, when this basis becomes active in the human system for the benefit of the transformation of the soul. That is where transmutation starts in order to prepare the whole system for transfiguration. At the same time this points to the laboratory for making gold: the human being himself with all his aspects, within his own system.

Hence the question: is this longing for perfection, for spiritual gold, for divine Love sufficient to go this path? No, because the alchemy of the Western mysteries requires in addition to a correct psychological basis also a correct physiological foundation. And this can only be prepared if the longing for salvation is combined with the unconditional willingness to undergo that revolutionary process of change personally.

In that process the blood is going to change as well as the nerve fluid, the consciousness and the endocrine glands that together determine the state of the blood. Blood, nerve fluid, consciousness and the endocrine system are important factors in the whole process. That is where the preparations for the alchemical wedding start.

Without change, without inner renewal, it is not possible to transform base metals – called lead by the alchemists – into gold. That is where sacrifice starts: giving away of the self to make room for what is new. The greatest requirement is the sacrifice of what is I-centred, the surrender of the I to the process of renewal in which the earthly self will be dissolved.

That is the very problem for the materialistically oriented human being. What can and will he give up? Does he dare to jump into the deep? The deep that does not appeal to him, because he cannot visualise what is awaiting him?

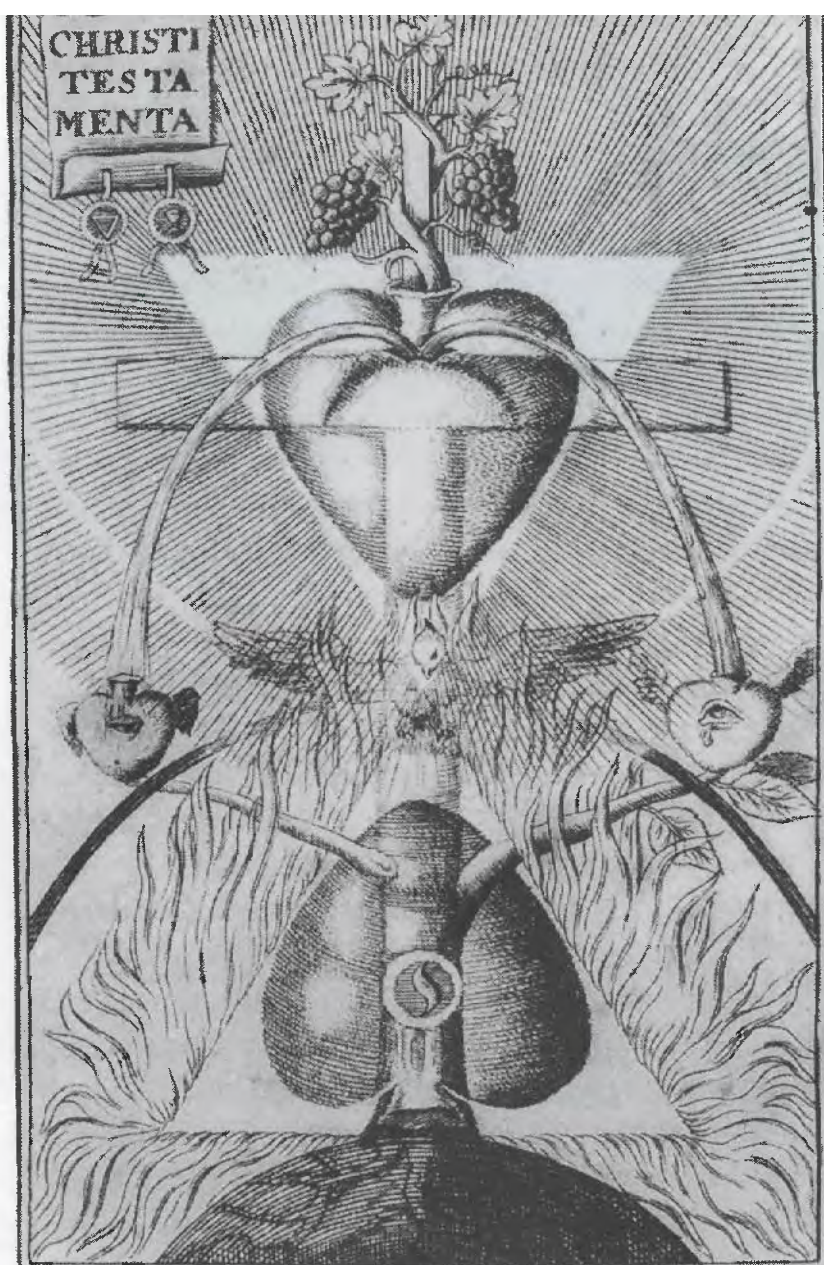


SON OF GOD IN A LIMITED BODY

Where does he draw the line in letting go of the old? Limits strongly depend on our personal idea of freedom. That threshold needs to be crossed. The human being of the twenty-first century will have to choose and learn to sacrifice his so highly valued personal freedom in order to be able to achieve freedom for humanity as a whole.

How does the modern human being – and especially the modern Western human being, dragged along in the wake of materialism – deal with the idea that he is a fallen Son of God in a body that is subject to limitation? In the unmasking brought about by the present time, all images of God seem to collapse. A kind of iconoclastic frenzy is going on and God as a person, the last resort of the past Christian culture, appears not to

As above, so below. Apollo with the lyre, symbolising the perfect balance of the elements. *Museum hermeticum*, Frankfurt, 1625.



The blood of the Christ nourishes the soul imprisoned in the body and changes the Darkness into the Light. Jacob Boehme, *Theosophische Wercke* (Theosophical Works), Amsterdam, 1682.

exist. That is not a new notion, as it was already shown centuries ago by philosophers like Spinoza and Nietzsche. Referring to the atrocities of World War II, John A T Robinson, Primo Levi and Dietrich Bonhoeffer stood up to declare *this* God dead once and for all. Those insights and statements caused great turmoil.

Certainly, it is hard to swallow for a faithful believer, when he discovers that the Universal God does not bother with personal motives, motivation, careers, circumstances, crop failures and so on. Everyone is thrown back on his own responsibility by this discovery. As he

sows, so he will reap. And whoever wants to behave like an animal is free to do so. But clearly, that is not an expression of the Gold of the Spirit!

Isn't there a God who rules the All? Could that be the god that is promoted by some religion? In that case, there are as many gods as there are religions! Thus everyone has created his own god – often in cooperation with others who strive after the same purpose. Then which God is the One, the Almighty who surpasses everything?

To find the One, the human being seeking for the Truth needs to turn into

his inner self. 'Thou art Gods' does not refer to the personality, but to the golden nucleus that has been placed in the human being as a nucleus of higher life. That inner vein of gold must be mined to release the power – the Gnosis – that can weave the Golden Wedding Garment for the purpose of spreading the wealth of the spiritual gold – to fulfil the great Law of Love.

More than ever before, the new atmospheric conditions of the present time allow the seeker the space to celebrate within himself the Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross. That is because the present iconoclastic frenzy is unmasking everything that is temporary, limited and humanly imperfect. Due to the ever more radical unmasking of the perishable, the imperishable can be manifested. The pure image of the original human being becomes visible. But also that of those who are on their way to realise that image again in their own being: on the one hand in meekness, humility, kindness and helpfulness, on the other in the soul and spiritually conscious human being, who can draw on the immeasurable wealth of the dynamic process of transfiguration.

That new man cannot be rationalised or felt. He lives out of the high reality, bestowed on him by the Spirit of God. He testifies of it and whoever recognises it knows that he is standing before a Christian Rosycross, who is exploring his spiritual path of life consciously. That spiritual human being has been touched in his heart by the Love of God and he has answered 'yes' wholeheartedly. By bringing the Rose of the heart to blossom forth in this way, he receives the higher knowledge required to enable him to go the path of inner renewal.

Attaching the Rose to the Cross in this

way means confirming in the blood the Christ Power received and released inwardly. This stimulates the processes of change that release and activate the Gold of the Spirit.

That process will result in a coronation. The human being regains his status of priest-king, though not of a kingdom that can only exist in and by matter. His kingdom consists of Love, of immeasurable treasures, as mentioned by Christian Rosycross. And his wealth consists of giving away those treasures. Not for gain, but for everyone who is seeking for the truth and is prepared to sacrifice his old self to find the new self. That is why he remains focused on the inexhaustible Wellspring of the Gnosis, without thinking of himself. In that directedness he bypasses his own personal needs for, if he should not do so, the eternal Wellspring would no longer be able to reach him.

*When longing for Life has become full,
– nourished by the emptiness of matter –
I cross the sword with daily darkness
in meekness and without compassion
in not-doing, full of feeling,
relying on Aurora's glow.*

*The morning sun in all its glory
brightens my work into a feast,
to form above dust and bondage
the Golden Spirit's power field.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Wezen en krachten der metalen*, (Essence and power of metals), Mellie Uyldert, De Driehoek, Amsterdam, 1977, p. 22;
- The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross, part II*, J van Rijckenborgh, Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem 1992;
- The Confession of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross*, J van Rijckenborgh, Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1989.
- Ethics*, Benedictus de Spinoza. Many editions since 1677.

WHERE DOES THE CONCEPT OF ALCHEMY STEM FROM?

The interest in the concept of alchemy is increasing and there are so many different views about it that the edcapstors of PENTAGRAM would like to present a survey of these opinions – even if incomplete. To this end, publications from the last 50 years have been consulted. Each of them shows that the roots of this mysterious ‘science’ lie very far back in human history.

According to the author Mircea Eliade¹ alchemy stems from metallurgy. Smelters, blacksmiths and alchemists often claimed extraordinary religious experiences, which were kept secret and incorporated in initiation rituals. These three groups worked with matter, which was holy and alive for them. Their goal was to achieve a transmutation. The point of contact between metallurgy and alchemy lay where human beings intervened in the rhythm of the substances they processed. They believed in the holiness of the earth as the source of life and were convinced that its every violation had to be atoned for with sacrifices. The initiation rituals and mysteries of the Chinese metallurgists probably were an important component of Taoism and Chinese alchemy.

In her book *Alchemie als psychologisch ontwikkelingsproces* (Alchemy as a psychological process of development)², the author Marie Louise von Franz points out that matter is divine in the experiences of many Africans. There is a

deity for every process of transformation. Divine forces are mixed and divine power is exercised. Thus, the alchemist causes changes in the realm of the divine powers.

The Egyptians inherited the knowledge of smelting metals from the Babylonians and Sumerians. For them, the smelting of tin, bronze and iron were religious activities. Mummification was also an alchemical process. The body was symbolically transformed into Osiris, the cosmic and individual principle in the human being. In this way, the human being was united with the godhead. To this end he was bathed in primal matter, in the primal waters or Nun.

The survey by the Swiss author B D Haage³ begins with the third century AD. He refers among other facts to the oldest writing of that time that describes purification and initiation processes, the *Physika kai Mystika*. The repeated metaphors of suffering, dying and resurrection have their roots in myths and mystery cults. According to Haage, medical science became a part of Western alchemy via Arabic alchemy. He also mentions Paracelsus and his followers who searched for the panacea that had to be prepared from plant and animal substances. Due to this, alchemy was no longer limited to the mineral kingdom.

The term ‘alchemy’ originates from translations of Arabic texts from the 12th century. They spoke of al-kimiya, which was translated into Latin as akimia, aquimia, alchimia or alchemia. Albertus Magnus (c.1193-1280) wrote



about the ars nova (the new art) or alchimia.

Haage traces the word ‘chemia’ back to the *Book of Enoch*, according to the account of Zosimos amongst others. The academy of Gondi Shapur and several scientific centres in Egypt were founded during the reign of the Sassanids (224-651 AD). Translations from texts translated from Greek and other languages were used there. They dealt with philosophy, physics, astronomy, geography, medicine and also alchemy. Some of these texts stemmed from translation centres in Persia and Mesopotamia. For example, the works of Thales, Pythagoras, Empe-

docles, Democritus, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, but also the hermetic writings like the *Tabula Smaragdina* were translated. Many of these Arabic writings – although translated into Latin – found their way to the mediaeval alchemists in the West via the Iberian Peninsula.

The author H W Schütt⁴ located the origin of alchemy in ancient Egypt. He believes that the Serapeion (the temple dedicated to the god Serapis) is proof that Greek religion and philosophy and Egyptian religion and temple art deeply influenced each other. This led later to the synthesis of religion, philosophy and medicine, which determined the thinking and

Original alchemical laboratory in the oldest section of the university of Krakow, Poland. Photo Pentagram.

knowledge of the first alchemists. These doctors occupied themselves with pharmacology. The Greeks had a high opinion of the medical and especially the surgical and anatomical knowledge of the Egyptians. The Greek influence can still be recognised in several recipes of the alchemists. The substances and medicines used appear in alchemical writings as well as in Greek medical texts. Alchemical experiments with metals were carried out in order to discover new methods of healing. Digestive processes, fermentation and decomposition played an important role in it.

The author especially emphasises chemistry. For him, the alchemists were the forerunners of the chemists. He quotes Roland Edighofer: *'The result of the Rosicrucian literature was that from the wealth of images of the Rosicrucian message many readers in the 17th century only remembered the miraculous and the alchemy connected with it.'*

What role did the ideas of the 17th-century Rosicrucians play among the old alchemists and the new chemists? Alchemy was a secret science in the hands of a few initiates. At least that is how alchemy is traditionally represented. This picture does not fit the progressive scientist of past centuries. Nor does the pathos of the general Reformation – the break with tradition – fit the picture of the traditional adept. Yet, several Rosicrucian writings mention the *prisca sapientia* (the venerable knowledge) that supposedly could be traced back to Adam and Moses. In addition, the Rosicrucians were thought to be related to the Order of the Knights Templar because of their common symbols as the rose and the cross of St. Andrew.

Peter Marshall⁵ starts his search for

the Philosopher's Stone in China and from there traces a line of influence – via the alchemy of India, Egypt, Arabia and Europe – to the Hermetic enlightenment. Professor Zhao Kuang-hua answered to his question about the origin of Chinese alchemy: *'This goes at least back to 200 BC, but we do not know where. Alchemy developed from Taoism. Every alchemist is a Taoist, but not every Taoist is an alchemist. Alchemy is one aspect of Taoism.'* Chinese alchemy is based on three fundamental Taoist ideas about the cosmos: on the concept *chi*, *yin* and *yang*, and thirdly, the theory of the five elements. *Chi* is often described as the energy that circulates through the body and the universe. This energy penetrates everything and can be regarded as vital force. It is invisible. Material objects consist of *chi* and derive their structure and characteristics from it.

Tao can be divided into the principles of *yin* and *yang*. They are two forces that are each other's opposites and complement each other. They are active in the universe and are subject to an inflowing and an outflowing movement, like the tides. It is said in the *Tao Te Ching* that living beings are surrounded by *yin* and *yang* and that their harmony depends on the balance between *yin* and *yang*.

The Chinese characters for Tao are related to darkness and light. *Yin* is the shaded, dark, northern side of a hill and *yang* the bright, sunny, southern side. In Chinese alchemy, *yin* is represented as a tiger, water or a woman and *yang* as a dragon, fire or a man. The alchemist tries to reverse the process of the splitting into *yin* and *yang* and thus to attain unity – Tao. When he can attain unity in himself and in his laboratory, he receives the golden elixir of immortality.

The third basic ingredient is the theory that all processes and substances in the universe are composed of five elements (*wu hsing*). This theory of the five elements refers back to the tenth century BC. It is essential that these five elements do not refer to five kinds of matter, as in the western concept of the four elements (fire, earth, water and air). Chinese thinking deals with processes, not with substances. The elements are not passive. They are five strong forces which are in a constantly flowing cyclic motion. The five fundamental elements of a human being are essence, mind, vitality (*ching*), spirit (*shen*) and energy (*chi*). The first two form the consciousness; the other three are known as the three treasures.

There is also a connection with the five planets visible to the naked eye: Mercury – water, Mars – fire, Jupiter – wood, Venus – metal, and Saturn – earth. Because it is assumed that each planet has its own tone, there were at that time also references to 'the music of the spheres'.

The root of Chinese alchemy is the belief in a complicated and refined web of relationships between parts of the universe, which together form Tao. This is an organic pattern. Everything charges everything with energy. Everything works together and one thing is not more important than something else.

'The celestial Tao works mysteriously and in secret. It has no fixed form and follows no fixed rules. It is so great that one never reaches the end and so deep that one can never fathom it.'

The uniqueness of alchemy is that philosophy, religion, psychology, the arts, theory, practice, vision and experiment are combined in it. Alchemy is a holistic science and concerns itself with the relationship between intellect, body and spirit.

Alchemists call their great work, the *Opus Magnum*. On the one hand this refers to the laboratory experiments and on the other to the inner work on one's own perfection. The alchemist departs from the axiom 'as above, so below, as within, so without.' The change that appears in a visible substance reflects the inner process of the transformation of the soul.

The discovery of the philosopher's stone is for the alchemist an outward sign of his inner achievements. So there are two interpretations of alchemy: the exoteric or outward one and the esoteric or inner one. Exoteric science is the practical preparation of the *Philosopher's Stone*, the substance with which base metal can be transformed into gold and life can be extended. This aspect played a key role in the history and development of science.

In the esoteric tradition, the transmutation into gold is a symbolic activity of the human being to change base matter into refined spirit. And hence nothing less but the creation of the gold of spiritual illumination. Already since ancient times, the esoteric tradition has transmitted the knowledge regarding the structure of the world, the place of humanity in the universe, the nature of the spirit and the purpose of life. Paracelsus, the father of modern pharmacy, Jan Baptist van Helmont, who proved the existence of gases, Johann Friedrich Böttger, who discovered porcelain (in Europe) and Robert Boyle, who laid the foundations of modern chemistry, were all well-known alchemists. Isaac Newton also often occupied himself with alchemical texts.

This brief survey would not be complete without mentioning Carl Gustav Jung⁶. He was particularly interested in alchemy and used it in his psychology.

His insights were pioneering and are still of great significance for Jungian psychology and philosophy. He treated the separation and combination of opposites on the unconscious or soul level as they are represented in the symbolism of the alchemical opus. From his point of view, he wrote a summary and an explanation of the correspondences between the quest for the 'philosopher's stone' and the Christ idea.

The author Jan van Rijckenborgh⁷ explains the view of the School of the Rosycross regarding alchemy and its background in the work *The Confession of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross* (p.59). In his opinion, there are two interpretations regarding alchemy. One departs from the transmutation of metals in a literal sense. It is the attempt to transform base metals into gold. The other is diametrically opposed to this and sees this transformation as a purely spiritual process. This refers to the idea of the Gold of the Spirit that has to be liberated from the bonds of lower life and raised to a higher reality.

'The first interpretation is totally wrong; the second, as a description of one of the aims of mankind, contains some truth, but still has nothing to say with respect to the alchemy of the Rosicrucians.'

What is alchemy? A deeper study, a parting of the veils, makes this clear. With our material vehicles, we live consciously in the chemical sphere of the material world, in the nadir of materiality. This material world is composed of elements, forces, minerals, and metals.

This degenerate material world in

which we live, is imbued with a spiritual essence: the power of the Christ. The unceasing task of this spiritual essence is to restore the material world to its original purity and to propel the life manifested therein along the path intended for it. Christ, the all-fulfiller, is aided by the Western Mystery School in the fulfilment of this task. Behind every process of renewal or breaking stands the Order of the Rosycross with its entire apparatus, working feverishly in His service on all planes. That is alchemy, the alchemy of the Rosicrucians.'

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1 Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, The University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- 2 Marie Louise von Franz, *Alchemie als psychologisch entwicklungsprozess* (Alchemy as a psychological process of development), Lemniscaat, 1979.
- 3 Bernard Dietrich Haage, *Alchemie im Mittelalter, Ideen und Bilder von Zosimos bis Paracelsus* (Alchemy in the Middle Ages, Ideas and Pictures from Zosimos to Paracelsus), Artemis und Winkler, Zurich, 1996.
- 4 Hans-Werner Schütt, *Auf der Suche nach dem Stein der Weisen; die Geschichte der Alchemie* (On the Quest for the Philosophers' Stone; the History of Alchemy), C H Beck Verlag, Munich, 2000.
- 5 Peter Marshall, *The Philosopher's Stone*, Macmillan, London, 2001.
- 6 Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 1968, and *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Princeton University Press, 1977.
- 7 Jan van Rijckenborgh, *The Confession of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross*, Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1989.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

A bloody dispute on the question of Jesus' birthplace where the foundation of Christianity was supposedly laid, is fought by sister nations. They claim rights on the basis of supposedly historically proven statements of the same prophets and thereby ignore the spiritual significance of the Star of Bethlehem.

The firmament is filled with signs and symbols. This has always been known and the great teachers of humanity like Hermes Trismegistus and Pythagoras have taught their disciples: 'As above, so below'. Such signs and symbols are ancient and mysterious gems from the treasury of the Universal Teachings. They represent the inner world of the visible universe, but above all that of the human being. Symbols like the cross with its many variations, the hexagon, the rose and the pentagram, just to mention a few, are found in most cultures. They often appeal to the inner being of a person stimulating him to reflection or to action.

Usually the deeper meaning of a symbol, to which many of the interpreters attach their own thoughts and ideas cause conflict and dispute. Some of these symbols are the favourites of philosophical or esoteric societies, military circles and in commerce. Flags, coats of arms and company logos are often copied from or based on ancient universal symbols.

A symbol that appeared in the focus of attention during the past century is the pentagram, which was already used by



the Egyptians. The regular five-pointed star that also served as a symbol with the Druids is also called the incubus foot. For Pythagoras, the pentagram symbolised the spiritual wedding and union of the Soul with the Spirit. He referred to the number five expressed by it as to the number of the human being in the microcosm. The early Christians considered the pentagram as a symbol of the Christ, an

The Star of Bethlehem is often connected with the planet Venus. Viewing this planet through a telescope, as evening star in summer or morning star in winter, we see a light spot with five rays. Seen from the earth, the planet Venus describes an orbit around the sun in the form of a pentagram in forty years and three days.

Chr. Knight/R.Lomas, *Uriel's Auftrag* (Uriel's task), Scherz Verlag, Bern 2001.



expression of the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. The mediaeval alchemists used the five-pointed star as a symbol of the quinta essentia, the fifth element, the fire ether or the Holy Spirit. For Giordano Bruno the number five represented the soul, because it is composed of equal and unequal, even and uneven.

CONNECTING LINES INTERSECT ACCORDING TO THE GOLDEN SECTION

Although stars are spherical, they are usually represented as dots or as bundles of rays. Similarly, the pentagram consists of five points which, if connected directly, would result in an inverse pentagon. A special feature of these lines is that they intersect in the proportions of the Golden Section: the ratio of the smaller segment to the bigger one is the same as that of the bigger segment to the whole. Expressed mathematically $p:q = q:(p+q)$. Within this pentagon ever smaller pentagons with the same proportions can be drawn. Consequently, expanding the pentagram by sides of thousands of light years would leave the ratios unchanged.

Suppose such a line would represent a power line or a light line. Then the pentagram would form a closed power field, in which the powers generated would flow back to the nucleus. According to universal wisdom there are more universes with countless bigger and smaller power fields and their mutual relationship is determined by the divine law.

Goethe wrote:
*'When in eternal times
 the same keeps flowing ever,
 and universe and space
 expand, vibrate and quiver
 then lust for life escapes all things,*

FOCI OF SPIRITUAL POWER ALL OVER THE WORLD

'The number five is the pentagram, the five-pointed star shining behind the Rosycross, the symbol of the advanced, developed human soul. The number five is the Pentekoste that flames above the heads of the disciples at Whitsuntide. It is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the eternal birth-giving principle that has come to maturity. [...] A fivefold stream of power is continuously sent out from the foci of spiritual power in this world. [...] Following the path of Christ, fulfilling the demands of gnostic Christianity, man will one day construct the new earth, the community of the new life, as a concrete reality.'

J van Rijckenborgh, *The Call of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross*, Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1988.

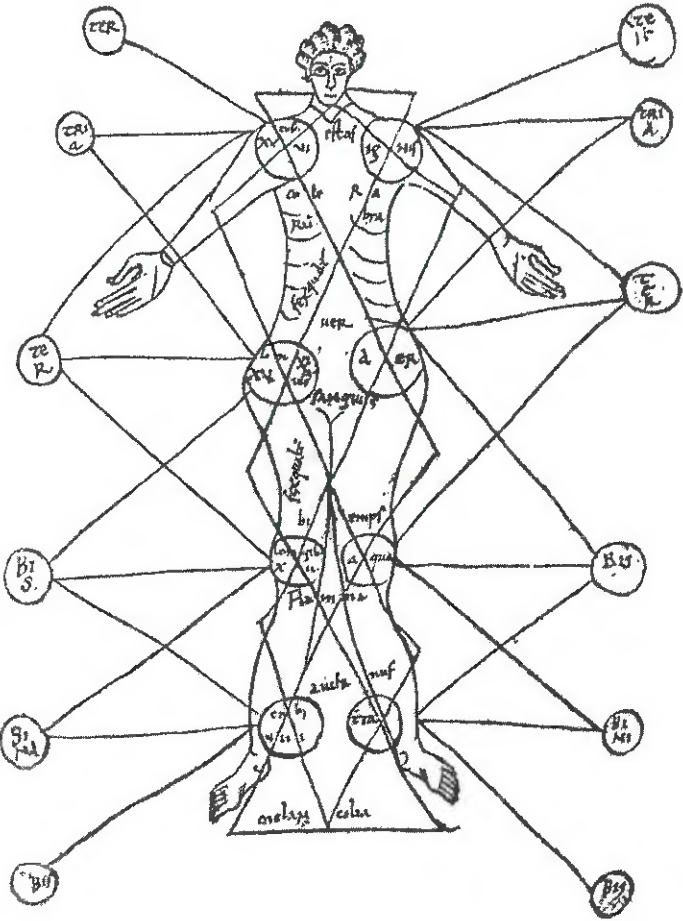
*the smallest and the greatest star.
 And all the striving, all propulsion
 is eternal peace in God the Lord.'*

This image has been worked out in Goethe's Faust. When Mephisto is about to leave Faust, he cannot pass the door because a pentagram has been drawn on the threshold.

Then Mephisto says:
*'There is a confession I must make.
 A little obstacle prevents my walking out:
 The incubus-foot on the sill of your door!'*
 And Faust replies:
*'You are distressed by the pentagram?
 Well, tell me then, you Son of hell,
 How you got in while subject to its spell.'*

For the modern Rosicrucian the pentagram is a symbol of the true new man. The Universal Teachings state that a human being has two souls: the natural soul that he develops into an all-dominating I, and the original soul that is still present in him as a seed waiting for libera-

Isis and Pharaoh Horemheb with the five-pointed star between them. Horemheb's Tomb, Valley of the Kings, Egypt.



Relationship between the bodily fluids and the zodiac. Spain, 11th century.

tion. Each of these souls maintains its own rhythms and laws. A truly new ensoulment can originate only, when the dominant I withdraws and allows the original soul to be revived. That is a lengthy process in which the natural soul experiences radical changes. It is the path of 'reaching the stars by passing the thorns' (per aspera ad astra).

The sanctuaries of the Cathars in the caves of the valley of the Ariège remind us of that great process. About 700 years ago, the Brotherhood of the Cathars was very active in South France. The Cathar process of initiation usually took approximately four years. Before going out into the world as a perfect one, a parfait, a candidate had to pass his final test in the cave of Bethlehem. In one of the rock walls a pentagon had been chiselled in which the candidate had to go and stand with outstretched arms, spread legs and raised

head to fit the five corners of the pentagon. During a magnificent ritual he was initiated to his task. The new state of consciousness attained rendered him unassailable. 'No one in the world would be able to overcome the Mysterious Power he manifested,' Antonin Gadal wrote in *On the Path to the Holy Grail*.

THE LIGHT MUST BE BORN IN THE SOUL

Why is the pentagram called the star of Bethlehem? Why is the birth of the new soul related to Christmas? Suppose that the figures in the Christmas story from the Bible would appear in this time. Then these figures could be seen as symbols of the different aspects of the soul. The soul longs for the Light! The light descends into the human heart in order to cleanse and restore the entire system, the microcosm and the personality dwelling in it. But as long as someone still follows his own ideas, however serious or original they may be, the miracle of this new soul birth will keep him waiting. When he loses all interests in himself and experiences his own petty world as hopeless and miserable, the longing for liberation of the soul knocking on his door breaks through. This could be the moment when the weary heart learns to recognise the outstretched hand of God's Love and perhaps dares to accept it. As mentioned in the different gospels, a reply by means of the Holy Spirit follows. Or expressed differently: in a field of purification and renewing, healing energy that touches him. Is this a mystical explanation? No, because the activity of the Holy Spirit is both a mercy and a task. The Light must be born in the soul, in the fivefold soul, represented by the pentagram.

We also speak of five soul fluids that are active in the blood, the nervous system, the

endocrine system, the serpent fire and in the consciousness of a human being. The birth of the Light in the darkness of the soul becomes possible when the rose in the centre of the microcosm opens up and assimilates the cosmic Light power. And what happens to the personality? It experiences the Light radiation with gratitude and emotions. With emotions because old habits can be given up by that touch, and new, completely different qualities can be developed. And the gratitude arises because eternity may again be approached after immeasurably long times.

A NEW POWER IS RELEASED IN THE HEART

In this way different processes of purification and restoration develop in the fourfold personality, so that the soul may rise up and grow. A new power is released in the heart. The different bodies are prepared for their task, but the human being is still hardly aware of it. But soon after these promising moments we see the flight to Egypt. At first, the soul and the consciousness are still too weak to receive and retain the Light consciously. That is why these processes take place in secret. To the extent that a person dares to surrender to the liberation of the soul, it increasingly influences the personality, promoting purification and restoration. Subsequently the heart is purified, and via heart and the blood circulation the blood becomes involved in the rebirth of the soul. The longing of the heart also stimulates the nerve system and the endocrine system receives new impulses.

This longing is not exclusively focused on the Light, but can also be transformed into purposeful activity. This requires insight, deep inner stillness and unceasing one-pointedness. In this way the fivefold soul human being is affected by the flaming Spirit of God.

The relationship between the position of the earth and the sun (the calendar year) and that between the position of Venus and the fixed stars has been used by astronomers to correct the calendar, before the atomic clock could be used. The five-pointed star with a bright light in its centre (the sun) and the letter G (God, the most Sublime One) on it, can still be seen on the ceilings of English freemasonry temples. It is no coincidence that the five-pointed star served in ancient Egypt as a symbol of knowledge, because whoever knew the movements of Venus had access to detailed information about the periods of the Nile's flooding as well as of the seasons and the time for sowing, planting and harvesting. This traditional knowledge was reserved for priests only. The symbol of Venus is also connected with the five-petalled rose, which is sometimes also used as the symbol of the resurrection and the virgin birth. The five-petalled briar rose (Rosa canina) is also used to represent the Venus-Earth cycle. The stamens in the heart of the rose represent the sun and the orbit of Venus. Another reason for choosing the rose as a symbol of Venus is its faculty of reproduction without pollination. After the plant dies, a new identical one is born again.



THE STAR OF VICTORY

When the old soul has been emptied and has declined and the new soul has been born, the five-pointed Star of Bethlehem radiates from within. From the microcosm and the personality the five-pointed star, enclosed by the pentagon, radiates. This is a completely new, etheric force line to which everything in the microcosm will be attuned. This force flows from the head to the right foot, from there to the left hand, then to the right hand, from the right hand to the left foot and finally back to the head. Thus the magical pentagram is drawn. *'Then the rose reveals itself and its fragrance is perceived,'* the author J van Rijckenborgh writes in *The Gnostic Mysteries of the Pistis Sophia*.

Cave of Bethlehem in Ussat-les-Bains, France.
Photo Pentagram.

Then a new firmament has been created, a new microcosmic solar system. The old stars in the old heaven have been extinguished and are replaced by new faculties:

- insight into the plan of development for the world and humanity;
- longing for liberation of all souls from the web of nature;
- self-surrender of the I, so that the soul may live;
- a new mode of life in order to enhance purification and restoration of the microcosm;
- true wisdom as the basis for thinking, feeling and acting.

A new light vesture will then radiate from the restored human being as proof that he has entered into a new reality. Then nothing stands in the way of the great transformation, the transfiguration of the entire being by the union of Spirit, Soul and Body.

The Light of the Star of Bethlehem now shines. This is not a visible star far above us, but the focus of pure forces filling the new soul and preparing it to forge the link with the Spirit of God. That is the goal of every human being. And the Cathars wished each other this good end with the words: *'May the profound peace of Bethlehem be with you.'*

REGISTER 2001-2002

VOLUME 23 NR.1 – JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2001

Content

- 2 The spiral of the consciousness
- 8 'Loving one's neighbour has its limits'
- 11 Speaking about God is like reaching for the wind
- 15 'Error has no roots'
- 21 Your own or someone else's authority?
- 24 The magic power of money
- 28 Jacob Boehme shows the way towards inner liberation
- 37 The keeper of the Prophet's Seal

VOLUME 23 NR.2 – MARCH/APRIL 2001

Content

- 2 In the beginning was the Word
- 5 The inadequate word
- 10 Which network controls your life?
- 15 The wonder of speech
- 21 Bach the 'fifth evangelist'
- 35 The grand imitation mass media
- 38 The Universal Teaching of the Bible?
- 46 'Let there be Light! And there was Light'

VOLUME 23 NR.3 – MAY/JUNE 2001

Content

- 2 The fire storm of Aquarius
- 6 Watch out, friend! Listen to my advice.
- 7 Is dialectics good or evil?
- 11 A Rosicrucian Prayer
- 13 Living Rosycross active in five continents
- 34 What do the Rosicrucians mean when they speak about
- 36 Forces that control humanity
- 39 I was sitting on the rock
- 40 The candelabrum of the heart

VOLUME 23 NR.4 – JULY/AUGUST 2001

Content

- 2 Searching for eternal life
- 7 Achieving inner kingship
- 13 The story of Zacchaeus the tax collector
- 15 The theory of the monad and unity
- 20 'Transcend time, become eternity'
- 27 'Europe is pregnant and will bear a strong child'
- 32 Christian religion or religion of Christ?
- 37 The Dead God and the New Man

VOLUME 23 NR.5 – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2001

Content

- 2 Is it too late for a Renaissance?
- 6 The New Man as scenario
- 12 Four centuries of dreamt humaneness
- 16 The Coming New Man
- 19 Does humanity still have value and dignity?
- 26 The rhythm of world events
- 28 The wave
- 29 The longing for the ideal society
- 34 The program of the Academy of Florence
- 38 Art in the Renaissance

VOLUME 23 NR.6 – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2001

Content

- 2 The seventh day of Creation
- 6 The origin of western alchemy
- 14 Yuseph and Asenath, a love story from Egypt
- 24 While their hearts are a thousand miles away
- 29 Does modern drama contribute to human consciousness?
- 36 Lucifer the Morning Star
- 41 Human fate

VOLUME 24 NR.1 – JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2002

Content

- 2 Without Light no one does well
- 6 Emotion draws a trail of loneliness through heaven
- 11 Eternal struggle born from primordial fear
- 16 When the great illusion dissolves, true life begins
- 19 Sensations, sensations and the soul is suffering
- 24 Is this cosmic consciousness?
- 27 Over six and quarter billion unsolved mysteries
- 31 Water of life
- 32 Two are resting on a bench
- 37 The bridge between faith and love
- 40 'I liked everything here, except myself'

VOLUME 24 NR.2 – MARCH/APRIL 2002

Content

- 2 Why this issue of Pentagram about the Group of Young Pupils?
- 3 Become master of your own life!
- 6 Liberation from your 'old nature'
- 14 Why do two opposite souls live within me?
- 22 Is life still worth to be lived?
- 28 International renewal conference for Young Pupils at La Nuova Arca in Italy
- 31 The satellite that revolves around the original planet
- 38 New liberating impulse for all of humanity
- 43 New faculties awakened

VOLUME 24 NR.3 – MAY/JUNE 2002

Content

- 2 'They held in their hands the light of creation
- 7 Rhythm and balance
- 10 Children of the new time
- 14 A century needed to lay the foundation
- 30 Can the longing for love be fulfilled?
- 34 'Like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay me down'
- 37 Where eternity and time meet
- 40 All life serves itself

VOLUME 24 NR.4- JULY/AUGUST 2002

Content

- 2 Violence or no violence
- 4 The light land of eternal peace
- 9 The secret signs of the Rosicrucians
- 12 Dying begins at birth
- 15 Is there no escape?
- 20 Masks of the mind
- 26 War and peace within the dimensions of space and time
- 32 Truth, freedom, sword
- 36 Conflict as entertainment or as a lesson?

VOLUME 24 NR.5 – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

2002

Content

- 2 Seeking the Holy Grail?
- 3 The worldwide search for the Grail
- 6 The Celtic Grail and the Arthur legend
- 11 The Grail is present in every human being
- 12 Parcival – the Path of the seeker
- 18 The Cathars on the path to the Holy Grail
- 24 Origin and meaning of the Grail legends
- 29 The journey from East to West
- 39 Kitesj – symbol of an undamaged cosmos

VOLUME 24 NR.6 – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

2002

Content

- 2 Assessing, judging or condemning
- 5 What is the secret of the universe?
- 8 Conflicting desires
- 13 Man, know thyself
- 16 What should not be, does not exist
- 22 Lost in the labyrinth of time
- 32 The essence of God is like a circle
- 38 The shadow keeping humanity imprisoned