

PENTAGRAM

PARABLE ABOUT THE GENESIS OF A BOWL

Unaware, sunk in darkness
the clay, the earth sleeps. At the same time,
in the daylight, a master is waiting,
a potter's wheel, a cool place, an oven,
the world of time and space, and a space
for consciousness.



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THE GLORY OF LOVE

Address by A H van den Brul, member of the International Spiritual Directorate

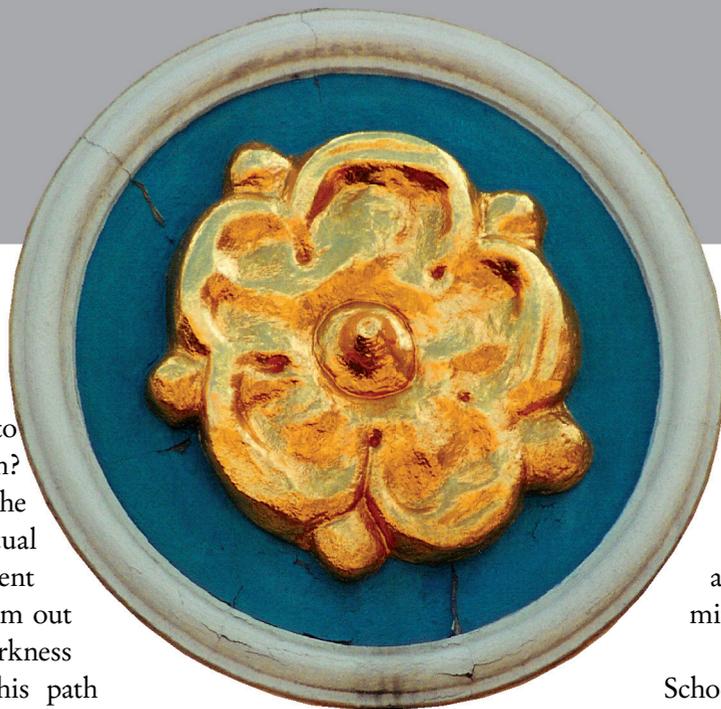
The living body, which encompasses everything and everyone in the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross, is meant to support and accompany the pupil on his path, so that the great work it undertakes with its pupils will one day culminate in the Spirit-Soul human being. Hence this Spiritual School has, above all, one aim: the transformation and transfiguration of the human being and the microcosm. That is why the living body is, first of all, a spiritual house, in which the pupil lives and works on the immortal human being, the heavenly other one.

Spiritual School and pupilship cannot be separated. The material form is totally dedicated to the spiritual building, which is not of this world. The foundations of this building can be found in the holy earth, from which the Supernature arises. Thus it forms an important, though temporary, link between two natures, between the Supernature and dialectical nature. This state of duality can also be found in the human being, whose personality is of this earthly nature but who, by virtue of the microcosm and the *monad*, fundamentally stems from the holy earth. And spiritual workers – which we pupils are – are continuously aware of this state of duality, not only within ourselves and regarding the two natures, but with re-

spect to the entire All-manifestation. That is why, in the Spiritual School, we periodically speak of two suns, which are the basis of ancient Rosicrucian teachings: the sun of the physical world, making life on earth possible, and the spiritual sun, Vulcan, the life-giving power of all spiritual genesis. This is also reflected in the concept of, on the one hand the material world, in which everything spiritual is imprisoned, and on the other hand the spiritual world, in which life is completely free from all ties to matter. Every form of captivity in matter is neutralised in the spiritual world, yes, is impossible.

VITAL QUESTIONS

So we can think of an earthly sun, the source of light and warmth serving all temporal life in matter, and of an eternal sun, the source and primordial principle of all wisdom and true life. Whoever is really spiritually awakened and in whom the light of the spiritual sun is going to break through, experiences something of its beneficial radiation. He becomes familiar with its energy as the new kundalini force, the new life force from the Pleroma. Whoever has not yet seen the spiritual sun arise in his life, lives essentially in darkness. On the basis of this irrefutable axiom, a number of questions crop up: What is the world, what is humanity and where does it go? How great and profound are the mysteries of life and the All-manifestation. How can the human



being get to know them? How can he find spiritual enlightenment that lifts him out of the darkness and ends his path through temporal life?

For the time being there are relatively few people who find the path to true enlightenment, despite the countless numbers seeking in many directions. How difficult it is for us to accept that sorrow and grief cut deep furrows into the lives of earthly human beings. Consciousness and intellect have developed over a long period of time, but up to this point they remain bound to earthly life, even though the holy earth also belongs to the sevenfold cosmos. Is the human being unable to learn and understand this?

THE CYCLES OF THE SPIRITUAL WORK

Just as the development of the world and humanity moves in cycles and periods of time, we can also see cycles and periods of time in the spiritual work. The current cycle of the great work of liberation is also occurring in connection with the emanations of the *spiritual sun*. The Brotherhood of Life anticipates this, thus, the Spiritual School of the Young Gnosis – with all its workers – is involved in this cycle of development. With its work, the School is part of a gradually unfolding plan that is being executed to the

extent to which its workers become aware of its mighty scope.

A Spiritual School manifested sevenfold

does not simply appear out of the blue. A conscientious preparation on many levels had to precede it. And this material and spiritual building has just reached an important stage on the arc of its development. We would like to explain this by presenting the words with which J van Rijckenborgh, confronted a small group of pupils with a particular task at an earlier time:

Among other things, he said: *‘The tempo of mighty accents in the development of humanity, occurs in about a hundred years. The same is true of the cycles of the spiritual work. Seen historically, the year 1924 was the beginning of the modern Spiritual School, because the assignment for a new spiritual work was given at that time.’*

Hence, in the current year, 2004, we are commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the School; we will come back later to the meaning of the number eight. *‘After having received the assignment,’* J van Rijckenborgh continued in his address, *‘the new work of the modern Rosycross actually started in 1925. Until then, the Brotherhood of the Rosycross had been primarily concerned with inspiring spiri-*

Golden rose above the entrance of a church in Pocatky, Czech Republic. Photo Pentagram.

tual movements and initiatives and being active in the background both with regard to individual persons and to groups. We think here of the many philosophers of the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, whose ideas were noted by many people. We also think of the preparatory thoughts, characteristic of the world literature of that time, concerning transfiguristic teachings which appeared fragmentarily. The last persons who were occupied with esoteric-Christian topics had already left temporal life in 1925: Max Heindel on January 6, 1919 and Rudolf Steiner on March 30, 1925. Well, friends, after all these preparations, the Brotherhood declared that for the modern Rosycross the time had come to manifest and establish a Spiritual School connected with an inner Mystery School. That was what started in 1925. At that time a work of preparation, development and realisation commenced. This would make the modern Rosycross, as the Spiritual School of the Young Gnostic Brotherhood, well-known all over the world. Its construction and completion would take a period of a hundred years. In other words, it would last until approximately the year 2025,' according to J van Rijckenborgh. He called this period of a hundred years 'the period of the new Age of the Holy Spirit. During this period the radiations of the Seven-Spirit, the spiritual sun, will be manifested powerfully in and by means of the earth stratum in and on which we are living.'

This would be accompanied by great atmospheric changes. At the same time intense worldwide social changes would take place, so that the work might have to be interrupted for a short time. Fortunately, up to this point, this has not hap-

pened. Such accentuations in the spiritual history of the world, these *Ages of the Holy Spirit*, have already occurred often. For example in the Far East, in India, in Egypt, in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe, while in Western Europe a similar period has recently begun. It is during such a period of about a hundred years that the construction and extension of the Spiritual School is now taking place, especially with regard to the deepening of the inner aspects of the Mystery School.

J van Rijckenborgh divides this period of construction of a hundred years into two parts; first, there was a preparatory period of forty years between 1925 and 1965, followed by a second 60-year period of realisation, between 1966 and 2025. This does not mean that after 2025 the work would not continue to develop, because the work of liberation in the Age of Aquarius concerns 'different processes of harvest and selection,' as he states in his book *Dei Gloria Intacta*. These processes can last into the distant future year of 2658. To what extent the Spiritual School will still participate in this work at that time can, of course, not be predicted. Hence it is said: 'Work as long as there is time; work as long as the day lasts.'

Many of us have, to a great extent, experienced the immense efforts of preparation and development of the sevenfold Spiritual School during the past years. Initially the soil in the regions selected by the Brotherhood had to be prepared. Next, the seed had to be sown so that it would not fall on rocky soil. Then, the new growth had to be constantly protected, after which the new grain had to grow and ripen so that it would acquire the golden colour of ripeness, then the first *grain* could be harvested.

In this way a group of harvesters was formed, a group of workers who would be resistant to storms and betrayal. This was the great responsibility of the two Grandmasters during the time that they led the gnostic community. From this community, a group of workers emerged who became jointly responsible for the spiritual leadership, so that no stagnation would occur in the continuation of the great work.

YOUTHWORK

It should not be omitted that in his address, J van Rijckenborgh emphatically referred to the great importance of starting a youthwork in the Spiritual School that should develop on an international level. Its workers should not be totally captivated by matter and should certainly not lapse wholly into intellectuality. He foresaw a great danger in the strongly developing materialistic tendencies. If the youth leaders could keep themselves free from these tendencies, it would strongly benefit the care for, and protection of, the tender souls of young people. Then *the possibility* of a spiritual development for the young personality could be *guaranteed and preserved*.

He also stated in his address that all the literature of the modern Rosycross would be published and that more buildings and temples would be realised in many European countries and elsewhere. From Europe the work should spread over the entire world.

According to J van Rijckenborgh, the first period of all these developments ended on December 31, 1965, and the second period, which would last until 2025, started on January 1, 1966. *The living foun-*

dition was laid during the preceding years, and now the building stands right in the world in its sevenfold fullness. Of course, it has been physically manifested and continues to expand, but more important is the spiritual significance of this manifestation: the spreading of a mighty light field, the fire of the Spirit. The coming 21 years will also be fully devoted to the completion of this great work. A new generation of friends is busy preparing and developing itself for this work. In 2004, this great work is no longer merely a plan, a bare concept or a building without content. It has already grown into a *Living Body*, encompassing all its focal points and all its pupils with its electromagnetic astral field and irradiating them with the light of the Seven-Spirit or spiritual sun. All of this has only one aim: granting inner enlightenment to every pupil, so that from the reborn soul, from the fountain of gnostic light, *divine peace and love* can radiate into the world and to humanity. This is a very urgently needed work in a time of increasing global tensions, which are reflected in human beings in a multitude of ways. We need not describe how the scarlet clouds of hatred, aggression and fear wash over the world and settle into human hearts, causing despair and deep grief. And Europe is certainly not excluded from this.

THE TOWER OF OLYMPUS

In 2004, the Spiritual School certainly commemorates its 80th anniversary, but it is still in the process of completing its worldwide work, and every pupil is totally involved in it. First of all, we would like to look ahead to where the gnostic stream of life rushes ahead of us. In this

stream we want to further deepen our spiritual path and our inner growth. All of us are on our way to celebrate the *alchemical wedding* in the house of the Spiritual School, which we inhabit and in which we work. Every pupil is able to go his path in the sevenfold spiritual building at his own pace and according to his current inner work. He will accomplish this path within himself, because the great plan of salvation and liberation is primarily contained in his own microcosm. A radiation emanating from the monad is projected into the pupil, if he opens his heart

and prepares his head sanctuary for it. Then the sevenfold plan cannot but be executed. For then the pupil builds the Tower of Olympus in connection with the sevenfold staircase of the Spiritual School, and unlocks it *within himself, floor by floor.*

Hence, do not seek it outside yourself, but *find it* in your own microcosmic house. A microcosm that is linked with the *House Sancti Spiritus*, the house in which the holy Seven-Spirit touches the human being.

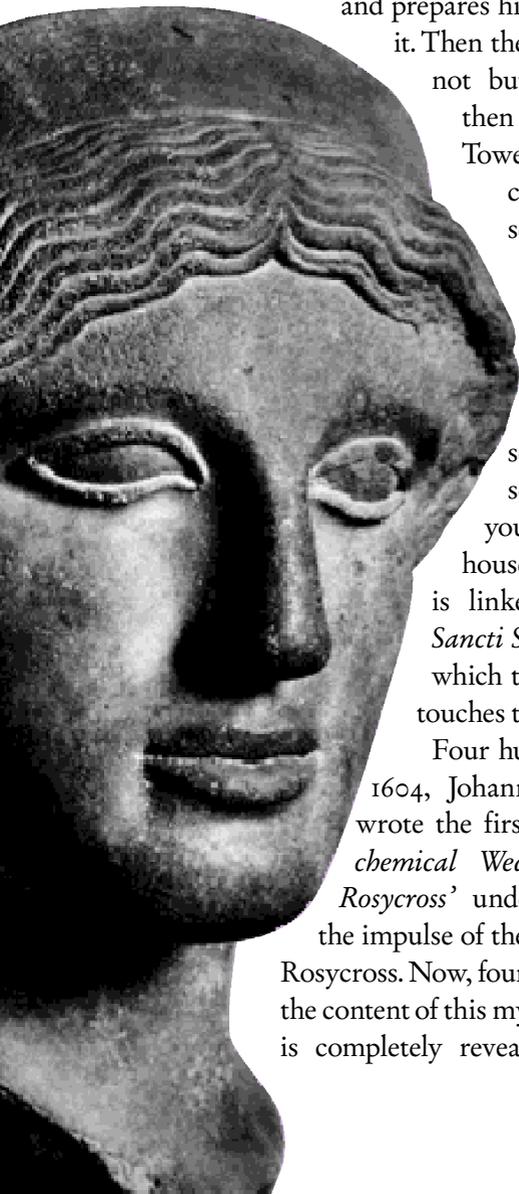
Four hundred years ago, in 1604, Johann Valentin Andreae wrote the first pages of *'The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross'* under the influence of the impulse of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross. Now, four hundred years later, the content of this mysterious manuscript is completely revealed in the modern

Spiritual School, not in the sense of a detailed unveiling of the path that C.R.C. once accomplished, but foremost in a way that every pupil can absolutely follow today. Then he can enter the House Sancti Spiritus that radiates at the top of the sevenfold Spiritual School, which is called the eighth floor of the Tower of Olympus. This sevenfold state of being entirely imitates the great example of C.R.C., because he gathered seven brothers around him, as the Fama relates. Seven brothers, seven aspects built the House Sancti Spiritus, while C.R.C., himself, was the eighth!

Thus the mysterious number *eight* rises up before us. It is the roof of the spiritual building, looking over the wide horizon of the new soul life. It is the wide-open gate to eternity. A pupil can erect *his* inner Tower of Olympus, climb it and enter the, perhaps as yet unknown, eighth floor on which the monadic fire is then kindled.

THE SONG OF LOVE

And while he is busy accomplishing the great alchemical work in his inner being, he simultaneously joins others in group unity and love, to serve the Spiritual School and its work in many places, in unity and harmony. Hence, the motto of the Work in the year 2004 is the *Song of Love* and inner peace. This song resounds on the fifth day of the alchemical wedding of C.R.C. J van Rijckenborgh linked this sevenfold pivotal formula with the seeking human being: love for all people whom we meet and with whom we live; love for deeply suffering humanity who is living in a world that seems to become ever colder and more inhuman; love for each other in the Spiritual



School, in the group and for our fellow pupils, all of whom are giving everything to bring their pupilship to a good end, and love and a state of peace for everyone's work in the School. It is spreading the inner peace and harmony arising from the acquired soul power that is unfolding to enlighten our pupilship.

This is the inspiration that irradiates the whole work and can emanate from the group of pupils in the year 2004. *True inspiration* is born when the thinking rises up into the Light and is totally irradiated by it. Then thinking turns into perception and perception into understanding, *into Gnosis*. Then our thinking *experiences* the plan unfolding from the radiating nucleus in the heart of the microcosm. Thinking that turns into Gnosis, will be able to *understand* everything and comprehend all consequences. Then the mystery is no longer a secret, but an open gate to inner knowledge.

In this context, we quote some ancient words from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the Song of the Lord:

'The Almighty ascribes to the human being neither his bad nor his good works.

It is the darkening of knowledge by ignorance, by which the creatures went astray.

But in whomever ignorance has been driven out by knowledge of the soul, in him wisdom, like a sun, will reveal the most sublime.'

We are speaking about the *spiritual sun*, which is wisdom and love. This sun and its radiation know neither time nor space, and are nearer than hands and feet. They are manifested in us at the same moment that we open the spiritual

faculties of the Soul. The light of the spiritual sun is a product of the Spirit, offered to the soul as a fruit.

Aphrodite-Venus,
goddess of love.
Athens, 5th
century BC.

'The light shines in the darkness.'

'It gives light for all in the house.'

This light is the true *light of the world*, which is truth, wisdom and love all in one. It knows no darkness and does not set at the horizon of time. This light is kindled by those who gather under the tree of life, of which it is said that it receives its nourishment from the spiritual sun. To those who assemble under the golden crown of this tree of life, it is said: *'You are the Light of the World.'*

THE SONG OF LOVE

*From the fifth day: the song of the nymphs*¹

- 1 *Naught is better here on earth
than matchless, noble love,
whereby all sorrow flees us and
we're made like God above.
Therefore, let us praise the King,
that all the sea thereof may ring.
Now we shall ask; you answer.*
- 2 *What unto Life has brought us?
'Twas Love.
What unto Grace restored us?
'Twas Love.
What was it gave us birth?
'Twas Love.
How were we lost on earth?
'Twas Love.*
- 3 *What brings us forth and bears us?
'Tis Love.
What succours and consoles us?
'Tis Love.
What do we owe our parents?
'Tis Love.
What gives them their forbearance?
'Tis Love.*
- 4 *Through what powers do we conquer?
Through Love.
How can we Love discover?
Through Love.
On what are good works founded?
On Love.
How are the two united?
Through Love.*
- 5 *So loudly we'll sing;
let our praises ring
in Love's honour profound,
that Love may abound
in our Lord the King
and his Consort the Queen,*
- whose souls have gone hence,
though their bodies are seen.*
- 6 *As long as we live,
to us God will give
the power His Love to convey,
and in service aspire,
in the flames of Love's fire,
the two to conjoin once again.*
- 7 *Then shall this great sorrow
be changed to joy eternally,
that abiding happiness
many youthful hearts may bless.*

On the fifth day of the Alchemical Wedding, Christian Rosycross is sailing aboard one of the seven ships, with his companions. All are on their way to the island, where the Tower of Olympus has been erected. The crates with the bodies of the seven beheaded kings and queens, symbolising the old life forces of nature, have also been secretly brought aboard these ships. It is hoped that the kings and queens will be revived on the island by the faithfulness and the sacrifice of 'the host of loyal companions'. During the voyage the sea nymphs offer Christian Rosycross a pearl, and break out in the ode to love quoted above.

The pearl refers to the new consciousness. J van Rijckenborgh points out that Christian Rosycross, as a candidate, received a wound on his forehead during the first day. Due to his life of striving, the crystal of his old life is taken away from him, which can be called 'the primary condition of a liberating pupilship'.



The wound reminds him that ‘the crystal of the old consciousness’ had been ‘taken away’.

During the fifth day he is given a ‘new pearl’. This pearl stems from the seven forces of the sea of the fullness of life, Mare, the ‘world mother’. The new consciousness is completely vivified by the seven forces of love. Thus the nymphs should be interpreted as the pure, new nature forces of the new state of life. The song has seven verses²:

1. There is nothing more beautiful or more sublime than divine love.
2. The omni-revelation comes forth from divine love.
3. What do we owe to God and our neighbour? To radiate this love in deed and reality.
4. How can the world and evil be over-

- come? Only through divine love.
5. Who sings the sublime song of love? Those who have been raised to the kingship of the spirit.
6. Therefore, there is but *one* prayer in the hearts of all who experience this love: that everything and everyone separated from God may enter the unifying stream of love.
7. And that they thus, in eternity, may come to know the true, divine-human state of life.

¹ In: J van Rijckenborgh, *The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross*. Esoteric Analysis of the Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz Anno 1459, by J Valentin Andreae. Part II, pp. 139-141, Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1992.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148.

Water nymph in full motion, fragment of a Chinese relief.

PARABLE ABOUT THE GENESIS OF A BOWL

*A tale about the genesis of human consciousness;
from the start, through many consecutive steps and stages, to its high destination.*

Unaware, sunk in darkness, the clay, the earth sleeps. At the same time, in the daylight, a master is waiting, a potter's wheel, a cool place, an oven, the world of time and space, and a space for consciousness. Not all kinds of earth are suitable for burning a bowl. It must be clay. We can imagine how, in a lengthy process, during many rotations of the earth, stones and minerals are split, and after lengthy grinding, dust will be carried to the sea and sink to the depths. Compressed under the weight of many drops, the dust rests for days and nights. How long does a cosmic night, or a cosmic day last? Climate changes, ice ages, glaciers and the transformation of the earth then turn up what has been below for a long time. Clay may have been formed in this way.

And then grass covers it all. Who knows where suitable clay can be found? The master. He removes the upper layer and digs up the clay. He takes the precious substance to his workshop and cleans it. The clay undergoes the touch, the change; light is all around it, but it does not know anything, it does not understand anything.

What it perceives are the hands of the master. They surround it, they seize it. A tremor runs through the fertile, but still

lifeless substance, and still the clay does not understand anything. Yet the process has started.

The master is the designer of a wondrous wheel, which is under his control too. Yet this wheel cannot move. Why should it? Everything has to return to where it comes from. The wheel has a vertical axis, like the axis of the stars, which consequently all point to the centre of the universe. The axis of each potter's wheel points to the centre of the earth. The axes of carts stem from the same principle, but these axes are placed horizontally and thus revolve in a circle.

The wondrous wheel of the master potter is now made to rotate. On top of the potter's wheel is a lump of clay, unformed. Taken from chaos, it is brought into contact with the centre by the order of the axis. With certainty the hands of the master seize the unformed. Without hesitation they form that which rises up from the unformed and will have content. After all, no content without form, no form without content. The lump is opened up. The master adds water to the earth, grasps the inside and shapes. As by a miracle everything grows and gets a body. Moist and shiny the clay turns around. It smiles and says: 'Look, that's me.'

The master knows what he does, he feels what he knows and acts as his craft prescribes. His will is done. In that way the clay becomes a bowl. It revolves around its inner axis. That is why it doesn't go out of its orbit. It is under the



calm hand of the master. As a result, it approaches perfection. Its form encloses the empty space which develops around the axis.

Lao Tzu says: 'One rightly moulds the clay into a drinking bowl; precisely where there is nothing, lies the use of the bowl.' The bowl is a tool to be used. Due to its empty space it can contain everything. It is imprisoned. It lets itself be enclosed, filled, emptied and carried. It wants nothing, it just wants to be useful, to serve.

But all of this will come later. Now it is still happy, glad about the rotations, which slow down and eventually come to a standstill. Like a child the bowl would like to call: 'Again.' The potter, however, takes it off the wheel, on which it is standing. It feels an unspeakable grief when the potter takes it away from the part of the earth from which it originated; takes it away from the potter's wheel which had become its second nature. Now it knows that it came from the quarry, from the depth, where the great rotation could not be experienced.

Now the bowl experiences for the last

time the movement in a wide arc and then stands quiet, warm, soft and moist next to others, which are already there. It looks around and sees the others: brothers and sisters of very different shapes and sizes. It feels kinship; it is surrounded by even more shiny appearances, yes, it feels at home. Also further on, at the end of the shelves, there are other, similar forms of different sizes, which do not shine. They don't look alive anymore. They do not make a soft impression. They seem rather hard and dry. So what, it thinks, we here in the front are closer to the light; we shine!

Every day new bowls are made by the hands of the master. Fresh and soft they are put down. Room is made, things are moved further back, away from the light of the earthly day, further away into the cold, away from the moist surroundings. The newer ones are now in front and look around. One knows this look, one knows. One watches the activity, becomes ever dryer, becomes quiet and waits.

From time to time the master comes and carries a group of cooled-down, dry

Tea bowl with moon sickle and clouds on white background. Nonomura Ninsel, around 1660. National Museum, Tokio, Japan.

bowls to another room with an oven. Careful, so that nothing will break in this fragile phase or cracks will occur, they are placed close together. When the space is filled and nothing can be added, the oven is closed. The door is closed. Joy all around. One knows what was. No one wants to go out again, back to the clay quarry, to the revolving axis, to the moist and soft ones. One holds still and waits. One has heard that something fabulous, something incomprehensible will occur. It will become light. One has heard – one does not know what will come. One is quiet and waits.

The master, who has built everything, knows what he does. This is his craft. He knows his creatures, his creations. The creature knows that it is one with the master. There is joy in the room; joy about the heat, joy about the new bowls. The dry bowls in the oven lose the last water which was still in them. It is chemically bound. By the fire of purification the last traces of immaturity are removed.

Hour after hour all are together in the oven. In the darkness of the unconscious it dawns. Outlines become visible. The inner eye starts beholding. Where does this light come from? Nothing can be seen. There is no flame, no sun which shines. Yet, all see everything ever more clearly. It is like an aurora. It is like a sunrise. Softly each bowl shines of itself. Standing in rest, inwardly conscious of the axis, it becomes ever lighter. The light emanates from everyone's inner reflection. All are standing together in indescribable heat and light. All are alight, radiate, and are standing in the enlightenment. Now they know, they remember the heat from which they once originated: we did not pull ourselves up from the clay. We ourselves did not erect the axis in us; we did not purify ourselves in the fire.

*We are – but not on the basis of ourselves.
We are standing, our axis directed in Tao.*

In this knowledge, everything old has passed away. They have become thoroughly hardened. Now it begins to cool down. It is silent. The time has come. Waiting has been learned. The expectation of what is new. Standing in the fire is a foretaste of an activity, of being able to fulfil a function in *eternal light*. Here in the state of transience, bowls are used which have learned to wait, to take, to give, to serve in the process of their creation.

Now the door is opened, the door to a new stage, to a new phase. They are stepping outside, out of the space which until now was the oven. They are entering into a world which burns in another way, in an earthly way. All are still grouped together, but already the new masters are coming, the new lords of the house, and they choose, they select us.

Each bowl gets its place, fulfils its function. In this process many have grown old, very old. They do not ask for content or emptiness. They do not ask for time. They are ready day and night. Many are highly valued, are precious in the eyes of people. Many are seriously damaged. Is it their fault that they exist? Haven't they been erected on the same vertical axis?

And the master? He watches the axes from above and laughs. The axis? From above it is only a speck. It is like a particle of dust from the clay, like air in a drop of water, like a seed burning in my heart.

HINTS ON A PATH

*It is not easy to walk a true path.
Yet, whoever knows the goal, gladly walks it.*

*If the path seems hard, this may be caused
by the weight of him who enters it.*

*The heaviest weight is the I. Whoever lets go
of the bond with the I, will walk the path
unburdened.*

*Whoever is striving after truth will not walk
lightly.
He practices equanimity.*

*Everyone carries his standard within him,
it grants him insight.*

*When insight rules, the forced will
and all methods will disappear.*

*The wisdom of the present is not that of
tomorrow.
Yet there is one truth.*

*Whoever is observant and is seeking after truth,
every day again, it will be granted to him.*

*Whoever is striving after the new consciousness,
owes it to the Light and the Truth.*

*Whatever we may experience,
it serves to gain experience and make choices.
Thus everything has its meaning.*

*Whoever seeks mistakes and attracts them,
will soon fall into the ditch,
in which he only wanted to look at the fishes.*

*Human weaknesses belong to the outer human
being,
the inner human being is free from them.*

*The inner human being only knows the power of
the living soul.*

This alone will grant him liberation.

*Whoever wants to overcome obstacles,
focuses his eyes on the goal: the Light.*

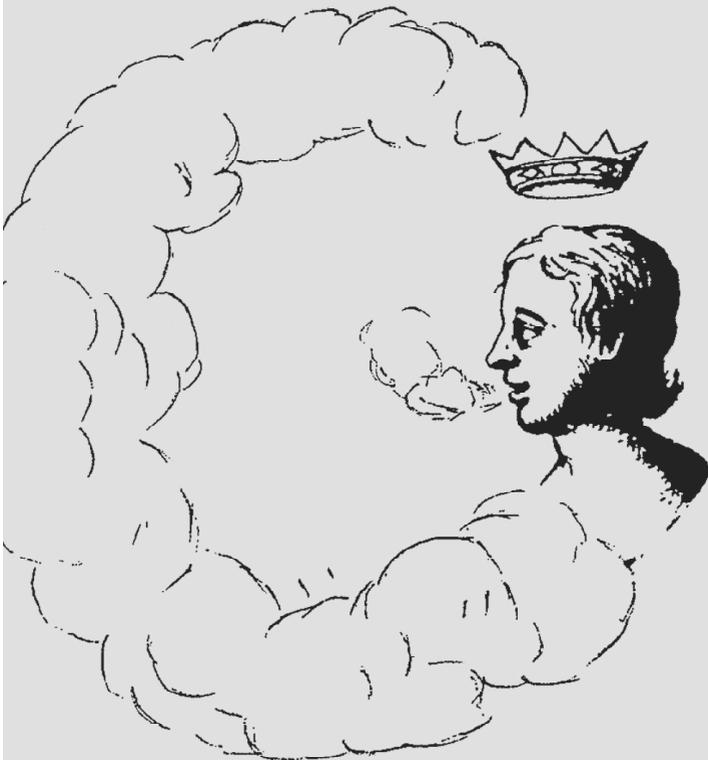
*Open your soul for the Light!
There is no darkness in clarity.*

*Weakness and imperfection,
they belong to the transient world.
The energy that is eternal dissolves them.*

*The human being is a small cog
in an imperfect world.
But the power of the great transformation
releases him from that task.*

*He changes and with him
the whole world is transformed.*

*The new respiration according to Freher. 'Turn to the
One that you possess, so that you may keep it. Only then
you will be able to be a perpetuum mobile.' Paradox
Emblemata, 18th century.*



THE SOFT WATER, TOGETHER WITH TIME, OVERCOMES THE MIGHTY STONE

*Legend of the origin of the book Tao Te Ching on Lao Tzu's road into exile,
by Bertold Brecht*

Once he was seventy and getting brittle,
quiet retirement seemed the teacher's due.
In his country goodness
had been weakening a little
and the wickedness was gaining ground
anew.

So he buckled on his shoe.
And he packed up what he would be
needing:
not much, but enough to travel light.
Items like the book that he was always
reading
and the pipe he used to smoke at night.
Bread as much as he thought right.

Gladly looked back at his valley,
then forgot it as he turned
to take the mountain track.
And the ox was glad of the fresh grass it
spotted
munching, with the old man on its back,
happy that the pace was slack.

Four days out among the rocks, a barrier
where a customs man made them report.
'What valuables have you to declare
there?'
And the boy leading the ox explained:
'The old man taught.'
Nothing at all, in short.

Then the man, in cheerful disposition
asked again:

'How did he make out, pray?'
Said the boy: 'He learnt how quite soft
water,
by attrition over the years
will grind strong rocks away.
In other words, that hardness must lose
the day.'

Then the boy tugged at the ox to get it
started,
anxious to move on, for it was late.
But as they disappeared behind a fir tree
which they skirted,
something suddenly began to agitate the
man,
who shouted: 'Hey, you! Wait!'
'What was that you said about the water?'
The old man pauses: 'Do you want to
know?'
The man replies: 'I'm not at all
important.
Who wins or loses interests me, though.
If you've found out, say so!'

'Write it down.
Dictate it to your boy there.
Once you've gone, who can we find out
from?'
There are pen and ink for your employ
here.
and a supper we can share; this is my home.
It's a bargain: come!'

Turning round, the old man looks in
sorrow at the man:



worn tunic, got no shoes.
And his forehead just a single furrow.
Ah, no winner this he's talking to.
And he softly says: 'You too?'

Snubbing of politely put suggestions
seems to be unheard of by the old.
For the old man said: 'Those who ask
questions,
deserve answers.' Then the boy:
'What's more, it's turning cold.'
'Right then, get my bed unrolled.'

Stiffly from his ox the sage dismounted.
Seven days he wrote there with his friend;
and the man brought them their meals
(and all the smugglers were astounded
at what seemed this sudden lenient trend).
And then came the end.

And the boy handed over what they'd
written –
eighty-one sayings – early one day.
And they thanked the man for the alms
he'd given,
went round that fir and climbed the rocky
way.
Who was so polite as they?

But the honour should not be restricted
to the sage whose name is clearly writ.
For a wise man's wisdom needs to be
extracted,
so the customs man deserves his bit.
It was he who called for it.

The never-ending
polishing soft
water takes the
sharp edges of the
rock away. Turkey.
Photo Pentagram.

Lao Tzu did not have the intention of writing a book, because this would have contradicted the verse from the Tao Te Ching: 'Could Tao be spoken, it would not be the eternal Tao. Could the name be named (written), it would not be the eternal name.'

If something is expressed in speech or writing, it is no longer the 'absolute truth'. Lao Tzu differs from those people in whom kindness diminishes and wickedness increases. Therefore he crosses the border. He is attuned to another vibration. He reminds us of the Lohans¹, the sages from China, who saw conflicts looming before they became reality, and who could, therefore, easily avoid them.

Lao Tzu, the boy and the ox, leave the world of transience. The ox performs his chores patiently and kindly. It is free from its natural inclinations and therefore an example of the strength of self-mastery. It is the symbol of the victorious, purified spirit-soul. The boy refers to a new beginning in another field of life and to the eternal youth of the ancient Lao Tzu. Lao Tzu is not a proper name, but is often translated as 'the ancient one'.

VALUABLES TO BE DECLARED

Borders separate different regions, spheres of influence, countries and fields of life. It confines the sphere of action of a particular form of existence. No one can ever pass a boundary just like that, unchecked, unless attention is paid to the active, old and new laws. The vibration key of the spirit-soul is the determining factor.

BUT THEY DISAPPEARED BEHIND A FIR TREE

The country, to which Lao Tzu travels, is not described. It appears like a 'nothing'. For the sage cannot be at home in any other country. He is at home in the unlimited. He was only a visitor, a helper at a level where help was needed and he will naturally return to the unlimited fullness. The sage fulfils his task and switches voluntarily between limitation and the unlimited. Seen from above, Lao Tzu crosses the horizontal lifelines, by choosing a vertical path. Thus he forms, as every true being does, the world cross.

'WHAT DID HE MAKE OUT OF IT?'

The border guard controls who may pass, but he himself may not yet cross it. Everyone who crosses the border, was symbolically a dweller of the border before. The border guard is usually blamed for lining his pockets, when someone crosses the border. However, that is the toll. Toll stems from telling, counting, what has been counted. In the materialistic world everything is counted, weighed, measured, evaluated and assessed. It is a sign that the inhabitants of these realms do not live in unity. A border guard can certainly not immediately assess the value of wisdom. He realises its value and only wants to partake of it after having reflected on it.

'WHAT WAS THAT YOU SAID ABOUT THE WATER?'

Lao Tzu shares his wisdom and energy ungrudgingly, but also without enthusiasm. He remains neutral. His toll to the

信月開川林
隱遯半
惟時節更相宜
此欲疎影
應空句
為問梅花知不知

糖画村畫



'Full of stillness walking around in the company of the moon,' Tu Chin, around 15th century AD.

world is the *'Tao Te Ching'*. Everyone who crosses the border must pay tribute, otherwise he may not pass. Freedom must be 'purchased'. The Bible speaks about those set free from the earth. The smugglers the border guard complains about, try to circumvent these laws by secretly crossing the border for their own personal gain. But then they are, inevitably but justly, confronted with the karmic consequences. Lao Tzu not only gives the title of his eternal treasure, he gives everything. Universal wisdom is indivisible; it is the fullness of another world. The values sought after are manifested to the border guard by the words *'The soft water, together with time, overcomes the powerful stone.'*

HARDNESS LOSES...

Even if water is not able to soften the stone, it does not engage in struggle. It gently flows past it. But in time it affects the stone like a constant power of love. The wisdom of Lao Tzu relates to humanity as the water to the stone. And this water, the soul of wisdom, continues to work on the stone. This is shown by the numerous new publications and studies about the *Tao Te Ching*, and by the great interest they receive.

The water represents what is small, delicate, pure, the drop. Water in a liberating sense is the water of life which transfers pure, new forces into our being. The hard stone symbolises gross material, solid and crystallised matter. It is also a metaphor

for fallen humanity. The forces of the new life are especially able to liberate the fallen human being, who is dense matter, bound to the earth earthly, and to liberate that which is spiritual in him.

BUT THE HONOUR SHOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED TO THE SAGE...

Wisdom must be desired, Lao Tzu says. *'Those who ask questions, deserve answers.'* That is a law too. Without questions, there are no answers. *'To him who knocks, it will be opened,'* depending on the quality of the question. The universal teachings are not indiscriminately flung into the world.

The inhabitants of the border must yearn for wisdom. Then they will not only receive part of the truth, but all of it. Without this essential question, he will not receive anything. The border guard, by virtue of his profession, his vocation, is unrelenting in assessing and demanding valuables. An inhabitant of the border needs help from the unlimited. That is why he calls the liberated human being back across the border. The inhabitant of the border needs help from the sage, yet he himself must win the truth.

1 Originally the Lohans were the first disciples of the Buddha, who eventually developed into Bodhisattvas, helpers of humanity. At first there were twelve, sixteen or eighteen; then they grew into a group of 500, who released great light power, particularly in China. They are sometimes represented as riding an ox or a buffalo, often also as (faithful) guardians.

OVERCOMING THE I

Sometimes a seeker encounters something which strikes him as very special. A poem from an unexpected corner which strikes a long-buried chord and reminds him of his childhood. A teaching from ancient Gnostic times, which suddenly – quite contradictorily – awakens in him the understanding that it is the present which counts, or rather his reaction, his own action in the present.

A seeker who has become more or less familiar with the ideas of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum, knows that the existence of two life spheres is the fundamental basis of its teachings. In the first life sphere a human being tries to build and maintain an existence in this nature. This makes up a large part of his activities. The second life sphere, extensively and profoundly discussed in literature, is unknown, confusing and vague to a large part of humanity. Many people categorically deny it, just as they deny God or the living principle in other human beings. Some of them have an inkling, but they do not know where to focus their seeking. Countless people experience a longing for unearthly happiness and pursue it in every earthly way possible. But there are also many people who are suddenly touched by the image of the living principle. They recognise it in themselves, and they see it in others. Or they see the harrowing suffering both on a world scale and on a smaller scale, close to home, and

they are touched by it: why am I not able to do more? They search for answers, from teachers, or in world literature; they read about a light spark, a soul spark, or about a spiritual principle. Jan van Rijkenborgh and Catharose de Petri write in their books about the spirit-spark, about a light principle in the centre of a human being which forms the essence of the inner God, of an inner, spiritual human being, who is directly linked to the second life sphere. This is what lies as a promise, as a plan, as a blueprint, around and within a human being.

It is special when a seeker recognises something of this spiritual human being within himself. But he, or she, *is* not this human being. A long road lies ahead, before he *can* be it. At one time the classical Rosicrucians expressed this as follows: ‘He is still hampered by a few eagle’s feathers.’

Firstly: he is a human being of the first life sphere. He necessarily needs to devote a large part of his attention and possibilities to this, because within this sphere he must live his life. Secondly: the properties of the potential new human being often do not at all correspond to what he deems necessary for daily existence. They are not properties of the I, which puts its own imagined importance in the forefront.

This is a fundamental principle. Every past movement has pointed this out and every new attempt in the future will continue to point this out: the I-human being belongs to the first life sphere; only a com-

A guard rides
haute école.
Nobuzane,
approx. 1200 BC.



pletely different human being, a soul-human being, can belong to the new life sphere, often called the Kingdom (by Jesus, who brought the Christ), or Nirvana (by the Buddha), or the New Life Field (by the Lectorium Rosicrucianum).

This is why it is not surprising that many traces of movements can be found

throughout history, which have tried to make the 'I' decrease, yes, which even used this as a point of departure for the genesis of a spiritual, inner human being. The 'I' is ignorant, the ancient Gnostics stated. Gnosis, inner 'knowledge of the heart' brings true 'knowledge', and can link the human being with the Sophia,

the light human being of old. The old human being, the old Adam as was stated in the Middle Ages, was totally unsuitable, and hence an instrument of the devil. That is why the new 'Christ' had to be resurrected to 'save' the human soul and take it to his kingdom. The great Bogomil, Paulician and Cathar movements fanned out in the northern countries around the Mediterranean, taught the 'endura' in which the old human being – symbolically, but no less real – died with respect to his earthly nature and was reborn in three stages. Then he would overcome the earth and his first joyful step on the way of the stars would be a fact, because a totally new ensoulment had come to the fore.

On the eastern side of the Mediterranean, an Arabian wisdom developed. When the Roman empire disintegrated, and the West, depopulated and without culture, made the first attempts to achieve a social structure, a civilisation rich in knowledge, inventive in physics and chemistry, and overwhelming in its eastern beauty, flourished on the Arabian peninsula and in Persia.

Islam was a religion which had a high regard for tolerance and hospitality, but soon the last representatives of the ancient Egyptian Gnosis were compelled to go 'underground'. This cannot be blamed on any specific religion, such as Islam or Christianity, but rather on 'religion' as a general dogma: by definition, enforced rules are detrimental to an inner, free encounter with the spirit of the original life sphere. This explains why, very soon, an 'inner path' emerged as a reaction to the development of the Islamic exoteric teachings.

CLASSICAL SUFISM

Just as it is part of human nature to suppress free inner development due to ignorance, or a lack of knowledge, so does searching for a way to God belong to the human being, and this can never be permanently suppressed. An inner explanation of the Koran developed, and other holy writings were created, but the main concern was with the practical way of life, which would lead human beings out of the swaddling cloths of society, religion and time. People who followed this path were called Sufis, after the woollen garments they wore. Numerous writings, particularly between the 9th and 13th century, shed light on the path from various angles.

This is the time of 'classical Sufism'. The directions and reflections written at that time are still of fundamental importance to its practitioners up to this day. Descriptions of experiences, biographies and parables testify of the enormous depth, which is found whenever human beings and the Gnosis form a unity again and emerge into a new dawn.

This is why it is gratifying and at the same time self-evident that much has been preserved in the works of the Sufis concerning the overcoming of the 'I' through a mode of life, which has its centre in God. This sort of Sufi writing describes what the Cathars called the 'endura', a path of self-surrender to the divine soul principle in a human being.

Detailed observations alternate with a wealth of short statements, which stimulate reflection and show that traditional thinking patterns are useless on the path of soul liberation. They merely served as a guide for others, still far behind, in

their quest. The Sufi writings show that the path is a matter of the *present* in one's own life and that each subsequent step can only be taken with the available 'light' at that moment.

THE JOURNEY AND THE OASIS

Just as a journey through the desert is impossible, or even suicidal, without stopping places at the right distances, oases where both camels and human beings can find food, shade and water, so the Sufis often divide the path into states of being (*hal*) and resting places (*maqam*). Both are an indispensable necessity for a candidate.

The state of the traveller, that is the 'state of being' of the seeker, is 'being on the path', the journey through the desert. Without his own, tireless efforts, neither traveller nor candidate can progress one step in the desert. Without an oasis or resting place both will perish, because at the stopping places they find shade, teachings, refreshment and greater inner depth; they are offered the right food to continue the journey. We can see this around us. Thus, the oasis is like a temple. We can see this as an inner accomplishment: thus, 'the oasis' is the growing soul garment.

The journey and the stages are passing phenomena, the resting places are permanent. It is said: 'every state of being is a gift, the resting places are accomplishments.' The journey, the path, is a blessing; by going forward, a resting place is reached. The various stages of consciousness stem from pure generosity and these stages are born of the utmost exertion. Whoever possesses a resting place is based on a firm foundation, his state of

being helps the traveller along. The candidate needs both the help of the resting place as well as his own tireless efforts.

Al-Ghazzali, an Arabian theologian, who, after years of searching, switched to Sufism, and tried to reconcile orthodoxy and Sufism in his work (an attempt which was, by definition, doomed to failure). In the systematic way that characterises much of his work, he divides a stage into three aspects: knowledge or insight, attitude, and action. He says:

'Insight is the root. It leads to a state of consciousness and this state of consciousness generates actions. Hence insight can be compared to trees, the state of consciousness to branches and the actions to the fruits. This is generally true for all stages of him who goes the path to God.'

Yet, in reality experiences are usually not as clearly systematic as they are in literature. In reality, the various 'resting places' and 'states of consciousness' are mixed up and mutually influence each other. This is why it is not surprising that many variations on this theme can be found in the various treatises.

REPENTANCE

Many Sufis considered the first stage on the path to be repentance or turnabout (*tauba*). How correct, how irrefutable! At least, when we see this concept of *tauba* as 'the searing realisation of being separated from the original life.' This is the first force needed to deviate from the wide road of unconscious religiosity, the path of the masses, the *sharia*. This is only possible by a conscious turnabout on the path of life (often coming from the outside), and by setting out on a new way of acting: *tariqa*.

A legend about the Sufi Ibrahim Ibn Adham relates: "One night he heard a strange noise on the roof of his palace in Balkh. The servants found a man, who in the presence of Ibrahim stated that he was looking for his lost camel on the roof. When the prince spoke sternly to him on account of his absurd undertaking, the man answered that Ibrahim's attempt to find heavenly peace and a truly religious life amidst all his luxury, was as absurd as looking for a camel on the roof. Ibrahim repented and renounced all his possessions.'

This turnabout is often accomplished through an unexpected situation or event in our outer life: it is the moment of a new phase of consciousness. In Sufi texts this is a crucial moment. This moment causes a first, conscious turning towards the original life field, towards God. It is often a blow of fate, a disappointment, or a special encounter which gets this going!

For a brief moment the seeker 'beholds'; he is lifted above his ordinary consciousness and he sees the possible ideal before him. It is important 'that the heart awakens from the sleep of indifference' and that a human being sees the pitiful condition in which he finds himself, at least with regard to this ideal. All of this is achieved, because he is granted the grace to hear with the ears of the heart to the admonitions of the God that appears in his inner being.

In practice, *tauba* led many Sufis to turn away from the world of matter, which often went too far and in many took on extreme forms. Asceticism and poverty became important; they became cultural phenomena instead of a simple state of being in and of itself.

'A poor person needs to take care of his poverty just as much as a rich person of his wealth.'

This very renunciation of the world is for the outsider the most noticeable stage of development of Sufism. The classical Sufi treatises abound with examples describing a life of poverty (*faqr*) and rejection of the world. These typically exoteric explanations of inner teachings often play a large role with Sufis who are at the beginning of the path. In this way the candidate hopes, for example, that by reduced eating and long periods of fasting he will acquire an aversion for this world and thus find pleasure in the eyes of God, but this has ensuing problems.

Wealth and the 'care for possessions and property', are seen as possible obstacles, just as they are in other cultures in which, at certain times, mysticism becomes popular. The result is that asceticism and complete negation of the material world often became the pride of the sufferer. Moreover, a wise teacher also pointed out that an excess of asceticism and renunciation is 'the expression of anxiety and fear.'

And fear of the nature order in which we live is just as binding as is wealth and abundance. What is important is to really see its possibilities and its limitations.

'Renunciation consists of seeing this side with the eye of transience, so that it becomes of little value in your eyes and easy to turn away from.'

For many Sufis poverty and asceticism are effective only when the person's outer life reflects the inner state of being. For those who strive after inner life, it is not worldly matters, which form the greatest

hindrances on the path, it is their own I.

'Treat your I like someone who does not need it, although one cannot escape it. Whoever controls his I, is mighty, whoever is controlled by the I is not capable of doing much.'

The Sufis summarise the desires and inclinations that drive a human being in the concept of the passionate soul, *nafs*. The *nafs* is a tempter that should not have it's own way.

'The (earthly) soul is like a devilish horse. When you give it free rein, you cannot be sure that it will not throw you off.'

Some Sufi biographies show that their lives changed when they obtained insight concerning the true obstacles, and their path was no longer marked by outer or inner extremes of deprivation. The *inner* renunciation develops through the power of insight. While external poverty is described as an illusion, inner poverty is closely related to 'becoming less' (literally: 'diminishing), self-surrender; a later stage.

'Do not give me back, after you have torn me loose, and do not make my I see, after you have screened it off against me.'

TRUST IN GOD AND SELF-SURRENDER

Trust in God (*tawakkul*) is an inner and an outer state of freedom from worry, protected by the loving care of God. It is the next important stage on the path of the Sufis.

The degree to which this state of being is rich and mutually inspiring is revealed in the following two quotations:

'Whoever removes all love for this side from his heart will find peace. When the heart has become empty to receive this love, 'renunciation' enters. And when it has entered, it will bring him the trust in God.'

While the reverse is equally true:

'When 'renunciation' is healthy in a

human being, then his trust in God is also healthy. For his honest trust in God enables him to renounce that which is available.'

This phase of 'renunciation', of 'letting go', is of the utmost importance, but at the same time extremely subtle. After all, it concerns the removal from power of the I-forces controlling the personality. Of course, this can never happen frivolously. It must be based on a growing new and responsible consciousness. Watchfulness and great understanding are expected from a candidate, in addition to which he should possess a certain inner stability, a soul equilibrium. Only then will it become possible to surrender one's own destiny to the inner God:

'When certainty has been accomplished, it is called tawakkul.'

PATIENCE

'Patience is to faith what the head is to the body.'

It is said: 'Patience consists of remaining equally well disposed towards trials as towards well-being.'

Perfect patience (*sabr*), even in the face of the most severe blows of fate or inner ordeals, is also one of the supporting pillars of the path in the Near East. Three stages can be distinguished:

1. he, who tries to be patient;
2. he, who is patient under temptation;
3. he, who is patient under all circumstances.

This subtle differentiation is an example of the utter precision with which the Sufis saw the phases and inner states of the path. Countless stories show the necessity for perseverance and patience. Here too, the classical image of the overcoming of the I, the journey through the desert, occupies a large part of it. This patience can only be realised by means of a special power, a power in which the candi-

date attains inner equilibrium during a long development. On the one hand, there is the indestructible orientation toward God – patience with God – and on the other the openness for the divine power amid temptations – patience without God. For the road is full of stones and in order to reach the goal, countless obstacles have to be overcome. This is illustrated by the following short story:

A man went to Ash-Shibli and asked: 'Which kind of patience is most difficult for the impatient person?'

He answered: 'The patience in God'. The man, 'No!'

Ash-Shibli: 'The patience for God'. The man, 'No!'

Ash-Shibli: 'The patience with God'. The man, 'No!'

Ash-Shibli: 'What then?' The man, 'The patience to persevere without God.'

Then Ash-Shibli cried out so loud, that he almost gave his last gasp.'

LOVE AND DECREASING

Love (*fana*) is the fruit of insight. Whereas natural love is connected with another human being, an object or a skill, divine love describes something completely different. It is a state of being at the end of a path of development, which shows that, ultimately, it was *the* active force at all stages and stopping places!

For this reason, *arif*, he who has insight, is often an advanced Sufi. Al-Ghazali writes: *'Love without insight is impossible – one can only love what one knows.'*

The concept of the 'beloved' plays a big role in Sufi literature, for it is the personification of the link with the divine.

'It is said that love is a fire in the heart, that burns everything the beloved does not want.'

Love becomes the last stage on the path, only through the inner knowledge that stems from it. While in the beginning

absolute obedience with respect to the master (*shaikh*) is demanded, at this stage *marifa* follows; inner knowledge or knowledge of God. Only the advanced Sufi knew the power and the possibilities of true, serving love; knew that it is the fastest way to, and the condition for, the unification with God.

For the simple, religiously inclined human being in Islam it was virtually impossible to overcome the state of obedience – after all, the word itself means submission (to the will of God).

For this reason love and 'decreasing' are placed on the same level. This love for God, which does not exclude any part of creation, is nourished by the longing for divine manifestation, and by rending the veil, which obstructs transcendental inner sight.

After temporary forgetting, *asnai*, the living knowledge of the primordial origin is revived. Only the stage of the decreasing of the I makes knowledge of the origin and the glory of eternity possible. This last step on the Sufi path is, in reality, not an end. We might say: here we lose track of what our natural consciousness can comprehend.

At this point, the Sufi can go the path towards the true purpose of human existence, the path to the spiritual human being, the ultimate fulfilment of the divine plan. To give any information on this path is fundamentally impossible. To decipher the writings of the few Sufis who have written about this especially for their pupils, is equally difficult.

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THE UNIVERSE, A RESONANT WHOLE

Since the beginning of time, sound has been the great interpreting and binding force in the universe. In the Bible we read of the Word that resounded in the beginning and created worlds. In Hindu writings we read of Vishnu, the Great Singer, who brought forth the worlds. And in the Secret Doctrine by HP Blavatsky we read in the third stanza: 'The vibration sweeps along, touching with its swift wing the whole universe and the germ that dwells in darkness: the darkness that breathes over the slumbering waters of life.'

From these veiled explanations found in important manuscripts, we may conclude that sound as an emanation of the unknowable is the great calling and connecting factor of our existence.

In his book *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* (chapter XV), Max Heindel writes about the properties of sound waves or vibrations: 'If one of two tuning forks of exactly the same pitch is struck, the sound will induce the same vibration in the other, weak to begin with, but if the strokes are continued, the second fork will give out a louder and louder tone until it will emit a volume of sound equal to that of the first. This will happen

though the forks are several feet apart, and even if one of them is encased in glass. The sound from the smitten one will penetrate the glass and the answering note be emitted by the enclosed instrument.’ This simultaneous resounding of two tuning forks is only possible if they have the same pitch. Invisible sound vibrations have a great power over physical matter. They can either build or destroy. Everyone knows the experiment in which a small amount of very fine powder is sprinkled on a copper or glass plate, after which a bow is moved along its edge: the powder forms beautiful geometric patterns based on the vibrations being generated. The human voice can also produce these patterns, and the same tone always produces the same pattern.

Conversely we may say that an object or, analogously, a being cannot be affected by any sound, unless it has a corresponding fundamental tone. In addition, we know that there is a close link between sound and colour. Both, sound *and* colour, are vibrational phenomena. Every sound has a specific colour. We also speak of colour tone. Vibration or sound is the connecting factor that conjures up light or dark colour tones depending on the pitch. Colours make forms visible, and thus we can imagine that sound produces forms.

SOUNDS CONTROL LIFE

The influence of sounds cannot be overestimated. Not only the spoken word, supportive or destructive, but also emotions like anger and grief produce sounds and can influence a human being to the extent that he is open to them. The influence of music can be elevating, even healing, but we can also experience the destructive, levelling effect of present-day booming sound waves. In this chaos of confusing sounds, human beings try to

keep going and make the best of it. They are often seeking a certain balance in life, a certain happiness or basis of activity that makes life meaningful.

Finding a partner for life may satisfy this need to a certain extent. If two people find each other and if the natural fundamental tones of their personalities correspond, it is indeed experienced as a complement to their own being; then there is a certain harmony. Yet, soon we discover that the feeling of incompleteness, stemming from an inner fundamental tone that has broken away from its origin, continues to gnaw at our being. And although a sounding board is found in one’s life-partner, it does not solve the problem of the *fundamental separation*, of being broken off from the origin. If someone loses his or her life-partner, he or she deeply misses the sounding board, the resonance of his or her common basis. The incompleteness is then experienced even more deeply, perhaps because the feeling of two resounding together created a certain sense of security. Now that this resonance is gone, the human being is thrown back on his own resources. Without wanting to detract from the grief and emptiness arising from the loss of a beloved one, we can say that this particularly intense event in our life may form a breaking point; a human being wants to know why and to what end. Consciously living people will certainly not push the question of the meaning of life to the background, and if this desire to know sincerely originates in the heart, the vibration emanating from it will evoke the sound of the beginning. As a flash of light it will shoot through him and stimulate him to further seeking. Whoever lets himself be guided by this stimulating vibration, will ultimately discover the original sound of the beginning as a constant factor in his being. This sound is Spirit, knowledge, life.

Flute and lyre player. Tomba de Leopardi, Tarquinia, Italy, around 500 BC.

THE WORD OF THE BEGINNING

The Word that resounded *in the beginning* was *creative* sound. This sound, this vibration that washed over the darkness and touched everything, should not be confused with sounds, which our ears hear these days. We hear *external* sounds. The Word is inner, spiritual vibration, light, power, joy and life in one original energy. It continues to resound uninterrupted, creative and glorious, and is not bound to space and time. Due to the degenerative development of the original human being in the physical world, however, the fundamental tone within him has become ever weaker, to the point where he has become a thoroughly externalised human being, who can hardly perceive the Word anymore.

These days, the sound of the personality is dominant. The sound of the beginning is drowned out by the bustle and noise around us, but also within us. We are hardly able to listen to each other, never mind perceive the sound of our own, 'silent' inner being. The soul human being, originally intended as an instrument with which the soul was to make its harmonic tones be heard, has disappeared. The human being has become increasingly externalised, attracted by the suction power of matter. And now the world and the human being are one. The law of rising, shining and fading that characterises the earth has also become humanity's law; the law of mutually balancing opposites. He who was meant to become a spirit human being, who was meant to be a fellow builder in the Divine plan, has become an earthly human being.

Yet, the sound of the beginning is certainly still present in the human being. Every moment of possible 'openness' is used by the original vibration, even if we no longer 'hear' it. It reminds us of the direction we can choose to achieve harmony, to take up our place in the plan of the Logos, the Word. The life atmosphere around the human being, formed by his vital, emotional and mental bodies, is no longer a harmoniously sounding whole. It derives its power from the surrounding world field, an atmosphere that is no longer linked with the sound of the beginning. In all respects, the actions of all inhabitants of the world have resulted in the life vibrations of this atmosphere becoming too slow to be able to reflect the pure initial sound. Just as in the human being, the original tone, *the voice of the silence*, can hardly be heard in the world either.

Just as a planet, pushed out of its own orbit, ends up in another system and will consequently lose its original nature, so the human life wave was, in primordial times, pushed out of its original spiral. Because it was unable to continue on its original path, the planet now resounds with a colour tone that strongly differs from its original tone. At the same time, our original *inner* colour tone has become veiled.

Yet, the sound of the beginning still resounds undiminished in the universe. By its very essence, it tries to revert what was lost to its original orbit again, both cosmically, and microcosmically. The *great sound* touches the small sound – which is, after all, related to it – in order to achieve resonance. That is why *two* voices so often resound in us; the sound

of earthly nature and the sound of the beginning. These are two quite different vibrations. If we learn to distinguish between them, it can be the first step toward making a choice. The original path will certainly take up again that which was lost, if a human being can react to the radiant, awakening vibration of the original sound of the beginning.

PURIFICATION OF SOUND AND COLOUR

How can a human being find his way to the pure sound again? He can do so by raising his vibration, the sound of his being. He must reconcile his thinking, feeling and acting with the original intention. He must at least make an effort *to vibrate* with the sound of the soul principle that lies hidden within him. The result will be that, with a purer sound and colour, the whole personality becomes more transparent. He 'has the courage of his convictions', and attunes himself to a higher vibration. A totally different radiation is generated, which can be explained by a gradual return to the original orbit. In Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching we read:

*'The Way' is the first cause,
contained within itself.
It was, is and will be,
unto all eternity.
Its Omnipotence is limited
by Space and Time.
And from its 'Logos'
the World soul has originated.
The straight path is:
'Vibrating in Its Rhythm.'
Recognising All-existence
in every breath.*

*Thus going up
into Its Spiritual radiant Light,
which cannot be anything but
all-ensouling willing.*

We can choose this straight path of the original sound and awaken our innermost being to new experience. The rhythm of the sound of liberation surrounds us. It is like a song, like a softly twinkling, murmuring melody. It is like the murmuring of the Divine river. The small pure sound in a human being finds its original frequency again, its 'breeding ground'. If a human being recognises this in his spirit-soul, he will increasingly avoid the earthly tones in order to be able to hear the other, higher vibrating sound in the resulting silence.

And gradually the sound, which then emanates from him, will make the sounds hidden in others resonate and flare up in brighter colours. This does not require many words. Then a pure mode of life develops on the basis of the awakened sound of the soul that has found the 'fundamental tone of its origin' again. Just as two tuning forks can only resonate if they have the same pitch, so too can he or she who has released this vibration within him- or herself, touch and awaken the sounding board in others. The *voice of the silence* will then be heard; the inner sounding board will be found, and there will be perfection.



HOW PUPILSHIP BEGINS

World literature has preserved countless memories of the original life sphere and the divine human essence. Numerous as the stars are the teachers and messengers who have exemplified a path of life to the Kingdom of Heavens as the Path. They lived the path. Their teachings were clear, simple and consistent and were meant for a particular group of people who were able to tolerate 'solid food'.

These teachers used countless ways to communicate the divine truth to their multifarious circle of listeners: as stories, in moving poetry, letters, gospels and oral tradition. Each of these forms can cause a wondrous experience. Sometimes only one such 'touch' can turn an outsider into a disciple. This can be seen as a beginning and is often compared with 'birth', because a human being is rarely entirely ready when he is touched by the Light, when the 'Light calls him', and the initial reaction is often awkward. But as soon as there is a positive reaction, an important process begins, just as birth is the beginning of many far-reaching developments.

First of all, there is a change. Jan van Rijckenborgh calls this 'the fundamental change' or also 'the great revolution'. This change does not so much concern the external or social circumstances, it is, rather, an inner process. This change takes place in the heart and in the head. The change in the heart concerns the longing. The seeker

who has understood the futility of the many things the world offers, discovers at a certain moment that there is an atmosphere of Light, Peace and pure human dignity. He discovers the first principles of the life sphere of original, soul humanity. At the same time he realises that this domain cannot be reached by ordinary pursuit of things. Other qualities are needed to enter this world: a pure heart, truth, compassion and peace. These qualities are primarily released by the inner Christ. Therefore it is said, '*Christ is the source of pure attraction, [...] who blesses the pure, open heart.*'¹ The Aquarian Gospel² contains a beautiful tale that describes this moment.

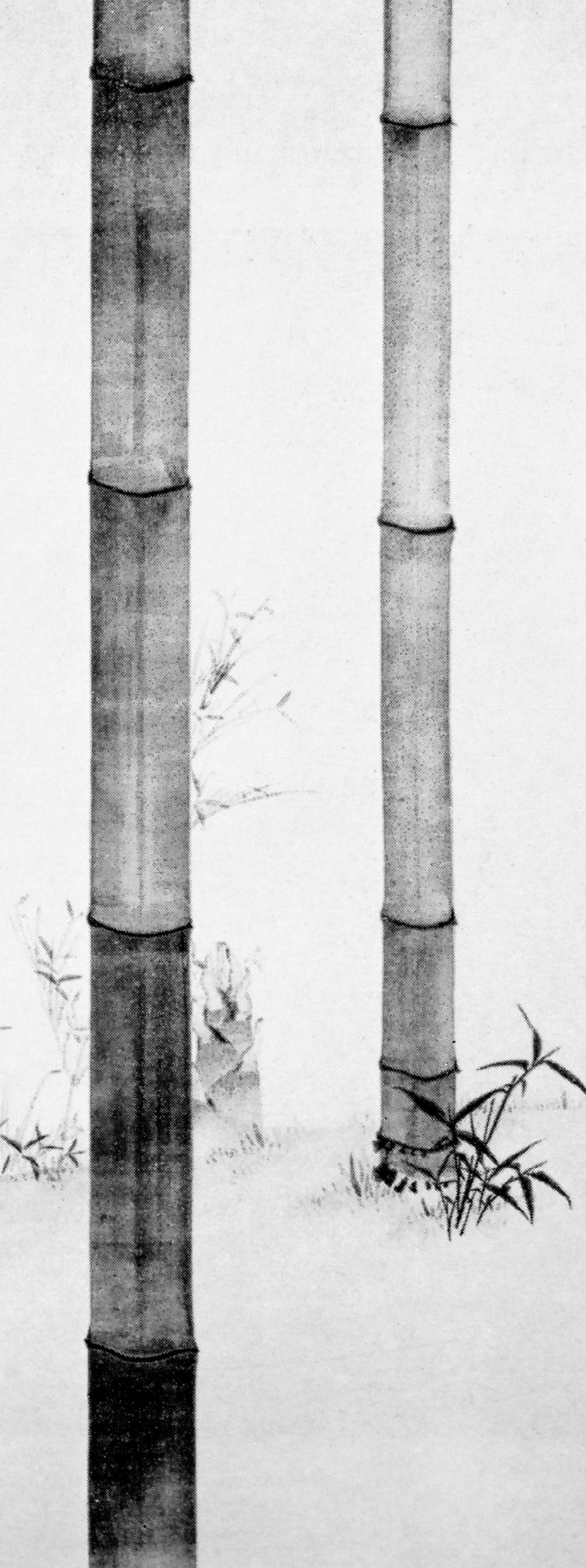
'Now when they reached the shore, the Christine master called to Peter, Andrew, James and John and said: You fishermen of Galilee, the masters have a mighty work for us to do; and you may follow me. And they left all and followed him.

And Jesus went along the shore, and seeing Philip and Nathaniel walking on the beach he said to them: You teachers from Bethsaida, who long have taught Greek philosophy. The masters have a higher work for you and me to do. I go and you may follow me; and then they followed him.

A little farther on there stood a Roman tribute house, and Jesus saw the officer in charge; his name was Matthew, who once abode in Jericho. The youth who once ran on before the Lord into Jerusalem and said: Behold the Christines come.

And Matthew was a man of wealth,

Bodhisattva of compassion. Yung-Kang, China. Around 490 AD.



and learned in wisdom of the Jews, the Syrians and the Greek. And Jesus said to him: Hail, Matthew, trusted servant of the Caesars, hail! The masters call us to the tribute house of souls. I go and you follow me. And Matthew followed him.

Ischariot and his son, whose name was Judas, were employed by Matthew and were in the tribute house. And Jesus said to Judas: Stay your work; the masters call us to a duty in the savings bank of souls. I go and you may follow me. And Judas followed him.

And Jesus met a lawyer who had heard of the Christine master and had come from Antioch to study in the school of Christ. This man was Thomas, man of doubt, and yet a Greek philosopher of culture and power. But Jesus saw in him the lines of faith, and said to him: The masters have a need of men who can interpret law. I go and you may follow me. And Thomas followed him.

And when the evening came and Jesus was at home, behold, there came his kindred, James and Jude, the sons of Alpheus and Miriam. And these were men of faith, and they were carpenters of Nazareth. And Jesus said to them: Behold, for you have toiled with me, and with my father Joseph, building houses for the homes of men. The masters call us now to aid in building homes for souls; homes built without the sound of hammer, axe or saw. I go and you may follow me. And Judas and James exclaimed: Lord, we will follow you.

And on the morrow Jesus sent a message unto Simon, leader of the Zelotes, a strict exponent of the Jewish law. And in the message Jesus said: The masters call for men to demonstrate the faith of Abraham. I go, and you may follow me. And Simon followed him.'

In this way, the Aquarian Gospel tells how the twelve disciples are called and fol-

low their teacher Jesus on his way through Judea. This is a story that can be understood on many levels. Its particular beauty, however, reflects the atmosphere of unsullied pureness that appeals to everybody. The simple, straightforward language penetrates deep into the heart. So it is no small wonder that many people are touched by it. A vague, longing and reflection can develop in those people. Above all, the powerful imagery and metaphors excite the *spiritual* heart of the listener and stimulate it to react. In Indian mythology, this place is often called the 'lotus of the heart'.

The lotus, which is often described as a 'gemstone', is a principle from the sphere of eternity. Although it radiates a great sense of calm and stillness, it sparkles with dynamic generative power. We who have to live our lives in this world of time and space know that, through the ages, a karmic history has been woven around this lotus. Although the lotus itself remains untouched, it cannot develop because of this karmic history. And as karma gets ever denser based on what we do, or do not do, the consciousness of the lotus moves farther away from human consciousness. Man forgets! Buddhism calls this forgetfulness the cause of the world of suffering. Many experiences are bitter, for both the lotus and the personality.

But there have always been messengers who speak about the lotus. The Indians know the Jatakas, the Buddhist 'birth stories', which often refer to events in the previous lives of the Buddha. The *Theravada* canon, from which they stem, contains a collection of more than 550 stories about them.

Even today, many storytellers present them on many occasions. Over and over again, the people on the Indian peninsula are spellbound by the timeless truths and

experiences told in the Jatakas. The stories fascinate listeners from all classes. Buddhist monks, however, tell them, above all, to convey the teachings of the Buddha to ordinary people. The stories contain a kernel of verses that have remained unchanged over a very long time, while the prose settings around it are adjusted to the place and time of the storyteller. As a result, the verses appear in a new form, as gems sparkling in their prose settings.

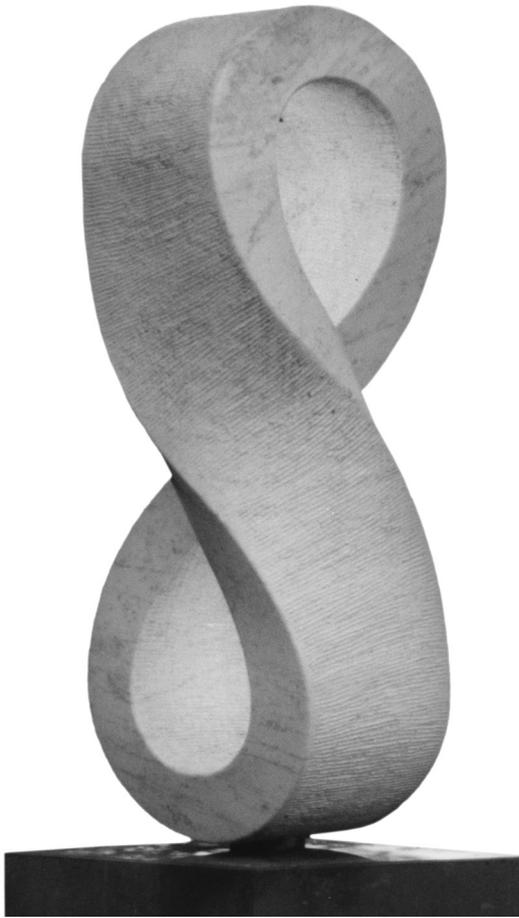
It is fascinating how, for many thousands of years, people have recognised their own situation. Do they, too, not have a well-cut gem in the centre of their beings, which is waiting for an opportunity to shine again? Around this gem, the story of one's life has developed – the work of prose. It is true that the gem is shining, but unless we are alert, we increasingly obscure its radiance on our way from birth to death. But insight and purification can turn human life itself into the setting, which allows the gem to shine and radiate, so that it can be seen from afar.

JAKATAS REFLECT HUMAN EXPERIENCES

Jakatas often start like this: 'Once upon a time, when Brahmadata was king in Benares...' thus referring to a vague, mythical time. The actions and events in the Jakatas reflect typical experiences of human life, but often they also evoke memories of man's origin. The listeners can identify with these stories because they appeal to archetypes that are part of every human being.

The main character in the Jakatas is the wise and virtuous future Buddha (referred to as the Bodhisattva³ who may be the protagonist, but is usually the observer. The Bodhisattva, just as the lotus in a human being, is present, but initially seems to play no role. If this lotus is awak-

Bamboo painting on silk. Goshun (1752-1811). Tokio, Japan.



ened from its sleep and propelled to activity again, self-knowledge can develop which will lead a human being back to his origin.

THE STORYTELLER

When travelling the towns and villages of India, we can often observe crowds gathering around a storyteller. A good storyteller begins only when enough people have assembled around him. The narrator lifts his listeners above the story. Profound experiences, symbols and memories of their origin can thus be stirred up in those who are listening. Jakatas only reveal their full power when they touch the consciousness of the audience. The moment the listener identifies with the story or the figures in it, he can perceive his life through the eyes of the Bodhisattva.

'Eternal motion is eternal renewal.'
Sculpture at conference centre Renova, Bilthoven, The Netherlands.

Which levels of consciousness are unlocked depends on the state of consciousness of the storyteller and the susceptibility of the listener. If the storyteller is a true master of narrative, the vibrations of eternity can linger in the listener's heart for a short moment and stir up his inner yearning for the origin.

THE STORY OF THE MOURNING FOR THE DEAD⁴

Once upon a time, when king Brahma-datta reigned in Benares, the Bodhisattva was reborn into a very wealthy merchant family. When he had grown up, his parents died. After the death of the parents, Bodhisattva's elder brother provided for the family. Soon his brother died from a terrible disease. Relatives, friends and neighbours assembled, raised their arms in wailing, lamented and cried. Everybody was deeply depressed by sorrow and grief.

Only the Bodhisattva did not wail and weep. The mourning relatives silently reproached him: *'Look at this man! His brother has died and he does not even bat an eyelid. How hard must his heart be! Probably his thoughts just revolve around one thing: "Now I will be the sole heir!" And certainly that is why he has wished his brother's death.'*

Turning to him they asked: *'Will you not mourn for your brother?'* The Bodhisattva heard what they said and answered, *'You wail and weep, "My brother is dead!" because in your blindness you do not know the eight worldly properties. Am I not going to die as well as you are going to die*

one day? So why do you not mourn for yourselves as you will also die? Everything which comes into being, will cease to exist. Nothing that has been created will exist forever. Hence should I cry just because you blind fools in your ignorance do not know the eight worldly properties and therefore cry?’

And after these words he recited the following verses:

*You mourn just for him who has already died.
Yet him who is soon going to die you do not mourn for.
Since all who are imprisoned in the body’s garment,
will one by one bid farewell to this life.
The gods, men and the four-footed creatures,
the flocks of birds like all the mighty serpents
all possess a passing body.
Yet all of them must part from them one day.
Bearing in mind that human joys and sorrow
are fleeting, passing swiftly like a flower of the day,
we stop wailing and lamenting.
Why do you let the troubles weigh you down?
Those who are stubborn, foolish sinners
and think the world of themselves,
they are calling him a fool who is wise
as they refuse to accept the truth.*

With these words the Bodhisattva announced the truth, thus liberating the mourning crowd from their sorrow.

HIGHER SOUL LIFE

In the universal stories of birth, the great light always seeks the small one, the spiritual sun attempts to warm the lotus in human hearts. Occupation, social class and ancestry do not play any role in this. There is a higher goal, a higher soul life for everyone. Heart and head are the two anchors of the soul vessel of the soul. Once the lotus has formed a bud and the bud has blossomed forth, the fundamental change will also penetrate the head sanctuary, the thinking faculty and the consciousness of the human being. He who has been enabled by a fundamental change to anchor heart and head firmly in the Light knows that his whole being must follow a sevenfold process.

1 Jan van Rijckenborgh, Catharose de Petri *Reveille!*, Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1962, chapter IV.

2 Levi Dowling, *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, L.N. Fowler, Co. Ltd., Romford, Essex, Great Britain, 1977, chapter 88: 17-35.

3 Bodhisattva – He whose essence (sattva) is Light (bodhi). Often interpreted as the seventh initiation. Followed by the Buddhahood.

4 Translated from: Hermann Oldenberg, *Die Reden des Buddha*, Herder Verlag, Freiburg i. B. 2000.

THE FAULT LIES WITH OTHERS, DOESN'T IT?

At work, many are used to criticising even the tiniest of errors and weaknesses of co-workers, managers and subordinates. In the family, children confront their parents with their preconceived notions, while their parents in turn fiercely criticise 'modern youth'. Despite the pain that every person experiences from criticism every day, criticism is considered to be positive. Yet, the Sermon on the Mount says: 'Judge not, that you be not judged'. How can these be reconciled?'

A conflict of thoughts, words and discussions between people and groups permeates the mental and astral sphere of human life. It is an agitated and polluted conflict, hindering the *liberating force* from doing its work. First there are the major philosophical movements, and religious and socio-political systems. They run over each other with armies of pointed arguments and when the weapon of criticism no longer suffices, they reach for physical weapons to wipe each other off the face of the earth. But it applies no less to the human being in his personal relationships. How intolerable are the qualities and behaviour of others. And don't think this is limited only to adversaries: this fate also befalls those we live with, those we claim to love. Friends and relatives can evoke the most annoyed reactions. For a human being does not take kindly to others not behaving according

to his standards. He immediately sends out malignant, malicious or hate-filled thoughts, while keeping his tongue in check.

THE FAULT LIES WITH OTHERS

Criticism is viewed as a means of recognising the good and destroying the bad. Many people reject malignant, negative criticism and welcome so-called positive, constructive criticism. In this respect they take the position that criticism ensures progress and can't be done without. Certainly, perfect justice is always the basis of this striving. But it can be questioned whether the critical method that everybody employs is the right tool for improving fundamental human weaknesses. This method always looks for the fault in others. Whether someone, in view of his state of being, is at all capable of objective criticism, is capable of impartial observation and judgement, is rarely considered. If we seriously consider these aspects, we realise that everybody views and values everyone and everything, through his own – rose-tinted or not – glasses. But those glasses aren't clear. They are tinted by the person's auric field in which his character, blood and general state of being are expressed. 'I' always assume that I am right, for I act according to my own state, my own values. If 'you' see things differently, then I feel besieged, for 'I' observe and act correctly. This should be cause for acknowledgement and even admiration. 'I' act as if I am king of my

own kingdom, and therefore I am attacked, for my presumptions, 'my preferences' are unreal. And the result is self-maintenance.

PEACE AS THE FIRST REQUIREMENT

Every individual, every group, possesses its own system, which distinguishes it from every other system. Everything is judged by its own standards, and very little measures up. The values of others are perceived as a threat. Attack and defence: the conflict using weapons of criticism is world-encompassing. Sometimes one side has the upper hand and, other times the other side has the upper hand. Does this really bring true progress? As long as this is the reality of our life system: attack, defence, self-maintenance and lust for possessions, the new order, the harmony with *divine laws*, remains an illusion.

The 'road back' to unity with the original laws of life knows no judgement. 'Harmony with God and the world, with all that lives in it' assumes a living link, unification at a different level, and precludes criticism. Unity in this sense can absolutely not develop in judgement, in criticism, because judgement divides, into 'you' and 'I', into 'this right' and 'that wrong'. After all, pure insight into our daily reality, let alone into an eternal order, can never develop if our own prejudices and the resulting tunnel vision keep creating obstacles.

One condition for openness and understanding is peace. The unceasing attack and defence which forces the mind and our feelings into a state of contorted self-maintenance, disturbs this peace and blocks insight from entering into our being. If the flame of criticism influences the body and the soul, then kindness, understanding and patience cannot develop. This always scars the inner being. He who judges, changes his surroundings, and

rarely for the better. The people being criticised will increasingly hide their good sides and turn a sharp edge towards the critic. Yes, they even hone that edge on criticism. The critic sees this as a confirmation: hasn't he always known that it was not good? But how poor and joyless a human being becomes through this behaviour. He belittles reality and covers it so that it reflects back to him his own limited and diminutive essence. The endless variety of existences, the immeasurable richness of the world and above all: the light of the original field, from which everything originates, remain closed to him. If he could end this conflict, he would be free. He would no longer experience coercion from criticism. He would throw off the suffocation of prejudice. Criticism not only hinders the development of new insight into the human being, but also smothers any germ of new insight into other people. What person is so independent that he could lead a life free from criticism if he is besieged by criticism from all sides? Through criticism the critic maintains the condition that so repulses him. All become paralysed because of his criticism and defend themselves. If someone takes positive criticism to heart and tries to change, this is often a change that corresponds with the vision of the critic. Only in rare cases is criticism aimed at bringing forth the new possibilities of life, awaiting realisation in the person. And thus many people live their lives according to the standards of others, out of fear of criticism, thus hindering their own development.

Everyone who goes the path of soul liberation, bears responsibility for himself and for the world. It is a responsibility for the birth of the origin in himself and in others. When a person is truly free of judgement, this responsibility can flourish.

How can being uncritical, letting go of all the usual standards, be realised in the



practice of everyday life? Would this not lead to people doing whatever they want, failing to fulfil their duties, using it for their own benefit? How does being uncritical influence the work in a Spiritual School? Does it not have one-sided effects? These are questions that arise if being uncritical is viewed as a duty, as an order. Forcing oneself to be uncritical cannot produce anything new; the beneficial and gentle consequences of a *true* lack of criticism are not brought about in this way.

In peace you can recognise the negative effects of criticism on yourself and on others. Equanimity, a certain inner neutrality and realism, (another person is also striving, I too have many blemishes, defects and faults of the personality) make a person simple and humble. The love and compassion, arising from this, eventually make it possible for a true lack of criticism to become more and more

real. If a human being yearns for a new state of being and this gradually develops in him, he will increasingly begin to live from freedom, unity and truth, without nourishing the impulse for self-maintenance. How could he not do so? Love is sweet and gentle, and he experiences it as a blessing for himself and for others. He no longer wants to live without this love. This is why he endures being, rightly or wrongly, criticised. If he did not, then love would immediately withdraw. It could not do otherwise. Perfect justice cannot be found here in dialectics, because in this emergency order both judge and suspect are guilty, and the difference is only a matter of degree. It is, however, certain that all mistakes and criticism do not exist in the new life field, because there love is the fundamental quality, as are day and night here. That is why the standards by which he is judged are not relevant to him. Not because of arro-

'I didn't do anything...' Photo Pentagram.

gance, but because he lives from this fundamental quality of love. This is the yardstick of the original, divine field in which the self-maintaining personality has been dissolved.

Within the rules of society he will always wonder if criticism of him is justified. He knows, however, that the person who opens himself up to original life is not judged by this high field, for 'who can stand before it?'¹ He is freed by accepting everything he is confronted with. He sees the true essence of things. If he sees something that is about to go awry, he shall refrain from criticism and immediately try to render assistance in a positive way, to be of service, to give aid, if it is in his power, and at the same time try to maintain the link with the original field.

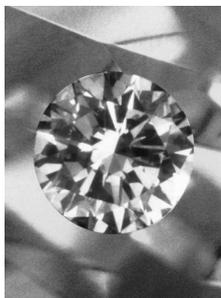
We may be tempted to think, in terms of people who are not following the soul path, shown by the Spiritual School, that they are living entirely by self-maintenance and that 'therefore' criticising is a normal way of life for them. But when confronted with people who go the path of the Spiritual School, who nonetheless have a 'critical' attitude, we would certainly expect a different behaviour from them, for we feel linked with them. We think that the work of the Spiritual School is endangered by the behaviour of such people and barely tolerate it. Doesn't the School represent our highest ideal? We know, however, from personal experience that imperfections cannot be undone by fighting them. Something new has to replace them. Many shall say: '*Trust is perhaps good, but verification and criticism are better. The work of the Spiritual School is too important to leave it to someone who falls short. If necessary strong action should be taken.*' Of course, trust in imperfect people is not always justified; of course, the principle of verification and criticism seems more effective. But he who trusts in the new opportunities

granted to him *by the Gnosis* will be amazed by the undeniable new activity emanating from him. He discovers *the constructive power of love*. He himself does not love – how could he? – but love as a force works through him. It is this force, active simultaneously in every striving human being, which calls all to their task and responsibility. It is a new energy that develops into patience, love and understanding. And from it a cleansing, stimulating and correcting influence emanates, which touches everybody's actions. For the awakening spirit-spark atom has become active and deepens *everyone's* understanding and experience of the world around him. In a Spiritual School like the Lectorium Rosicrucianum the issue is not trust in an imperfect personality, but trust in this perfect energy of the Gnosis.

¹ *Who can stand before it?* Rev.6:17.



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