

September Contemplative Reading
MAN, KNOW THYSELF

Dear friends,

Who doesn't know the classic adage: "Man, know thyself"?

Millennia ago, in the days of classical Greece, when Gnosis became known, this aphorism of wisdom was engraved on the pediment of the Temple of Delphi. The temple of Delphi was dedicated to the highest aspect of the Divine.

Today, this wisdom is clearly disseminated in the School of the Golden Rosycross. The aphorism "Man, know thyself" marks the **beginning** of the liberating path.

In the Tao Te King, from China, this beginning is formulated as follows: "He who knows himself is enlightened";
and the end of the path is expressed as follows: "He who conquers himself is all-powerful".

A correct understanding of the beginning of the path is essential if we are to achieve the goal of bringing the true Light back into our being. Today, more and more people are thinking and writing in a spiritual sense about self-knowledge and personal development. But the focus is mainly on the personal, the individual.

Since the emergence of psychology, the focus has been on individual processes and personal experiences. In other words, it's all about the multiple difficulties of the

"I" as it struggles in the midst of this world to remain “on top of it”, where so much energy is lost in the vicious circle of unresolved ideals and problems.

What's missing is a true understanding of the microcosm, the “small world system we inhabit” and its auric sphere that encapsulates it, and of which our physical being is only one part.

This is why in the early days of our era, Hermes warned: "Know that you are a microcosm!"

Short musical interlude

We, as physical human beings, are born according to the product of the past.

We are born within the frameworks of this nature, namely race, peoples, tribes, family and finally parents. These are very limited frameworks; the very source of our life, the Soul, can only express itself within them very partially.

Seen in this light, it has to be said that we don't really live; no, we survive on a minimal basis that can barely be called human, that hardly approaches the divine potential of being truly human.

This mode of survival has forced us to adopt ways of living that have been inscribed in us for many incarnations. These patterns are so refined, so intelligent, so ingenious, so powerful on the mental and astral levels, so effective and so well-integrated, that ordinary people like us can't imagine to do anything without them. As a result, without true knowledge, Gnosis, we're completely shackled by these instincts and behavioral patterns.

For this reason, the result of this whole survival situation is called our fate, our lot. There is an "emergency-order" that is protected and watched over by what Hermes calls the Lords of Fate.

It is they who regulate the "rise, shine and fall" processes, so as to guarantee the Soul the possibility of returning to true Life.

To achieve this, however, a fundamental and total reversal of the consciousness is required: we must turn away from living from our egocentric self and turn towards living from the Soul.

Short musical interlude

Everything we're talking about here, dear friends, is a matter of essential self-knowledge. We need to be deeply aware of the fact that it is destiny that drives us forward, and that we will always feel, in the background of our lives, anguish and uncertainty for as long as we are unaware of our situation and do not radically change our orientation.

It's this anguish that causes so many of us today to lose ourselves in psychological research into our "self" and into accentuating our individuality, or more likely, our I centrality. Our anguish comes from the impossibility of observing oneself objectively, as long as we remain trapped inside this dialectical perception of nature.

Let's quietly forget that we might learn something from our particular astral dependency and personal karma. All that is a hermetically sealed book; nor is it what we need.

Our openness to examining the general human situation, and our willingness to apply it to ourselves, depends on our Soul's level of distress. Only when we have truly reached a dead-end in our I centrality is there the maturity necessary to discover what the universal wisdom teaches us, and what we say so often in the Golden Rosycross: that the ego-consciousness - and therefore also our ego-consciousness - is merely a driving force keeping the personality alive. The personality can only be described as a "partial-creation", being only the basis, the starting point of a true human becoming, a starting point that is still purely animal.

If, propelled by the distress of the Soul, we truly understand this, then we can speak of self-knowledge. This is a very special moment, because at that very moment, a reaction follows from the heart of the microcosm we call the Rose, the rose-of-the-heart.

The great prospect of the rebirth of the Soul is always revealed as soon as we take a realistic look at our imprisonment and become deeply and fully aware of it. We call this realistic view of our current situation "self-knowledge", and the opening of the rose-of-the-heart is the Light that pours over us and enters us on our path.

This is why Lao Tzu said: "He who knows himself is **enlightened**".

Short musical interlude

Self-knowledge, Gnosis, opens the door to knowledge of God.

In ancient Greek Gnosis, "Know thyself" was the first condition for entering the temple of Delphi dedicated to Apollo, the god of Sun and Light, the god who represented the Good, the True and the Beautiful.

Today, in the Golden Rosycross, we are dedicated to Gnosis, and our activities bear the same signature and set the same entry requirement.

What can be revealed to us in these activities depends, in fact, solely, on how we participate, on our inner state and our inner orientation.

Inside these activities, the Gnostic Solar Light shines forth, revealing the All. In this light, we can see clearly, with our inner eye.

On the one hand, we can clearly observe our personal state; on the other hand, we can see something of the golden sparkle of the Soul shining through, so that the path becomes clear to us.

BUT even our ego is fascinated by the whole and sees all kinds of possibilities, although obviously within the limited scope of the ego's focus. He or she will want to use the Light for his or her own purposes. The ego will tell itself these aims are very noble, however they are never liberating.

That's why each and every one of us must remain vigilant, to avoid falling into the ego's imagination. From the very moment one enters the Spiritual School as a pupil, we are invited to keep searching, to examine whether what we think we see as Light is in fact not darkness.

We can study all the wisdom in the world, all the Gnostic literature, but if we don't learn to distinguish within ourselves the difference between light and darkness, between Soul and ego, between living and surviving, then we will remain trapped in the darkness of the course of the ages.

Feelings of resistance will continue to play a part for a long time, but those who know their inner light, and follow it, will be ready to connect and to dedicate themselves to the group to which they will now belong, the community of new Souls.

There may be moments of doubt, misunderstanding or mutual conflict, but if we allow the Soul to take the lead in our lives, we will devote ourselves to all those who walk the path, and to all those who seek the way. That is, to and for all humanity.

Of him or her, Lao Tzu says: "He knows his light, yet he stands in the shadow", meaning that he or she is humble and aware of his or her limitations. It is in group unity and helpfulness that he will find his destiny. Yet he continues to look to the mountains for his salvation.

When we talk about helpfulness, we're talking about the power of love; yet few concepts are so often misunderstood. Almost everyone has their own image, their own conception and therefore their own limits when it comes to love. And yet, it is said that in love, we shall all be victorious.

If we want to continue our path to the end, we'll certainly remain focused on Love, the Love that makes everything perfect, but which must be released by each individual.

Both Soul and Love are associated with the notion of Fire. The fire of the Soul, the ether-fire, burns away all obstacles, all enmity. So it's only logical that we should focus on the fire-principle within us. It is said that only the Soul - the Soul Flame - can kindle the fire of Love in the heart. This pure Love Force of the heart must be communicated, which it always does, through actions!

That is why, ultimately, it is Love that brings salvation.

We could talk about Love for a long time, but there are no words capable of fully expressing its power. Love cannot be captured in images. When Love manages to spring forth in a human being, its fire first illuminates the sanctuary of the head, and it appears to consciousness in the form of a clear understanding or vision; it will also be demonstrated by an act, by a concrete reality, perceptible to those who have the eyes of the Soul open.

Musical Interlude

In the past, the ego was the only master, and wanted to assert itself, its traces in the astral sphere of our microcosm were very powerful and magnetic. The "past" refers to the situation we were in before we were touched in our hearts by the light of Gnosis.

Even every step along the way that we put off until tomorrow or later, is the consequence of the power that the past exerts over us. That's why, as far as

possible, do everything you can to close off the past once and for all. And this is within your power, because victory over the past is based on the "Here and Now" of Gnosis. This Present, which is outside Time, will create a resting point of non-earthly quality.

In this state of balance, the weight of the past is relegated to the background. In the vacuum of light, where opposites are in balance, we can transcend the nature of death that weighs so heavily on us.

Now we understand even better the deeper meaning of the encouragement to keep heart and head in the Light. Only the Soul overcomes the past. Only the fire of the Soul is kept alight in spite of all enmity.

Break all astral ties holding you to the old astral field of life and link up with the new astral field, that of Gnosis and the Brotherhood of Life.

We too, in our time, can realize - thanks to the fire of the Soul - to what extent, in everything we feel, perceive or say, we are either on the path, or still too much in self-maintenance.

Ultimately, the fundamental change occurs if we persevere, if we follow the Soul, in a state of neutrality, of chosen solitude, of intelligent waiting for "our day of the Lord", with our eyes always directed towards "the mountains from which help comes"; and we nurture inner rest and the certainty of victory, not because I want to, now or later, but with the attitude: "Your Will be done."

Not as a kind of prayerful attitude. What is envisaged is silently raising one's mind in the abstract, without special thoughts or images, without expectations or demands.

It is in this state that the inner temple opens for us, the inner oracle of the Spirit in which the reborn Soul can immerse itself and grow into its state of perfection. The Spirit can then project itself into the reborn immortal Soul, bringing true life, new awareness and the power of free thought!

What is new, free, pure and truly good always arrives as a manifestation of Light; And, simultaneously, in that same Light is the perception of the immortal Soul. Light cleaves the darkness and shows the way, unerringly. Light manifested in this way finally becomes for us perfect understanding.

This is how we understand what is meant by the return of Light to our lives. The Divine Light radiates continually and will at some point be seen again in the clouds of the aura, in the auric sphere, of the Soul for whom the Path is now complete.

For when the pupil is ready - the Master is there.