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Lectorium Rosicrucianum

What should a human being's point of departure be, if he, on his way to gaining inner consciousness, wants to achieve certain results? Should he switch off his critical mind? Do his life's happiness and the salvation of his soul depend on hazarding to follow a teacher, an organisation or faith, or some movement? Is it possible for the seeking element of this human being to become an important, acquired property, which stays with the seeker during his entire path? Is it a power that turns from 'seeking' into pure 'intuition' and ensures the human being to say 'yes' or, at critical moments, to know inwardly not to continue on the chosen path?

Philosophers of all times have occupied themselves with these matters. In their quest for the truth, they go deeply into the certainties people believe they possess. They also speak about the powers that control the human being and about the small margin between his struggle for life and the longing of the soul. They point out the pitfalls of our (lower) consciousness, the many limitations imposed by nature, but also the liberating possibilities for the soul, because often we are seeking with our head, but find with our heart.



The path of the druids
Pythagoras' school of wisdom
A new vision on Judas?
The quest of the philosophers
Friedrich Schiller

PENTAGRAM

SPECIAL ISSUE

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

What should a human being's point of departure be, if he, on his way to gaining inner consciousness, wants to achieve certain results?

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The School of Athens. In the centre, Plato and Aristotle: left, Pythagoras. Fresco in the Stanza della Segnatura, 1510-11, by Raphael Sanzio of Urbino (1483-1520). Vatican Museum, Rome.

Cover: detail of a ninth-century relief of a Viking ship, found on the isle of Gotland near Stockholm, Sweden.

What is philosophy?

A seeking human being is continuously hovering between hope and fear, between certainty and intense doubt, between firm denial and positive endorsing. We are inclined to think that this situation keeps the consciousness sharp and alert, critical and inquisitive. We can also imagine that a seeker never begins anything because of this state of consciousness. After all, we do not know where any beginning development will end; things may turn out quite unexpectedly.

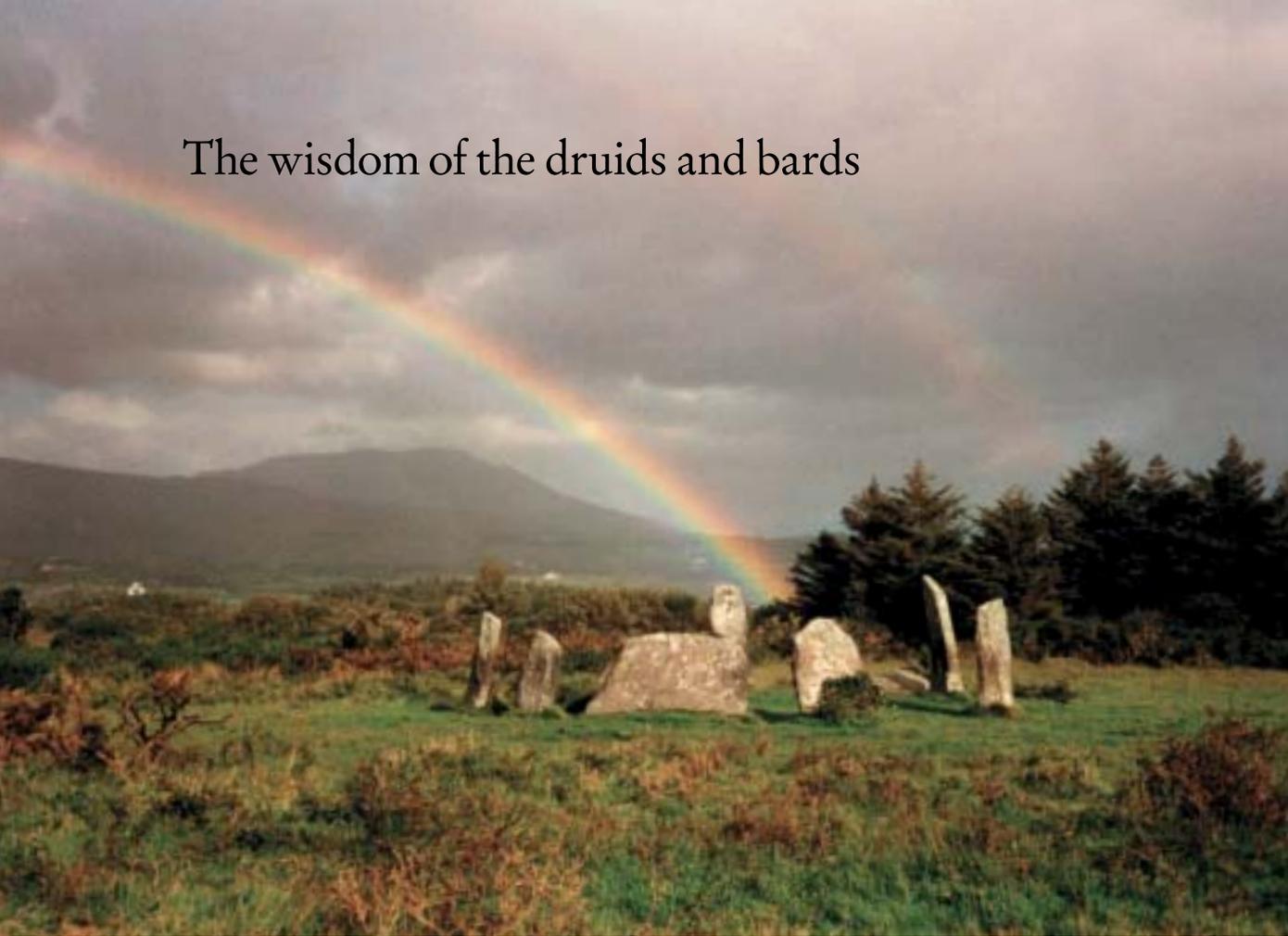
What should a human being's point of departure be, if he, on his way to gaining inner consciousness, wants to achieve certain results? Should he switch off his critical mind? Do his life's happiness and the salvation of his soul depend on hazarding to follow a teacher, an organisation or a faith, or some movement?

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Philosophers of all times have occupied themselves with these matters. In their quest for the truth, they go deeply into the certainties people believe they possess. They also speak about the powers that control the human being and about the small margin between his *struggle for life* and the longing of the soul. They point out the pitfalls of our (lower) consciousness, the many limitations imposed by nature, but also the liberating possibilities of the soul, because we are often seeking with our head, but find with our heart.

This is the first of two issues of the Pentagram, in which your attention is drawn to some of these thinkers or philosophical systems. Many of them found the truth. In this process, the seeking element became a property of the heart, which unfailingly separates what is true from what is false and what is genuine from what is fake.

The wisdom of the druids and bards



*The ancient Celtic peoples, led and taught by the druids, possessed a culture, society and consciousness that was totally different from ours. In her book *The Flaming Door*, Eleanor C. Merry described in general terms the conditions on being able to approach their way of thinking:*

Derreenataggart (Derrintaggart). Rainbow above a stone circle near Castletownbere on the Veara Peninsula, Kerry County, South-west Ireland. The Irish name means '(Place of the) oak of the priest'. © Pentagram.

If we neither possessed modern science, logic, our arrogant opinions or the bewilderment about death, and had no other conscience than the powerful, visible results of our deeds; if sleeping were like an awakening; if our personal memory only came to us through the repeated and solemn expression of the handwriting of the stars; if “history” were like reading in the blood of our forebears that streams through our veins; if our head felt like a model of the whole earth that we carry on

our shoulders in the rhythmic balance of our movements; if our heart were an image of the sun and our lungs the wings of the moon that protect it... yes, then the whole universe would be a powerful gesture of the spirit; then we would move around in the dreams and visions of the gods, and the earth would be our table into which we would carve, in stone and wood, our everlasting deeds.”¹

But this is only an approximation. The visions that the bards and druids expe-



rienced during their worship are not easily accessible to us. In this time, however, in which everything is documented, we are able to clearly

place the universal principles of the wisdom of their mysteries before us.

The wisdom of the ancient druidic mysteries partly symbolised achieving individual independence and becoming conscious of matter in the material, external field of life. This development was the central issue in the centuries before Christ, while in our time, dematerialisation and detaching from the links to the external world are emphasised.

Confronted with each other, we re-

cognise a development that makes the human being conscious of the material world in which he lives, and a development that tries to pull him out of it. The first one is considered to be the ancient, descending or incarnating development, guided by the druidic mysteries. The second one is the modern impulse to detach from this same matter again. It is one aspect of the universal principle of flowing out and returning, of exhaling what is eternal and returning to the source, which applies to all planes of life.

According to sources that were not recorded until the beginning of the Christian era, but are considered reliable by most experts, the Druids experienced the cosmic Christ in a clairvoyant and vi-

THE CELTIC WORLD

Betekenis van de nummers

- 1 – Armagh
- 2 – Tara
- 3 – Kells
- 4 – Clonmacnois
- 5 – Cruachan
- 6 – Emain Machae
- 7 – Man
- 8 – Iona
- 9 – Lindisfarne
- 10 – Caerleon
- 11 – Verulamium (St. Albans)





sionary way. They referred to him as ‘the Lord of the Elements.’ All who have studied the history of the Celts and their spiritual teachers agree about one point: the Roman sources of our knowledge of the Celts were often prejudiced, because it was the history of the victors. Victors are always right – until authentic sources surface that qualify their story. They usually tell an entirely different story, certainly concerning the Celts.

One of these sources is *Bardass*, a manuscript that was once recorded from the mouth of Welsh bards. Like all ancient sources of wisdom, this was only passed on orally for centuries. Not until the first centuries AD, there were bards who, together with monks, put these traditions in writing. The copies we nowadays possess are adaptations of those first written versions. In some places, the content was Christianised, but this does not detract from the ‘primordial wisdom’ that we can sense in it.

Bardass relates the story of Menw or Manu as ‘the Son of the three cries’. He had a vision of the creative word, in which he heard the name of God: ‘When God spoke His name, the light and the life originated with the word, because before there was no life except for God himself. His name was spoken, and by speaking it, the light and the power of life were created as well as the human being and every other living thing. And Menw beheld the emanation, the form and appearance of the light in the three pillars and its musical expression in the rays of the light, because

hearing and seeing were one, united in one form and sound. And united with form and sound was life, and united with these three was the power which was God the Father. And because each of them was united into one, Menw understood that any voice, any hearing and life and being, any vision and seeing was one with God, even the tiniest creature is none other than God.’²

Two things strike us in this text: the unity that flows out into a number of qualities. This is encountered in many traditions of wisdom: it is also called the emanation, the flowing out of all beings, all forms and phenomena from *one* source. In the Welsh tradition, perception and hearing appeared simultaneously, followed by their use in letters and symbols; then came the understanding of sound and speech, and the music of song and poetry. In brief, it was an ever-continuing differentiation without loss of unity. No break occurs anywhere in creation, ‘even the tiniest creature is none other than God.’

The second central issue is the image of the three pillars. Upon hearing the primordial sound, Menw heard three tones and he saw three letters. He also beheld the symbols that belonged to it: ‘The symbol O was given to the first pillar, the symbol I to the second or middle pillar, and the symbol W belongs to the third pillar. This forms the word OIW.’³ This means: through this word, God reveals his creation: life, power, eternity, universality. It was at the same time the manifesta-

Top, left page: Celtic gods were often represented in groups of three, triads, just as their teachings were also passed on in triads. Because of the bread and the linen in their lap, this relief of the mother goddess in three figures symbolises the abundance of life. © Ulster Museum.

Above, right and left: Dolmen and stone circle in the megalithic complex of Carrowmore, Sligo County, Ireland.

Above, centre: Poul-nabrone Dolmen at The Burren, Clare County, Western Ireland. This is a so-called *portal tomb*, and the best-known dolmen of Ireland. According to the ancient Irish legend *The running away of Diarmuid and Grainne* (‘Grain goddess’), this dolmen was their sleeping-place during their flight from the mythical hero Finn Mac Cool. © Pentagram.



tion of his love, because at that moment the whole universe was vivified like a flash of lightning. It was one simultaneous sounding and jubilation with the spoken name of God, in one song of ecstasy and love.⁷⁴

In this splendid primordial image, the pillars rise up, which also appear as symbols in other traditions. Just think, for example, of the pillars of power and wisdom from the Jewish tradition that

stood next to the entrance of the Temple. In the Celtic tradition, the two pillars were called 'Art' and 'Knowledge.' They contained the entire wisdom of the ancient mysteries. This wisdom was also 'carved on two pillars' by Hermes, the great sage from ancient Egypt.

The third pillar, the pillar in the middle, is the pillar of love. While the whole of creation is supported by the two pillars on the left and the right, sound and

light, art and knowledge, power and wisdom etcetera, love arises in the middle and ignites everything in great harmony unto a great fusion of light. This can also be found in the Judeo-Christian tradition: Christ, as the manifestation of this power of love, does not come to abolish the (Jewish) law, but to fulfil it, as he explains. Wisdom and power are united in love.

“The realisation of the inherent truth in this ancient story is the heart and the essence of any study of Celtic mythology – or rather of all secrets of life. There is a triad everywhere. The human being, as the third one, can associate in any relationship to the other two.”

The human task is to combine the arts, science and religion within himself. When he realises this unity, it will radiate in society and in culture. That it concerns more than just the reconciliation between the two extremes of the arts and science, is shown by another source from Celtic mythology. This refers to the story of ‘Annwns’ Take,’ (also called ‘The Depth’). This story is attributed to the bard Taliesin, whose name means ‘radiant brow’, symbolising an enlightened person. The poem deals with a journey in a ship through seven enclosed spaces, circles, or sanctuaries (called ‘Caers’ in the text). The ship’s crew consists of twelve people, with the thirteenth one in the middle: Arthur. This isn’t just the image of the legendary Round Table, but also and above all a representation of the zodiac with the sun in its centre. In the poem, the seven planetary spheres are ‘visited’ by the twelve signs of the zodiac.

The path of the bards and druids pur-

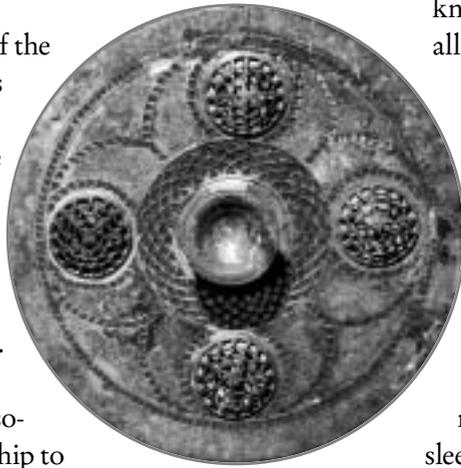
portedly had three stages: from the fixed constellations through the planetary spheres to the world of the elements. A true bard could say, just like Taliesin, the ‘Radiant One’, that he was thrice-born: ‘Three times I was born. I know how to contemplate. It is sad that people do not seek all knowledge of the world that is

gathered in my bosom. For I know all that ever was and all that will be.’ Every night, while asleep, a druid – someone who had accomplished a threefold initiation – consciously travelled through the three spheres (elements, planets and stars) and before awakening, in reverse order. To him, sleeping was, therefore, an awakening and death did not

frighten him.

The druid or bard who was initiated in the mysteries and had become a seer, felt himself to be a miniature model of the universe. From great heights, he looked down at the great ‘cosmic instrument’ in its twelfefold and sevenfold order. From this also emerged, for the druids in particular, the knowledge of all the realms lying below it. Thus he became acquainted with the secrets of, for example, earthly magnetism, but also with the reflection of influences emanating from the constellations and planets in the human body and in the planetary world. On this basis, he developed a form of medicine. The bard heard the melodies and the harmonies of the higher worlds. But it was not his lower personality that had this heavenly music at his disposal, but his self. The name of this self, which was united with divinity, was IAU, also called ‘the Younger’.

This is also universal. We find a similar name in the *Stanzas of Dzyan* (that were



Left: Gaul fighter on an armour belt from Slovenia; 4th century BC.

Above: We know many examples of richly-worked shields, like this bronze, open-work shield from the Chariot tomb at Cuperly, Marne, France.



Parade helmet of bronze and iron, gold and coral from Agris (Charente), approx. 400 BC, Musée de la Société Archéologique et Historique de la Charente, Angoulême, France.

later translated for the West by H P Blavatsky): ‘Behold, oh Lanoo, the radiant child of the two, the unparalleled refulgent glory, bright space, son of dark space, which emerges from the depths of the great dark waters! It is Oeaoohoo the younger. He shines forth as the son. He is the blazing divine dragon of wisdom.’⁶

In our time, the perspective has turned

around. We have now reached the nadir of materialism and crystallisation, and the way back or upward leads via the four elements or building stones (interpreted allegorically) through the planetary spheres to the world of the fixed stars, to the zodiac. If this path of initiation is walked, the ancient glory of the micro-cosmic human being is restored.



To the druid or bard, the journey to *Anrwn's Take* led into the depths. Before he finally descended into 'Gwair's jail', his body, everything had to be 'in good order', that is, in accordance with the cosmic laws. The just person, we can find in the text that reads like the report of an initiation, 'bears the heavy, blue chain'. He is subjected to the inevitable impurities and the heaviness of physical life (the blood). He also enters the world, referred to as *Vedirwid*. He has to be well prepared for his descent. It is the experience of stepping outside himself for the first time in order 'to become acquainted with the world,' of uniting with the world by experiencing its spiritual reality and not the illusion of its physical nature. Otherwise, the 'brightly burning sword' will be lifted against him, and he will not be able to cross the threshold of spiritual consciousness.

Charged with the 'take', the treasure of experience, Taliesin finally returns to the higher worlds, but with another name: Elphin, the 'Son of Man'. In him lives Taliesin, the immortal spirit, the microcosm. Elphin may be temporarily separated from Taliesin, but that is only appearances. He is ensnared and imprisoned in his earthly destiny. Taliesin releases him from it, and Elphin remem-

bers his heavenly destiny again. He turns to the inner spiritual being again. Finally, Taliesin sings before Elphin's wife, his soul. He enters the hall where he will sing, and all twenty-four bards are silenced by the genius that radiates through his recitation. In the number twenty-four, we recognise a universal symbol again. In the Christian and gnostic tradition, they are called the 'Twenty-four Elders'. They represent the two times twelve signs of the zodiac: the first time during the descent – the old lights – and the second time during the ascent, the 'the way of the stars' – the

Fragments of a Celtic calendar from Coligny (Ain), 2nd century BC. The Celts had a five-year cycle of 62 months, in a complex system based on the rhythms of the sun and the moon, and show a refined understanding of the stars and their movements.



A Gaul god carries a wild boar on his chest and has an extra eye on the side of his trunk. The wild boar was the symbol of the fighter/king, the eye refers to knowledge of the two worlds. © RMN/Man.

new lights on the inner firmament.

And then the pre-Christian aspect miraculously merges with the Christian aspect in his song:

*'John the Prophet
I was called by Merddin (Merlin),
ultimately every king
will call me Taliesin.*

*I was with my Lord
in the highest spheres,
when Lucifer
fell into the depths of hell.*

*I carried the banner for Alexander;
I know the names of the stars
from north to south.*

*I was on the cross of the horse
of Elijah and Enoch.*

*I hung on the tall cross
of the merciful son of God.*

*I was in Canaan
when Absalom fell;
I was in the hall of Don
before Gwydion was born
(Mercury or Hermes).*

*I was in heaven
with Mary Magdalene.*

*I received my inspiration
from the Cauldron of Ceridwen.'*

Every human being is a son of man, Elphin. In every human being, Taliesin is waiting to liberate him. Then Elphin arises from the earthly personality and becomes the son of God again, who he always was but who was forgotten. He regains his initiation name: Taliesin. Elphin-Taliesin represents the whole of humanity. It is splendidly expressed in the lines of the poem 'Royal Cadeir':

*'At the end of our efforts
the tongues will become extinct.
The fiery soul
will travel through the clouds
with the children of the Seraphim.
Your people will ascend
towards Elphin's redemption.'*

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- 2 Ibid.
- 3 The W is equal to the U and is pronounced as U in Welsh, so OIU.
- 4 Translated from the Dutch text of: Eleanor C. Merry: *The Flaming Door. The Mission of the Celtic Folk-Soul*. New Knowledge Books, East Grinstead, UK, 1936. Reprinted in 1962, 1983 and 1984 (Harper Collins, London).
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 H P Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*. Stanza III, verse 7. Theosophical University Press Online Edition.

The druids, an introduction



In the various Celtic communities, the druids played a decisive part. There is a world of difference between the romantic fantasy images and the documented reports that were written by historians and chroniclers from classical antiquity. Fiction tells about a majestic, grey-haired old man with a wavy beard and hair, who is surrounded by an otherworldly light in the oak woods, collecting mistletoe; who utters prophecies and brings sacrifices, including human ones, on the stone altars called dolmen. Reality was quite different: possibly more sober but just as fascinating.



The word druid is not related to the word oak. For centuries, this was assumed groundlessly. This is because Pliny the Elder spoke in his *Naturalis Historia XVI, 24* about the bards' devotion to mistletoe and where it grows. 'They perform no sacred rites without oak leaves; so that the very name of Druids may be regarded as a Greek appellation.' Thus it was concluded that the word derived from the Greek word drus (oak), and this conclusion is still supported by some people to this day. But it is quite different. In Nordic mythology, there is a connection between 'tree' and 'knowledge'. Pliny speaks about trees and not about oaks. It may be assumed that druid means 'man of the trees' or 'knowledgeable one', derived from the Indo-European word 'wid' which means wisdom.

Bards worked in communities that have been classified as Celtic. This

We can trace the Celts in England and Wales (Cymru) as Cymmerians, in Ireland as Gaels, in Scotland as Gaels and Picts and in France (Gaul) as Gauls. According to tradition, these people colonized 'a virginal land' in ancient times. Druidism was organised around 1800 BC under the leadership of Hu Gadarn (Stonehenge). He was a contemporary of Abraham and the patriarch of his people. The Celts did not commit anything to writing, not even religious matters, nor did they ever build altars in which metal or nails were used. They formed the biblical 'stone kingdom'. We may perceive an impression of their wanderings by following the pyramid-shaped stone heaps – the cairns – from the Middle East to Britain: from their original land beyond the river Euphrates (about 3000 years BC) to their new dwelling places on the island and in Gaul around the beginning of our era.

According to tradition, the first stone heap was erected by Jacob as a token or a contract between Laban and himself. 'So Jacob took a stone, and set it up as a pillar. And Jacob said to his kinsmen: "Gather stones," and they took stones, and made a heap; and they ate there by the heap. Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha; but Jacob called it Galeed. Laban said: "This heap is a witness between you and me today." Therefore it got the name Galeed.' (Gen.31:45-48)

Erecting a 'stone heap of the witness' became a religious tradition of the Hebrews and the Celts. It testified to their unshakeable belief in the covenant between them and the one invisible God.

Page II: Sandstone Etruscan stele from Bologna. The bottom image shows the struggle between an Etruscan knight and a Gaul warrior.

Right: Martin Linnartz. Mistletoe in an oak. Pencil drawing, 1981.

group of peoples lived in areas stretching from Hungary to the British Isles, from the plain of the Po to the Rhine estuary and from far in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor to North Africa, Spain and France.

In *De Bello Gallico* VI, 13/14, Caesar says of them: '... the druids preserve the religion, perform sacrifices and explain the teachings. Many young men are educated by them, and they are revered as their judgment is decisive in almost any conflict. They administer justice and make laws, they solve disputes concerning inheritances or borders, and they determine penalties or rewards. If an individual or a tribe does not obey, they exclude those involved from practicing religious duties. Obviously, this is the ultimate penalty for the Gauls... They do not usually partake in wars and do not have to bear weapons...'

The term druid covered much, as there were the most diverging talents and powers in which a druid was specialised. They were judges, priests, poets, literary artists and so on. The ancient Greek and Latin authors called them sometimes 'philosopher' and at other times 'magician', 'prophet', 'singers and poets', and Diodorus of Sicily concludes that no sacrificial ritual is performed without the presence of a druid



'specialised in philosophy'. The authors of antiquity always spoke admiringly about the druids and never considered them primitive wizards. Diviciacus says in his *De divinatione*, I, 40 'He (the druid) claimed to know the laws of nature, which the Greeks have called physiology, and he possessed the power to predict the future by observing and explaining the signs.'

Hippolytus says in his work *Fylosophumena*, I, 25 that the druids have made a thorough study of the teachings of Pythagoras, and Clemens of Alexandria states in his *Stromata* I, XV, 71 that Pythagoras was not only a pupil of the Brahmins, but that he had also studied with the druids. The Brahmins and the druids may be compared as their 'professions' of teaching and studying, poetry and legislature were similar. The starting point of Celtic law was identical to that of ancient India.

Myles Dillon, a former professor of Celtic at the university of Dublin, gives a whole series of remarkable similarities between the cultures of the Aryan Indians and the Irish druids.

In ancient Greece, one was amazed that the druids possessed a significant philosophical system and that these barbarians (any non-Greek or non-Roman people) knew a philosophical and religious tradition of such a high intellectual and spiritual level. Caesar said about the Celts: 'The druids teach that the souls do not disappear but proceed from one body to another.' Next to the king stood the druid. Together they ruled the land. In a Celtic community, the state, the temporal, stood in the service of the wisdom of the druids, the eternal. With the Romans and later with the Roman-Christian church, the eternal stood in the service of the temporal.



In addition to the Roman chronicles, much is known about the druids in ancient Britain, Ireland and Wales through traditions and documents from early Christianity. The origin of Christianity in England and the events of the first centuries were quite different from what the church wanted us to believe. The earliest information about Britain can only be obtained from Roman writers like Julius Caesar, Dio Cassius, Tacitus, Suetonius and later Roman authors. However, the available records show that Britain possessed a highly developed civilisation and culture at the time and could certainly not be described as 'barbaric'.

'Civilised and courteous to strangers' was how Diodorus Siculus (died 14 BC) characterised Britain's inhabitants. 'They are honest and have integrity; they are far removed from the tricks of certain people among us, they are

MISTLETOE

The knowledge of the druids of flora and fauna and their medical use of herbs and plants is indeed impressive and based on a profound knowledge of the human being. These 'knowledgeable men' worshipped the mistletoe for more reasons than just to make a 'magical potion'. In addition to being an important medicinal plant, the mistletoe was to them also a symbol of higher life. Mistletoe is a plant that never touches the earth because it draws its life force from ancient trees, often oaks, in vast forests that were sacred to the druids.

The mistletoe is not a parasite in the usual sense of the word. It draws water from the oak without jeopardizing it; it actually creates its own nourishment in the chloroplasts.

These sages and priests, who knew the healing powers of the mistletoe, considered it a gift from the other world, the world of the living; a gift from the circle of Gwynfyd. The mistletoe is not subject to the changing of the seasons. Its berries ripen in the coldest period. It avoids anything that is connected to the earthly cycle. It knows no upper or lower side and its shape is spherical. The germinating seeds of the mistletoe grow in all directions though not downward as those of any other plant. It is focused on perfection, is unearthly and maintains a special relationship with the light. The wise druids considered the mistletoe to be concrete proof of the divine help offered to the human being who is necessarily caught up in the circle of experience.

The tiny plant grew in the endless forests that covered thousands of acres of land full of remote places to which the turmoil of mutual tribal warfare hardly penetrated, to where there was boundless silence, borne by the rustling of the wind and where the violence of rising and fading civilisations passed by unnoticed. Field thrushes eat the berries of the mistletoe and drop the seeds on other trees via their fast digestion. Or they brush their bills, to which the seeds got stuck, on branches so that the mistletoe can spread from tree to tree.

Do we nowadays still know how to make the most effective healing ointment of it? This plant was also used as a remedy against the 'holy' disease: epilepsy. The druids could not know that mistletoe contains polypeptids, visotomine and biogenous aminocholine. But they did know that the mistletoe lowers the blood pressure and combats the growth of tumours because it is able to retain light and (vital) warmth. Thus it becomes understandable why these initiated men (and women) with their immense insight, surpassing earthly space and time, and with profound knowledge of the cosmos considered this plant to be a gift, a universal remedy, a remedy stemming directly from the 'endless plains' or, as it is also called, 'the land of the living'.



content with simple food and they like the luxury and splendour of rich people.' There was a lively exchange of knowledge and culture between the Romans and the Celts. The druids knew three levels of initiation that they had to pass through before they were admitted to the religious mysteries. Of the third phase it was said that those who passed it successfully were 'reborn'. In this way, they gained access to the teachings that the druid priests had preserved since antiquity. They experienced 'the special favour of the gods'.

The leaders of the British religious and political world were chosen from this group of initiates. They, too, knew a Madonna with a child in her arms – symbol of the purified soul with the new life principle – and on 25th December, at dawn, the birth of the sun god was celebrated. Both the cross and the serpent were sacred symbols to the druids. With the arrival of the Romans, they had a history of at least 2000 years. Their starting point was the triad: 'Every man has three duties; to honour God; to behave in a correct way to every human being; to die for your country.'

The druids were predominantly aristocrats so that it literally was a 'royal priesthood'. The order consisted mainly of kings, princes and noblemen. The authority and influence of the druids was vast. They could impose the highest penalties, and also the most feared one: that of excommunication,

which meant that one was expelled from both worlds: from this and the future one. The temples of the druids were shaped like circles with open roofs and sides; by their shape, they symbolised the arch of heaven and it was not allowed to take metal inside. The altar in the druidic circle was called 'cromlech' (stone of worship) and a hollowed-out stone served as a basin for receiving untouched 'holy' water that was caught directly from the rain clouds. No druidic worship could be performed before sunrise or after sunset. The circular shape of the temples symbolised the eternal cycle of nature and the entrance paths also had a symbolic function and sometimes had a length of seven miles.

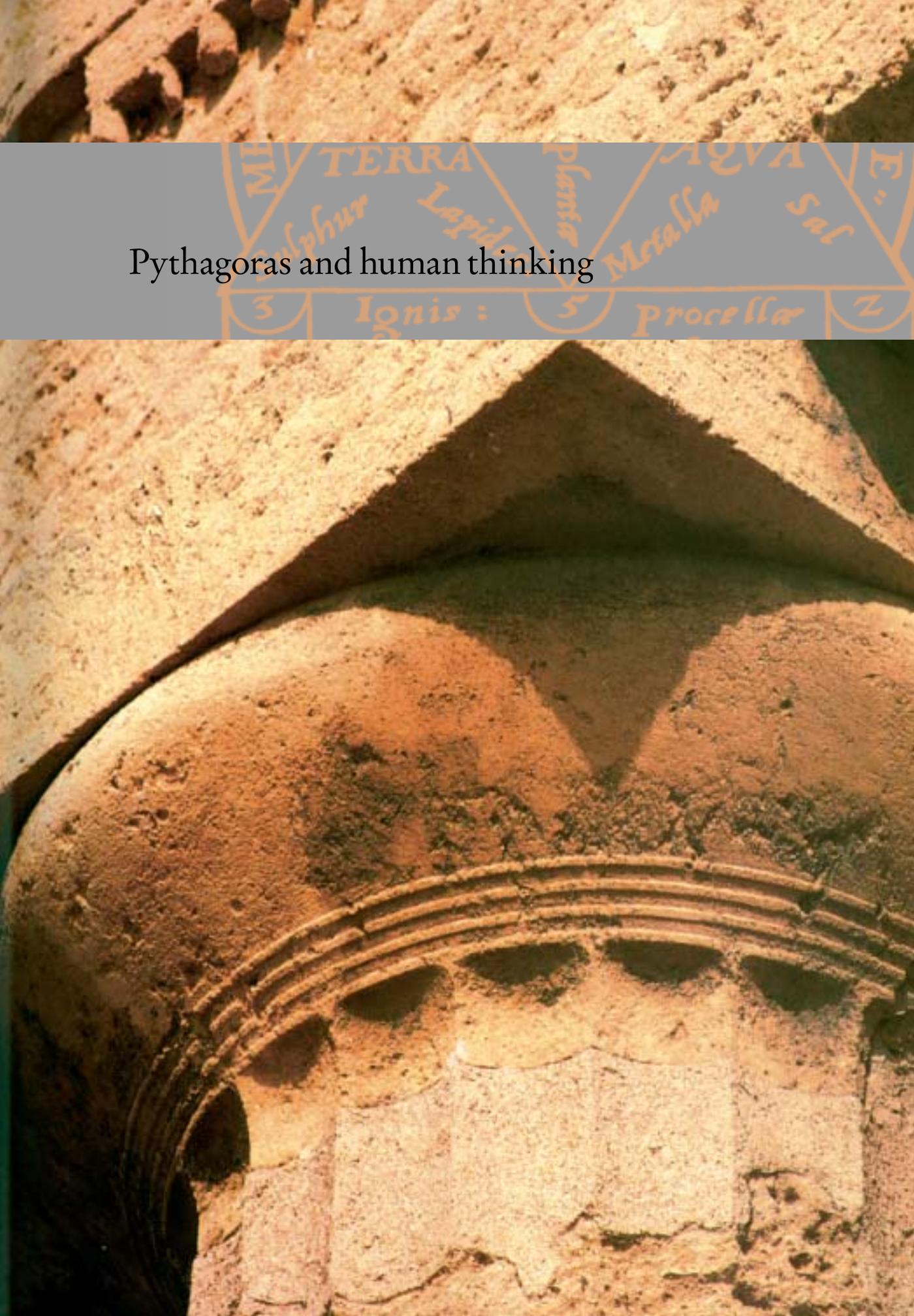
The druidic institutions in Britain in the first century AD counted more than sixty universities enrolling more than 60,000 students. Becoming familiar with druidic wisdom and everything related to it required an average of twenty years. Through its schools and universities, ancient Britain had obtained a status that could compete with that of the present and many people chose to study there. Greek and Roman sources show that noblemen and wealthy people from Athens and Rome sent their children there to study law, science and religion. The determined efforts of the Roman empire to end this superiority, and if possible to make it disappear completely, prove that the rulers in Rome were very much aware of

it. They only definitively succeeded after 325 AD when state and church formed a monster alliance. But ever since the ordinances of Augustus and Tiberius, it was clearly stated that druidism should be extinguished, among other things by declaring the practice of the priestly functions of a druid high treason.

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Pythagoras and human thinking





Pythagoras is the great sage who stood at the beginning of the Greco-Roman cultural period. Together with the Egyptian-Hermetic tradition and the Jewish-Christian religion, he left his stamp on the development of Western thought. At the beginning of the Greco-Roman culture, he stood also at the cradle of individual thinking that played a major part in this cultural period.

According to Pythagoras, human thinking stems from two sources, or in other words, human thinking has two aspects: a lower and a higher one. The lower aspect is the power of reason which Pythagoras called 'consideration'. It is a cognitive faculty, formed by the transitory world, with the I in the centre and, for this reason, only concerns the phenomena of this world. It defines causal relationships, it considers the means to be used for achieving the envisaged goals and orders the sensory perceptions into concepts and scientific systems.

The higher human cognitive faculty, called the 'best insight' by Pythagoras, is an organ of spiritual thinking, of which we might say: it is a form of intuitive thinking. Its centre is the true self, the spiritual nucleus in a human being. According to the Rosicrucians, it can become active in the head as soon as the spirit-spark in the heart is stimulated. As it is composed of the forces and based on the laws of the divine world, those who are aware of them can discover the inner motives of the world of phenomena. The Spiritual School of the Rosycross refers to this intuitive or spiritual thinking as the new consciousness, the new soul.

For Pythagoras and in the school founded by him, these two ways of thinking were in harmony with each other. The spiritual thinking was the guiding principle, which set the objective for rational thought and defined its limitations. Rational thinking was the servant of spiritual thinking. It implemented the latter's impulses in the world of phenomena or recognised laws in that world, which were expressed in parables and analogies of the divine world. In this way, it was a kind of preparation for directly experiencing the divine world.

When, for example, the Pythagoreans looked at a regular pentagon or pondered

Pythagoras (approx. 582/70 – 496 BC) came from the Greek isle of Samos that lies off the coast of present-day Turkey. He travelled much and visited many mystery places of the ancient world (in Egypt, Babylonia, on Crete and in Greece) where he was initiated. In 520, he travelled to Crotone in Southern Italy. There he founded a school or brotherhood, which had 2,000 followers, including 600 initiated women and men. The basic principles of this school were: being focused on the spiritual law, non-conflict, harmony in all undertakings (which was particularly supported by music, astronomy and geometry) and unbreakable friendship (group unity). The path he showed is expressed in the famous *Golden Verses*. From this school emerged a mystical-ritual cult, which was dedicated to Apollo, the sun god of wisdom and the arts. Discord among the pupils and hostility from outside caused the school or brotherhood to cease existing after Pythagoras' death. But the energy released by him and also his teachings have continued to exist throughout the centuries and stimulated many thinkers (among whom are Plato and Plotinus) who consolidated them in their schools.



upon the seven tones of the tone scale, the numbers five or seven reminded them of the same basic numbers on which the whole cosmos of the world of phenomena is built, and which form the basis of the divine world. This is a totally different approach than the 'cold' explanation of Pythagoras' theorem, which doesn't even stem from him, but had already been known much longer. To Pythagoras, numbers were the basic principle of the divine and earthly nature – numbers seen as qualities, and not merely as quantities: numbers as the principle of order.

THE UNCURBED SUPREMACY OF RATIONAL THINKING

Through time, the relationship between the two types of thinking was lost. Many philosophers only accepted rational thinking. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), for example, stated 200 years ago that the human being is unable of spiritual thinking, a thinking that can recognise and acknowledge God and the divine laws. He should confine himself to the knowledge of things that can be perceived sensorially by the rational mind. With remarkable acumen, Kant defined the limitations of rational thinking and showed that it is unable to recognise phenomena like God, freedom, immortality etc., and cannot prove the existence of God. And he is certainly right in this respect. But was he also right in denying that man will ever be able to acquire a different way of thinking, the spiritual thinking, that enables him to know God and His qualities?

According to Kant, man was unable to approach God through thinking, but at most through 'moral inner law', as he put it. He believed that man has an inner 'feeling' that God, freedom and morality exist. This was probably a weak reflection of the activity of his spirit-spark.

But sensing the moral inner law is different from the certainty that develops by 'seeing' God through spiritual thinking. To Pythagoras, the intuitive, spiritual thinking is the very attainment of man that makes him the true human being: the *manas*. Only intuitive thinking gives the human being insight into his divine origin, his place in the universe, his current fallen state, the actual goal of his life and the path leading to it. In his *Golden Verses*, a detailed description of the spiritual path, Pythagoras says: 'But take courage; the race of man is divine. Sacred nature reveals to them the most hidden mysteries' (verses 63-64).

Rational thinking helps man control nature. Rational thinking can make life easier and more comfortable. But when he ignores spiritual thinking and tries to orientate himself exclusively in this world, he will finally feel lost and lonely like a speck of dust in the universe, brought forth by chance, and thrown into life without rhyme or reason.

This way of thinking has actually become the point of departure of everything. It is a threat to nature and man. This way of thinking must, loyal to itself, reject spiritual thinking.

If Pythagoras were to live today, he would be awed by the results of biogenetics, accomplished by rational thinking. He would see this as the demonstration of his idea that the world of phenomena is magnificently ordered by number and structure, down to all details. He knew that the creator, in his wisdom, generated the archetypes of his creations within himself – just as thinking generates a thought. These prototypes work in creatures like seeds, according to certain laws, and allow them to gain experience until they will one day become aware of themselves and God, who is also within them. As above, so below: just as



FROM PYTHAGORAS' GOLDEN VERSES

Never begin to set your hand to any work, till you have first prayed the gods to accomplish what you are going to begin. Consult and deliberate before you act, that you may not commit foolish actions. For it is the part of a miserable man to speak and to act without reflection. Never do anything which you do not understand, but learn all you ought to know, and by that means you will lead a very pleasant life. Concerning all the calamities that men suffer by divine fortune, support with patience your lot, be it what it may, and never repine at it, but endeavour what you can to remedy it. And consider that fate does not send the greatest portion of these misfortunes to good men. Whatever you receive, adhere to what I teach you. And by the healing of your soul, you will deliver it from all evils, from all afflictions. Know that all these things are as I have told you; and accustom yourself to overcome and vanquish these passions: first gluttony, sloth, sensuality, and anger.

Never suffer sleep to close your eyelids, after your going to bed, till you have examined by your reason all your actions of the day. Wherein have I done amiss? What have I done? What have I omitted that I ought to have done? If in this examination you find that you have done amiss, reprimand yourself severely for it; and if you have done any good, rejoice. But take courage; the race of man is divine. Sacred nature reveals to them the most hidden mysteries, while the divine has no place on earth, more in accordance to its own nature than a pure and holy soul.

The ancient theologians and priests testify that the soul is connected with the body through a certain punishment and that it is buried in the body like in a tomb. Everything we see when we are awake is death, and when we sleep a dream. Let reason, this divine gift, be your supreme guide. A good mind is the working place of the divine, a bad mind is the working place of evil. And when, after having divested yourself of your mortal body, you arrive at the most pure Ether, you shall be a God, immortal, incorruptible, and Death shall have no more dominion over you.

In antiquity, Pythagoras' Golden Verses have been compiled by Iamblichus and consist of Pythagorean teachings, which had been preserved through the efforts of a number of his pupils. Marsilio Ficino, who also translated the *Corpus Hermeticum*, published these verses anew in 1490. Subsequently they have appeared in numerous publications.

harmony and beauty, law and number rule in the divine world above, this is also true in the world of phenomena below, even if the creatures of that world were to stray from the divine plan within them, as they currently do.

Being filled with awe and amazement, Pythagoras would abstain from any rash manipulation of natural laws – the thought wouldn't even cross his mind. He knew only too well that each particle of nature, e.g., the gene of a plant, is very closely related to all other particles. He who blindly interferes in the natural processes without insight into these relationships, disturbs the natural course of things and prevents their development towards the great goal intended by the creator.

In the same way, Pythagoras would regard the current theory of evolution. He would admire the unlimited multiplicity of the animal and plant life that proves the inexhaustible divine 'imagination' and would delve into the laws of evolution – mutation and selection. He wouldn't even think about mere chance being responsible for these developments. He would say that the divine activity in nature uses mutation and selection to advance the development of its creatures.

And what delight would Pythagoras derive from noting the discoveries in the field of particle physics: how the tiniest atom is built according to the laws of measure and number, works in accordance with these laws and thus reflects the creator's wisdom that arranges everything according to measure and number. However, he wouldn't want to split these atoms, particularly since it is unknown how this might affect the household of nature.

Rational thinking must be controlled, but due to its nature it is incapable of

doing so itself. Only a heart that is mild, benevolent and all-encompassing can give rise to all-encompassing spiritual thinking. Such a heart is linked with the world of the spirit and mitigates rational thinking. Only spiritual thinking can give human life meaning and show the way in which it may be realised.

THE MIND AS A NEUTRAL TOOL

Pythagoras says that the human being must think for himself. Become independent, live your own experiences and thus enter the spiritual path as soon as possible. First of all, you shall learn and *experience* when the mind is useful for you and when it is harmful. 'And if you have done any good, rejoice. Practise thoroughly all these things; meditate on them well; you ought to love them with all your heart. 'Tis they that will put you in the way of divine virtue' (verses 44-46). Your innermost yearning for the truth shall become the compass of your thinking. You will discern if what you think to be light is not in truth darkness, and whether that which others or printed books tell you is not just speculation. Believe your inner compass and be sober.

'If you follow your path like this,' Pythagoras continues, 'you will find reliable insights into the laws of both the earthly and the divine world. You become detached from your relentless passions and fears, the inner forces that cast a shadow over your consciousness and induce vain fancies and delusions. With the clear view of your rational mind, you will then see the reality of the world of phenomena and you will move therein wisely. Wisely means: so that your spiritual development is not prevented. Now by measure I mean what will not incommode you' (verse 34).

THE MIND AS SERVANT OF THE NEW
THINKING

The I, and therefore also the mind, will then become servants of the new soul, of the new thinking. With this new, intuitive thinking you will, one day, be free of any earthly impediments. 'Leaving yourself always to be guided and directed by the understanding that comes from above, and that ought to hold the reins. And when, after having divested yourself of your mortal body, you arrive at the most pure Ether, you shall be a God, immortal, incorruptible' (verses 69-71).

Having this in mind, Pythagoras experienced the situation of mortal humans: 'Like huge cylinders they roll to and fro, and always oppressed with ills innumerable' (verses 57-58). He realised that the only help is to help them find their own way to freedom.

With this in mind, Pythagoras founded a mystery school. He had discussions with various groups of people: senators, boys, young men and women. He gave four famous speeches addressing each of the four groups, thus winning over students and sympathizers. Subsequently he organised a community, taught, and gave communal, spiritual addresses. In this context, intuitive thinking was necessary, because any external organisation must correspond to the inner law. The organisation and the stages of the path, the relationship between master and students, the content of the addresses and lessons, all reflected the harmony, the order and the beauty of the spiritual laws controlling the cosmos. Unconditional obedience with regard to the spiritual law determined Pythagoras' deeds and also those of his pupils. This is the point of departure of any mystery school and is written in

every human heart. 'When you have made this habit familiar to you, you will know the constitution of the Immortal Gods and of men. Even how far the different beings extend, and what contains and binds them together' (verses 49-51).

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A wise man

Pythagoras' father was the merchant Mnesarchus from Tyre. Legend relates that he brought grain to the city of Samos when it was suffering from a famine, and that this earned him citizenship. Pythagoras' mother was Pythais from Samos. Pythagoras probably had two or three brothers. In his early years, he received a good education; he was taught, amongst other things, philosophy, lyre playing and poetry. He made several journeys with his father.

According to some sources, Pythagoras first lived in Egypt for some time and later, as a prisoner of war, in Babylon (the region around present-day Baghdad), before returning to Samos. It is certain that he left Samos for Crotona in Southern Italy to establish a colony. This may have happened in 530 BC, but possibly not until 518 BC. In Crotona, Pythagoras founded a philosophical and religious community. The nucleus of this community was formed by the 'mathematikoi'. They were taught by Pythagoras himself and obeyed strict rules.

Pythagoras summarised the principles of the community's faith in a few 'axioms of the faith':

- At its deepest level, reality is of a mathematical nature.
- Philosophy (the study of wisdom) can be used to attain spiritual purity.
- The soul can raise itself to the unity with the divine.
- Certain symbols (numbers, for example) possess a religious value.
- All members of the community swear an oath of absolute loyalty and secrecy.

Philosophy, and mathematics in particular, were studied in the Pythagorean community. One of the main aspects of Pythagoras' worldview was, for example, that

everything could be reduced to numbers.

The Pythagoreans studied number theory in a more or less metaphysical way, but applied it to everything. To them, everything was ordered by natural numbers. The number 2 represented the man and 3 the woman; logically, the number 5 = 2 + 3 therefore represented marriage. But also music, harmony and numbers belonged inseparably together. In their view, the world was one glorious work of art, and Pythagoras was the first one to use the word 'cosmos', which literally means 'ornament' or 'work of art', when referring to the world. With regard to astronomy, he taught that the earth was a sphere in the centre of the universe, that the orbit of the moon formed an angle with the equator and that the morning star Venus was also the evening star.

Another important aspect of Pythagoras' philosophy was his conviction that the soul is immortal and migrated to another body after death. This need not necessarily be that of a human being. Pythagoras was, therefore, very much opposed to eating meat. According to his philosophy, it might then be possible to eat your own grandparents!

Because of the fifth rule – absolute loyalty and secrecy – it is

not certain how many of the group's ideas and manuscripts really are Pythagoras'. On the one hand, everything was attributed to the great master, while we, on the other hand, do not know a single of his manuscripts. The teachings were largely secret and no one was allowed to record anything of it. Prospective members had to be silent for a long time and were not allowed to familiarise themselves with all knowledge of the initiates. Within the group, the respect for the great master was so large that the argument *autos epha* (Greek) or *ipse dixit* (Latin), which means 'he said so himself', precluded any further discussion within the order.

Despite the secrecy, many authors from Greek and Roman times wrote about Pythagoras, not only the great philosophers and scholars Aristotle and Iamblichus, but for example also the Roman poet Ovid, who was fascinated by Pythagoras' ideas. In his masterwork *Metamorphoses*, he quotes Pythagoras with the words: *Omnia mutantur, nihil interit* (everything changes, nothing perishes), words that sound familiar, even today.



JUDAS ISCARIOT, GOSPEL OR TREASON?

The importance of self-knowledge

Numerous gospels, treatises, revelations and other kinds of writings circulated during the first centuries of our era. Some of them were rooted in much older texts from Egypt and even from India, others originated from that time. Their content varied considerably, from well-known apocryphal texts like *The Gospel of Truth*, *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve* and *The Gospel of Mary* to, for example, *The Gospel of the Magical Arts*, *The Gospel of Jesus the Sun*, *The Gospel of Helena* (Emperor Constantine's mother), *The Teachings of Peter*, *The Letter of Seneca to Paul*, to thirty six scrolls that were called *Acts* and were written by a man called Fabricius.

The four familiar gospels from the Bible were compiled at a later date and adapted by unknown writers by order of those who, at the time, tried to create

Gospel means glad tidings. In the New Testament of the Jewish-Christian Bible, four of these gospels are included in the form of mythical stories about the resurrection of the human being, the journey home of the prodigal son. They have no historical value whatsoever, but refer exclusively to processes in the human being and aspects of developments in the human soul. As Hermes says to Tat:

*'You ought. O Soul, to get sure knowledge of your own being, and of its forms and aspects. Do not think that any one of the things of which you must seek to get knowledge is outside of you; no, all things that you ought to get knowledge of are in your possession, and within you.'*²¹

a basis for their Church. These and other gospels were not written by historical persons called Judas, John, Mark, Thomas, Mary, Phillip, or whatever name they may have had. There isn't any proof for this. The names given to the canonical writings were derived from the names of the apostles of Jesus and these gospels were then 'marketed' by the Church as original manuscripts.

Around 475 AD, a presbyter called Theodoret, supervised the establishment of churches in Rome, and he wrote the following about the widely diverging Christian texts: 'I have also found myself more than two hundred such books in the churches which have been received with time; and having gathered them all together, I caused them to be laid aside, and introduced in their place just four Gospels for the bishops to use.'²²

A 14th-century French illustration of the Arthur legend, in which the sword Excalibur is returned to the lake. Arthur sits heavily wounded at the bank of the lake, while Bevidere throws the sword back into the water, where a woman's hand takes it away. © British Museum.

Many Church authorities knew that these writings were falsifications, but nevertheless called them 'divine'. This was actually openly admitted. Bishop Victor from Tunnunum in North Africa, who died around 569 AD, said: 'In the consulship of Messala, at the command of the Emperor Anastasius, the Holy Gospels, as written by *Idiota Evangelista* (meaning the evangelists themselves), are corrected and amended.'³

A GUIDE FOR THE PSYCHE

The original Gnostic texts may be interpreted as descriptions of stages of consciousness, states of growth, understanding and realisation, and of life experiences symbolised by names of persons, countries, regions or cities with a particular meaning, but which, in fact, all occur within the human being at a certain moment. The way back to original divinity can never be placed outside the human being.

In short, the gospels contain a description (or parts thereof) of the prodigal human being on the way back to his fatherland. This is a quest and a path of development of the human being with three phases: John-Jesus-Christ. In other words, of the purified (physical) human being, the soul figure and the spirit-soul human being. Or, put differently again, the path of development of seeking, realisation and resurrection. It is a path that leads right through all natural, inner and spiritual resistances. And any human being, who asks himself honestly who he is and what he is doing on this earth, experiences the voice of his conscience at the appropriate moment. Then, for a brief moment, the divine spark gets some space in the prison of this material life, and the universal light power, which we call Christ, illuminates his heart.

Every human being then also experi-

ences the anger of his imprisonment, of Herod, whom he also carries within himself, but also the power of a Baptist and of Jesus.

Every human soul suffers under the oppression of matter, but must nevertheless seek the origin of this suffering in his own self. Then he also sees the Pharisees and the other scribes, the countless blind, cripples, beggars and lepers. He discovers that the tax collectors and whores also live in him, and also Pilate, Saul, Peter, John, Mary, and Judas who must sell Jesus to the world. For the human being who can grasp it, the meaning of the gospels is clearly etched in his soul. But who is able to do so, who knows himself and therefore his true nature, his soul? Who possesses such inner wealth? Perhaps a humble path of experience and purification, and conscious of being deprived of this original knowledge, offers an opening for the current human being to gain this insight and this maturity.

At this moment, between 30 and 60 apocryphal gospels are known in the Christian world – depending on the way we count them – in addition to the four canonical gospels. The *Gospel of Judas* has once again turned the theological world upside down. From various statements in dailies and weeklies, it is nevertheless evident that everybody is trying to explain this find, which defies all previously taken points of view, to their own advantage. Quite a bone to chew on by the theologians!

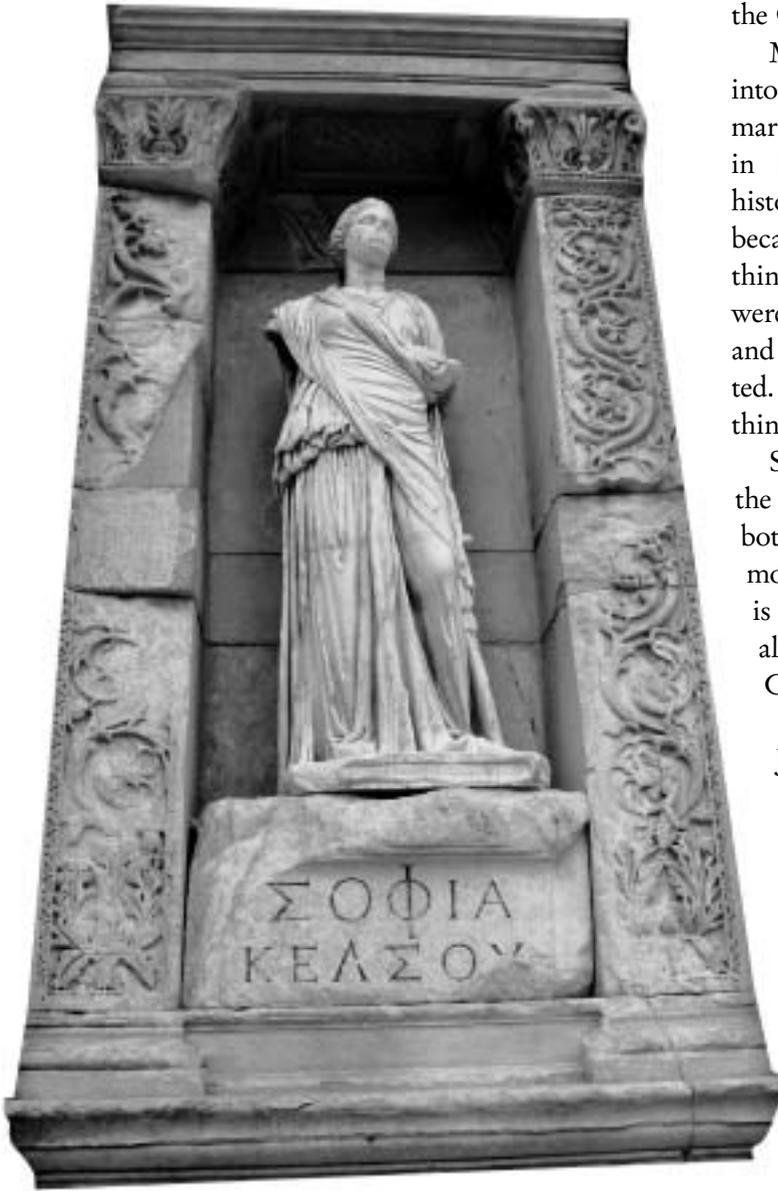
The official point of view is that these Coptic texts, according to experts translated from Greek, were found in Egypt around 1975 and ever since travelled the world as adventurous merchandise for the highest bidder, until they were bought by an American foundation in 2005.

Shortly before Easter 2006, the texts

Historical records of the church call a group of people the 'early church fathers,' a term that 'commonly applies to the church writers of the first six centuries. However, that phrase is a vague generalization only [...] A misconception among Christians today is that apostles passed on Jesus Christ's message to these men, a theory invalidated by both church and historical records. For the first three hundred years the primitive church had no organization and the clergy [...] were generally called presbyters [...] The original meaning of "presbyter" [...] simply meant 'old man', and a contraction of it resulted in the Old English word 'preost', which today is 'priest'. [...] The best of the presbyters could read and write. In Greek they were called 'episkopos' [...] subsequently this became 'bishop' today. They ruled the other presbyters who would only repeat stories and who, of course, added to them. [...]

Those who received the gift of public speech ultimately possessed all authority in the primitive church [...] The transmission of both Old and New Testaments was oral, exactly as the gospels are read out in churches today. Second-century documents written by Celsus revealed that it was commonly accepted in his time that presbyter's manuscripts were ever-changing compilations of ancient myths and fictional tales, and in those early years there was a great diversity of opinion amongst presbyters about what stories should be "publicly read". Celsus recorded this comment about the essence of the Presbyterian texts: They lard their lean books with the fat of old fables... and still the less do they understand... and they write nonsense on vellum... and still be doing, never done.⁴





Statue of Sophia (wisdom) in Celsus' library in Ephesus. © Pentagram.

have been published as the rediscovered Gospel of Judas. It is indeed a rediscovery, because they purportedly must already have been known by the persecutor of heretics, Irenaeus of Lyon, as his manuscript *Adversus Haereses* (Against heretics) from 180 AD shows, in which he discards them as a fraud, because they did not fit the politics of the developing church. *The Gospel of Judas* was most likely known already in 120 AD.⁵ It concerns one of the many 'heretic' Gnostic writings from original early Christianity that were banned by

the Church.

Mythical Christianity was turned into a personified story, Jesus into a martyr and God into an almighty man in heaven. Like everywhere else in history, it is the account of the victor, because all Gnostic groups and dissident thinkers from the beginning of our era were persecuted, eliminated, murdered and their writings destroyed or confiscated. What really happened was something entirely different.

Since the middle of the last century, the truth about this is brought to light, both literally and metaphorically, ever more clearly and rapidly. An example is *The Gospel of Judas*, probably found already in 1947 in Al-Minya in Central Egypt.

Again glad tidings, showing that Judas was apparently not a traitor and that, therefore, the so-called holy church fathers must have tampered a lot with the texts of the other gospels to make it appear so. The meaning of Iscariot is explained by some as derived from Keriot (a place near Hebron), while others say that Judas was born in the distant land of Iscariot, where the Iscariotites lived, who, like the Canaanites, lived in seclusion and formed a rather isolated Jewish-Gnostic group.

THE FLIGHT OF THE FEATHERED SERPENT

In 1953, *The flight of the feathered serpent* was published in Mexico, a book that, partly in the form of a story, throws an entirely different light on the, very often misunderstood, significance of Judas Iscariot in this very special Christ drama. On the whole, it is probably no less important than the recent texts on Judas Iscariot published with so much ado. The question remains if the

author of this book had any knowledge of these texts. A few passages from this remarkable book are quoted below⁶:

‘Jesus said to Judas concerning the other disciples: “They are sleeping peacefully, because they found a part of what they were seeking. But you, Judas, have not found yours and your cup will be bitter in drinking. Yet, your reward will be great in heaven. A great storm will come over all of us and there will be unrest in peaceful hearts. But yours will be tossed to and fro in its loneliness and will only find peace in the joy of the

Lord when the law has been fulfilled”’.

‘Jesus spoke to Judas: “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were so, I would already have worn a crown on my head more splendid than that of Solomon. But you will see me crowned in the way the world crowns every Son of Man. On that day you will weep, but the flood of your tears will be a hidden stream in the greatest depth of the water of the rivers; one that – instead of flowing to the sea – leads to a source lying higher than the mountain tops. In that stream you are living and through

The Greek word *hairesis* was a word indicating that one had taken sides, was adhering to a philosophy of life. It was neutral and not loaded emotionally. Also in the Bible the word was used in a neutral way. In the first century, it generally became a negative concept, signifying a dissident concept of faith.

The Greek *hairesis* became *sectae* in Latin (heresy-sect). In present times, heresy is more synonymous with ‘religious dissidence’ than with ‘sect’.

Heresy is a theological or religious opinion or doctrine maintained in opposition of, or considered to be contrary to the catholic or Orthodox teachings of the Christian Church, or, by extension, to that of any church, creed, or religious system, considered orthodox.⁷

that stream you will serve, to enable others to sail also upstream of the river of fate”’.

‘An unimaginably great light surrounded us (up to three times). And I, Judas, heard great words of truth, spoken in the kingdom of heaven. I knelt at the feet of my rabbi and said: “Now I know who you are.” But my rabbi put his hand over my lips, looked at me lovingly and said: “Judas, beloved of my heart. Remain silent of what you have seen, for my hour has not yet come. It is necessary that fate be fulfilled and you will help me accomplish it.” Many beautiful words of truth he imparted to me, without speaking them with his mouth, but so that afterwards they were etched into my heart.’

‘Jesus spoke: “Judas, from now on I

will call you my friend. Yet, the world will understand with difficulty who you are in reality and in spirit. But the hour has come for me to wash your feet. For concerning the things that must come quickly, every human being has the choice to react in two ways, that is, to accept his servitude consciously or to resist it. The human being prefers to deny the truth, so as to see only one aspect of God. And mistakenly he then starts to believe that he knows Him in His entirety. But you and I will now fulfil righteousness just as all righteousness of the Father must be fulfilled. Happy is he who can understand what now lies in your heart, Judas”’.

‘Blessed are you, my rabbi, Son of God. For you are the “yes” to humanity, whereas I am the “no”. I now see you as

the light that drives away the darkness. I will be your reflection in that darkness in the human soul, so that they will know which path to follow and which one to avoid...'

'Rabbi, rabbi of my heart. I see the night approach and how I will have to lose myself in the darkness for man to be saved. Hand me this cup if it is your will and that of our Father who is in heaven. Help me to endure the agonies awaiting me.'

'And when he reached me his hand with the sop invitingly, I accepted it. His eyes looked at me compassionately and mine were bathed in tears because my soul trembled of fear. Full of compassion he said to me: "What you must do, do it quickly".'

The story continues by telling us that he is of different blood than Jesus. He was made of clay, of the dust of the earth, as Genesis 2 expresses it. In his heart, he longed to heat his clay to become a pure vase for the great unseen. He had tasted in his heart the kiss of eternity.

How remarkably similar – particularly with regard to their meaning – are these words from 1953 to the words of the recently rediscovered Gospel of Judas, in which Jesus says to Judas: 'You are the disciple who has truly understood me. You will surpass all the others (disciples). For you must sacrifice the man that covers me.'⁸

THE NECESSITY OF TREASON

In the 1970's, J van Rijckenborgh says in an article in the monthly periodical *De Topsteen* (The Topstone), a predecessor of the current *Pentagram*, about King Arthur and his twelve knights that it is always necessary that one knight plays the role of traitor. In the Arthur legend, this role has been assigned to

Mordred. Just as in the gospel, also in pre-Christian religious history a Judas figure always fulfils a very necessary role. 'It is therefore really necessary,' J van Rijckenborgh explains, 'that the human being begins to understand this activity of the higher, new life. The Arthur legend, just as the Christ drama, must be placed in the life of the individual human being.'

The author continues: 'He or she who wants to become an Arthur or Jesus human being, must, fully aware of his task and calling and at the right psychological moment, have the courage to say to Mordred/Judas, while seated at the round table with his twelve knights/disciples, that is, in his private life field with its twelve active forces: What you want to do, do it quickly [...]

Thus it is Judas who leads his master to Golgotha, and hangs himself after this work is accomplished, that is to say, turns himself to higher good, just as in esoteric philosophy the sorrow of the twelfth house becomes the passage to the new birth in the first house [...]. The most characteristic property of earthly nature is self-maintenance. For the human being who tries to make higher life serve his ordinary ambitions for salvation, one of the twelve knights/disciples has to forge the link. Higher life gives itself captive, resulting in the death of Mordred/Judas. Earthly nature loses and ruins itself through self-maintenance. In the Arthur story, the king is wounded and must withdraw to Avalon. Avalon means, I will return.

Orthodox Christianity expects the second coming of the Christ in the distant future, but the human being who is going to look into God's depths, knows that this second coming is, cosmically, a daily event in the clouds of heaven, and individually in the respiration field, when he evokes this power in

whatever way. [...] The concept of a “round table” refers to an esoteric-scientific process, in which the candidate, together with the twelve pairs of cranial nerves that control the entire physical body, begins to work consciously with the twelve soul powers, begins to eat consciously of the bread of the Presence and is prepared to call up the powers of the Holy Spirit for breaking up his dialectical life. [...] Thus the myth of the round table becomes an encounter of the candidate with his twelve disciples in a specific phase of his spiritual development, in which will be spoken emphatically and powerfully: what you want to do, do it quickly.”⁹

In the book *The Living Word* by Catharose de Petri, the Judas mystery is expressed as follows: “The more you grow, the more you will become aware of the appalling power of delusion. Just as Judas betrayed Jesus to the scribes, so the delusion is one of the twelve forces on your path of life, and this force will continually betray you until you see through its essence to the fullest extent. Then it will flee like Judas, and, relieved of its pernicious influence, you will once again tie yourself to delusion to collaborate in the liberation of humanity of which you are an inextricable part.

If you cannot give up Judas, if you cannot release yourself from delusion, you will continue to rotate within the circle of your twelve possibilities. But should you succeed in liberating yourself from that, the broken link will form the possibility for the ascent to a higher spiral of life. [...] See here the greatest victory next to the deepest disillusionment. This is a struggle every human being who wants to realise Jesus the Christ in his deepest self will have to live through.”¹⁰

It is perhaps not a coincidence that the texts of the Gospel of Judas recently

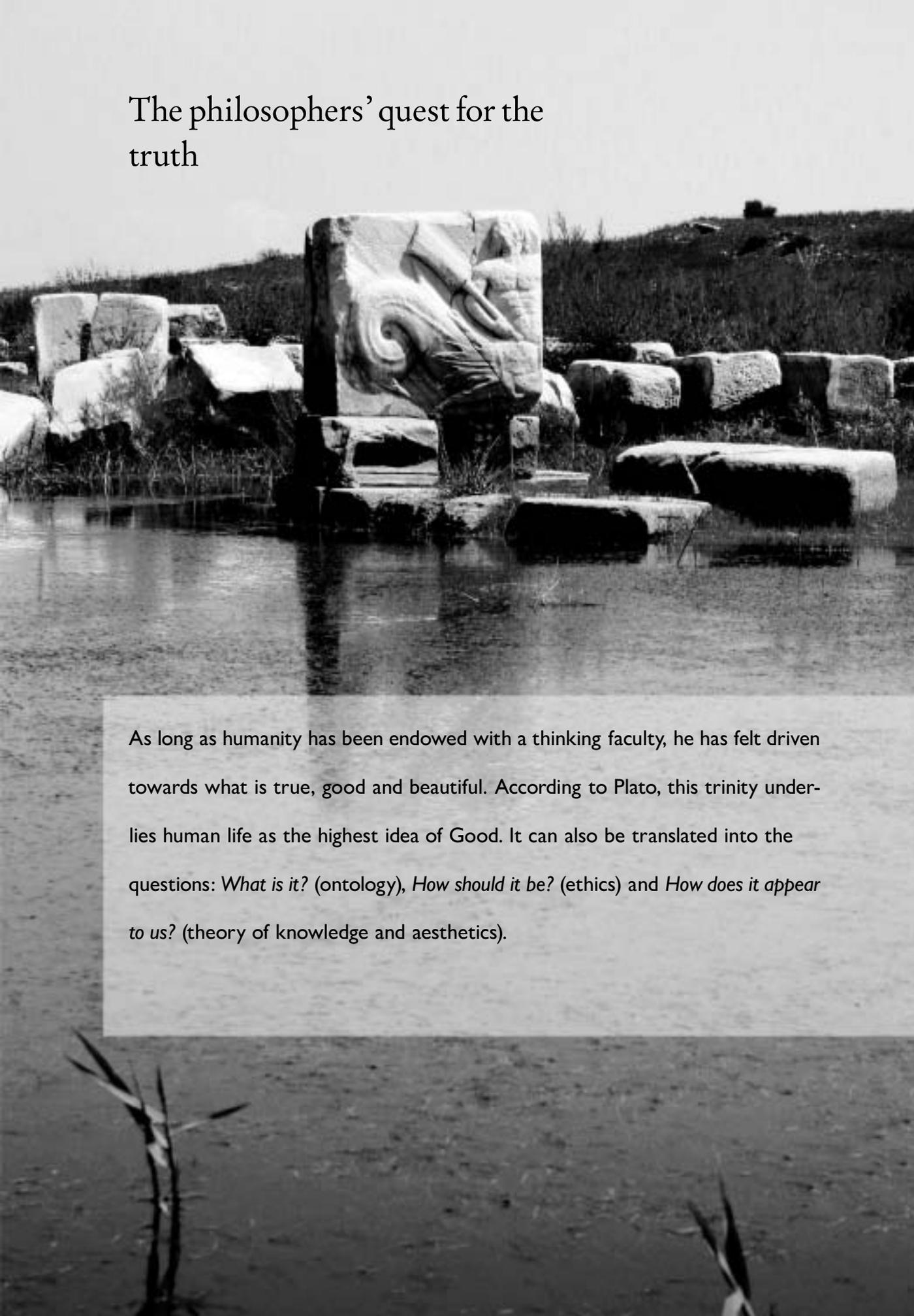
(re)appeared on the scene, now that humanity must demonstrate in this beginning Age of Aquarius, whether it has discovered and understood the true knowledge in his soul.

After 2000 years, we seem to be ready for it again. Perhaps we may say that the time has come in which humanity learns to understand this. Yet, only those who in their daily inner life are true followers of Jesus the Christ, will be able to unveil and experience this mystery within themselves. In this context, it is also important that a human being realises that the divine light impulse of this era, which carries the name of Christ, can only be realised in his heart, in his soul. As long as experiencing Christianity by humanity is external, the significance of Judas Iscariot will certainly remain a great mystery.

NOTES:

- 1 Hermes Trismegistus, *De Casigatione Animae*, Cap. 12, verse 5, (transl. by W. Scott). Hermetica, vol. IV, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1936.
- 2 Tony Bushby, *The Crucifixion of Truth*. Joshua Books, Maroochydore, Australia, 2004, p. 175.
- 3 Ibid, p. 175.
- 4 Ibid, p. 48-49.
- 5 Interview with prof. H v Oort by L Dros in daily *Trouw*, dated 6-4-2006.
- 6 Translated from the Dutch text of: Armando Cosani, *The Flight of the Feathered Serpent*.
- 7 www.wikipedia.org/heresy
- 8 Interview with prof. H v Oort by L Dros in daily *Trouw*, dated 6-4-2006.
- 9 Address by J van Rijckenborgh, *De Topsteen*, 1979.
- 10 Catharose de Petri, *The Living Word*, chapter 39. Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, The Netherlands, 2000.

The philosophers' quest for the truth



As long as humanity has been endowed with a thinking faculty, he has felt driven towards what is true, good and beautiful. According to Plato, this trinity underlies human life as the highest idea of Good. It can also be translated into the questions: *What is it?* (ontology), *How should it be?* (ethics) and *How does it appear to us?* (theory of knowledge and aesthetics).

When the human being realises that he is a presence in the world, the moment arrives that he wonders: what is this world, which function do I have in it and what am I *expected* to do in this world? He seeks for the truth concerning his own 'being' in the world. Sooner or later, he then inevitably arrives at the three vital questions: Who am I? From where do I come? And where am I going?

Religion in all its many forms has tried to provide an answer to these questions. World teachers have tried to explain to people what they perceived in their revelations from a higher world. In addition, the Gnostics showed the way to be able to share in this divine reality in this life.

THE DIALECTICAL METHOD

Western philosophy, however, has always approached these fundamental questions with rational arguments, which Aristotle described as the 'dialectical method'. From the time of the Greeks up until the eighteenth century, the concept of 'dialectics' was only considered an art of argumentation which used opposites to arrive at the truth. This method is characteristic of Western philosophy. The starting point is certain, unproven, yet in principle accepted certainties, undeniable axioms, and on this basis it is tried through logical deductions to reach equally undeniable conclusions about what 'is' and what 'ought to be'. But the catch lies precisely in these axioms. What is our point

'The diseases from which we suffer stem from the formation of human thoughts.'

Teilhard de Chardin

of departure?

In the course of time, various points of departure have been accepted. Where can undeniable certainties be found? In everyday life, it is that which we directly perceive, what we can see with our eyes and touch with our hands. In our system of justice, too, it is expected that witnesses tell the truth and nothing but the truth on the basis of unbiased observations made during certain events.

PLATO AND THE GNOSIS

Yet it was Plato, who in his dialogues can be regarded as the 'master of the dialectical method', and who had already placed great question marks at the level of reality of what we perceive with our sensory organs. In the famous passage from his dialogue *Politeia* (The State), he recounts how people can be led to take a world of shadows for the real world. From this, Plato draws the conclusion that the external world, which we perceive with our sensory organs, is not reality but merely the projection of a higher reality. The only thing that really exists is the world of ideas: a hierarchy of ideas at the apex of which stands the 'only good', which is what is good, beautiful and true all in one.

There is a certain correspondence between Plato's view and that of the later Gnostics. Plato also recognised that it is man's aim to

'The heart has reasons, reason does not know.'

Blaise Pascal

attain this higher reality through a process of development. He called such a person a 'philosopher', but he attributed a much wider interpretation to it than we do now.

His pupil Aristotle was more of a scientist, a spiritual world conqueror who ordered all the knowledge he could assemble according to strictly logical principles. By so doing, he set the stage in all sciences and, for centuries, determined philosophy.

The contrast with Plato is striking: whereas

Plato was focused, more or less poetically and with love, on an inner development towards the *one truth*, Aristotle became lost in a multitude of logical systems and categories.

We encounter this difference in points of departure quite frequently in history. Thus there are Gnostics, whether called Neo-Platonists or not, who devote their contemplation and striving to supernatural reality.

And there are philosophers who lose themselves in systems of logic, of which the drawn-out rationality is unable to take the entire truth, which clearly encompasses many more fields, into account. Philosophers, who complied with the power of the Roman Church, saw themselves confirmed in Aristotle's approach.

By separating the world of faith from the world of knowledge and taking special care that his conclusions never came into conflict with ecclesiastical truths, Thomas Aquinas, among others, was able to develop his ingeniously refined theological systems, while at the same moment the last remnants of gnosticism were cruelly destroyed in southern France and in Italy.

THE ONLY CERTAINTY IS THAT I DOUBT

Not until after the Middle Ages, at the dawn of the period that was also called that of 'modern philosophy', a renewed effort was made at finding an answer to the issues upon which Plato had touched. Once again, the question of 'undeniable principles' was raised as a basis for the philosophy of truth.

Famous is Descartes' saying *Cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am). He formulated it after calling into doubt everything that was purportedly true. Amidst all the doubt, only one thing remained certain: *the fact that I doubt*.

Page 30: The ruins of the city of Milete in ancient Magna Graeca (current Turkey) are submerged during a major part of the year.

Left: Grieving goddess Athena. Tomb stele from 470 BC, Acropolis, Athens.



In the further elaboration of his philosophy, Descartes became lost, however, in the separation of matter and spirit. This means that, despite all doubts, he nonetheless proceeded from an external world and a world of thinking separated from it.

Through this, Plato's allegory of the cave (see pages 35-36) was once again scrutinized. For more than a century, thinkers racked their brains with the question: What is reality?

Immanuel Kant came up with a genial but sobering conclusion to this discussion. He showed that spirit and matter must be separated in a different way. Admittedly, he too still departed from the premise of an external world, but nevertheless demonstrated that we can perceive it only through a consciousness which filters and sorts all impressions in such a way that they suit the thought structure of the perceiver. The main characteristics of this human thought structure are three-dimensional, spatial thinking and the concept of time.

From this point of view, space and time are therefore not characteristics of actual things themselves but of the consciousness. The hard, concrete reality in which we believe we are living turns out to be a reality of the *consciousness*, a 'mental image'. The *Ding an sich* (The thing in itself) is not comprehensible to the human mind.

Kant's conclusions ushered in a new period of philosophical thought. His work marks a watershed between what may be described as early-modern and late-modern. Right to this day, the question persists: What is truth, if reality is evidently just a reality of the consciousness?

After Kant, there were initially still attempts at an all-encompassing philosophy in which the boundaries set by the time-spatial consciousness were meant to be surpassed. It is the question of the reality behind the reality of the human consciousness, the world of the *Ding an sich*.

Since the approach of rational logic was abandoned here, religious and speculative conceptions were in a hurry to provide answers. It

'The heart knows, the head denies, is there no other way?'

Stephen Sondheim

seemed inevitable that the great religious, philosophical systems be addressed. They'd had an answer at the ready for a long time, but were still waiting for the right question.

Hegel drew very close to gnostic thinking by stating that, behind everything manifested, there is an absolute, driving spirit, which becomes conscious of itself via humanity. Hegel transferred dialectics as a method of attaining new insights to a different plane. To him, it was a natural law through which things continually develop towards an ever-higher level.

Although this so-called speculative philosophy had great beauty, it was rejected by other thinkers as too impractical and too chauvinist Germanic. Yet, Hegel's thinking exercised a great influence, and not just upon Marx who, with his dialectical materialism, placed the entire human path of development within the context of a material world again.

DOUBLE DIALECTICS

It was from Hegel's philosophy that Jan van Rijckenborgh took the term 'dialectics' – the inspired vicar and professor Arnold Hendrik de Hartog acting as mediator – distinguishing thereby, however, between lower and higher dialectics.

Lower dialectics is the fundamental law of the external world, in which everything develops within the tension field of opposites. While Hegel proceeded from an ever more steeply ascending line of development, however, according to Jan van Rijckenborgh, is also characterised by the aspect of almost perpetual repetition or turning of the wheel,

through which every seemingly higher development for the better again and again slips down to a lower one and is ultimately pulverised by time.

Jan van Rijckenborgh likewise speaks – more in the spirit of Hegel – of higher dialectics as a field of development in which the original human being, as a ‘thought of God’, develops towards a self-conscious and self-creative, divine being.

Since Hegel’s time, a certain weariness on the part of philosophers may be observed. Attempts to achieve an all-encompassing philosophy, simultaneously responding to the issues touched upon by Kant, are abandoned. If everyone apparently lives in his own fragment of reality with his own truth and his own system of good and evil, there is little point in fabricating ‘tall tales’ as to what is and what ought to be. This is expressed in what is afterwards called post-modern philosophy. *The* truth does not exist, says the axiom.

What is good, beautiful and true exists only within an individual reality. Conflicting realities can therefore be true at the same moment and in the same space.

Moreover, reality can be manufactured. Advertising experts, politicians and authors have discovered that it is possible, via illusion, selective reporting and half-truths, to create something in people’s minds which is seemingly real.

THE TRUTH COMPRISES MORE THAN THE MIND

It seems as if we have arrived again at the point with which Plato began. The statement of the Greek sophist Protagoras ‘Man is the measure of all things’ has once again become

relevant.

Yet, the age-old search for the truth has indeed been successful. The greatest gain is that even to rational thinking it has become clear that there is much more than can be grasped by the mind. No single philosophical system and no single conceivable model of reality is absolute. It becomes apparent that all models are superseded again by new insights. If we take this as our point of departure, new possibilities emerge and we are standing in a new freedom of thought.

For this is what post-modernism has brought us: nobody is waiting for a new philosophy by another philosopher. Now the moment has come to understand that each of us holds the key, and has the task to seek his own inner truth, which at the same time will prove to be the universal truth. For that which is found from within is many times stronger than that which is imposed from above. These values are perhaps not yet clearly visible, but there are groups and individuals everywhere who are searching in every possible direction. When this seeking is open-minded and each of us perseveres, it will certainly be successful, just as in winter nothing is visible yet, though all kinds of things occur underground, and then suddenly in spring a sea of colour bursts forth, to which every single flower contributes its share.

Plato: The allegory of the cave

'We might compare our natural state of development with the following situation. Behold, human beings living in an underground cave, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the cave; here they have been from their childhood, and have their hands, legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets. And do you see men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent. A strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

They are like ourselves.

They see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave.

How could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows.

Obviously.

And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

Very true.

And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the

passing shadow?

Yes, that seems logical.

To them, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

That is certain.

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains. The glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows. And then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to reality and his eye is turned towards more real

existence, he has a clearer vision, what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them, will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw, are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

Absolutely.

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take flight in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

Indeed.

And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and

rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the sun itself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated?

Of course.

When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

No, indeed, certainly not immediately.

He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves. Then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Certainly.

Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of it in the water, but he will see him in its own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate it as it is.

Certainly.

He will then proceed to argue that this is it who gives the seasons and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold.

That would indeed be the first step.

And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the cave and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

Certainly, he would.

And if they were in the habit of

conferring honours among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honours and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer: "*Better to be the poor servant of a poor master*"; and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner?

Yes, I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.

Imagine once more, such a person coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness? And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the cave, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady – and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable – would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending. And if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

No question.

This entire allegory may now be appended to the previous argument. The prison house is the

world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun. And if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world, then you have at least understood my own expectations, which you liked to hear anyway. Whether they are right or wrong, only God knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of "value" appears last of all and only with an effort.'

SOURCE OF THIS TRANSLATION:

Plato, *The Republic*, transl. Benjamin Jowett. Vintage, 1991, pp. 253 ff.

To be found at:

<http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/allegory.html>.

A splendid inner development

Every perfection which I perceive, becomes mine own – Friedrich Schiller, *Theosophy of Julius*



We know that the Reformation and later reformed thinkers had rather rigid opinions. An unbridled, irrational(!) 'objectivity' that seemingly belonged to the 'church' as an institution, is never able to keep human nature in check, not even with the most terrible threats or oppression. At the beginning of the 18th century, this influence, which controlled a large part of society, was waning.

Under the initial impulses of an approaching new era, it was no longer the church – the object – that mattered, but the human being – the subject – himself, who wanted to understand God, creation and his own soul. God's word was heard again, no longer as revenging justice, but as a subtle, inner admonition. Eighteenth-century seekers were longing for 'biblical' realism, a guide for their mode of life, and were inwardly (and sometimes also outwardly) yearning for the coming kingdom. They were people like Spener and Oetinger, later called 'pietists', who had the courage to distance themselves from rigid orthodoxy, and had an eye for the human being.

Pietism particularly propagates the idea that what you say must correspond to what you do. In this context, the erudite vicar can learn a lot from the sincerely pious washerwoman, and a blacksmith or carpenter may know more of/about God than a professor of theology. Simple farmers sometimes acquire the stature of saints, while scholarly theologians run the risk of being called Pharisees.

This point of view strongly influenced a number of German authors. The father of Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760) was one of Spener's followers. Zinzendorf professed 'the religion of the heart', was devoted to Jakob Böhme and later founded the movement of the Moravian Brothers. Novalis (Friedrich, Freiherr von Hardenberg, 1772-1801) was one of

them, and the historian Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) had a mother who strongly leaned towards pietism. Schiller lived in a period, during which a strong impulse for reorientation appeared. In the 18th century, pietism was a German, protestant, religious movement seeking a new experiencing of untainted Christianity, which considered sin 'nature' – the old being – and grace 'rebirth' – the new being.

SOCIAL CRITICISM

Schiller was the son of a non-commissioned officer, and at the intercession of the sovereign, he was able to study law and medicine at a military school. He became a regimental physician in Stuttgart. Stimulated by the writings of the Enlightenment, he wrote his first social-critical tragedy *Die Räuber* (The robbers). The first production in January 1782, which Schiller had to attend secretly, resulted in Schiller being imprisoned and receiving a writing ban: he was only allowed to write medical articles. Schiller understood that he would be unable to live under this tyranny and fled with a loyal friend to Mannheim ('abroad'). A period of wandering began, and friends and people who were well-disposed towards him provided for his material needs.

Schiller was characterised by an inner conflict, which actually never completely subsided during his life and was caused by

The Pietists

Just as the Cathars received their name from their adversaries, those who scorned and cursed the followers of Johannes Spener (1635-1705) called them 'pietists', after the word 'pius' that means 'devout'.

dissatisfaction with the social conditions. This brilliant author and historian nevertheless preserved a fundamentally optimistic attitude, focused on human development. This resounds in his motto: 'Live in your age, but never be its creation; render services to your contemporaries, not by what they praise, but by what they need.'

Between 1785 and 1787, young Schiller lived in Leipzig and Dresden in Christian Gottfried Körner's house, whose acquaintance he made during his wanderings. Körner, three years older than Schiller, became his bosom friend and spiritual teacher. In addition to an extensive general education, Körner also had a great knowledge of what was called arcane or secret sciences. It is assumed that Körner had contact with the legendary Count de Saint-Germain in Leipzig, about whom many mysterious stories circulated. Through Körner, Schiller came into contact with theosophy (theos-god and sophia-wisdom), and this stimulated him to writing the ode *An die Freude* (To joy). His ode was later put to music by Beethoven and is nowadays the anthem of a united Europe. The striving for high ideals, which Schiller elaborated in his tragedies, was a splendid expression of the spirit of the time. Schiller was one of the first ones to inwardly understand the new impulse of individual freedom. He considered it his task to anchor these ideals in human beings.

Schiller developed by studying vari-

Pietists were striving for personal conversion and for rejection of the world. They practised a life of inner religion and combined it with pious family values and the preservation of Sunday observance. It is therefore not surprising that we find well-known names of people among the precursors of the pietists, who were lifelong advocates of a practical and devout Christianity. Jakob Böhme was one of them. Another one was Johannes Arndt, one of the people who inspired Johann Valentin Andreae, the author of the Rosicrucian manifestoes.

Entirely in this spirit and tradition, Philipp Jakob Spener published his book *Pia desideria* (*Serious Requirements for a Reformation of the True Evangelical Church*). In this publication, he put forth six proposals for the reformation of the church:

- 1 profound study of the Bible by vicars and laymen;
- 2 a universal Christian priesthood ('general priesthood of the faithful');
- 3 the application of this knowledge of Christianity in deed and life;
- 4 instead of attacking dissenters violently, approaching them sympathetically and kindly;
- 5 reorganisation of theological education in universities in such a way that living religiously would be more strongly emphasised;
- 6 making the way of preaching more accessible and intelligible to ordinary people.

ous subjects, but particularly by delving into history. He devoted himself to a historic tragedy about the counts Egmont and Hoorne, who were beheaded for freedom's sake in Brussels in 1568; he wrote about *Die Geschichte des Abfalls der Vereinigten Niederlande* (History of the Secession of the United Low Countries) and about *Die Geschichte des Dreißigjährigen Krieges* (History of the Thirty-years War). He also occupied himself with philosophy. He studied Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Critique of Pure Reason) and *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (Critique of Practical Reason). As a young man, Schiller believed that circumstances prevented people from becoming inwardly free. He wondered: Who will educate humanity?

'It is the artist's task to lead humanity to inner harmony.' Beauty is one of Schiller's most important ideals, and he thought that the classical Greeks were masters of it. They possessed this harmony...

Also his later works like *Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais* (The Veiled Image at Sais) and *Taucher* (The Diver), in which he expresses the limitations of human knowledge, testify to his maturity.

He wrote many theatrical works because, in his eyes, the theatre was a powerful instrument. He expected from the stage the incentive to the rebirth of the nation.

In *Theosophie des Julius* (Theosophy of Julius), which was published for the first time in Schiller's periodical *Thalia* in 1786, this event occurring in one's inner being is described. He wrote it as a series of letters between Julius (the twenty-six years old Schiller) and his spiritual teacher Raphael (the three years older Körner).

Initially, Julius, the pupil of spiritual matters, feels proud and full of joy

because of the new insights he received: 'These rocks have I ascended at your side, at your side I wandered through this immeasurable perspective.' Hardly is Julius left alone by Raphael, so that he could become inwardly strong and mature on his own, or feelings of despondency and doubt arise and he grumbles: 'What have you made of me, Raphael? Believe none but your own reason, you did further say. There is nothing more holy than the truth. What reason discerns, is the truth. I have obeyed you, and have all opinions sacrificed [...] Your theory has flattered my pride. I was a prisoner [...] You have transformed me into a citizen of the universe... But – unfortunate contradiction of nature – this free upward-striving spirit is woven into the rigid, unchangeable clockwork of a mortal body, mixed up with its small requirements, yoked to its small destiny – this god is banished into a world of worms [...] I am not happy. My courage is gone. I despair of my own strength. Write me soon [...]'

Raphael reacted to this by requiring Julius to cure himself of the 'illness of the soul': weakness and doubt. Julius must develop from a child, still needing nourishment from a teacher, into a mature citizen of the spiritual world. 'You have to survive an illness, from which you can only recover through your own self alone, in order to be safe from any relapse. The more deserted you feel yourself, the more you will summon all healing power in yourself [...]'

In his reply, Raphael explains his *Theosophy of Julius* to him. It consists of five chapters, which describe five stages of development at the level of the soul. In the first chapter, *The World and the Thinking Being*, Julius (Schiller) deals with the relationship between creation and the original divine energy.

‘The universe is a thought of God [...] It is the vocation of all thinking beings to find once again the first design in this existing whole [...] To seek the unity in the composition, the law in the phenomenon [...] For me there is a single appearance in nature, the thinking being [...] Everything in me and outside of me is only the hieroglyph of a power [...] The laws of nature are the alphabet, by means of which all spirits converse with the most perfect spirit [...] Harmony, truth, order, beauty, excellence give me joy, because they betray to me the presence of a rational, feeling being and let me divine my relationship with this Being.’

Careful consideration of nature may result in the conclusion that there are properties suggesting the existence of continuous life: ‘Each coming spring gives me explanation of the uneasy riddle of death and refutes my anxious apprehension of an eternal sleep. The swallow, which we find benumbed in winter and in spring see come to life again, the dead caterpillar, which, made young anew as the butterfly, rises into the air, give us an excellent sensuous image of our immortality [...] Where I discover a body, there I divine a spirit. Where I notice movement, there I conjecture a thought. Where no dead lies buried, where no resurrection will be, speaks Omnipotence indeed to me through His works, and so I understand the theory of an omnipresence of God.’

The second chapter is titled *Idea*. In everyday usage, idea refers to a sudden thought, a brainwave. In this respect, our inner world is addressed. The word *idea* stems from the Greek word *idéa*, which approximately means appearance or form. These concepts belong to the external world. Both aspects are linked. It de-

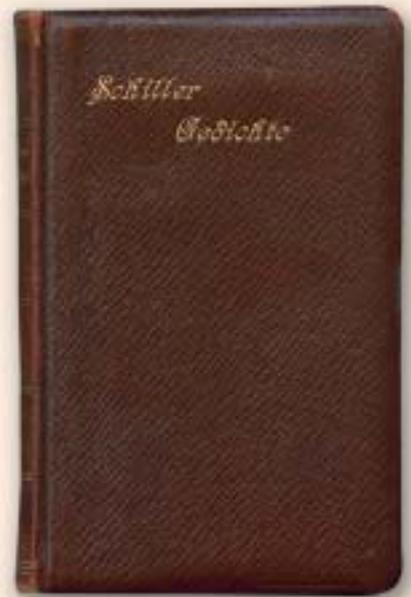
pends on the quality of a soul what it assimilates of the outside world. Conversely: everything beautiful and noble that it takes up, it assimilates and thus it develops.

IDEA

‘All spirits are drawn by perfection [...] Intuition of the beautiful, of the true, of the excellent is the instantaneous taking possession of these properties. Whichever condition we perceive, we enter into it ourselves. In the moment, when we think of them, we are the proprietors of a virtue, the authors of an action, inventors of a truth, owners of a happiness. We ourselves become the perceived object [...] The perfection becomes ours at the moment, wherein we awaken in ourselves a conception of it [...].

We have concepts of the wisdom of the highest Being, of his goodness, of his righteousness, but none of his omnipotence. To indicate his omnipotence, we help ourselves with the stepwise presentation of three successions: Nothing, His Will, and Something. It is waste and dark – God calls: Light – and it becomes light. Had we a real idea of His working omnipotence, so were we creators, as He. [...] Every perfection, therefore, which I perceive, becomes mine own, it gives me joy [...] What beauty, what excellence, what enjoyment I bring forth outside me, I bring forth myself, that which I neglect, destroy, I destroy myself, I neglect myself. I desire the happiness of others, because I desire my own. Desire for the happiness of others we name benevolence, love.’

In the third chapter, ‘love’ and ‘the absolute’ are described. Love, which is the noblest thing on earth, is only a shadow of the absolute.



LOVE

‘Love therefore is the most beautiful phenomenon in the soul-filled creation, the omnipotent magnet in the spiritual world, the source of devotion and the most sublime virtue. Love is only the reflection of this single original power, an attraction of the excellent [...] When I hate, so take I something from myself; when I love, so become I so much the richer, by what I love. Forgiveness is the recovery of a lost property – hatred of man a prolonged suicide; egoism the highest poverty of a created being [...]’ Schiller wants to express the active element implied in love. Love is an active power, a great and important activity. This is why understanding and benevolence exist between beings who are similar, who are of the same level. However, love can be activated between beings who differ, but yet are in harmony.

With pleasure I discern again my perceptions in the mirror of yours, but with more fiery longing I devour the higher ones, which are lacking in me [...] The man, who has brought it so far, as to ga-

ther up all beauty, greatness, excellence in the small and great of nature and to find the great unity in this manifoldness, has already moved very much nearer to the Divinity. The entire creation runs into his personality. If each man loved all men, so each individual possessed the world! [...] I admit it frankly; I believe in the reality of an unselfish love.’

In the fourth chapter, the fourth stage of inner development, the nature of this unselfish love is examined. It may culminate in the sacrifice of the loved one.

SACRIFICE

‘It is thinkable, that I enlarge my own happiness through a sacrifice, which I offer for the happiness of others, but also then, when this sacrifice is my life? And history has examples of such sacrifice; and I feel it lively, that it should cost me nothing, to die for Raphael’s deliverance [...] How can the cessation of my existence agree with the enrichment of my being? [...] It is indeed ennobling to the human soul to sacrifice the present advantage for the eternal; it is the noblest degree of ego-

Schiller was unbelievably popular, and his works received numerous editions. The above one is an edition with lithographs from 1913.

ism, but egoism and love separate mankind into two highly dissimilar races [...] Egoism erects its centre in itself; love plants it outside of itself in the axis of the eternal whole. Love aims at unity, egoism at solitude [...] Egoism sows for gratitude, love for ingratitude. Love gives, egoism lends [...], immaterial, whether the tributes fall in this life or in the other!

Think of a truth, my Raphael, which benefits the whole human species into distant centuries and add thereto, this truth can only be believed, if he dies. Think then of the man with the bright encompassing sunny look of genius, with the flaming wheel of enthusiasm, with the wholly sublime predisposition to love. Let the complete ideal of this great effect climb aloft in his soul [...] The human species, that he now thinks, is he himself. It is one body, in which his life, forgotten and dispensable, swims like a blood drop. How quickly will he shed it for his health [of the whole]!

In the fifth chapter, Julius beholds this path for entering into unity, into God, and how the human being can realise this vital task.

God

‘The whole substance of harmonic activity, which exists together in the divine substance, is in nature, the image of this substance, scattered in innumerable degrees and measures and steps. Nature is an infinitely divided God. As in the prismatic glass, a white stripe of light is split up into seven darker beams, the divine ‘I’ has been broken into countless perceiving substances. As seven darker beams melt together again in one bright stripe of light, out of the union of all these substances a divine being would issue forth. [...]

The attractive power of the elements

brought about the bodily form of nature. The attractive power of [pure] spirits, multiplied and continued into the infinite, had to lead at last to the annulment of that separation, or (may I express it, Raphael?) *bring forth* God. Such an attractive power is love. Therefore love, my Raphael, is the ladder, whereby we climb aloft to divine likeness. Love is: the exuberantly growing Arcanum, to rescue the eternal from the ephemeral.

What is the sum of all the foregoing? Let us plant beauty and joy, so we harvest beauty and joy. Let us think clearly, so shall we love ardently. Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect, says the founder of our belief. Weak humanity grew pale at this command, therefore He explained Himself more clearly: Love one another. [...] There is *one* truth, which, like a firm axis, goes commonly through all religions and all systems: *Draw near to the God, whom you love.*’

The quotes in this article have been taken from: Friedrich Schiller, *Philosophical Letters*. Translated by William F. Wertz Jr. http://www.schillerinstitute.org/transl/Schiller_essays/philosophical.letters.html

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Antonin Gadal

On the Path
to the
Holy Grail

The ancient
Cathar Mysteries

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Antonin Gadal

Who actually were the Cathars? Virtually everything we know about this community, which lived in southern France during the Middle Ages, was written by those persecuting them or has been falsified. The only reliable witnesses from that period, the caves, valleys and rivers that formed the background of their life, whisper the stories of their unconditional devotion and their total dissociation from worldly matters.

Gadal, who assimilated these stories during his youth, passed this jewel on in the form of a novel. With great feeling, he depicts all the details of the path to the Holy Grail. It is clear that it concerns not only a story, but a living reality.

He accompanies us on this journey of initiation through time, searching for the true light-treasure of this brotherhood.

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