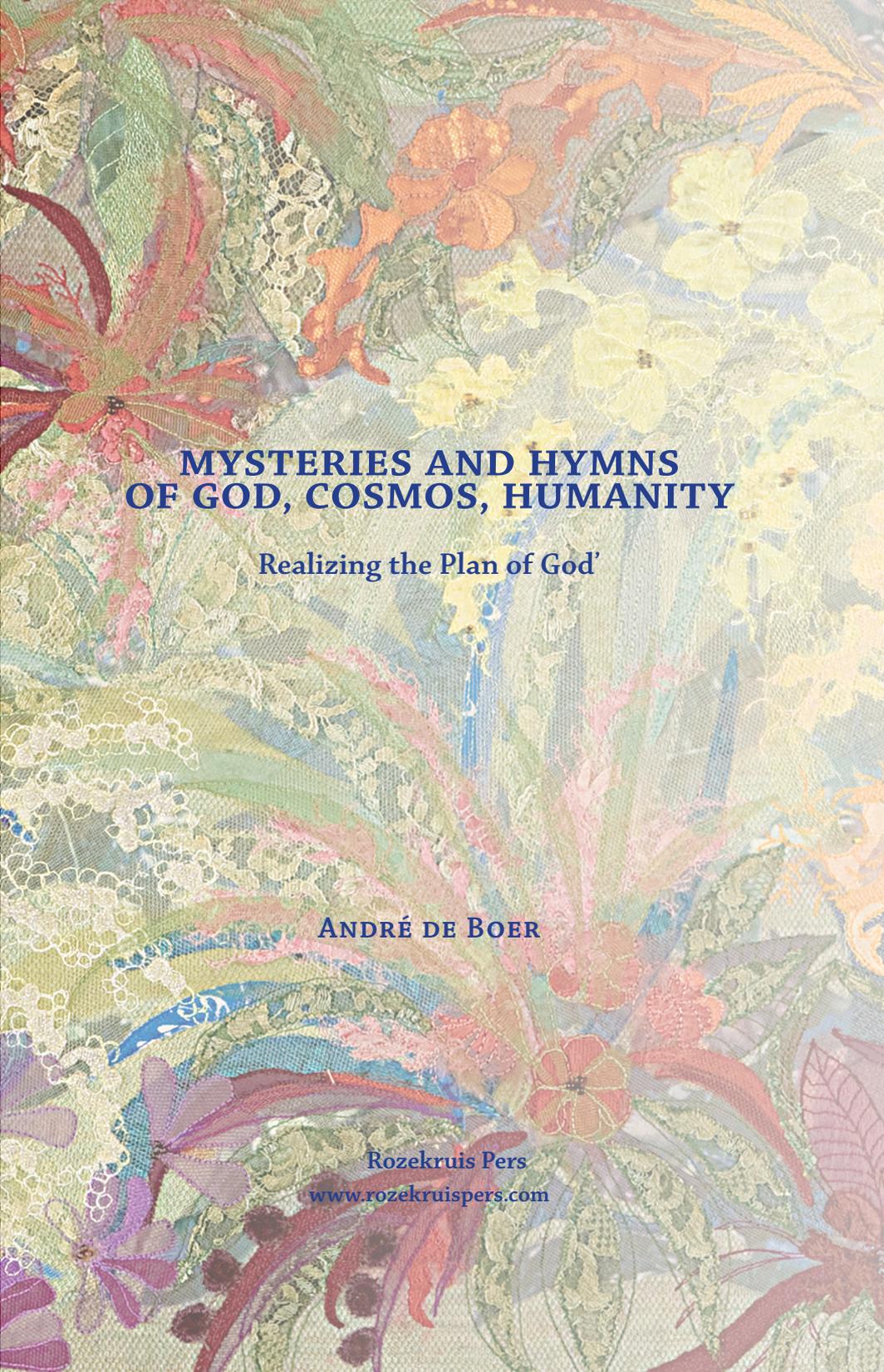


MYSTERIES AND HYMNS  
OF GOD, COSMOS, HUMANITY





**MYSTERIES AND HYMNS  
OF GOD, COSMOS, HUMANITY**

Realizing the Plan of God'

**ANDRÉ DE BOER**

Rozekruis Pers  
[www.rozekruispers.com](http://www.rozekruispers.com)

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Rozekruis Pers

Bakenessergracht 5

2011 JS Haarlem

The Netherlands

[info@rozekruispers.com](mailto:info@rozekruispers.com)

[www.rozekruispers.com](http://www.rozekruispers.com)

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## PREFACE

We think about the future almost every day. Our own future, or that of our loved ones and sometimes we also think about the prospects for society and for our planet earth.

We allow the choices that we make in our lives to be determined largely by our ideas and insights about what is good for the future. We choose a profession, we connect with certain people and groups, and we have an affinity with ethical and moral principles that we try to observe. In doing so, we are guided by the image we have of humanity, of the world and perhaps also of God, or the divinity.

In our life we come into contact with all kinds of visions and methods to personally control the direction of our life. Almost each one them is derived from three major currents that have existed for millennia: the materialistic way (*the way of the body*), the mystical way (*the way of the heart*) and the occult way (*the way of the head*). The solutions that we realize based on these three approaches have direct consequences for our state of being, for our life and for our environment.

Many religions, philosophies of life and spiritual movements speak of an ideal, material or spiritual reality that exists or that can be realized. We can be inspired by such ideas, but they do not at all change the fact that we are mortal.

Countless methods have been developed that are said to enable us to break through the veils that are enveloping our existence, so that we can penetrate into a more profound

understanding and thus take control of our destiny. Consider, for example, astrology, magic, alchemy and also the natural sciences and neurosciences. They indeed offer us opportunities to become a more powerful person in the three-dimensional reality. However, they are unsuitable for liberating us from ourselves.

The gnostic path, which is a central issue in this book, points in a different direction, where it is no longer primarily about me, but is about the Other in me who can go the way of the mysteries. The Other – that is the immortal and divine man hidden within me – can awaken and grow within me, so that I can gradually place my life at the service of that divine aspect within me.

This reversal of roles takes place in a process called transfiguration. That renewal process starts with a deep inner desire and cannot be forced in any way. Yet a correct understanding is necessary to be able to walk the path of transfiguration.

This book, *'Mysteries and Hymns of God, Cosmos, Humanity'*, is part of the book series of the Spiritual Texts Library. The publications are guidelines for people of the 21st century who want to go a path of spiritual awareness and renewal in their daily lives. They are based on carefully selected classical spiritual texts with clear reflections about these passages that have been taken from the more than four-centuries-old living tradition of the Rosicrucians. All books of the Spiritual Texts Library are spiritually inspired, broadly oriented and deeply rooted. They are ideal as a starting point for philosophical reading groups, as they are available as free online programs on the website [spiritualtexts.academy](http://spiritualtexts.academy), where it's possible to listen to all the texts and to read them.

*'Mysteries and Hymns of God, Cosmos, Humanity'* is the third and final part of a trilogy about the gnostic mysteries relating

to the path of transfiguration. These three books can be recognized by the image of a sun on the cover. The mysteries are of a universal nature and are therefore not linked exclusively to a particular religion, philosophy or spiritual movement. The universal wisdom doctrine is expressed in many different, sometimes divergent, traditions, but unfortunately we often find superficialities, crystallizations and degenerations therein, so that our mind tends to withdraw from it.

The first book in the trilogy, *'Mysteries and Symbols of the Soul'*<sup>1</sup>, is based primarily on classical spiritual texts from various authentic spiritual traditions. The second book, *'Mysteries and Challenges of Birth, Life and Death'*<sup>2</sup>, is based on the Jewish-Christian tradition, particularly Bible texts that can be a true inspiration for us. This third book, *'Mysteries and Hymns of God, Cosmos, Humanity'*, is based on texts from the hermetic tradition, allegedly derived from the legendary Egyptian initiate, Hermes Trismegistus.

The texts of the three-times-great Hermes are still largely unknown to the general public and also to professionals such as theologians, psychologists, pastors and spiritual caregivers. Yet they can be an important help for people looking for life renewal and life fulfillment. Over the centuries they have remained virtually undamaged and have not lost any of their power of expression. They make clear how humanity is part of a divine creation plan, providing directions on how mankind can become able to participate in its implementation.

J. van Rijckenborgh (1896-1968), one of the founders of the International School of the Golden Rosycross, became acquainted with the hermetic heritage in the 1950's, discovering the great value they can offer for the development of humanity. He published a new Dutch translation and provided extensive

commentaries, as published in the four-part book series '*The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis*'. The hermetic quotes in this book stem from that book series and also from the booklet '*De Castigatione Animae*' (The Admonition of the Soul), translated in English by Walter Scott.<sup>3</sup> Each chapter is preceded by a short section from the explanations by J. van Rijckenborgh.

In the first volume of '*The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis*'<sup>4</sup>, J. van Rijckenborgh describes the situation of a person bound to the temporal world, while his destiny is eternity. The second volume<sup>5</sup> describes in detail how you can be liberated from the temporal world. As a starting point he uses the insight that humans in their present existence do not know God. Remove yourself, he says, let go of the bond with the forces of nature. In volume three<sup>6</sup>, the author describes the difficulties that you, as an aspiring person, may encounter in this process. Those difficulties consist of, among other things, the confusion about good and evil, the activity of the mind, and finally our tendency to use everything for 'our own maintenance'. In the fourth volume<sup>7</sup>, the author reaches a culmination when he penetrates into the purification of the heart and the thinking, by means of allowing access to truth as a purifying vibration. People and society are constantly changing. That is why it is important that the gnosis is continuously being communicated in such a way that the people of today can be reached, addressed and also touched inwardly. The three volumes of the aforementioned trilogy together give a good impression of the philosophy of the Rosycross. This is not a clearly defined doctrine, but a garment in which the universal doctrine of wisdom, which cannot actually be expressed in words, can temporarily be clothed. Differently formulated on the basis of a metaphor from chapter 7: these three books are the barrels that allow the wine to be received.

The first part of this book, '*Mysteries of God, Cosmos, Humanity*', consists of nine spiritual texts from the so-called Corpus Hermeticum and nine pertinent thematic reflections. They are directed both to the heart and to the head. The second part, '*Hymns of God, Cosmos, Humanity*', is composed of 22 hymns based on spiritual world literature.

We sincerely hope that this publication will contribute to the recognition of the call of the gnosis for self-realization in the present time, and that countless people will be able to prepare themselves to use the key to liberation for themselves, for humanity and for the world.

Rozekruis Pers,  
Doride Zelle



## INTRODUCTION

# THE WAY OF THE STARS

What a great miracle is man, Asclepius.' Any right-minded person will be able to confirm this statement attributed to the Egyptian sage Hermes Trismegistus, regardless of his or her origin, background, philosophy of life and religion. Over the past thousands of years, humanity has gained much knowledge about itself and about the phenomena on the earth and in the universe. Countless studies have been conducted that offer impressive insights into the functioning of the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom and humanity.

Researches within the sciences extends ever further, both to the infinitely large – the universe with the planets, moons, stars, galaxies and black holes – and to the infinitely small – the molecules, atoms and elementary particles from which all matter is built up, particles that can be regarded as solidified energy. The more knowledge we obtain about the universe and everything that is part of it, the greater our wonder will be about the design, the functionality and the perfection of the cosmos. The processes of life are also being described and explained with increasing accuracy. Scientists are developing increasingly effective methods to influence these processes in directions that they consider valuable.

Over the past century, great progress has been made in all sciences that investigate and describe humanity and human action, such as biology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science and theology. Would all those

sciences together be able to give a complete picture of the human phenomenon? Scientists look at people in an objective way, looking at aspects that can be sensed and often measured. Because of that restriction, they ignore the essence that truly makes people human, the essence that is related to the conscious, living experience, also referred to by the word 'soul'. Thus they do not gain access to the mysteries of humanity, and certainly not to the mysteries of the cosmos and of God.

It seems that the more we learn more about the what and the how of life and being human, the further distant we become from fundamental questions such as: What is the meaning of our existence here? What has brought us into this strange world? What is our destination? Through such questions, we can come into contact with the mysteries of life, mysteries that our intellectual thinking cannot penetrate. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu wrote a few centuries before the beginning of the era in verse 14 of his Tao Te Ching:<sup>8</sup>

*'Look at Tao and you don't see it; it is called colorless.*

*Listen to Tao and you don't hear it; they call it soundless.*

*Try to touch Tao and you will not touch it; it is called immaterial.'*

Whoever wants to penetrate into the essence of life needs something that all over the world is designated by the Greek word gnosis, which means 'knowledge' and refers to inner knowing. This name is consistently used to make it clear that it concerns the knowledge of the heart and not the knowledge that results from our intellectual thinking.

Is it possible to acquire something of that knowledge, of that gnosis? The answer is: yes! But it is essential to realize that gnosis cannot be obtained with the familiar intellectual methods of acquiring knowledge as applied everywhere. Gnosis manifests itself in the person in whom a special process has begun. We could say that obtaining such inner knowledge is

a kind of fermentation process that starts as soon as a divine principle becomes active within an individual.

This divine principle is known throughout the world in religions, myths and philosophies, because it is the basis of all spiritual striving. The German poet Friedrich Schiller wrote in his poem '*Ode to Joy*' about the divine spark.<sup>9</sup> In the east it is referred to as the jewel in the lotus, as atman or as the spirit in the valley, as Lao Tzu calls it. And the Rosicrucians speak of the rose in the heart, which is present within human beings as a flower bud, but can bloom when a person knows how to open up to the spiritual light. The Bible uses the symbol of the seed that is sown in the earth and grows into a tree of life whose fruits can be harvested.

Real gnosis comes from within, often manifesting itself as the result of an inner touch after an extensive search. Every person searches, has searched or is starting to search. The entire reality of being human is connected with the search for fulfillment. We are missing something, we are limited, finite, incomplete. What can we do to escape from this inner turmoil? We can numb ourselves with everything that this world offers us. Then we look for oblivion. We can also make every effort to live a pleasant life. Then we seek happiness. Or we can be dissatisfied with our material living conditions. We then look for wealth and property.

So the human search has all kinds of gradations. Driven by the feeling of being ignorant, unable to control the world, not knowing how to create perfection, man seeks. He searches for the higher, the deeper, for the truth, because there must be a secret, a key. There must be a truth, perhaps hidden somewhere in the form of science, religion or art, a truth that represents the perfect. Sacred scriptures, legends and stories about it do not appeal to us for nothing, and sometimes they evoke a feeling of nostalgia in us.

Since times immemorial, searches have been undertaken for the missing link that is designated by several names. People look for the elixir of life, for the philosopher's stone and for the holy grail, because it is said that they lead to the good, the true and the beautiful. What is the missing link, the link that connects us to the higher reality, whose existence we sometimes feel intuitively, but which keeps escaping us over and over again? Our state of being human is incomplete, imperfect, because the connecting link with our divine origin is no longer there. Basic science, true religion and the royal art of construction have been abandoned, forgotten, faded. The return to that divine – the restoration of the connection with the divine – that is the secret, the mystery.

There is a key that opens the door to that original state, that original realm, that kingdom. It is gnosis, the mysterious power of the divine realm, to which this book '*Mysteries and Hymns of God, Cosmos, Humanity*' is dedicated. It is the inspiration from an invisible reality of life, which can manifest itself in humans as wisdom, inspired by gnosis, love and vigor – attributes that are bestowed upon a person when the latent divine principle awakens in the heart and one begins to follow the silent voice of the innermost self.

Following the voice of the roseheart is like going a path that is also called the path of transfiguration, because the person is then subjected to a fundamental change. It is the path of initiation, traditionally compared to the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into the butterfly. Within the medieval gnostic movement of the Cathars, it was referred to as the way of the stars, on which man is symbolically liberated from the gravitational force of the earth.<sup>10</sup> That thought was propagated some thousand years earlier in a number of manuscripts written in Greek in the Egyptian harbor city of Alexandria and attributed to Hermes Trismegistus in the first centuries of this era.

This legendary initiate describes the way of the stars as it ascends through several heavenly spheres. The first seven spheres are still strongly connected to the earth and are related to the seven classical planets, but from the eighth sphere on, everything is completely different. Today we would say that from the eighth sphere on, we are referring to a different dimension or a totally different field of life, one that we cannot imagine with our ordinary thinking capacity, but which can nevertheless be experienced intuitively by humans.

Characteristic of the hermetic writings, also called the hermetics, is that they assume that there is an unbreakable coherence and connectedness between God, cosmos and humanity, and also that human beings have the task to allow the divine within to awaken and grow so that they become fit to cooperate in the execution of the divine plan underlying the cosmos. Even now people can still be inspired by those ideas that originate from inner knowing, from gnosis.

Astronomy is one of the oldest sciences. From the earliest times onward humanity has looked up at the wonderful starry sky with respect and fear. Throughout the ages there have always been people who had a great interest in the laws and the order that we can see in the celestial phenomena, persons who found great satisfaction in acquiring knowledge about the celestial bodies and their movements. Today three forms of wisdom of the stars that are distinguished, clearly differing from each other, which in the old days still formed a unity: astronomy, astrology and astrosophy. These three all presuppose that system and order reign in the universe.

Astronomy or astronomical science charts the organisation of the visible part of the universe and tries to explain it. With the help of increasingly sophisticated instruments, a part of the universe is being explored to the extent possible. The

instruments being used are currently so precise that instead of speaking about the visible universe, we can better talk about it being observable.

Astrology reflects the influence of the positions of stars and planets exerted on people and the world in successive periods. From an individual point of view, this concerns the period of life from the first birth cry until the last breath. In addition, it is common practice for the person who practices astrology to try to create as much harmony as possible in his world of opposites by taking into account the positions of the stars.

Thus humanity maneuvers as circumspectly as possible between good and evil, between what has already been determined by fate and what choices we may still have, trying to make the best of it. However, living by the laws of fate through astrology does not diminish the fear and anxiety of man. On the contrary, by being so intensively occupied with it, a person becomes even more strongly attached to self-maintenance. And that self-maintenance is a major barrier on the path that Hermes calls 'the way of devotion'. Astrosophy assumes that the influences of galaxies and planets affect us on the basis of imperishable, supernatural laws. This science of the stars is not limited to the visible and measurable universe. It is based on divine revelation. It shows the systematic nature of everything that takes place in the universe. And it states that this systematic nature is based on a divine plan with humanity and the world. Behind the reality that is visible to us floats an invisible reality, the true reality that influences the visible.

This book, *'Mysteries and hymns of God, Cosmos, Humanity – realizing the plan of God'*, is not about astronomy and astrology, but rather is rooted in astrosophy. The hermetic writings quoted in this book are of a philosophical nature and are, moreover, inspired by a higher, inner knowing. When these

writings were rediscovered in the Renaissance, many scholars were particularly enthusiastic about it because they discovered great similarities with Christianity. They thought they held in their hands the key to what we might call the universal doctrine of wisdom.

It can be deduced from the manifestos of the classical Rosicrucians from the beginning of the seventeenth century that they knew the hermetic writings and attached great value to them. They considered Hermes to be the primal source of all wisdom. In particular they derived an aspect from the hermetic teachings that played a central role in their plans to achieve a complete renewal of man and society: the insight that man is a microcosm, a reflection of the macrocosm. This is also an essential principle within today's International School of the Golden Rosycross. As a microcosm and as a miniature solar system, a human being belongs to an eternal nature of divine origin.

Humanity emerged from that divine nature as microcosms and we must again become aware of that origin. The current reality of humanity, however, shows that he has been severed from this consciousness, his being is beclouded, misted, and because of his I-centrality he can no longer perceive the divine field of life. However, through the ages, mankind has been pointed at the divine spark that he carries in his heart. In that spark lies – as a seed – the possibility of being re-born, of returning to the origin. For that reason a human being is a dual being, he belongs to two natures: the earthly, mortal nature with all its facets; and the supernatural nature, the divine nature.

Therefore, the microcosm is simultaneously included in two developments. Firstly, there is a path of development as a divine being within the original nature, a nature that is not subject to the factor of time, which ends everything. And secondly, we see a temporal-spatial development in which the microcosm is led to a fullness of experience, to a nadir, from

which he could rise up again from material servitude and then, enriched with the treasure of gained experience, continue the path of the first development. In this way, humans and microcosms will eventually come to fulfill their original destiny as a unity.

Humanity is currently at a turning point in its development. Having reached the lowest point, the nadir, now the path of ascension must be realized with the help of the mortal personality. A change of consciousness, thinking, willing and feeling can arise from a new inspiration by divine power; yes, the entire being can change. New forces of the stars are currently driving all of humanity into a different direction. A higher order sends out an appeal to people to react. For centuries this has been passed on to humanity through the universal doctrine of different cultures, and many people have listened and responded to it. Every person is facing the necessity to respond to that call more and more strongly. When that happens, the old world of images also changes. Great perspectives open up to those people who begin to understand the meaning of their life.

Finding and serving God resides as a possibility in the heart of every person. Its realization requires that the divine principle must grow and the I-centrality must diminish. He or she who has brought about this change in one's own self has become a traveler in eternity from that moment on. Such a person undergoes the truth of the divine plan for world and humanity, the truth that manifests itself in macrocosm, cosmos and microcosm.

Jan Schoeber,  
Hilversum, July 2018



## TO BE MY OWN PATH

I probed into the depths of the earth  
I searched the heights of the sky  
And they were full of movement:  
    a fiery birth  
    dazzling stars,  
    the extinction of volcanoes.

I looked about me  
and everything was full of movement.  
I saw people build,  
and ascend the peaks of mountains  
and perish in violence.

I then looked inside  
and understood the restless movement there  
as a birth of ardent desire,  
    building castles in the air  
to be washed away by my tears.

And experiencing the suffering of humanity  
I asked, 'What am I to do?'  
A whisper reached my ear:  
'Be a stairway that reaches from earth to heaven,  
on which they can take a step towards the light,'  
    But my heart was still restless,  
and I asked again: 'What am I to do?'

A whisper reached my other ear:  
'Be a bridge connecting one bank to the other,  
so that they may cross over the raging stream.'  
But my head was restless, and I asked again:  
    'What am I to do?'

But no more answer came.

Not from the heights nor from the deep,  
Not from others and not from myself.  
Space was without answers.  
    Need dissolved  
    in a silent no-need.  
And I discovered that I was only able  
to be my path in self-surrender.

*(Pentagram 1988)*

PART I

**MYSTERIES OF  
GOD, COSMOS,  
HUMANITY**



T. WASZINK

*God is both transcendent and immanent, which means that His radiation fills all cosmic domains, and that he manifests himself in everything and everyone, while at the same time he is outside the all-manifestation in what cannot be known. So he is both known and unknown, time and eternity. It is clear that, on the basis of this reality, those who succeed in fathoming the gnosis will reflect on the deity in an entirely different way, in adoration, praise and gratitude.*

*The religious man of nature forms an idea of a deity, which is endowed with majesty to a greater or lesser extent. Depending on whether he is primitive or somewhat more cultivated, he turns to a god he imagines to be somewhere; in most cases above himself. Do you see the difficulty? If one wants to contemplate something such as God in adoration, praise and gratitude, one needs a focus of concentration.*

*But where should the gnostic, who has received some insight into the nature of things, turn? If he tries to contemplate God the Father he cannot find any focus at all, unless he chooses some aspect, some insignificant detail, of God's manifestation. For what is transcendent and at the same time immanent, can never be defined in dialectical terms: not in terms of time, or of eternity, or of distance, or of direction. It cannot be defined in any way whatsoever.*

CHAPTER 1

**EXPERIENCING THE DIVINE**

SPIRITUAL TEXT: **Corpus Hermeticum 8:20-35<sup>5</sup>**

**I**f you also wish to perceive God in and through the mortal beings who are on earth and in the deeps, consider then, my son, how man is fashioned in the womb; investigate with care the skill of this genesis and learn who the craftsman is of this fair and godlike image of man.

Who has modelled the spherical shape of the eyes?

Who has pierced the orifices of the nostrils and ears?

Who has opened the mouth?

Who has stretched the network of the muscles  
and nerves and fastened it to the body?

Who has laid the systems of the veins?

Who has given the bones their firmness?

Who has covered the flesh with skin?

Who has separated the fingers?

Who has widened the soles of the feet?

Who has bored the body's outlet ducts?

Who has given the spleen its place?

Who has given the heart its pyramidal shape?

Who has made the liver broad?

Who has made the lungs porous?

Who has given the belly its capaciousness?

Who has disclosed the most honorable parts, while  
hiding out of sight those of least honour?

See how much skill and how many different crafts have been employed on one matter, how many works of art have been assembled in one single piece; all are exceedingly beautiful, all perfect in measure, all diverse from one another. Who has made all these things? What other Mother, what other Father, than the God, who has wrought all this by His will!

No one claims that a statue or a portrait has come into being without a sculptor or a painter. Should then this creation have been brought into existence without a Creator? Oh, what depths of blindness; Oh, what absolute God-forsakenness; Oh, what a nadir of obtuseness. Therefore, O Tat, never deny the Creator the works of His hands. His greatness is expressed better and stronger by the designation: 'Father of all things', than by the name of Him alone does it befit to be Father. Yes, this is in truth His manifesting deed.

And if you force me to say something bolder still: it is in His being to fecundate and bring forth all things. As it is impossible for anything to come into being without a Creator, so the Creator would not be the everlasting if He did not eternally create: in heaven, in the air, on earth, in the deeps, in all parts of the Universe, in the entire All, in what is and what is not.

There is nothing in the whole of the All that He is not. He is both the things that are and the things that are not. All that is, He has made manifest, and all that is not, He contains within Himself. He, God, is sublime beyond all name; He, the invisible, who is yet the most manifest; He who is beheld by the Spirit-Soul, but who is also perceptible to the eyes; he the bodiless, who has many, nay all bodies. There is nothing that he is not; for all that is, is he. For this reason He has all names, because they are all out of the one Father. For this reason he has no name at all, because he is the Father of the all.

Who could praise you too highly, or in keeping with your worth and value? Where shall I turn my eye for my praise? Upward, downward, inward, outward? There is no way, no place, not a single creature, that is located outside.

You manifest yourself as the active, universal power. You are the good, because you have wrought all things.

The subtlest part of matter is air.

The subtlest part of air is the soul.

The subtlest part of the soul is the spirit.

The subtlest part of the spirit is God.



CHAPTER 1  
EXPERIENCING THE DIVINE  
REFLECTION

There is an age-old philosophy based on which you can experience the highest joy and everlasting supreme happiness. It is a philosophy that is attributed to the legendary Egyptian initiate Hermes Trismegistus. This philosophy is a redeeming one that has emerged from universal religion and universal spirituality, stemming directly from the gnosis, which is also referred to as the Source, the One, Tao, or God. For thousands of years and in many cultures the sun has been looked upon as a symbol of the Primordial Source (*see, for example, hymn 1*). The sun, as we know, gives light, warmth and life. When you open yourself to the spiritual Sun, which is also called the Sun behind the sun, you become connected to the light of universal wisdom, the warmth of all-embracing love and the life of liberating decisiveness.

When you go a path of inner renewal guided by the gnosis, words can only approach the great results, but no pen can describe them. When Hermes Trismegistus lifts himself up inwardly, then the indwelling spirit speaks to him: *'This is the good end for those who possess the gnosis, the knowledge of God, that they become God'*.

(Corpus Hermeticum I:65)

Becoming God! That is of course no small matter. Is such an unfathomable promise correct? Is it not very haughty when I assume that I can become God? The answer to both questions is: yes! The fantastic perspective of becoming a god, as shown

in hermetic scriptures, is true, but at the same time it is important to realize that you as a mortal being – one who may walk around on our planet for a maximum of a hundred years – will never become divine. Hermes states: *‘The divine is not mortal; what is mortal is not divine’*

(Corpus Hermeticum 2:45)

However, the divine can be born, grow and become active within the person that you are, but as soon as you try to take hold of this inner process, it withdraws from you.

A person who has been somewhat renewed as a result of the touch by light forces from the Primordial Source is modest. He is modest because he knows that the divine power working within him, which he experiences from time to time, is not his, but that it is bestowed on him. He realizes that in a symbolic sense he is like an instrument from which music sometimes comes forth as a result of a heavenly touch, but he also knows that his instrument is not yet well tuned to allow the harmony of the spheres to resound purely in him.

Such a person desires to understand the essence of things and to be instructed in it. That is why he is open to admonitions from Hermes Trismegistus, the three-times great one, the man in whom the personality, the soul and the spirit form a harmonious unity, and who therefore has become like the Greek god Hermes: a messenger of the gods. He is not put off by the little flattering words that Hermes Trismegistus speaks to humanity out of love, but rather he is encouraged by them.

*‘Oh, you nations, you men who are born of the earth and who have given yourselves up to intoxication and slumber and to the ignorance concerning God, become sober and stop wallowing in debauchery, enchanted as you are by an animal sleep. Oh you earthly born, why have you given yourselves up to death, whereas*

*you have power to participate in immortality? Repent, you who walk in error and who have excepted ignorance as a leader. Liberate yourselves from the dark light and take part in immortality by taking leave of destruction forever’.*

(Corpus Hermeticum I:68,69)

## **Gnosis**

The ignorance concerning God about which Hermes speaks here is also indicated as a lack of gnosis. The word gnosis stems from the Greek and means ‘knowledge.’ It does not mean practical or theoretical knowledge that arises from giving meaning to information that in turn is based on data or facts. No, here it means primarily wisdom, an inner knowing and at the same time an active force that enlightens. The following statements from experts in the field of gnosis are formulated so broadly that it is immediately clear that gnosis is universal and not related exclusively to only one religion, spiritual trend or philosophical system.

*Gnosis is the knowledge of the heart.*

(Gilles Quispel)<sup>11</sup>

*Gnosis is the knowledge that is of and with God. He who has this knowledge is filled with all that is good and receives his thoughts, which differ entirely from those of the masses, from God.*

(Corpus Hermeticum II:10)<sup>6</sup>

*Originally, the gnosis was a summary of primordial wisdom, the combination of all knowledge that pointed directly to the original divine life. In this way the divine wisdom was and still is brought tot humanity, and the way was shown to those wanting to return to the original fatherland.*

(J. van Rijckenborgh)<sup>12</sup>

*Gnosis is the redemption of the inner man; not of the body, because the body is perishable, it is not psychic, for even the soul is of transience [...]. Therefore salvation is pneumatic, that is, spiritual. Thus, through gnosis the inner spiritual man is born.* (Valentine)

*A Gnostic is one who has come to understand who we were, what has become ours, and where we are found, where we are so hastily headed, from which we are liberated; what birth is and what regeneration means.* (Theodotus)

*Gnosis is above all a personal, existential certainty: I come from God, I share in his being, I return to him. It is an enlightened insight into the origin, the present situation and the destiny of man.* (Roelof van den Broek)<sup>11</sup>

Partly on the basis of the foregoing, we can approach the concept of gnosis in a different way: as the living experience that results from the synthesis of religion, philosophy and spirituality on the basis of connection with the divine, which is also referred to as light power from the source of everything. Concepts such as religion and spirituality can easily evoke negative associations as a result of the many caricatures that we can observe in society. We now want to approach them from the meaning that follows from the original Latin words. Religion is then 're-connecting' and spirituality pertains to 'relating to the mind.' Spirit is not referring to the intellectual thinking or 'the mind', but to a force that rises far beyond that, a force that concerns the divine plan of creation. Schematically we can represent the aforementioned synthesis of religion, philosophy and spirituality on the basis of light power as a figure of four equal circles that partly overlap each other (see image 1). It reminds us of a four-petalled flower and is at the same time a so-called venn diagram. Venn diagrams have been

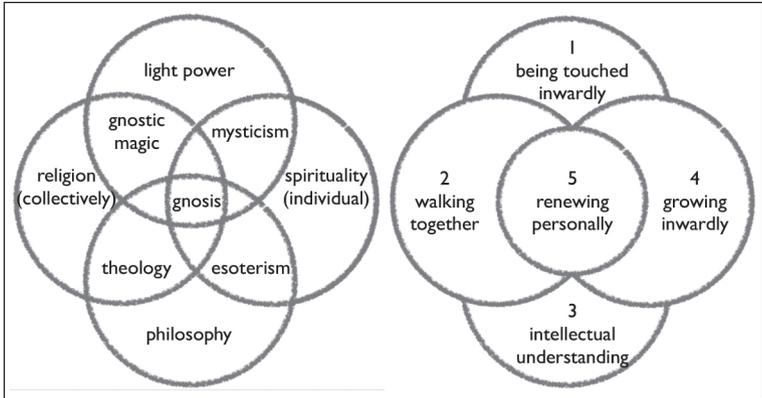


Image 1: do not wander in the periphery of religion, philosophy and spirituality, but live consciously from the power of the gnosis.

used since the end of the nineteenth century in the set theory of mathematics. A venn diagram is a graphic representation of the logical relationships between multiple collections, illustrating similarities and differences between different groups or concepts.

#### **Four domains and their synthesis**

The four domains and their synthesis are related to five aspects of the liberating path and can be formulated in the order shown below.

1. light power: being touched inwardly
2. religion: walking together (collective)
3. philosophy: intellectual understanding
4. spirituality: growing inwardly (individual)
5. gnosis: renewing personally

Image 1 also lists sub-sets between two sets:

- we can refer to the overlap between religion and philosophy as theology
- we can refer to the overlap between philosophy and spirituality as esotericism

- we can refer to the overlap between spirituality and light power as mysticism
- we can refer to the overlap between light power and religion as gnostic magic

In the following chapters of this book, these four 'sub-sets' are explained in more detail from the perspective of going an authentic spiritual path on which the old person is systematically replaced by the new human being. The quadruple Venn diagram shows clearly that the light power is essential. Whenever that is lacking, religion, theology, philosophy, esotericism and spirituality do not contribute to, or may even delay, the realization of the divine plan. But no matter how powerful the opposing forces are, in the long run the pure light will always conquer, because it is much more powerful than the darkness and the false light.

The gnosis can express itself in the form of certain images, both word images and also sound images, in all sorts of religions and spiritual movements and philosophical systems. It is important to realize that these forms are not the gnosis itself but are at best certain reflections of the gnosis, enabling those who are receptive to it to be touched inwardly and, partly because of this touch, to be renewed. The essential truth is not presented to us on a silver platter in the form of, for example, books, courses, speeches or works of art, but must be conquered by the striving human consciousness and action life, acquired through many experiences.

The nature of stories, reflections, songs, prayers, rituals, music, paintings, statues and buildings created by the activity of the gnosis are of course partly determined by the culture and consciousness of a people at a certain moment in a certain area. We know the Indian gnosis of, for example, Krishna, Buddha and Shankara; the Persian gnosis of Zarathustra; the

Chinese gnosis of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu; the Greek gnosis of Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato; the Christian gnosis of Jesus and Mani; and of course the Egyptian gnosis of Hermes Trismegistus.

### **Promotion or transfiguration**

The history of gnosticism and gnostic movements is a very interesting field. In the past decades, more and more academics have started to occupy themselves with that. At several universities worldwide you can graduate in gnostic studies. You can also carry out scientific research about gnosticism, giving you the opportunity to obtain a Ph.D. degree.

This can all be very useful and valuable, but it is worth remembering that the gnosis is not intended as an opportunity to become promoted by it, but to transfigure with it! To become a new person. It is a major pitfall to place the gnosis exclusively in the past, because the vertical power flow of the gnosis can be active in a liberating way on the horizontal timeline only in the now. This fact is aptly expressed in the lofty symbol of a Latin cross with a flowering rose at the crossing.

You do not become a new person by figuring out how gnostic authors and groups thought and worked in the past. What does it take to become a spirit-inspired person? The titles of the first nine chapters of this book give an impression: experiencing the divine; distinguishing dimensions; consciously perceiving, thinking and acting; receiving esoteric teachings; realizing purification; praising God; assimilating spiritual powers; going the way of godliness; proclaiming the gnosis.

That is quite something! How do you do that in the practice of your daily life? Hermes Trismegistus provides clear guidelines, as is explained in this book. Sometimes they are

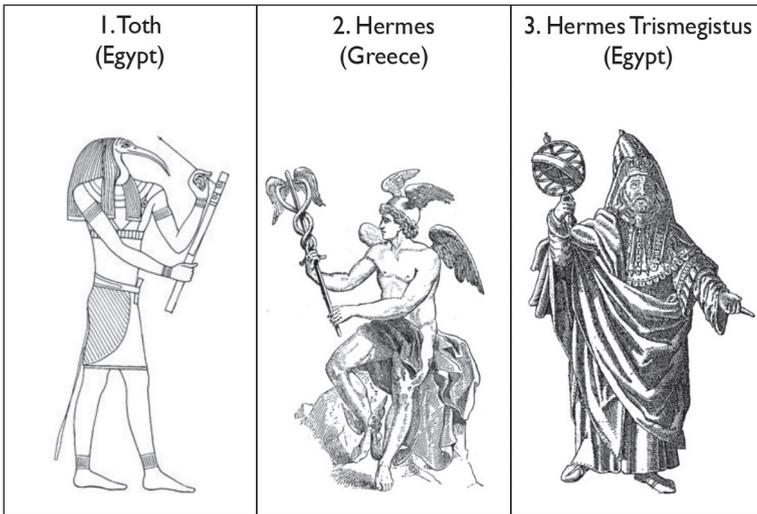


Image 2: the legendary Hermes Trismegistus is a synthesis of the Egyptian god Toth and the Greek god Hermes.

practical recommendations, but most of the time they concern commentaries about the nature of God, the cosmos and the human being on the basis of which you can raise yourself up inwardly, thus making the right choices in your life.

Who was Hermes Trismegistus anyway? Historically, nothing is known about him. Most likely the three-times great Hermes is a conceived character, a personified synthesis of the Egyptian god Toth – the god of wisdom and writing – and the Greek god Hermes, the messenger of the gods who is called Mercury in Roman culture (see image 2). He is the prototype of man who has achieved fulfillment on the spiritual path and endeavors to open up the way to others and to provide insights and powers to those who are open to it. This initiate is king, priest and magician in one.

### **Cultural melting pot in Alexandria**

Hermes Trismegistus is the main character in manuscripts

of unknown and anonymous authors in the first centuries of our era in the port city of Alexandria in northern Egypt, then the cultural capital of Greek civilization. It was a melting pot of many peoples, perhaps somewhat comparable to the heterogeneous population in today's large western cities. Hermeticism was able to develop there through the same worldwide spiritual impulse that also, for example, allowed early Christianity to spread at that time. Within Hermeticism, the wisdom from ancient Egyptian mystery schools was connected to Greek philosophy.

Most hermetic writings are written in the form of a monologue, with Hermes addressing the reader directly; or in the form of a dialogue, in which there is a two-way conversation between Hermes and his indwelling spirit (also called Pymander) or between Hermes and one of his pupils: Tat, Asclepius and Ammon. The form of dialogue is a lively way of propagating the gnosis, already used in ancient times by the Greek philosopher Plato (427 BC-347 BC) for example in Athens, also in the seventeenth century by the Protestant mystic Jacob Böhme (1575-1624) and in the eighteenth century by Karl von Eckartshausen (1752-1803).

The nine chapters of this book are based primarily on the so-called '*Corpus Hermeticum*', a collection of seventeen hermetic treatises that were written in Greek in Egypt in the second and third centuries. The collection of manuscripts was brought from Istanbul to Florence in the fifteenth century, where the priest, humanist and neo-platonist Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) translated them into Latin and published them in 1463.

In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, printed editions of the *Corpus Hermeticum* appeared in vernacular languages such as German, English, French, Italian and Dutch.

In 1607 Jacob de Meester printed the first Dutch version of the Corpus Hermeticum in Alkmaar. A subsequent Dutch edition was printed in Amsterdam in 1643 on behalf of publisher Abraham Willemsz van Beyerland. J. van Rijckenborgh, one of the founders of the School of the Golden Rosycross, published a new Dutch version of the Corpus Hermeticum in 1960 in the form of the four-book series *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis and its call in the eternal present*, for which he provided reflections during conferences at the Renova conference center in Bithoven, the Netherlands, for pupils of his spiritual school. In 1990, the Church History professors Gilles Quispel and Roel van den Broek published a scientifically justified Dutch translation of the Corpus Hermeticum from the Greek which they had made for the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica in Amsterdam. The quotes from the Corpus Hermeticum in *Mysteries and Hymns of God, Cosmos, Humanity* are derived from the aforementioned book series by J. van Rijckenborgh, which starts with the so-called Emerald Tablet or Tabula Smaragdina, a short, powerful hermetic and meditation text, like a mantra, which formed the basis for alchemy, and which is included as a hymn in part 2 of this book. The reflections refer to it several times. The nine chapters of this book are always closed with a short section from a hermetic writing from the Arab world, known as '*Castigatione Animae*' (*Admonition of the Soul*) and published in English by Walter Scott.<sup>3</sup>

### **Initiates in the mysteries**

What does the Hermes figure want to achieve, as it appears in the hermetic writings? He wants to initiate his listeners or readers into the mysteries of God, cosmos, humanity. Why? Because that work contributes to the realization of the plan of God and those involved will taste 'happiness and bliss.' Hermes cannot do otherwise. He owes it to his core being that

reveals itself increasingly powerful. He also receives the power for this work as a response to his prayer to God, the Father of all things:

*'Incline thyself to me and fill me with thy power; with this grace I shall bring the Light to those of my race who are in ignorance, my brothers, thy sons. Yes, I believe and testify with my blood; I am going to the Life and to the Light. Be praised, oh Father, thy son will sanctify with thee, for which thou hast given him all power'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 1:73)

A large majority of people are not open to the help offered to them on the spiritual path by representatives of the divine hierarchy. That was the case at the time when the hermetic writings came about, and it still is today. Those who are not yet ripe for the inner path do not yet desire to be taught the essential things, they do not understand the hermetic teachings and may shrink back from the personal consequences entailed in going the path of Hermes.

The foregoing provides some insight into the origin of the expression 'hermetically sealed'. For those who have no affinity whatsoever with hermetic writings, they remain as a closed book: inaccessible. Now it is true that people today can understand hermetic writings considerably better than people from ancient times, or even people from a few decades ago. Humanity as a whole has experienced significant growth in consciousness in recent decades. Both the ability for abstract thinking and the general level of consciousness have increased. Keys to understanding hermetic texts are becoming more customary and are even being disseminated on social media. The hermetic gnosis is ideally suited to promote unity among people and between people and other life-waves on earth, because it does not exclude anything or anyone. Hermes says to his student Asclepius, whom he considers to be a healer in

development: *'All creatures are in God. They have come into being through God and are dependent on him; whether they manifest themselves in physical bodies, rise as soul-beings, have been vivified by the spirit, or have been received into the realm of the dead, they are all in God'*.

(Corpus Hermeticum I 1: 22)

Who or what is God then? Everything we say or write about God is limited and therefore not entirely correct. This is beautifully expressed in the first lines of the Tao Te Ching that is attributed to Lao Tzu, the initiate who probably lived and worked in China around the sixth century BC:<sup>8</sup> *'If Tao could be pronounced, it would not be the eternal Tao; if the name could be said, it would not be the eternal name.'* In some currents of early Gnostic Christianity, the same view was held. This is expressed very poetically in the hymn in John's secret book (see hymn 3) for example. The word GOD is nowadays sometimes seen as an acronym of the letters G, O and D, which stand for the generator or creator, the operator or sustainer and the destroyer or demolisher. This thought is based on the Hindu trinity of the gods Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer) and Shiva (the destroyer). At first, the destructive aspect of the deity seems to contradict the idea that God is love, but after careful consideration it appears that this aspect also really belongs.

### **Infinite creation**

Everything that has a beginning also has an end. Destruction eliminates crystallizations and enables new developments. Everything that exists is constantly being re-created. Hermes therefore says: *'The creator would not be the eternal if he did not create eternal: in heaven, in the sky, on the earth, in the depth, in all parts of the universe, in the universe, in that which and in what is not'*.

(Corpus Hermeticum 8:26)

According to Hermetic philosophy, however, God is much more than the generator, sustainer and destroyer. The following seven characterizations make this evident, while still leaving much room for the mystery and at the same time being worthy of further pondering.

*'You should see God in this way: he keeps as thoughts everything that exists enclosed in Himself: the world, himself, the universe'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 2:77)

*Whereas he is an ever-active power, it is not sufficient for him to have created beings, he also takes them into his care.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 2:27)

*As God acts entirely alone, he is always resident in his works and he is himself what he procreates, creator as well as creation. For if his creatures were to be free of him, they would collapse and inevitably perish, because they would have no life of themselves.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 2:56)

*'In the all there is nothing that is not God. That is why God cannot be defined by conception of size, place, quality, form or time: for God is the all, and as such he is in everything and encompasses'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 13:50)

*'If you do not make yourself equal to God, you cannot understand him: for only those who are alike understand each other'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 2:78)

*'What is God? The never deviating, unchangeable good'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 5:63)

*'God is not reason, but the cause to which reason owes its being; He is not breath, but the cause to which breath owes its being; He is not light, but the cause to which light owes its being'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 6:37)

These statements by Hermes are not just random contemplative comments, rather they are ideas supported by a deep

knowledge of experience. Understanding the divine and the divine plan is important, but not sufficient. For a disciple of Hermes there must be a deep desire, because on that basis a fruitful relationship can arise between man and God. In Chapter 1 of *Admonition of the Soul*, Hermes says to us:<sup>3</sup>

*'If the maker of a thing is not himself visible to us, we can form a notion of him from the thing he has made, when that thing is presented to our view. Even so then, we can represent to ourselves in thought the Author of all that is, by contemplating and admiring the (visible) things which He has made, and ever brings into being, and which are and have been produced by Destiny.*

*I bid you then, O Soul, to represent to yourself in thought all things that are either understood by thinking or perceived by sense. And know that it is the truly existent Being, the First Cause, perfect and full of light; that bestows on men knowledge of the inner nature of things; and of the finer distinctions between them,' and of ever-lasting life, and in short, knowledge of all things, and all things are, in relation to Him, particulars, but are not parts of Him; as He on the other hand is, in relation to them, the universal, but is not a mere sum of them.*

*Reflect on this, O Soul, and mark it well; and free yourself from the pollution of the physical world, and to that end, humble yourself; and seek and strive earnestly to attain to Him who is the source and father of good, the root and originator of intelligence, the giver of life and wisdom, Him who is perfect goodness and mercy, that so you may come to partake of Life, and enjoy happiness and bliss'.*

(*Admonition of the Soul*, Chapter 1)



*The basis of our consideration is not the natural state, but the living soul-state, for only the living soul is able to understand in a spiritual way. So, we should now understand that true life is the life of the Spirit, of God, the life that really deserves this designation. There exists a very close contact between the attribute – the phenomenon of life – and life itself; that is, between God and man.*

*The personality-state is only an attribute, a revelation, of the one life. Why should the life of the Spirit acquire such attributes? These attributes should serve to extend the one life, to make it more powerful, more majestic.*

*The course of development unto manifestation of attributes, from goodness through eternity, from eternity through the order of space and time, through change to birth, the gigantic genesis of attributes, simply means an extension, a breaking out from the Spirit into attributes, to manifestation of the glory of the divine state.*

## CHAPTER 2

# DISTINGUISHING DIMENSIONS

SPIRITUAL TEXT: **Corpus Hermeticum 2:1-28<sup>4</sup>**

**P**YMANDER: Well then, be still, oh Hermes Trismegistus, and do not forget what I shall tell you. I shall tell you immediately what has occurred to me.

HERMES: Much has been spoken from many aspects about the All and about God, but the opinions contradict each other, so that I have not discerned the truth in it. Will you, oh Lord, explain this to me? For I shall believe only what you will reveal to me.

PYMANDER: Just listen, my son, how God and the universe are related to each other: God, eternity, the world, time and genesis. God makes eternity, eternity makes the world, the world makes time, and time makes genesis.

Goodness, beauty, blissfulness and wisdom form, as it were, the essence of God; the essence of eternity is invariability; the essence of the world is order; the essence of time is changeability; and the essence of genesis is life and death.

Spirit and soul are the actively revealing powers of God; durability and immortality are the manifestations of eternity; the return to perfection and denaturation are the manifestations of the world; increasing and decreasing are the manifestations of time; genesis has as its manifestation the faculty. So is eternity in God, the world in eternity, time in the world, and genesis in time.

Whereas eternity rests round about God, the world moves itself in eternity, time is accomplished in the world and becomes the genesis in time. Therefore, the origin of all things

is God; the essence is eternity and the world is its matter. Eternity is a potential force of God. The work of eternity is the world which has had no origin, but is in a continual genesis through the activity of eternity. That is why nothing in the world will ever perish, for eternity is imperishable, neither will anything ever be destroyed, because the world is entirely surrounded by eternity.

HERMES: But what is the wisdom of God?

PYMANDER: It is goodness, beauty, bliss, all virtue and eternity. Eternity shapes the world into an order by penetrating matter with immortality and durability. The nascency of matter depends on eternity, just as eternity itself depends on God.

There is genesis and there is time, in heaven as well as on earth, but they are of a different nature: in heaven they do not change and are imperishable, on earth they change and perish. God is the soul of eternity; eternity is the soul of the world and heaven is the soul of the earth.

God is in the Spirit-soul; the Spirit-soul is in the soul; the soul is in matter and all this through eternity. This vast body, comprising all bodies, is filled from within by a soul full of spiritual consciousness and full of God, a soul which vivifies the All and is surrounded by it from outside. Outwardly: the vast and perfect life that is the world; inwardly; all living creatures; above, in heaven, it lasts invariably, always remaining equal to itself; below, on earth, it brings about the changes of genesis.

Eternity maintains all this, either by what is called fate, providence, nature, or whatever one may think of it now, or later. But he who brings about all this by his activity is God, the revealing, active power of God. God, whose potential power is unsurpassable and with whom nothing human nor divine can be compared.

Therefore, Hermes, do not think that anything from here below or above would be equal to God, for you would then deviate from the truth: nothing is equal to the Incomparable, to the universal, one God. Neither should you think that he shares his potential power with whomsoever. For save himself, who is creator of life, immortality and change? And what else could he do but create? God is not inactive, otherwise the entire cosmos would be inactive, for everything is full of God. Consequently, there is nowhere inactivity, neither in the world, nor in any other being. Inactivity is an empty word, with regard to the creator as well with that which comes into being.

And everything must come into being according to the influence, natural to every place. For the creator lives in all his creatures; and he does not abide in one of them separately, and he does not create in one of them alone, but he creates all of them. Whereas he is an ever-active power, it is not sufficient for him to have created beings, he also takes them into his care. Look upon the world which displays itself to you through me, and imbibe deeply of its beauty: a pure and imperishable body, inwardly strong and young, and ever increasing in force.



CHAPTER 2  
DISTINGUISHING DIMENSIONS  
REFLECTION

One of the most common mistakes in religion, philosophy, and spirituality is that a person is considered to be only a body with a personality, and that one fully identifies with that. Obviously these two dimensions of a person are important and they require the necessary attention and care. In authentic religion and spirituality however, the emphasis is specifically put on the awakening of the higher dimensions of oneself, particularly the soul and the spirit, in order to allow them to become more and more active in the personality and in the body. Why? Because only then will you truly become a human being as intended in the divine plan.

In the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Hermes Trismegistus gives numerous indications for attaining soul consciousness, which rises far beyond what we know so well as our self-consciousness. Catharose de Petri (1902-1990), one of the founders of the International School of the Golden Rosycross, writes the following words in chapter 15 of her 1959 booklet *'The Seal of Renewal'* concerning the relationship between the I-consciousness and the soul-consciousness:<sup>13</sup>

*"The I-consciousness and all that pertains to it is at most a phase in a divine emergency order, serving to lead a fallen microcosm back to his home in the original land of the Father. Whoever wants to maintain his I-consciousness shall perish, that is to say, the turning world-wheel will bring him back to the dialectical starting point, from where he will go up again to the high point in perpetual repetition and so on until ... well, until he is ready to "lose his life to find it",*

*meaning, until he is willing to give up his I-consciousness to find the liberating soul-consciousness.*

*We and all our fellow-men have a soul; this means however, a soul-organ with the activities relating tot it. A soul consciousness is something quite different. He who acquires this soul consciousness has thereby become an entirely different being, a new man, liberated from the world wheel; in the gnostic sense he has become a true Aquarian. It is only then that the love which is in the Gnosis can be fully manifested in him.'*

It is gratifying to know that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century this ancient wisdom, which was vivified in secret by the spiritual schools of all time, is becoming increasingly widespread. The terminology used today is a bit different, but the essence is the same. Those who follow today's generally respected spiritual leaders on the internet conclude that most people can agree with the statement that man is a multidimensional being and is faced with the task of allowing the higher dimensions to become active within him. Much more so than in the past, this step is now an urgent necessity because the electromagnetic radiation conditions of 'mother earth' have changed and have become more intense. As a result of increasing radiation activity, many people are now more or less forced to go a path of awareness and renewal because they can no longer maintain their old state of being. It is being dismantled.

### **Increase of the vibration frequency**

Contemporary spiritual leaders teach that the increasing activity of a higher dimension should not particularly be looked upon as an increase in volume - as the term dimension might suggest - but instead more as an increase in vibration frequency of the human system. They also disclose that taking part in a higher dimension is not an entirely pleasant process. Since a cleansing and purification of several sorts will need to

take place in the body of the person concerned, this process may temporarily cause physical and psychological difficulties. In this context, one often complains of 'ascent' problems. Your more subtle vehicles and your physical body must adapt in order to be able to tolerate more powerful energies. And that takes time. It has always entailed a certain struggle to be able to go a truly spiritual path and to a certain extent it will continue to be so. It is through learning to deal with resistances that we develop inner strength.

People who live consciously and conscientiously and strive inwardly sometimes look with amazement at their fellow human beings who are following their natural tendencies, apparently enjoying themselves and leading a pleasant life. Then all kinds of questions may arise, such as why can I not be happy with a regular life? For example: why do I still have problems with health, relationships, work and finances, in spite of my extensive knowledge and experience, and while still honestly doing my best? Should I perhaps give up my entire pursuit for depth and meaning in life in order to experience more joy in my life?

The idea that life should above all be pleasant and entertaining is sometimes called the illness of our time. We will have to accept that life is not always fun and can sometimes even be very burdensome. If you follow the hermetic way, your life can be more enjoyable, but it will not automatically be so. Your life will, however, absolutely be more meaningful. And if you persevere, a breakthrough can take place within yourself whereby the spirit-soul becomes active in your personality. Then each time that you lift yourself up inwardly, you can experience great joy, even if your personal circumstances are far from ideal. As it is sometimes said nowadays, your consciousness is then transformed from '3D' to '5D'.

What the School of the Golden Rosycross calls the dialectical consciousness or the I-consciousness is nowadays often referred to as the third-dimensional consciousness or 3D-consciousness. The highest achievable option in this respect is a well-functioning rational mind. There is no room for higher intuition or divine inspiration in 3D. The limited 3D consciousness – connected to the contaminated etheric, astral and mental spheres of the earth – is in particular characterized by fragmentation, conflict and competition, disharmony and separation

All these qualities are in sharp contrast to the values that apply in the soul world – the fifth dimension or 5D – which is related to living from the heart. According to J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, this living from the heart can be achieved by means of the so-called square of construction: clearly aiming at this goal, living without conflict, maintaining inner harmony and living in and through the All-Unity.

The fifth dimension is the field of unconditional love, it is the world of ideas of Plato, it is the Kingdom of Heaven about which Jesus speaks and it is the domain that Hermes Trismegistus refers to as ‘the World’.

A person can participate in 5D through soul rebirth, which is an inner Christmas celebration based on transformation of consciousness. This transformation is often symbolized by the five-pointed star, the pentagram. We are steered from many directions to this ascent of consciousness that humanity as a whole is now facing.

### **Intermediate phase**

A question that will inevitably arise from the foregoing is: What then is the fourth dimension or 4D? This phase is an intermediate one between the third dimension and the fifth dimension, and



Image 3: the human being that begins to discover something of a higher reality (from a book by Camille Flammarion, 1888).

usually lasts considerably longer than most people would like. The human being in the fourth dimension is touched inwardly, knowing from within that there is much more than the sensory perceptible world and that he is called upon to unseal higher dimensions within himself. He is committed and willing to do this, but discovers that he fails again and again because he is still inwardly divided. He tries to live with his 3D consciousness according to the norms of a 5D consciousness. Sometimes it works, but often it goes wrong because his consciousness and his human system have not yet been transformed.

The human condition in this intermediate phase, or 4D, is beautifully depicted in a lithograph from a book by Camille Flammarion (see image 3). A pilgrim sticks his head through the heavenly dome and discovers that behind it there are all sorts of other worlds unknown to him. The image is of course symbolic because in a physical sense there is no heavenly dome at all. The artist knew that of course. But he wanted to depict something that is impossible to express on a horizontal plane,

in a three-dimensional space. The pilgrim on the lithograph is astonished and perhaps also enthusiastic because he experiences something of realities that until now he never thought to exist. It feels good to be enthusiastic about something, because then you experience the life force within yourself and there is joy. The literal meaning of enthusiasm is: to be in God (*in theos*). And that is exactly what authentic religion and spirituality is all about: being consciously in God. According to hermetic philosophy, everything is in God. Hermes says:

*'So there are these three: God, the Father, The Good; the world; and man. God encompasses the world and the world encompasses man. The world is God's son; man is the son of the world, God's grandson, as it were. It is not as if God does not know man. On the contrary, He knows him perfectly and wishes to be known by him'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 12: 42-43)

So here we read that God wants to be known by man, not as a theoretical abstraction or as a working hypothesis, but as a living experience. And therein lies the challenge, because Hermes finds that the greatest sin in people is that they do not know God. He even invites man to become God, for he says, *'This is the good end for those who possess the gnosis, the knowledge of God, that they become God'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 1:65)

Humanity as a whole is still quite far distant from this state. That was already the case in ancient times and it still is today. Therefore the following admonishing words from Hermes are still extremely topical:

*'Whereto are you hurrying, O men, you whose minds are clouded because you are drunk with the word that lacks all Gnosis, the word of absolute ignorance that does not agree with you and that you*

*vomit in the end? Stop and become sober: see again with the eyes of the heart! And if not all of you can do so, let those at least who can. The malignity of ignorance floods over the whole earth, ruins the soul which is penned up in the body and prevents it from reaching the harbours of salvation.*

*Look for Him who will take you by the hand and lead you to the gates of the Gnosis, where the clear light shines in which there is no darkness; where no one is drunk, but all are sober and look up with their hearts to Him who wishes to be known. But listen well: His voice cannot be heard and His name cannot be pronounced, nor can material eyes view Him. Only the Spirit-Soul is capable of so doing'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 3:1-5).

So with our senses and with our normal consciousness we cannot perceive or experience God, or the gnosis. We are invited to start looking again with the eyes of our heart, that is, if we are able to do so. The human view and world view of Hermes differs greatly from that of people who identify themselves completely with their body and their personality. It is stated in hermetic philosophy that there is potentially a soul and a spirit-soul within the human system. Usually they are still latent, and the intention is that they awaken and become active after many earthly lives, on the basis of a fullness of experience and a consciously chosen inner path.

### **Microcosm**

Hermes and many others regard mankind as a reflection of the cosmos, and for this reason is called a microcosm: a miniature depiction of the great cosmos. When we look at night into the cloudless sky with our eyes or with telescopes, then what we observe does not at all resemble a human being: infinite stars and planets in the form of bright spots in an otherwise seemingly empty universe. However this is only the

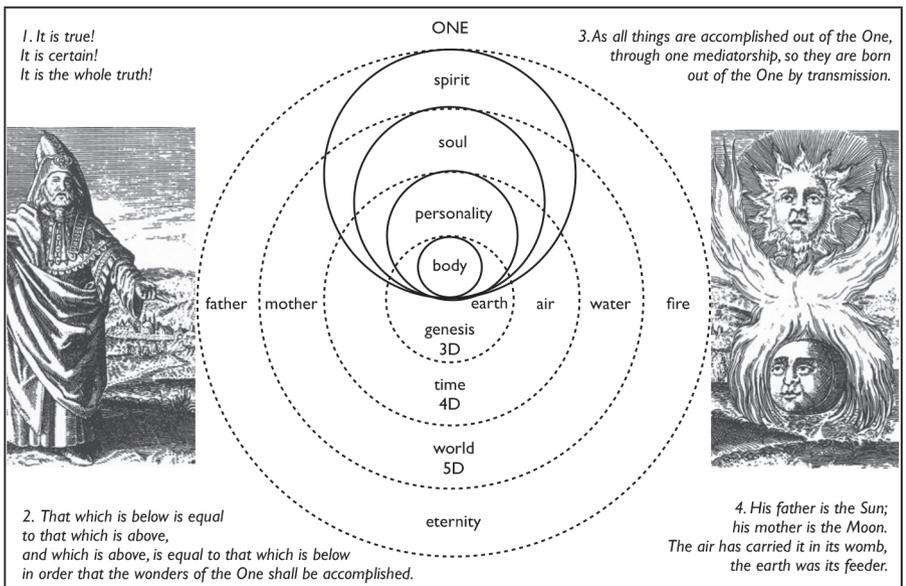


Image 4: the human being as a microcosm is potentially a reflection of the cosmos.

material aspect of the universe, corresponding to our physical body and which Hermes refers to as 'genesis'. When Hermes Trismegistus has become silent within and thus opens up to divine inspiration, the spirit-soul who calls himself Pymander begins to speak to him. Because opinions about God are contradictory, Hermes longs for an explanation of God from his innermost self. Pymander then tells Hermes that four spheres can be distinguished and that they have matured from each other: eternity, the world, time and genesis.

Pymander says: *'God makes eternity, eternity makes the world, the world makes time, and time makes genesis'* (Corpus Hermeticum 2:4). He explains this as follows: *'Goodness, beauty, blissfulness and wisdom form, as it were, the essence of God; the essence of eternity is invariability; the essence of the world is order; the essence of time is changeability; and the essence of genesis is life and death.'*

If we combine this with other information from the hermetic scriptures, we may conceive an abstract image of humanity and of the world, as is shown in image 4. Here we see that the absolute human being, the microcosm, has the same inner structure as the macrocosm in accordance with the hermetic principle 'as above, so below'. This axiom formed the basis for alchemy as formulated in the *Emerald Tablet* (hymn 2), a classical hermetic text, as follows: *'That which is below is equal to that which is above, and that which is above is equal to that which is below, in order that the wonders of the One shall be accomplished'*.

In ancient times, Greek philosophers distinguished four elements: earth, air, water and fire. These are not elements in the form of building materials for physical reality, such as the chemical elements of the periodic table, but are indications of certain qualities that can be experienced. In the human body we recognize the element earth in the solid matter from which it is composed. We recognize the element air in the breath that is characteristic and indispensable for life. The element water is fully present in the human body, with our body consisting of approximately 55 to 60 percent of the substance  $H_2O$ . In digestion, organic nutrients are converted with the help of oxygen into carbon dioxide, water and energy, which becomes available mostly in the form of work and heat. This process is related to the element of fire.

### **As above, so below**

According to the principle 'as above, so below' the classical elements earth, air, water and fire are not only present in the physical body of man, but also in his personality, in his soul and in his spirit-soul. Within the personality we recognize the four elements as follows: the physical body as earth, the etheric

body as air, the astral body as water and the mental body as fire. The four elements are also present in the larger structure of the human system: the physical body corresponds to earth, the personality corresponds to air, the soul corresponds to water and the spirit corresponds to fire.

Thus we can understand why Jesus says, *'If a person is not born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'* (John 3:5). By being born of water, a transformation of consciousness is meant, and the rebirth from spirit implies that the fire of the holy spirit becomes active in a person with a renewed consciousness.

In the human being, not only the body and the personality must be developed, but also the soul and the spirit-soul, because all these aspects are necessary for the human being to be able to participate in the implementation of the divine plan. Among other things, Hermes Trismegistus says the following about this process.

*'The spirit, the most rapid of all divine thought-creations, has for its body also the most rapid of all elements: fire. The spirit, the creator of all things, uses fire as an instrument for its creative work. Thus universal thought creates the All. The thoughts of human beings create only what is of the earth. Since man's cognitive faculty does not possess a garment of fire, it is not capable of calling into being divine things and is confined by its vehicles to what pertains to man. The human soul – not every soul however, but the soul truly devoted to God – is in a certain sense good-demonic and divine. When such a soul, after having walked the path of true piety – a path that leads to knowledge of what is divine and to refraining from injustice or harm towards any man – has detached itself from the body, it becomes Spirit-Soul throughout'* (Corpus Hermeticum 12:54-56).

Hermes therefore speaks of going the path of devotion to the divine. Although a person has to go that path individually, he cannot accomplish it on his own. That is why Hermes provides

the indispensable higher energies to the pupils that he teaches and guides: Tat, Asclepius and Ammon. On this path of awareness and renewal, the natural ensoulment of man is cleansed and purified so that a spiritual inspiration can become active and will gain power over the natural soul substance, thus leading to the re-creation of the entire human system. Through that fundamental change, that transfiguration, man acquires new powers that enable him to cooperate in the realization of the divine plan.

In chapter 1 of the scripture *'Admonition of the Soul'*, Hermes Trismegistus advises his pupils to reflect intensively on the composition of things in order to go the path of sanctification.<sup>3</sup>

*'Soul is more subtle than all the things encompassed by it, inasmuch as they are bodies and elements, but soul is wholly incorporeal. All things that are situated below soul are unable to partake of life except by means of soul. Soul possesses in itself the powers of thought, will, and judgement; and it extends its own properties to all things with which it is conjoined, so far as they are capable of receiving those properties; and thereby they attain to life. But those things with which soul is not conjoined are utterly destitute of thought, will, movement, and judgement; and a thing that does not possess these properties in any degree is lifeless.*

*Next above the substance of soul comes Spirit, which is exalted above soul, and encompasses it. Spirit is the subtlest of all things discoverable; it is superior to all the rest, and is situated in the highest place.*

*And Spirit is inferior only to that supreme Deity who is eternal and most holy and most lofty. From Him, without intermediary, does Spirit receive, and dispense to all things placed below it,*

*excellence and light and life Mind is the supreme mediator between God and the Kosmos, the chamberlain who stands nearest to the King. Contemplate this system then, O Soul, assure yourself of its truth, and be firmly convinced of it; for thus it is that things are constituted, ordered, and arranged'.*

(Admonition of the Soul, Chapter I)



*We are, thanks be to God, equipped with the divine cognitive faculty, albeit still in an embryonic state. This means, firstly, that they possess an astral body. Secondly, they have access, via the astral body, to the astral sphere of the earth. Thirdly, there is a constant interchange between them and the astral sphere of the earth with its natural forces, its demons. Moreover, they exercise an influence on the astral sphere, its nature and quality, by means of the faintly glimmering flame of their cognitive faculty.*

*See this situation clearly in your mind's eye, for it constitutes the drama of your life. In the astral field, in the astral fire, the ideas of human beings are etched. And since thoughts are active forces, vortices arise in the astral substance from which processes of realisation develop: creation.*

*You have access to this very special astral field, and that is what is so tragic! For it is precisely because of that, that you prevent your awakening from the embryonic state. For you are and always have been engaged in populating the astral sphere of the earth with all kinds of natural forces, with all kinds of demons. And it is in the nature of these demons, myriads of forms and construction are active in a variety of spheres, to influence the ethers and the forms they manifest. In this way, a fathomless, orderless chaos and degeneration has come into being in our earthly field of life.*

CHAPTER 3  
CONSCIOUSLY PERCEIVING, THINKING  
AND ACTING

SPIRITUAL TEXT: **Corpus Hermeticum 11:1-13**<sup>6</sup>

**H**ERMES: Yesterday, Aesclepius, I taught ‘the words of maturity’. And now I deem it necessary, in that connection, to speak in detail about sensory perception. It is thought that sensory perception and mental activity differ in the sense that the former is material and the latter spiritual. I, however, hold that both are most closely connected and by no means different, at least, in human beings. Just as, in the other animals, sensory perception is bound to nature, so, in human beings, the mentality too is bound to it.

The cognitive faculty is to mental activity as God is to divine nature. For the divine nature is brought forth by God and mental activity by the cognitive faculty, which is related to the Word. Or better still: mental activity and the Word are each other’s instruments, for the Word does not find utterance without mental activity, and mental activity is not manifested without the Word.

Sensory perception and mental activity thus enter human beings together, intertwined as it were. For there is no mental activity without sensory perception and no sensory perception without mental activity. Nevertheless, it is possible to conceive a form of mental activity without direct sensory perception, like the images that present themselves in dreams. I hold that both activities are set in motion by images making their appearance in dreams.

Perception takes place in both the physical and the astral bodies. As soon as the two components of perception have become one, thought, called forth in the mentality, is given

voice by means of the consciousness. The mentality brings forth all thought-images: good images when it has received the seeds from God, unholy images when they have originated from one of the demons. For there is no place in the world where there are no demons, that is, demons that lack the light of God. They penetrate into man and sow in him the seeds of their own activities. The mentality is then impregnated with adultery, murder, ungracious treatment of parents, sacrilegious acts, impious deeds, suicide by hanging or casting oneself down from a cliff, and a variety of other things which are the work of demons.

As far as the seeds of God are concerned, they are few in number, but great and fair and good. They are called virtue, moderation and piety. Piety is Gnosis, the knowledge that is of and with God. He who has this knowledge is filled with all that is good and receives his thoughts, which differ entirely from those of the masses, from God. Hence it is that those who walk in the Gnosis are not pleasing to the masses and, on the other hand, the masses are not pleasing to them. They are considered foolish, they are the target of ridicule and mockery, and they are hated and despised, and sometimes even put to death because, as I said before, evil must necessarily dwell here as it originated here. Thus, its domain is the earth, and not the world as some blasphemously maintain.

But he who loves and is devoted to God will endure all things, because he participates in the Gnosis. To such a person all things work together for the good, even those things that are evil to others. And when ambushes are laid against him, he conveys everything, as a sacrifice, to the Gnosis, and he, alone, transforms evil into The Good.

I now return to my discussion of perception. It is characteristic of man to combine perception with mental activity. As I have mentioned before, however, not every human being has an intellect

at his disposal, for there are two kinds of men: physical man and spiritual man. The physical man, connected with evil, receives, as I have said, the seed of his thoughts from the demons; the spiritual man is connected with The Good and is kept by God in His grace.



CHAPTER 3  
CONSCIOUSLY PERCEIVING, THINKING  
AND ACTING  
REFLECTION

*M*any teachings that can be recognized as being from other religious, philosophical and spiritual traditions have been incorporated in the Hermetic philosophy, albeit in other formulations. Thus we find the tri-unity of body, soul and spirit and the distinction between four spheres or worlds not only in Hermeticism but also, for example, in the Indian wisdom, in Greek philosophy and in the Kabbalah, the Jewish Gnostic tradition.

How is it possible that there are so many parallels between the inner teachings of authentic traditions? Certain philosophers in ancient times and also in the Renaissance assumed that a primordial wisdom had been revealed in the east in the distant past, one that gradually came to the west through human travels until it reached the Greek philosopher Plato. They believed that it really only degenerated after the revelation of primordial wisdom and that we need to return to the primordial source of all wisdom in order to be able to partake of truth again.

This view, known as Platonic Orientalism, apparently assumes a limited three-dimensional consciousness because it is based on time-spatial thinking. From the perspective of a five-dimensional consciousness, however, it is clear that the structures of people's inner experiences have a universal

character, and are therefore not exclusively dependent on time, space and culture. Then it is understandable that teachings of different traditions are very similar because they are derived from something that could be called a universal doctrine of wisdom, to which every person can open himself inwardly, thereby gaining access to it as a first-hand experience. That process is somewhat similar to downloading knowledge and information from a source that is invisible, but can be accessed online.

We find the idea of Platonic Orientalism, for example, in the works of the priest Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), founder of the Platonic Academy in Florence and translator of the *Corpus Hermeticum*; and one of his students, Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), best known for his 'Oration on the Dignity of Man'.<sup>14</sup> According to Marsilio Ficino, the original sublime wisdom can be traced back to the Persian prophet Zarathustra. The humanist Pico della Mirandola, diligently studying the Kabbalah, regarded Moses as the source of primeval wisdom. Both thinkers saw the Hermetic scriptures as a second important revelation alongside the Jewish-Christian Bible. The aforementioned Renaissance philosophers are often presented together with the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) as the great hermeticists of the Renaissance.<sup>15</sup> However, research by Professor Wouter Hanegraaff at the University of Amsterdam shows that this is not justified, because those authors have not understood the *Corpus Hermeticum* as well as the Italian Lodovico Lazzarelli (1447-1500), who until recently has been put aside in history as an insignificant hermeticist. This view is not correct, because the small Latin masterpiece 'Crater Hermetis', that Lazzarelli wrote in about 1493, and which was published five years after his death, shows that Lazzarelli had a much deeper understanding of the *Corpus*

*Hermeticum* than all his contemporaries, and that his vision can be called downright innovative.

Professor Hanegraaff therefore sees Lazzarelli as the most important hermeticist of the Renaissance. It is known that in the last part of his life Lazzarelli lived like a saint, entirely in accordance with hermetic and Christian teachings.

### **Progressive development**

Lazzarelli does not consider Zarathustra or Moses as the primal source of wisdom, but Hermes Trismegistus. An essential difference between his vision and the opinion of his contemporaries is that Lazzarelli does not start with the notion of a regressive development in which everything has become increasingly worse, but from a progressive development in which, with the passage of time, humanity can increasingly and more powerfully reveal itself. Another distinction is that Lazzarelli does not see Hermeticism and Christianity as two completely different revelations, but as manifestations of one revelation, which continues unceasingly.

Lazzarelli points out great similarities between Hermetism and Christianity. As far as we know, Lodovico Lazzarelli is the first to equate Pymander, the indwelling spirit, with Christ, who becomes active in the person who has realized the inner rebirth. In Lazzarelli's vision, progressive human development begins with Hermes Trismegistus, an archaic initiate-sage to whom Christ speaks under the name Pymander. His revelation was not yet perfect because most people could not yet understand it. According to Lazzarelli, we are only able to understand the inner rebirth after the incarnation of Christ in the man Jesus; then the Christ spirit can become active in every person who walks the right path to that end.

Lazzarelli loved literature, and in his younger years he

dreamed of becoming a famous poet. To bring that goal closer, in 1473 he became a member of the Academy of Rome, where he trained as a humanist. In 1481 Lazzarelli met a preacher, Giovanni da Corregio, who had an immense impact on him, and he followed him as his master. As a result, he became a spiritual seeker, discontinued his training as a humanist and completely abandoned his ambition to become a celebrated poet of name and fame.

In 1482 he wrote a beautiful manuscript for his teacher containing all the hermetic writings that were known in his time. In the preface he mentioned his master as 'Giovanni Mercurio'. Lazzarelli indicated herewith that he saw his master Corregio as Hermes Trismegistus (Mercury is the Latin name for Hermes), as a person in whom the divine has been realized, and who teaches others who are open to it. A paragraph from that preface reads:

*'Dear teacher, dearly beloved father Giovanni Mercurio: I have become so absorbed in the study of the divine books of Hermes Trismegistus and also in the most holy words of Moses and the prophets, and most of all in those of Jesus Christ our Saviour, that all other writings, whether of ancients or of moderns have completely lost their appeal to me and make me sick to my stomach.'*

This quote could indicate that Lazzarelli had profoundly experienced gnosis, and had therefore gone through a fundamental change within himself, in accordance with the following hermetic statement:

*'The Gnosis of The Good is both divine silence and the stilling of all the senses. He who has once found it can no longer pay attention to anything else. He who has once beheld it, will no longer see*

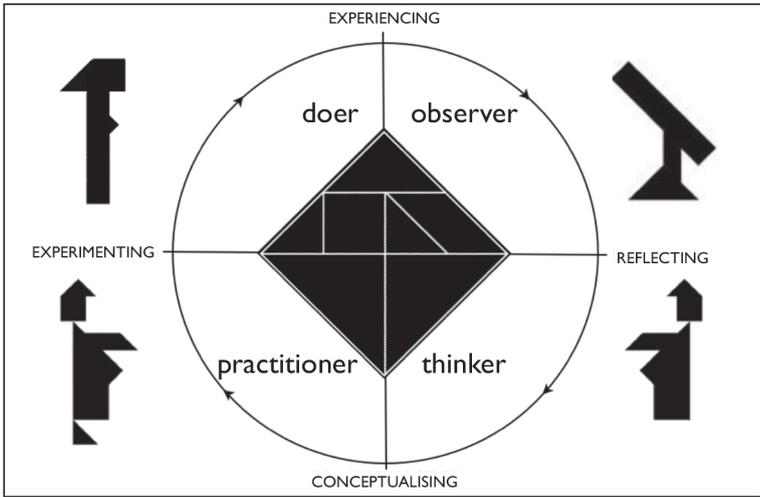


Image 5: the learning cycle and the four learning styles from David Kolb.

*anything else, nor can he listen to anything else, and even his body participates in this immobility. Where all physical perceptions and stimuli have vanished from his consciousness, he remains in tranquillity' (Corpus Hermeticum 12:13-14).*

From a certain point on, the desire of Lodovico Lazzarelli was no longer focused primarily on the sensible world, whereas this was and still is the case with a large majority of people. Our thinking is also strongly based on sensory perception and nowadays also on the tidal wave of information from smartphones, tablets, laptops and other devices that confuse and distract us.

### **The senses and the mind**

It is important, of course, that through our five wonderful senses of vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste we interact with our environment – that we consciously perceive and feel, and that we reflect on our sensations and experiences in order to learn certain laws and know how to make the right

decisions and perform the right actions. This allows us to learn and grow as a personality in a way that the American learning psychologist and educator David Kolb portrays in his model of the learning cycle of experimenting, experiencing, reflecting and conceptualizing; and the four learning styles of doer, observer, thinker and operator (see image 5).<sup>17</sup>

All kinds of research show that our senses have been developed to work together. This means, among other things, that we learn best if we stimulate multiple senses at the same time. Such an abundance of sensory stimuli reaches us in daily life that it is virtually impossible to process them all at the same time. In order to be able to control the flow of information, we have learned to concentrate on parts of it. Most people are strongly focused on the images around them. They are visually oriented. Someone who focuses primarily on sounds is auditory. People who mainly focus on their feelings are said to be kinesthetic.

The so-called visual, auditory and kinesthetic modalities are effective in every person and alternate with each other, yet most people appear to have a certain preference in this which is expressed, for example, in facial expressions, body language and language use. When a visually minded person is positive about something, he says for example: 'that looks good'. Those who are auditory may say 'that sounds good', while someone who is kinesthetic expresses himself with the words 'that feels good'.

Consciously observing, thinking, deciding and doing is not only necessary to be able to live our earthly life well, but also to learn to understand something on the basis of analogies of domains that transcend sensory reality, and the grand plan that drives everything. In chapter 2 of *'Admonition of the Soul'*, Hermes formulates the latter idea as follows:<sup>3</sup>

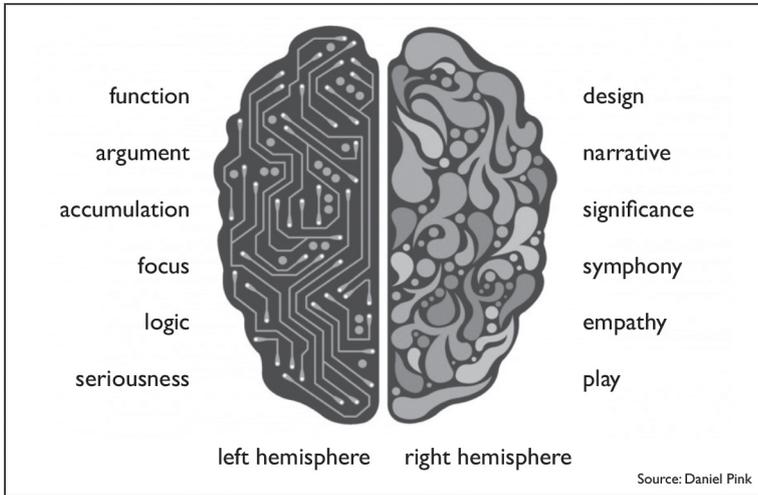


Image 6: integration of the qualities that are assigned to the left and the right hemisphere of the brain is important but not liberating.

*‘Though this world is a complex of contraries, good and evil being intermingled in mutual conflict, yet at the same time it contains semblances or shadows of things higher en more real, whereby the soul is awakened, and urged to its attention on itself, and to attain knowledge of the truth.’*

In spiritual traditions we often find references to visual images, such as the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly, as a symbol for the process of renewal that can take place in man; or a tree as a symbol of a person who has become a living connection between earth and heaven and can therefore produce fruit; and the shining star as a symbol for the resurrection body or golden wedding garment. George Gurdjieff uses auditory symbols when he refers to the scale or octave of music when teaching the course of processes with the help of the Enneagram, to display something of the qualities that emanate from God and which can be experienced

by humans.<sup>18</sup> And Jacob Boehme in his book *Aurora* mentions the flavors sweet, bitter, sour and acidic to represent some of the qualities that come from God that can be experienced by man.<sup>19</sup>

The attainment of the truth as intended by Hermes far exceeds what is known as common sense. The thrice great Hermes Trismegistus does not regard that as divine but as something similar to the senses, because it is also an aspect of the personality and is therefore bound to nature. This applies both to the rational, analytical way of thinking and to the creative and synthetic way of thinking. The first way of thinking is often linked to the left hemisphere of our brain and the second to the right hemisphere (see image 6).

Anatomically and physiologically it turns out to be incorrect, but that does not alter the fact that it may be useful to use the brain hemispheres as a metaphor for both ways of thinking.<sup>20</sup>

The renewal of mankind through transfiguration can never exclusively come about through mere intellectual activity: not through the left hemisphere, not through the right hemisphere, and also not through the harmonious cooperation between the two. Integration of the qualities that are assigned to the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere is important, but in itself is not liberating in a gnostic sense.

For the gnostic renewal process, it is essential to be touched in the heart. In order to be able to continuously experience that touch, it is necessary that the consciousness becomes calm and does not lose itself in fascination for the sensory world. There is of course room on the gnostic path for intellectual considerations – both analytical and synthetic – because the human mind is a wonderful and important instrument of the personality. Hermes says:

*'It is not, however, the mentality that reaches up to truth, but the soul that is connected to the spirit, having the power to forge ahead to the truth after it has first been guided to this path by the mentality. When it then ponders upon the entire All with a gaze that is all-embracing, finding how everything accords with what the insight-laden mentality has explained, its faith is raised to knowledge and it finds tranquillity in that fair knowledge of faith'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum I 1:25)

This hermetic approach differs very much from a scientific method. Natural sciences are primarily based on physics, which deals with matter. The hermetic writings are mainly about metaphysics, that which is beyond the material and is related to the search for the purpose and meaning of existence. In hermetic philosophy, it is not primarily about defining truth in formulas or in words – because at best they are extremely limited reflections of the truth – but about coming into contact with, experiencing and living out of truth.

### **Paradigms**

The human and world view presented by natural sciences is very extensive and detailed, but limited to what can be perceived with the senses or extensions thereof in the form of instruments. The view of man and the world within hermetics and other esoteric traditions is less complex, but includes much more because it is based on experiences that transcend sensory perceptions. That is why it is said that while gnostic-hermetic thinking is based on a completely different paradigm than natural scientific thinking, hermetic philosophy still accepts most of the conclusions of the natural sciences.

The concept of 'paradigm' was introduced by the American physicist and philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996) and refers to a system of beliefs, models and theories

on the basis of which reality is perceived, analyzed and interpreted.<sup>21</sup> A paradigm offers a high degree of certainty because it is based on a coherent set of beliefs that can be considered as assumptions that have been discussed extensively.

A self-contained belief offers less certainty than a paradigm, and an assumption even less. Paradigms, however, are a false certainty because history teaches us that old paradigms gradually give way to new paradigms due to advancing insight. The following quotes about paradigms can clarify things further.

- God's Spirit moves through us and the world at a pace that can never be constricted by any one religious paradigm.  
*Bono*
- The symbolic language of the crucifixion is the death of the old paradigm; resurrection is a leap into a whole new way of thinking. *Deepak Chopra*
- A radical inner transformation and rise to a new level of consciousness might be the only real hope we have in the current global crisis brought on by the dominance of the Western mechanistic paradigm. *Stanislav Grof*
- Your paradigm is so intrinsic to your mental processes that you are hardly aware of its existence, until you try to communicate with someone with a different paradigm. *Donella Meadows*
- Since paradigms are often unconscious, you will not be able to face your own until they are broken. In that case, because it concerns the deepest level of certainty, you will also experience great instability. *George Parker*

Does all this mean that the paradigm of hermetic philosophy will give way to a broader and more precise paradigm? Absolutely! And that also applies to the paradigm of Christian

salvation, which in the New Testament is represented as real, yet very elementary. Jesus says to his disciples: *'I still have much to say to you, but you cannot bear it now. But when it comes, the spirit of truth, it will show you the way in all truth'*.

(John 16: 12-13)<sup>22</sup>

### **The spirit of truth**

Catharose de Petri writes in response to this Bible text in chapter 10 of *'The Seal of Renewal'*:<sup>13</sup>

*'If we continue our work in absolute self-sacrifice with complete dedication, the spirit of truth shall manifest itself and speak to the world in even clearer language. A tremendous flow of truth, of revelations of coming events, will be liberated in the world. All countries and all peoples will be stirred by this new truth as by flood and already now this can be witnessed everywhere. World and mankind are being, as it were, torn free from their limitations and their eyes will turn to matters of intercosmic concern, to the interrelation with the all-manifestation, in order that all may know that mankind must form a willing part of a glorious plan of salvation. [...]*

*The truth will stir the all, now here, now there, as a mystery; one time as a whispering, another time as a stormwind. One moment it will speak of hardly expected and almost incomprehensible things; the next moment it will testify in a clear manner. All will be stirred, small and great, the wise according this world and the simple. In this way an international goodwill towards the Gnosis will be fostered.'*

This grand prophecy might initially be considered strange and highly unlikely by people who are trapped in the paradigm that assumes the sensible world to be the only reality. In Hermeticism and other esoteric traditions, thoughts are seen as living creations that can be born and nourished, can increase and decrease in power and size and eventually die.

Those who cannot recognize this idea as truth would do well to accept it as a working hypothesis and to then investigate in practice the extent to which this approach can be recognized as their truth.<sup>23</sup>

Whereas most neuroscientists view thoughts solely as the effects of all kinds of electrical currents in the brain, the hermetic teachings consider thoughts as creations of a certain quality that enter into the consciousness of man such that he can become aware of them and that he himself can, in principle, decide what to do with them: let them pass, feed them, combine them with other thoughts and feelings, store them in memory and so on. Man's thoughts and the way he deals with them determine who he is and what he does. Hermes very briefly describes the process by which man becomes what he thinks:

*'The human soul is manifested as follows: the consciousness manifests in the mind, the mind in the power of desire, the power of desire manifests in the vital fluid; the vital fluid spreads through the arteries, the veins and the blood; it sets the animal creature in motion and sustains it, as it were'* (Corpus Hermeticum 12-38)

On the gnostic path, the student gradually becomes more aware of his thoughts, feelings and acts of will, trying to direct his life in such a way that further inner development becomes possible; thus he ultimately contributes to the realization of the plan of God. He is not alone in that. If his intentions are pure, he receives the necessary insights and powers from the divine hierarchy at the right moments to enable him to go his path. If he joins forces with like-minded people who also walk the path of divinity, he will experience that this is based on a protective, beneficial and driving activity. He recognizes the truth in the following words that Hermes speaks to him:<sup>3</sup>

*“Though this world is a complex of contraries, good and evil being intermingled in it in mutual conflict, yet at the same time it contains semblances or shadows of things higher and more real, whereby the soul is awakened, and urged to turn its attention on itself; and thus the soul is enabled to gain clear intelligence and to attain to knowledge of the truth. The soul descends into this world in order that it may make trial of things and learn to know them; but when it is here, it neglects its business of seeking and learning truth; it is drawn away to the pursuit of worldly goods and pleasures, and forgets the purpose for which it came down to earth.*

*Men use their senses amiss, and fail to attain to any true knowledge; but this world, rightly regarded, is a place for learning truth in. The visible forms of things which it presents to our senses are fleeting and perishable; but they are semblances or shadows of forms that are not apprehensible by sense, forms that are real and everlasting.*

*There is in the thought-world nothing of which copies are not to be seen among the things which are brought into being by the process of nature in the sense-world; and on the other hand, all things that are found in the sense-world are merely varying semblances or copies of things in the thought-world. The deceptive and fleeting pleasures of the sense-world suggest to us that we should turn from them to the true and unceasing pleasures of the thought-world; the frail, transitory, and perishable forms of the sense-world bid us turn from them to the stable and constant forms of the thought-world; the mutual repugnance and inconstancy of all things in the sense-world urges us to turn to the concord stability and constancy of all things in the thought-world.*

*Therefore, O Soul, as long as you are in the physical world, seek not any pleasure (of sense), and suffer not yourself to be so occupied with any sensible thing as to be drawn away from learning to know, and representing to yourself in thought, and seeking out,*

*those things which (it is your true function to) aim at and desire and pursue; that so you may be enabled to devote all your efforts to the one aim of getting knowledge’.*

(Admonition of the Soul, Chapter 3)



*The rational, the meaning, the essence of rebirth stands as an antithesis in this world. So the candidate in the gnostic mysteries needs to resolve this antithesis in himself by turning away from the world. If he does not want to or is not yet able to do so, then, for the time being at least, pupilship of a gnostic Spiritual School is not the right thing for him. And there you have the reason why the fourteenth book speaks of a secret sermon on the mount of rebirth. Throwing yourself at gnostic philosophy with the nature-born ego and the ordinary, dialectical lust for life will never lead to an unveiling of the mystery of rebirth, how ever hard you try. No-one in this state of being could possibly understand the mystery or react to the secret discourse in the right way, and any attempt to imitate the process would very quickly fail. The meaning of the discourse on rebirth will always be hidden to those who remain on the outside, even if they were to learn every word that has ever been written on the subject.*

## CHAPTER 4

### RECEIVING ESOTERIC TEACHINGS

SPIRITUAL TEXT: **Corpus Hermeticum 14:1-25**<sup>7</sup>

**T**AT: In your general discourse, Father, you were enigmatic and vague when you talked about the divine nature. You did not reveal that nature to me, saying that no one can be saved unless he has been reborn. But when, after your talk with me, I made myself your supplicant during our descent from the mountain, and inquired about the doctrine of rebirth so that I might come to know it as this is the only part of the doctrine that is unknown to me, you promised to convey it to me as soon as I had disengaged myself from the world.

Now I have done so and have made myself inwardly strong against the world's delusion. So would you please now complete what is lacking in me, just as you promised me, and teach me about rebirth, either by word of mouth or by means of a mystery. For I do not know, O Trismegistus, from what matrix the man is born, and from what seed.

HERMES: My son, he is born from the wisdom which thinks in the silence, and from the seed which is the Only Good.

TAT: But then, who sows it, Father? All this is utterly incomprehensible to me.

HERMES: It is the will of God, my son.

TAT: And of what quality is the one who comes to birth, Father? For he will neither participate in my earthly being nor in my intellectual thinking.

HERMES: The reborn one will indeed be different: he will be a god, a son of God, all in all and equipped with all faculties.

Tat: You are talking in riddles, Father, and not like a father speaking to his son.

HERMES: Such things cannot be taught, my son. But God willing, He himself will restore your memory of it.

TAT: You are telling me things, Father, which pass my understanding and which perplex me utterly. The only appropriate response I can make is to say: I am a son who is a stranger to his father's house. Do not continue to withhold your wisdom, Father, for I am your legitimate son. Explain in detail in what manner rebirth takes place.

HERMES: What can I say, my son? Only this: When I perceived in myself an indefinable vision, brought forth by God's mercy, I went out of myself into an immortal body. So I am now no longer the one I was before, but have been begotten of the Spirit. Such a thing cannot be taught nor can it be perceived by the physical element through which we see here. That is why I no longer worry about the composite form that once was mine. I no longer have any colour, nor a sense of feeling, nor dimension; all this is foreign to me.

At this moment you see me with your eyes, my son, but what I am you are not able to understand by looking at me with your physical eyes. Indeed, you are not seeing me now with those eyes, my son.

TAT: You have put me into a state of considerable confusion and conceptual bewilderment, Father. For now I no longer even see myself.

HERMES: May God grant you to go out of yourself like those who dream in their sleep; but then, in your case, without sleeping.

TAT: Now reveal this also to me: Who is it that instigates the rebirth?

HERMES: It is the son of God, the one man, according to God's will.

TAT: Now you have really made me speechless, Father, because

now I no longer understand any of it: I still see you with the same body, with the same outward appearance.

HERMES: In this you are mistaken, for the mortal form changes from day to day. Imaginary as it is, it changes in the course of time by increasing and decreasing.

TAT: What, then, is true and real, Trismegistus?

HERMES: It is that which is not defiled, my son, that which is unlimited, colourless, unchangeable, uncovered, formless, radiant, only to be fathomed by itself, the unalterable Good, the incorporeal.

TAT: That is beyond my comprehension, Father. I thought I had become wise through you. But all my insight has been confounded by these concepts.

HERMES: That is how it is, my son, with what goes up like fire, or down like the earth, or is liquid like water or blows through the universe like air. But how would you be able to perceive with your senses what is neither solid nor liquid, what can neither be collected nor caught, and can only be comprehended through its aptitude and active power - something which is possible only for one who can comprehend the birth in God.

TAT: Am I then incapable of that, Father?

HERMES: That is not what I meant, my son. Withdraw into yourself, and it will come. Will it, and it will happen. Still the body's sensory activities, and the birth of the divine will become a fact.



CHAPTER 4  
RECEIVING ESOTERIC TEACHINGS  
REFLECTION

Muhammed Ali al-Samman made a remarkable discovery that greatly changed views of Gnosis and early Christianity in ancient times. This Arab farmer started digging in the desert near his hometown of Nag Hammadi, in central Egypt, in the early morning of December 16, 1945, because he was looking for humus. In doing so, he came across an old stone jug. He became curious and hoped there would be something in it that could make him rich. At the same time, he was also a bit scared because there might be a djinn living in the jar.

Muhammed Ali gathered courage and smashed the jar to see what was inside. To his great disappointment this illiterate farmer discovered that it only contained thirteen old leather-bound manuscripts, with writings that he could not read. He knew it had something to do with early Christians, and took his treasure to his Islamic spiritual leader, who assured him that it was of no use at all. Yet, Muhammed Ali did his best to sell this worthless junk. He probably eventually received a very modest amount of money for it. After many years of drifting and wandering, the manuscripts known as the Nag Hammadi writings became available for historical scientific research.

They turned out to be 52 third- and fourth-century texts that were Coptic translations of religious and philosophical texts, originally written in Greek. It was not until 1977 that an integral English translation was produced under the supervision of the American scholar James M. Robinson. In English it was known as *'The Nag Hammadi Library'*.<sup>24</sup>

At first glance, it appears to be a heterogeneous collection including Christian texts, philosophical texts, Gnostic texts and three hermetic texts: Initiation in the eighth and ninth sphere, Hermetic prayer of thanks (see hymn 4) and Asclepius (already known in Europe in the Middle Ages).

Despite the great diversity of the Nag Hammadi scriptures, there is nevertheless a common characteristic to be discovered: gnosis in the broadest sense of the word. The big question is why at that time those writings were hidden in the desert sand. A generally accepted explanation is that monks from the Pachomius-founded monastery at Tabennisi on the banks of the Nile buried this library of manuscripts because they feared it would otherwise be destroyed.

In the year 367 the church father Athanasius of Alexandria (295-373) sent a warning letter to many Christian faith communities. In this letter, the bishop listed writings that are now part of the New Testament and emphasized “only in these books is the teaching of divinity proclaimed” – a sort of white list. In that letter, Athanasius warned against the so-called apocryphal books which, he asserted, would have been written by heretics to ‘lead astray the ones of simple mind.’

### **Prohibited books**

Certain monks of the Pachomius Monastery probably found their inner path in reading manuscripts that were not mentioned in that particular letter, and may have feared that they would be excommunicated and removed from their monastery due to the possession of ‘the mountain as a symbol’. That is why they may have put those manuscripts in a jar, smuggled them out of the monastery and buried them far away.

Many conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the Nag Hammadi library in relation to history. We now mention only

three of them, because they are important for the theme of this book.

The ancient gnosis was much more varied and universal than was being stated by its adversaries, who erroneously assumed that gnosis was of an origin deemed exclusively heretical to Christianity. Young Christianity was much more diverse than previously believed. Both Christianity and ancient Hermeticism had an esoteric character, namely that spiritual insight, the gnosis, is not accessible to just anyone, but only to those who are touched inwardly, who open themselves to her and devote themselves to her.

Long before the Nag Hammadi writings became available there were a few who already expressed the above findings in word and in writing. The British historian, theosophist, gnostic and author George Robert Stow Mead (1863-933) was one of them. In 1884 he graduated as a classicist and became very interested in Eastern spirituality. Three years later he became a member of the Theosophical Society. In 1890 he quit his job as a teacher to become the personal secretary of Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), founder and then president of the Theosophical Society.

Mead's interest gradually shifted from Eastern spirituality to Western esotericism as found in Greek philosophy, early Christianity and Hermeticism. It is a development that many are going through: first breaking away from ecclesiastical Christianity, then seeking refuge in Eastern spirituality and finally, enriched with new insights, returning to the Christian roots. George Mead was anything but superficial. He undertook thorough and scientific research and published many texts, in particular translations and reflections on classical Hermetic and Gnostic writings. In his book *'Echoes from of the Gnosis'* he writes in 1906:<sup>25</sup>

*'My dear friends (if you will permit me, I would reply), there is no Christian Gnosis and Trismegistic Gnosis; there is but one Gnosis. If that Gnosis was for certain purposes either associated with the name and mystic person of the Great Teacher known as Jesus of Nazareth, or handed on under the typical personality of Great Hermes, it is not for us to keep the two streams apart in heart and head in water-tight compartments. The two traditions mutually interpret and complete one another. They are contemporaneous; they are both part and parcel of the same Economy. Read the fragments of these two forgotten faiths, or rather the fragments of the two manifestations of this forgotten faith, and you will see for yourselves. [...]*

*If I believe rightly, the very essence of the Gnosis is the faith that man can transcend the limits of the duality that makes him man, and become a consciously divine being. The problem he has to solve is the problem of his day, the transcending of his present limitations. [...]*

*It would be manifestly absurd to go back to the past and simply pour ourselves once more into these ancient forms; this would be death and a mental and spiritual 'reincarnation' backwards, so to speak. It is precisely this absurdity which so many literalists attempt in theology, only to find themselves stranded among dead forms with the tide of the spiritual life far out'.*

(Echoes from the Gnosis, The Hymns of Hermes by G.R.S Mead)

### **Gnostic foundation**

George Mead laid a solid Gnostic foundation upon which others could build. For example J. van Rijckenborgh used the 1906 English translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* by George Mead as the basis for his book series *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis*.<sup>26,27</sup> For addresses to his pupils, van Rijckenborgh also made grateful use of the English translation of the '*Gospel of the Pistis Sophia*' which Mead had already published in 1896,

the second edition of which was published in 1921.<sup>28</sup> The Pistis Sophia is portrayed as a woman who goes the gnostic path of initiation and in doing so is confronted with thirteen soul reversals through which she must struggle in order to achieve soul-rebirth. Those soul reversals have been laid down in the thirteen so-called penitential hymns that she sings, three of which are included in this book (see hymn 5).

The manuscript of the '*Gnostic Gospel of the Pistis Sophia*', probably written in the third or fourth century, had been kept in the library of the British Museum since 1785.<sup>29</sup>

On Blavatsky's advice, Mead translated it from Greek into English and published it. Blavatsky absolutely opposed the clerkish Christianity of that time, but she considered this gnostic gospel to be extremely important because '*the soul is always the one subject, and the science of the soul was the sole purpose of all the ancient mysteries.*'

In part four of his book '*The Gnosis in Present Day Manifestation*', Van Rijckenborgh elaborates on the meaning of the words Pistis and Sophia for people who want to go the Gnostic path. He sees the Pistis and the Sophia as two streams or emanations flowing forth from the divine realm (referred to by gnostics as the Pleroma) which together can transform humanity according to the plan of God. The Pistis is the flow of knowledge as it manifests in countless ways within authentic spiritual traditions; it is often misunderstood and wrongly applied by the majority of people. The Sophia represents the flow of wisdom that keeps aloof from the world but radiates on her. That Sophia is known in all authentic spiritual traditions. In the apocryphal Bible book '*The Wisdom of Solomon*' it scintillates through the words in many ways (see hymn 6). Van Rijckenborgh writes (in '*The Gnosis in Present Day Manifestation*'):<sup>30</sup>

*'During the course of time we see how an external manifestation of the divine Brotherhood appears again and again as a messenger to found a religion. When this religion begins to take shape it divides into a greater or lesser number of sects. That is splendid and positive, although many fulminate against it. This fulmination itself is also good, for it points to the effect of a magnetic power, of the primary emanation of the Pleroma: the Pistis, which unceasingly makes itself known to mankind in a thousand-and-one forms. [...]*

*It is logical that a pure intellectual reaction follows the touch of the Pistis. Some persons react spontaneously, emotionally; others react mentally from the beginning. When the mentally directed persons undergo the touch of the Pistis, they begin to consider it. It is in this way, in the multifarity of its aspects, that theological science has arisen. A theologian is a specialist with respect to the knowledge mankind has gathered under influence of the primary emanation. He is therefore a specialist because he has made a choice from the multitude of appearances: he is a Christian, an Islamic, a Buddhist, a Brahman or some other sort of theologian. If he is a Christian theologian, one must specify to which of the many Christian sects he belongs. [...]*

*Do you realize that precisely this struggle of the theological parties is the purpose of stimulating emanation of the Pistis? The aim is to drive mankind, time and again, to the extrimity of its pitiful mental faculty. Servants of the Pistis can do no more than seek salvation, but in their present state of being they will never be able to find it. [...]*

*The Pistis points to the Sophia. But who or what is the Sophia? It is the other divine emanation that accompanies Pistis; it is the true, unassailable wisdom, the wisdom which, without making any concessions, issues from the Pleroma of God. This Sophia takes shape in gnostic schools of all times. Therefore, in these schools of the Gnosis we find the same Sophia, the same wisdom, the*

*same way, the same truth and the same life. Regardless whether the seekers come from this or that community, whether they are coloured brown, red or white, whether they come from the Buddhist, Islamic or Christian camp, they are taught by the one Sophia. They submerge to rebirth in the one Sophia.'*

The names Pistis and Sophia are also regarded respectively as exoteric – intended for the masses – and esoteric – meant for initiates. According to the esoteric teacher George Gurdjieff this dichotomy lacks precision. Gurdjieff starts not from exoteric versus esoteric but from the triad exoteric, mesoteric and esoteric, which can be represented as three concentric circles.<sup>18</sup>

### **Exoteric, mesoteric and esoteric**

According to Gurdjieff, the inner or esoteric circle is formed by those people who have attained the highest development possible for man, who have full control over their state of consciousness and who have realized a free and independent will. They cannot do anything that is contrary to their insight, neither can they have an insight that is not expressed in their actions.

The people belonging to the middle or mesoteric circle understand more or less the same as the people of the esoteric circle, but their knowledge is of a more theoretical nature and is not yet fully expressed in their actions. There can be no disagreement and no misunderstanding between them.

The third circle is called the 'exoteric' circle, because it is the outer circle of the inner part of humanity. The people belonging to this circle possess much of what the people of the esoteric and mesoteric circles have realized, but their knowledge is of a more philosophical nature, and is still hardly translated into action. Again according to Gurdjieff, the vast

majority of people is not yet part of the exoteric circle, but is located in the periphery. Those people understand relatively little, they are aware of themselves in a very limited way and are guided mainly by external influences. Gurdjieff compares such a person to a machine that functions automatically, but has no consciousness. If he were alive today, he might use the computer as a metaphor for the not-yet-awakened human being.

Gurdjieff's aforementioned tripartite division agrees quite well with the vision of Karl von Eckartshausen (1752-1803). His 'universal creed' is included in part 2 of this book (see hymn 7).

This German esoteric teacher based his work upon a threefold universal wisdom school of humanity, grounded on the tabernacle as described in the Old Testament, including a forecourt, a temple, and a sanctuary. In his booklet *'The interior Church and Community of God which is scattered throughout the World'* refers to them as the outer, the inner and the innermost.<sup>31</sup>

*'Man - nature - God - these are the subjects in the wisdom schools: man in the court, nature in the temple, God in the sanctuary. It has always been the intention of the wisdom school to lead man from the court of his own self to the temple of nature, and, through nature, to the innermost sanctuary, to God.*

*The working method of the wisdom school is divine in the innermost, spiritual in the inner, and natural in the outer. Its mysteries consist of the connection of the material world to the world of the spirit and the connection of the spirit to that of God. She allows people of all religions into the court because she intends to connect people with people and people with God.*

*In the forecourts, the diversity of the religions can persist. Brothers are entering the temple with their fellow brothers. And in the*

*sanctuary they, as anointed ones, as Christians, become one with each other.'*

### **Hermeticism and Christianity**

Von Eckartshausen never mentions his sources, but his writings are unmistakably Christian and Hermetic at the same time. The monks who buried the manuscripts in Nag Hammadi knew from experience that Christianity and Hermeticism can go well together. Lodovico Lazzarelli and Karl von Eckartshausen hinted at this idea in their writings. George Mead and J. van Rijckenborgh also strongly expressed this opinion. Van Rijckenborgh even made efforts to realize what he referred to as 'Hermes' ecumenism', which is based on inner recognition and goes far beyond a practical cooperation between religious and spiritual organisations.

Sometimes the connection between Hermeticism and Christianity is magnificently portrayed in an artistic way. For example, the Walburgis Church in Zutphen, the Netherlands, has a ceiling mural of Hermes Trismegistus; and the Cathedral of Sienna, Italy has a large and famous floor mosaic picturing Hermes giving esoteric teaching to Moses (see image 7).

This book '*Mysteries and Hymns of God, Cosmos, Humanity*', which is based mainly on the Hermetic Gnosis, deals with teachings and views referred to by many people as esoteric, but in fact – and here is an opportunity for readers to refine their terminologies – this is what Gurdjieff calls the exoteric circle, and Von Eckarthausen calls the outer school and the forecourt. This is where people who, from inner necessity, wish to become a Tat – a pupil of Hermes – find themselves in their approach towards the inner path.

Hermes is not Tat's biological father but his spiritual one: he has ignited the fire within his pupil. That is why Tat calls his

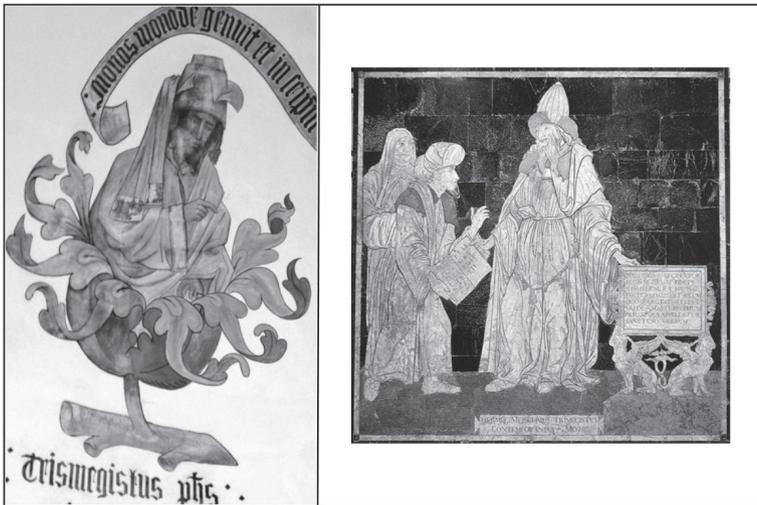


Image 7: Hermes Trismegistus on a vault painting (Walburgis Church Zutphen) and a floor mosaic (Cathedral Sienna).

teacher ‘father’ and Hermes considers him to be his son. In Tat, the archetype Hermes Trismegistus is completely present as inner master, but has not yet manifested himself. Tat has a developed and cultivated personality consciousness, but not yet a soul consciousness, and therefore also not yet a spirit-soul consciousness.

The soul and the spirit can only gradually express themselves in him, once he goes an inner path, guided by Hermes Trismegistus – the symbol for a descended initiate and a spiritual school. That path of transfiguration is, in a symbolic form, magnificently described in the dialogue between Tat and Hermes in the fourteenth book of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. That is the reason why this treatise is fully included in this book, divided between the chapters 4, 5 and 6.

A bona fide spiritual school works in a spiritual sense for all of humanity because its call resounds powerfully in the world

field, both audibly and inaudibly, both visibly and invisibly. In a practical sense, it works only with those who approach her *'desiring to be instructed in the essential things, to understand their nature and to learn to know God'* (Corpus Hermeticum 1:6). It does not speak to the great majority because *'those who walk in the gnosis are not pleasing to the masses, on the other hand, the masses are not pleasing to them. They are considered foolish, they are the target of ridicule and mockery, and sometimes even to put to death'* (Corpus Hermeticum 11:11).

### **Unmasking and breaking**

Unfortunately, such furious and destructive reactions to gnostic manifestations have not been exceptions, for the gnosis has an unmasking and breaking effect on forms that do not concur with it. Partly because of this, Jesus says to his disciples in his Sermon on the Mount: *'Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you'* (Matthew 7:6).<sup>22</sup>

And the classic seventeenth-century Rosicrucians wrote: *'Divulged mysteries become worthless; if desecrated they lose power. Therefore, do not cast pearls before swine, nor roses before donkeys..'*

Thus we can understand why Hermes gives his pupil Tat the following advice. *'However, avoid discussions with many; certainly not because you want to deny them your wealth, but rather because the multitude will only think you one to be laughed at. Like attracts like; but the unlike is never friend to the unlike. The words I have spoken will only attract very few listeners, or perhaps not even those few. Moreover, these words have the following special characteristic: they urge evil ones on to still greater malignity. That is why it is necessary to be on guard against the multitude; they do*

*not conceive the liberating power and glory of what is being said'* (Corpus Hermeticum 5:65).

The person whose heart is deeply touched by the gnosis for the first time experiences an enormous joy and grants that joy to all those dear to him. But when he talks about it and tries to involve them in his new discoveries, they usually turn out not to be at all interested. Then it is most of the time best to just return to the order of the day and leave it at that, and certainly not attempt to put those involved in contact with a spiritual school. Catharose de Petri explains this as follows in chapter 6 of *The Seal of Renewal*.<sup>13</sup>

*'If pulling out a fish of the water you will kill it, because you remove it from its natural life element. Before placing any human being in the sphere of life of the gnosis, you will first have to make sure that you do not tear them away from his natural element. How can we establish that? By determining the signature of the person concerned. This signature must meet certain conditions.*

*First of all, dialectics must have become oppressive to him as a sphere of life. Secondly, a positive new seeking element must be clearly apparent in him. Thirdly, such a person must already spontaneously come to live by new norms, even if only with a stumbling gait in endeavouring to walk a new path. If there is no such signature, a person is definitely not , or at least not as yet , fit for life in the gnostic field. Whoever disregards this rule will always do serious harm tot someone who does not have the required signature'.*

Catharose de Petri describes herein the characteristics of a human being fit to become a Tat, to join the exoteric circle, the forecourt. This signature reminds us of John the Baptist in the desert and of arcanum 9 of the Hermetic tarot, known as

<p>1. the hermit (<i>arcantum 9</i>)</p>  <p>Tat personality exoteric outer school forecourt levite stone barrel John 4 D</p> 	<p>2. the high priestess (<i>arcantum 2</i>)</p>  <p>Asclepius soul mesoteric inner school temple priest water Jesus 5 D</p> 	<p>3. the high priest (<i>arcantum 5</i>)</p>  <p>Hermes Trismegistus spirit esoteric innermost school sanctuary Samaritan wine Christ 6 D+</p> 
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Image 8: Tat, Asclepius and Hermes Trismegistus corresponding with arcana of the hermetic tarot.

the hermit or eremite (see image 8). This does not mean that such a person is alone in life, but that he or she has inwardly liberated himself from those people who are completely absorbed in the sensory world and its astral counterpart. Such a person is like the largest sheep that has left the flock, in the following parable from the Gospel of Thomas.

*“The Kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them got lost. That was the biggest. He left ninety-nine and looked for the one until he found it. After he had toiled, he said to the sheep, “I love you more than the ninety-nine”*” (Gospel of Thomas, Logion 107).

### **Spiritual seeker**

Those who have wrestled themselves free from the crowd may feel lonely, but they are irrevocably led by the Universal Brotherhood to places where the still-latent inner light can ignite. When the pupil is ready, the master is there! Such a person is then like the pilgrim of arcantum 9 of the Hermetic

tarot, which shows an old man in a hooded robe walking through the desert in the dark with a staff and a lamp. The old age of this traveler points at the countless experiences gained over many lifetimes. This spiritual seeker experiences a life that is focused solely on sensory perception as a desert.

He is in the dark and consciously on a journey towards the land of light, the kingdom of the soul, a remnant of which he carries within him: the awakened divine spark in his heart, which illuminates his path. That ignited spirit-spark is symbolized by his lamp. The hood ensures that he can look neither left nor right, that he is one-pointedly directed at what lies ahead and therefore does not stray onto side paths.

This traveler has become aware of the vertical dimension, symbolised by his staff. He has learned to be more or less independent and is therefore able to think, judge and act freely. Tat, a pupil of Hermes, is such a pilgrim. His request shows that he longs for inner renewal and also that he acknowledges his ignorance with regard to the path.

*'I have disengaged myself from the world and made myself inwardly strong against the world's delusion. So would you please now complete what is lacking in me, just as you promised me, and teach me about rebirth, either by word of mouth or by means of a mystery'* (Corpus Hermeticum 14:3).

Hermes Trismegistus, the initiate and representative of the universal Brotherhood on earth, identified in arcanum 5 of the Hermetic tarot, is obliged to comply with this request, for his apprentice has tested the waters, the stream of the Pistis and the stream of the Sophia. Having found the Pistis too insignificant, he is therefore ripe to be connected with the emanation of the Sophia, in accordance with the following words of Hermes from *'Admonition of the Soul'*.<sup>3</sup>

*'Merchants set forth their wares to be seen, not by the blind, but by men with sound eyes; and story-tellers, and those who make speeches at cross-roads, speak to be heard, not by the deaf, but by men with sound ears. And even so, philosophers do not address, and seek to initiate in wisdom, souls that are walking on the road that leads to death; they address, and wish to imbue with wisdom, those souls only which are walking on the road that leads to life. And these latter are souls which come to them and seek to be taught; but the souls which are walking on the road that leads to death are they that do not seek teachings, but recede from them and scorn them.*

*If you wish to escape punishment, O Soul, beware of errors and avoid sins; if you desire reward, let yourself be led to the right way of life. For it needs must be that sin brings punishment and loss, and that the right way of life brings reward and gain.*

*If you join yourself to Spirit, O Soul, your light is increased, so that you see with your mental eye the right way of acting; but if you turn away from Spirit and join yourself to sense, you lose the light of intelligence, and are enveloped in darkness, and your mental eyesight is weakened, so that in consequence of your blindness and darkness you give your-self up to sins.*

*The physician tells his patient not to eat what is bad for him. If the patient obeys him, he does right, and as the fruit of his right doing, he recovery health; if he disobeys him, he does wrong, and as the fruit of his wrong doing, he continues to suffer pain and torment'.*

(Admonition of the Soul, Chapter 9)





*Imagine that ignorance has been taken away from you in a fundamental way, and in your nature-born state of experience it is as if veils have been removed. Ignorance has vanished. And straight away, a glorious radiation descends into you from the light-vestment of the Sophia if you possess it bringing with it an inner joy that fills you utterly and passes all understanding.*

*And behold, intemperance is driven out in the same way, for the flood of inner joy poured out over you continues flowing into you in a steady rhythm, feeding and sustaining you. And as a result, any tendency towards disequilibrium – which is what Hermes means by ‘intemperance’ – disappears.*

*If you are living in such a torrent of abundance, you will no longer want to keep on renewing your attachment to the nature of death. This renunciation of everything dialectical, this forbearance, will drive out the vice of desire. By ‘desire’, Hermes means ‘chasing after earthly goals’ - the constant pursuit of things on a horizontal level, things which are purely of the earth, earthly. So, when you stand in the steadily flowing current of energy coming from the light-vestment surrounding you, the vice of desire will be driven out.*

CHAPTER 5

REALIZING PURIFICATION

SPIRITUAL TEXT: *Corpus Hermeticum* 14:26-37<sup>7</sup>

**H**ERMES: Purify yourself of the irrational castigations of matter.

TAT: Do I have castigators within me, Father.

HERMES: You have not a few, my son, and they are terrifying and numerous

TAT: I do not know them, Father.

HERMES: This very ignorance is the first castigation, my son; the second one is grief and sorrow; the third intemperance; the fourth desire; the fifth injustice; the sixth greed; the seventh deceit; the eighth envy; the ninth guile; the tenth anger; the eleventh thoughtlessness ; the twelfth malice. These castigations are twelve, but there are many more which, by means of the prison of the body, force the human being by their nature to suffer through the activity of the senses. However, when God has had mercy on the human being, they desist, albeit not immediately. And the latter explains the nature and significance of rebirth.

But be quiet now, my son, and listen in respectful gratitude. God's mercy will then no longer leave us. Rejoice my son, now that God's power is purifying you thoroughly so that the segments of the Word can be joined. The Gnosis of God has come to us: through its appearance ignorance has been banished. The Gnosis of joy has come to us. Through its appearance sorrow will flee to those who have a place for it. After joy the power I invoke is gentle courage. O wonderful power! Let us receive it in great gladness, my son; behold how its arrival has expelled intemperance.

Fourthly I name self-control, a power that resists desire. The next step, my son, is the support of righteousness, for behold how without ceremony it has banished injustice. So we have become the righteous ones, now that injustice has disappeared. The sixth power I invoke is the one that wages war against greed; it is the power of magnanimity, which imparts itself to all. And when greed has disappeared, I further invoke truth; as soon as falsehood flees, truth will approach us. See, my son, how The Good has become complete now truth has appeared, for envy has left us. The Good follows after truth, accompanied by life and light; and not a single castigation of darkness can affect us any longer, for, being vanquished, all have fled at whirl-wind speed.

Now you know, my son, the way in which rebirth takes place: through the advent of the ten aspects the spiritual birth is accomplished and the twelve aspects are expelled. Thus we are deified by this process of birth. Whoever then, by God's mercy, has achieved this birth- out-of-God and relinquished the physical senses, knows himself to be formed from divine forces and is filled with an inner joy.

TAT: Now I have achieved vision by divine dispensation, I see things no longer by means of the ordinary eyesight, but through the spiritual faculty of the powers received. I am in heaven, on earth, in water, in the air; I am within animals, and in plants; I am before, during and after birth, yes, I am everywhere. But now tell me this: how are the castigations of darkness, which are twelve in number, driven out by ten forces? How does this come about, Trismegistus?

HERMES: The tent dwelling which we have left, is composed from the circle of the zodiac which, in turn, consists of twelve elements; one nature, but manifold of conception, in keeping with man's erring thoughts. Among these castigations, my son, there are some that act in combination. For instance, undue haste and thoughtlessness cannot be separated from anger. They cannot

even be distinguished. Thus it is understandable and logical that they will disappear together when they are driven away by the ten forces. It is these ten forces, my son, that give birth to the Soul. Life and light are united. And so the number of unity is born out of the Spirit. Likewise, according to reason, the unity contains the number ten, tenfoldness, and the number ten again contains unity. TAT: Father, I perceive both the entire All and myself in the Spirit-Soul.

HERMES: That is rebirth, my son: one cannot form any three-dimensional concept of it. You know and experience it now thanks to this Discourse on Rebirth, which I have put in writings solely for your benefit, since we would not divulge all this to the multitude, but exclusively to those whom God has chosen.



CHAPTER 5  
REALIZING PURIFICATION  
REFLECTIONS

The subtitle of this book is: realizing the plan of God. This may evoke associations of a terribly long, tiring and painful process. Such a reaction is completely understandable from a dialectical or 3D consciousness, because from experience we know that it takes a lot of time, attention, energy and often also great sacrifices to carry out an ambitious plan in such a way that it is realized in the sensory perceptible world with the desired quality. From a spirit-soul consciousness, however, a completely different picture emerges because the plan of God is far beyond time and space. When Jesus' disciples ask their master when the Kingdom will come, he replies, *"The coming of the Kingdom is not to be expected in the future. No one will say: "Look, here it is" or "Look, there it is". No, the Kingdom has already expanded over the earth and people do not see it"* (The gospel of Thomas, logion 113).

Divine grace is abundant and is constantly seeking opportunities to flow into human beings, but humanity as a whole continues to make frantic efforts to shut itself off from it as much as possible. And they succeed dramatically well in doing so. If you look around you objectively in your environment and you become aware of what is happening in the world, you will have to determine that much is definitely not good and can rightfully be called 'evil'. It is widely recognized that the world and humanity are seriously ill and that healing and also sanctification are very much needed.

Where does evil originate? The ideas of the Persian prophet Zarathustra or Zoroaster concerning healing and sanctification have had a great influence in history. He developed a monotheistic religion, Zoroastrianism, in which the one good sun god Ahura Mazada is worshipped. The origin of that religion, unlike most other religions of that time, is not a nature religion in which God is seen and revered as a Santa Claus showering people with desirable gifts, but as an authentic gnostic-inspired religion focused on the transformation of humanity.

Zarathustra does not regard the sun primarily as an indispensable and powerful force of nature, but rather as a symbol for the invisible spiritual Sun that enables inner growth and renewal (see hymn 8). According to him, a less powerful god of evil, Ahriman, emerged from the one good God. Thus humanity is wedged between the power of good and the power of evil and faces the challenge of choosing the power of good. How is it possible that evil comes from good? We read about this in the Aquarian Gospel.<sup>32</sup>

### **Disharmonious mixture**

*'All created things have colours, tones and forms of their own; but certain tones, though good and pure themselves, when mixed, produce inharmonies, discordant tones. And certain things, though good and pure, when mixed, produce discordant things, yea, poisonous things, that men call evil things. So evil is the inharmonious blending of the colours, tones, or forms of good. Now, man is not all-wise, and yet has will of his own. He has the power, and he uses it, to mix God's good things in a multitude of ways, and every day he makes discordant sounds, and evil things. And every tone and form, be it of good, or ill, becomes a living thing, a demon, sprite, or spirit of a good or vicious kind'.*

(The Aquarian Gospel 39:12-16)

The Persian prophet Mani (216-276) connected the insights of Zarathustra with the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ. He founded the gnostic religion of Manichaeism, which was a world religion from about the fourth to the thirteenth century. Two testimonies of Mani are presented in hymn 9.

Manichaeism flourished not only in Iran and the Arabian Peninsula but also in countries around the Mediterranean, in Central Asia and even in China. Quite a few texts of the Manicheans have been preserved. The ideas of the Manicheans were incorporated in a renewed form in medieval gnostic movements such as the Bogomils in the Slavic countries in the Balkans and the Cathars, especially in the south of France. The famous theologian, philosopher and church father Augustine of Hippo (354-430) from North Africa was a member of the Manicheans for ten years. This very intellectual sage belonged to the exoteric circle and was never included in the esoteric circles of that movement. At one point he turned away from Manichaeism and argued strongly against it. Partly as a result of his actions, gnostic-oriented movements have been labeled heretical and then literally fought with fire and sword for centuries by order of the church of Rome of that time. Many gnostic movements have perished in this way, but the gnosis remained because it is immortal and is always looking for new ways to manifest and become liberating.

Characteristic of the Manichean view of man and the world is the existence of two realms that both express themselves in humanity: the light kingdom of the spirit and the dark realm of matter. Man cannot perceive the light realm with his limited senses because these senses are part of the realm of darkness. However, according to Mani, man has an encapsulated 'germ of light' in his heart which, if receptive to them, can vibrate along with the forces from the light realm and thus absorb

and process the impulses from that realm. As a result, a person changes and can leave the realm of darkness and return to the realm of light.

Seen from below, that is from the perspective of persons who have been touched inwardly and suffer physically, psychologically and spiritually in the world of fragmentation, the Manichean idea of the two realms or nature orders is not so weird at all. They experience a large gap between what they are now and what they could be in their inner being. That dualism between darkness and light brings forth the desire and the tension that are necessary to undergo an inner change and so become part of the realm of light.

### **The invariably good**

Seen from above, that is to say from the perspective of the inwardly renewed person who lives from the all-encompassing unity – as symbolized by Hermes Trismegistus – there are not two completely different, separated realms or fields. According to him, everything is connected to everything else. Absolute darkness does not exist for him: what people call darkness is for him only a place where there is very little light. This is also more or less the view that is expressed in the Corpus Hermeticum. In the tenth book, Hermes Trismegistus teaches his disciple Asclepius about the invariably good that knows no opposite, that is the absolute good or the only good, and also speaks about the relative good that people regard as the opposite of evil.

*“The Good, Aesclepius, is exclusively in God, or rather: God is The Good, in all eternity. That is why The Good is necessarily the cause and essence of all motion and of all genesis: nothing exists that is without The Good. The Good, in perfect equilibrium, is surrounded by a static force of manifestation: it is the entire plenitude, the primordial fount,*

*the origin of all things. When I call that which sustains everything good, I mean The Good, which is absolute and eternal.*

*All the other qualities occur in all beings, in the small as well as in the large, in each of them in a specific way, and even in the world, the greatest and most powerful in all manifested life: for all that has been created is full of suffering, because genesis itself involves suffering. Where there is suffering, The Good is certainly absent. Where The Good is, there is certainly no suffering whatsoever. Wherever day is, there is no night, and wherever night is, there is no day. That is why The Good cannot dwell in what has been created, but only in the non-created.*

*But since all matter participates in the non-created, it is also part of The Good.*

*In this sense the world is good: insofar as it likewise brings forth all things it is, as such, good. But in all other respects it is not good, being also subject to suffering, and changeable, and the mother of creatures subject to suffering. Human standards of goodness are obtained by comparison with evil. What is not evil beyond measure is here considered to be good, and what here is held to be good is the smallest part of evil. Therefore, it is impossible, here, for what is good to be free from contamination by evil. What is good, here, is affected by evil and ceases to be good. Thus, this good deteriorates into evil. That is why The Good is in God alone; yes, God is The Good.*

*In men, Aesclepius, The Good can be found only in name but nowhere as a reality. In fact, that is impossible, for The Good cannot find a place in a material body which on all sides is stifled by afflictions and arduous exertion, grief and desire, passion and delusion, and images of the senses. The Beautiful and The Good are not to be found within those who are of the world. All things perceptible to the eyes are chimera, resembling shadows. But that which transcends the senses approaches most closely the essence of the Beautiful and The Good'.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 10:1,4,5,6,10)

In Greek mythology, Asclepius is the god of medicine and healing. He is often depicted with a staff around which a snake coils. The staff is primarily the symbol for the serpent fire in the spine, in which the forces of consciousness circulate. The snake refers to death and rebirth. Many snakes have deadly venom in their jaws, and they crawl out of their old, crystallized skin when they have formed a new skin. The so-called aesculapian staff or Staff of Asclepius has been a symbol for medical doctors for many centuries.

We can see Asclepius as a personification of the candidate on the spiritual path who has joined the mesoteric circle or inner school because he wants to become a healer in the most extensive sense of the word: for himself and for others. In order to be able to heal others, he must first be healed himself. And complete healing is possible only through rebirth by Water and Fire.

From the teachings of Hermes to Asclepius quoted above, we can deduce that our biological body and our personality are not part of the only-good because we were created and therefore participate in suffering.

However our bodies and our personalities have also arisen from domains beyond the senses: those of the soul and those of the spirit.

Therefore if you desire to participate in the only-good, in which there is certainly no suffering, you will have to pay attention to the worlds of the soul and the spirit. The main problem however is that you have no knowledge about that. And if you do suspect it, and perhaps even long for it, you do not succeed in finding enough time for it because all your focus and energy go to the things of the sensory perceivable world and its astral counterpart. Hermes invites his pupils to free themselves from the impurity of nature. It is virtually impossible to go that spiritual path alone, in your own strength. Therefore there have always been

enlightened teachers and spiritual schools to assist those people who were ripe for the inner path; not only teaching their pupils, but also encouraging them to strive for inner renewal and providing them with the necessary light power.

### **Urge for self-maintenance and self-realisation**

Everyone can experience an urge for self-maintenance and a drive for self-realization. They form a valuable and necessary impetus for development but can often become a goal in itself and then lead to the growth of qualities that form great barriers on the spiritual path. In the Middle Ages these barriers were referred to as the seven deadly sins: pride, laziness, envy, anger, lust, gluttony and avarice. These aspects are in sharp contrast to the seven classical virtues of the Catholic tradition: wisdom, righteousness, moderation, courage, faith, hope and love. Love is usually considered to be the highest and the most powerful of these virtues (see hymns 11 and 12).

The pupil within the exoteric circle who has extensive knowledge about an authentic spiritual tradition and wants to go the way of godliness is faced with the task of freeing himself from the deadly sins and other obstructive conditioning. Not by fighting them, but by elevating oneself inwardly and becoming aware of what is going on within himself. Then he goes from the exoteric circle into the mesoteric circle, from the outer school into the inner school, from the Tat phase to the Asclepius phase. In the first book of the Corpus Hermeticum, called Pymander or Poimandres, Hermes describes this process of inner death as an ascent through seven different spheres of heaven, which were later associated with the seven classic planets: Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. *'In this way man travels further upwards, across the cohesive power of the spheres; to the first circle he yields the power to increase and decrease; to the second circle the proficiency in evil and the artifice*

*that has become impotent; to the third circle the now impotent error of desire; to the fourth circle the vanity of ostentation of the ruler, who can no longer be satisfied; to the fifth circle the godless recklessness and insolent thoughtlessness; to the sixth circle the attachment to riches that has been put out of action; to the seventh circle the lie that continually sets its snares.*

*Then, when he has stripped himself of that which issued from the power of the spheres, he enters the eighth nature, in possession of nothing but his own power and sings, with all those who are there, hymns of praise to the Father and all rejoice with him because of his presence’.*

(Corpus Hermeticum 1:63-64)

The 14<sup>th</sup> book of the Corpus Hermeticum entitled ‘*The secret sermon on the mount concerning rebirth and the vow of silence*’ looks at the purifications that must take place in a person who goes the liberating gnostic path in a different way. It shows that the hermetic gnosis is not a coherent and strictly-defined philosophical system, but that in Hermeticism there are always different attempts to say something about experiences that cannot actually be expressed in words. Therefore in Hermeticism as in all other esoteric traditions, frequent use is made of symbols.

### **The mountain as symbol**

The symbol of the mountain refers to, among other things, being elevated inwardly, gaining an overview, receiving esoteric instruction and being initiated. Several great wisdom teachers are known to have climbed a mountain with their closest disciples in order to teach them the mysteries that were not intended for the general public.

For example, Krishna and Hermes gave a speech on a mountain, and the Sermon on the Mount attributed to Jesus is found in chapters 5, 6, and 7 of the Gospel of Matthew. In

this gospel we read, among other things: *'Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it'* (Matthew 7: 13-14).<sup>22</sup>

Tat has gone through the narrow gate and is one of the few to find the way that leads to eternal life. He has gone through a thorough preparation and asks his teacher Hermes if he can take the next step in his process. *'I have detached myself from the world and have made myself inwardly strong against the world's delusion. So would you please now complete what is lacking in me, just as you promised me, and teach me about rebirth, either by word of mouth or by means of a mystery'*.

(Corpus Hermeticum 14:3)

Hermes then replies that the re-born person will be like a god, a divine son, all in all, and equipped with all powers. He adds that such things cannot be taught and advises that Tat will be able to experience the rebirth himself when he is ripe for it. This requires Tat to calm the sensory activities of his physical body and to cleanse himself from the irrational chastisements of matter.

Tat is then greatly amazed because he thinks he has no more vices, because he does not recognize them in himself. Does he not comply with the generally applicable rules? He doesn't hurt a fly, does he? Isn't he an exemplary pupil who behaves as may be expected from him? Hermes then says that Tat has numerous and terrifying vices, which he later associates with the twelve signs of the zodiac referring to them as: ignorance, sorrow, intemperance, desire, injustice, greed, deceit, envy, guile, anger, thoughtlessness and malice.

Hermes does not list these 'castigators' to accuse Tat or to

blame him for anything, for they concern vices that are present in all people since they are formed from parts of the earth and even of the universe: from star dust. Now that Tat has decided to go an inner path, it is essential that he becomes aware of the vices that live within him. He might well be in control of them, but again and again they subtly express themselves, so subtly, that he usually isn't even aware of them.

When we experience and suffer our own vices, our natural tendency is to tackle and fight them. Of course certain results can be achieved with this attitude, but the cause is not removed. When certain vices are controlled, other vices resurface. Such methods, which progress from the ego, are not in accordance with the gnostic path: we cannot nullify our ego with our ego. We need to recognize and acknowledge our castigators of chastisement and make room for the Light to neutralize them. In a symbolic form this is beautifully expressed in paragraph 83 of The Gospel of Philip.

### **The root of evil**

*'Let each one of us dig down after the root of evil which is within one, and let one pluck it out of ones heart from the root. It will be plucked out if we recognize it. But if we are ignorant of it, it takes root in us and produces its fruit in our heart. It masters us. It takes us captive, to make us do what we do not want; and what we do want we do not do. It is powerful because we have not recognized it. While it exists it is active'* (The Gospel of Philip 83).

When the root of evil is brought to light within you, so when you become aware and allow light forces to start circulating within you, then your natural self-preserving barriers dissolve. Such purifications by what is called 'the living water' do not happen overnight; it concerns a process of many years. It is not difficult to accomplish that process in itself, because it is mainly about listening to and following the inner voice. If as a

result of an inner touch you make room for the Other in you and pay attention to it, the immortal man will express itself more and more powerfully within you so that your mortal personality is less and less controlled by self-maintaining obstacles, such as the urge to possess and the drive for power and ambition.

The person who has been touched inwardly becomes more clearly aware that there is an original and immortal one living within him. That is why Pymander, the indwelling spirit, says to Hermes, who is in a state of contemplation, *'Of all the creatures in nature, only man is dual, namely, mortal as to the body and immortal as to the essential Man'* (Corpus Hermeticum 1:38).

The classic seventeenth-century Rosicrucians therefore emphasized in their manifestos that man is a microcosm, a cosmos (that is: order or ornament), which is a reflection of the macrocosm. A manuscript from the thirteenth century with texts by Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) contains a drawing of the original, immortal man or Adam Kadmon, who envelops the mortal man (see image 9, left). The writings of this multifaceted, decisive and productive mystic clearly show that she intensively experienced the transformative effect of the spirit fire within herself (see, for example, hymn 10).

We can say the same about the British physician, physicist and mystic Robert Fludd (1574-1637). The title page of his book shows a symbolic representation of man as a microcosm, including the four temperaments of man, the twelve signs of the zodiac and the spheres of the seven planets (see image 9, right).

### **As above so below**

In the seventeenth century there was not yet a sharp distinction between what we now know as astronomy,

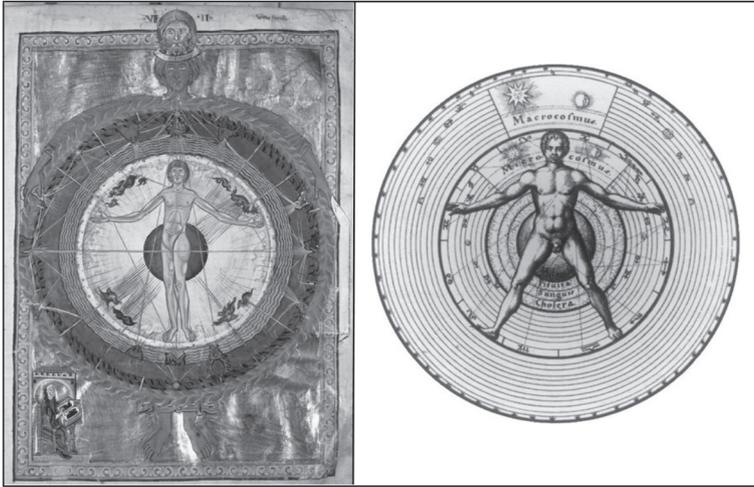


Image 9: the human being as a microcosm from scriptures by Hildegard von Bingen and Robert Fludd.

astrology and astrosophy. All these forms of star wisdom were classified as sciences and arts. It was not until the enlightened eighteenth century that astrology and astrosophy were considered unscientific because they no longer fit in with the new paradigms of the evolving natural sciences. Astrology and astrosophy are largely based on symbolic thinking, on establishing and using corresponding aspects that exist between what happens in the macrocosm and in the microcosm, according to the hermetic principle: as above, so below.

Most astrologers agree that there is a relationship between the twelve signs of the zodiac and the seven classical planets, as shown in the 'cosmogram' in the left part of image 10, which also shows which planets rule the seven major chakras of man. Chakras are energy transformers, invisible to the ordinary eyes; they form the connection between the etheric body and the astral body of the human personality. They regulate

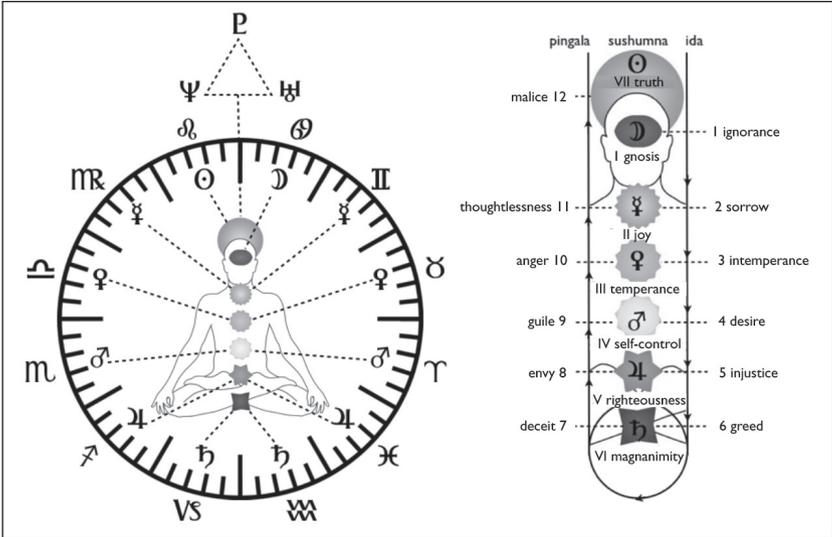


Image 10: expulsion of the 12 (zodiacal) castigators by the 10 (planetary) forces, changes of the chakras.

the energetic household in such a way that all natural life processes can take place in the correct manner.<sup>33</sup>

It is not necessary to be familiar with the functioning of the chakras in order to go the gnostic path, but some knowledge about them can contribute to a better understanding of the purification that takes place in a person who walks the gnostic path. Initially the chakras are of an energetic nature (mental, astral and etheric), but eventually, and sometimes very quickly, they also manifest themselves in the physical body in the form of changes in the brain, the serpent fire, the internal secretion, the nerve fluid and the blood.

In his book *'The coming new man'* J. van Rijckenborgh has extensively described the process of renewal in a person who goes the gnostic path.<sup>34</sup> That renewal begins with the budding of the rose, the awakening of the slumbering spiritual core of

the heart of every human being: the spirit-spark. If the pilgrim pays sufficient attention to this new activity, then at some point the new soul can be born in the fourth cranial cavity of the head sanctuary, in the open space behind the frontal bone. A concentration of gnostic light forces arises there, which then descends into the left strand of the sympathetic nervous system, thereby purifying the activity of the chakras: first the brow chakra, then successively the throat chakra, the heart chakra, the solar plexus chakra, the sacral chakra and the root chakra.

This downward energy flow is similar to the decline in hell as mentioned in the apostolic creed. The light forces neutralize the karma that is for a large part located in the sacral plexus at the extremity of the spinal cord, which corresponds to the planet Saturn. When the karmic influences are neutralized – in biblical terms, when sins are forgiven – ascension to heaven follows. The stream of gnostic light force then rises up through the right strand of the sympathetic nervous system, thus committing the chakras to their high purpose, until eventually the seventh chakra, the crown chakra, is ignited and the person concerned can rightly be called the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

If we combine this general description with what Hermes says in the fourteenth book of the Corpus Hermeticum about the expulsion of the twelve castigators by the ten forces, we arrive at the symbolic graphic representation in the right part of image 10. The ten forces are the seven manifested rays of the Spirit – the Holy Seven Spirit of which the seven classical planets are a lower reflection – plus the three non-manifested rays of the Spirit of which the three mystery planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto are a lower reflection. Together they are

the ten Sephiroth that compose the tree of life from the Kabbalah.<sup>35</sup>

Through the activity of the ten forces or Sephiroth, the seven properties of the new human being develop. Hermes refers to them as: knowledge, joy, temperance, self-control, righteousness, magnanimity and truth. What matters now is that the gnostic person allows himself to be played as a musical instrument by the ten forces; he allows that he, as a righteous man, praises the Lord with his ten-string instrument (Psalm 92:4). Hermes assures us that we are well able to endure the necessary purification processes as outlined if we are open to warnings and reprimands.<sup>3</sup>

*'Souls that have become foul and unclean in their very nature can be made bright again only by being plunged in misery, and remaining long in that condition, and undergoing it again and again.*

*How many times gold in which there is much alloy must be put into the fire again, before it comes forth pure and bright! How many times a bent rod must be heated in the fire, before it is made straight! How many times wheat must be passed through the sieve again, before the refuse that is mixed with it, and by which it is spoiled, is removed! And how many times defiled and rusted souls must undergo all manner of misery, before they recover right reason and are changed back to their primal purity!*

*How much better is the sweetness of honey than the bitterness of aloes, no one can know unless he has tasted both ...; and even so, the soul cannot know how much better is the sweetness of happiness than the bitterness of misery, unless it has tasted both, and thereby learnt to know both.*

*How great is the difference between the man who scorns and rejects a thing after he has tried and tasted it, and the man who draws near to it for the first time, desiring to try and taste it'.*

(Admonition of the Soul, Chapter 7)



*The hymn of Hermes is not a superficial song in praise of nature, the sort of thing one would sing if one saw the nature of death as the highest goal. It is a song of praise that wells up in the heart of Hermes, who has transcended the forces of nature and is now allowed by the powers of heaven to catch a glimpse of God's true intentions. All life, all manifestations that are not the result of rebirth, are finite. But any life that does arise from rebirth is eternally inviolable.*

*As long as the Spiritual School with its sevenfold body is able to raise its Golden Head into the inviolability of the living Soul-state, it will be beyond all harm. If the Living Body were to be unable to attain full resurrection, the twelve vices would have access to it, and if that were to happen, the Living Body of our School would be marked by the same characteristics as the nature of death.*

*We hope you will bear this in mind and resolve to make the utmost effort to transcend your birth in nature and attain Soul-birth, so that you, too, can be counted among the twice-born.*

CHAPTER 6  
PRAISING GOD

SPIRITUAL TEXT: **Corpus Hermeticum 14:38-57**<sup>7</sup>

**T**AT: Tell me, Father, will this new body, which is composed of the ten powers, one day be dissolved ?

HERMES: Stop talking about impossible things, because that would make you sin and veil the eyes of the Spirit-Soul. The natural body of the senses differs widely from the essential, divine birth. The former can be dissolve, the latter cannot; the first is mortal, the second immortal. Do you not know that you have become a god, a son of the One, just as I have?

TAT: Father, I would like to hear the song of praise which, as you told me, you heard the powers sing when you reached the Ogdoad.

HERMES: In keeping with what Pymander revealed in the Ogdoad, I approve of your haste to break down this tent dwelling, because now you are pure. Pymander, the Spirit, did not reveal more to me than I have written, knowing well that I am able to comprehend and hear, and to see everything I desire, and he has ordered me to do everything that is good. That is why the powers that are within me sing all the time.

TAT: Father, I too want to hear and know all these things.

HERMES: Be still then, my son, and listen to the song of praise that concerns these things: the hymn on rebirth. I had not meant to make it known so readily, except to you who have reached the end of this initiation. This song of praise, therefore, is not taught, but remains hidden in the silence. Go, then, and stand in a place in the open air, your face turned towards the south wind after sunset. Then kneel down and pray, and do the same at dawn, but then turn eastwards. And now, be still, my son:

May the entire nature of the cosmos listen to this song of praise. Open up, O earth! Let the waters of heaven open their floodgates when my voice is heard. Stir not, ye trees! For I wish to sing the praise of the Lord of Creation, the One and the All. Open up, ye heavens! Ye winds, be still, so that God's immortal cycle may accept my Word. For I will sing the praise of Him who created the entire All, who gave the earth its place and fixed the firmament; who ordered fresh water to leave the ocean and spread over the inhabited and the uninhabited earth, serving the survival and existence of all people; who ordered fire to appear for whatever use the gods and men might wish.

Let all of us together give praise to Him, who is exalted above all the heavens, the Creator of all nature. He is the eye of the Spirit: unto Him be the praise of all powers. O you powers that are within me: sing the praise of the One and the All; sing in harmony with my will, O you powers that are within me. Gnosis, O holy knowledge of God, enlightened by you, it is given to me to sing praise to the light of knowledge, and to rejoice in the joy of the Spirit-Soul. O you powers, sing with me this song of praise. And O you, modesty, and you, justice within me, sing for me the praise of what is honourable. O love for the All within me, sing within me the praise of the All; sing praise, O truth, of truth; sing praise, O virtue, of what is Good. The song of praise, O life and light, comes from you, and to you it will return.

I thank you, Father, who manifest the powers. I thank you, Father, you who urge what is potential to action. Your Word sings your praise through me. Receive through me the All, as the Word, as an offering of the Word. Hear what the powers that are within me exclaim: they sing praise of the All, they accomplish your will. Your will emanates from you, and everything returns to you again. Receive from all the offering of the Word.

Save the All that is within us. Enlighten us, O life, light, breath, God, for the Spirit-Soul is the guardian of your Word. O bearer

of the Spirit, O Demi-Urge, you are God. This is the call of him who belongs to you, through fire, through light, through earth, through water, through Spirit, through your creatures. From you I have received this song of praise out of eternity, and through your will I have also found the tranquillity I sought.

TAT: I have seen, Father, how, according to your will, this song of praise should be uttered. I have now made it known in my world too.

HERMES: Call it, my son, the true, that is: the divine world.

TAT: Yes, Father, in the true world I have power. Through your song of praise and your thanksgiving the enlightenment of my Spirit-Soul has become complete. From my innermost being I, too, now wish to give thanks to God.

HERMES: Do not be rash in doing so, my son.

TAT: Listen, Father, to what I say in my Spirit-Soul: To you, O first cause of rebirth, to you, my God, I, Tat, present the offering of the Word. O God, you Father, Lord and Spirit: accept from me the offering that you desire. For all this is accomplished according to your will.

HERMES: My son, thus you present to God, the Father of all things, an offering pleasing to Him. But now add something to it: through the Word.

TAT: Thank you, Father, for the advice you have given me.

HERMES: I rejoice, my son, that you have gained the good fruits of truth; a truly immortal harvest. Now that you have learnt this from me, promise to be reticent with regard to this miraculous faculty, and not to transmit to anyone the method of realizing rebirth, so that we will not be judged as belonging to those who debase the doctrine. Be it sufficient that we have both of us done our share: I by speaking, you by listening. In the light of the Spirit you now know yourself; both yourself and our Father.



CHAPTER 6  
**PRAISING GOD**  
REFLECTION

**M**any people tend to sing spontaneously while in the shower. Why? The bathroom is a safe environment and the warm running water ensures that you relax physically and psychologically while at the same time it reduces the influence of the stress hormone cortisol in your body. If you also sing, you will feel even better, because you will breathe a little deeper than normal, your blood will absorb more oxygen and the natural production of dopamine and oxytocin in your brain is boosted, which will increase your feeling of happiness. When you sing, you can't think or worry about something else at the same time. In addition, the acoustics in the bathroom ensure that your singing sounds better than in any other room!

People who open themselves up to the 'living water', that is to say to the healing and transforming rays of the seven spirit, from inner need sometimes create poems, songs and music in which something very special resonates that far exceeds ordinary consciousness. If they continue to focus on these with the help of higher dimensions, wonderful creations arise, sometimes even great masterpieces that continue to fascinate humanity for centuries. Think of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Psalms in the Bible, Dante's Divine Comedy, Bach's oratorios and also the Corpus Hermeticum, which contains three hymns of Hermes Trismegistus (see the spiritual texts of chapters 1, 6 and 9).

The nature of truly sacred writings is usually much more poetic than prosaic. A sacred text conveys much more than just the literal meaning of the words. They are more poems or songs than stories or reflections, because they incorporate aesthetic and rhythmic properties of language – such as meter, rhyme, sound symbolism and metaphors. When you regularly recite, sing, listen to or read such texts – even if they have been translated – you can always be touched again in your heart and grow inwardly through this touch.

Speaking, singing and listening to sacred texts is more powerful than reading silently because the human voice is a creative organ. Everything that is spoken or sung is made dynamic and charged with power. And that power is even greater as the voice and words are used more consciously and from a higher level of consciousness.

### **Speaking is creating**

Speaking is not only creating, but also consuming life force. Pupils on the Gnostic path should learn to use their life power mainly for spiritual awakening and renewal, as longed for by their deepest inner self. This means that they should not waste their personal energy by chatting a lot, for example. In chapter 3 of her book *'The Golden Rosycross'*, Catharose de Petri writes the following.<sup>36</sup>

*"The larynx, in cooperation with the mouth and throat, is one of the most perfect musical instruments available to mankind. One could say then that the human voice is the result of the cooperation of various organs. Did you know that the human voice and the words we speak are also the result of our entire sensory orientation: of our thoughts, our emotional life, the tensions in our blood, our total state of being? Did you know that by means of our voice we not only make our state of being known, but also spread it around*

*us? So it is not only our radiations that cause this to happen, for our voice renders these radiations active in this nature as a magic faculty.*

*When someone speaks to you personally, and you listen, his or her entire state of being is brought consciously within your radius of action and accepted by you. For behind the voice are not only thoughts, or feelings, or the activity of the will, but also four ethers, and each of these four ethers exists in three conditions: thus there are twelve aspects. By means of the air from the lungs, which makes the voice resound, these twelve personal etheric conditions are conveyed into your system, are more often than not accepted by you and thus rendered active. In this way, by mutual conversation, you weave countless ties and you will inevitably be caught in this web of nature, like an insect in a spider's web.*

*That is why a true pupil of a bonafide spiritual school speaks as far as possible only in an impersonal way. A true pupil avoids ordinary conversation as much as possible. Repeatedly the pupil's attention is drawn to reticence, to being silent, for in this way he can protect himself and prevent trouble for others.'*

The importance of inner and outer silence is essential for the pupil on the Gnostic path, as repeatedly emphasized in Hermeticism. Only then can the silent whispers emanating from the spirit-spark in the heart of the microcosm be heard in accordance with the motto: *'Direct your heart upon the light and know it'* (Corpus Hermeticum 1:19). In this way we can understand why Hermes characterises the human being who possesses the living knowledge of God as *'A person who speaks little and does not lend his ear to much talk'* (Corpus Hermeticum 12:28).

Of course a disciple of Hermes is never meant to completely shut off from others and to always and ever remain silent, for every human being is a social being and has received the gift

of the voice to use it, but not to abuse it. In this respect it is important to pay attention to the right things. Therefore Pymander speaks to Hermes:

*'Well then, be still, oh Hermes Trismegistus, and do not forget what I shall tell you'*

(*Corpus Hermeticum* 2:1) and Hermes in turn says to his disciple Tat: *'Be quiet now, my son, and listen in respectful gratitude'* (*Corpus Hermeticum* 14:30).

The pupil can be filled with divine power due to such receptivity and emptiness. He is then like the empty sound box of a stringed instrument that resonates with the divine fullness, designated by Pythagoras as the harmony of the spheres. That can almost literally be the case when he actually sings songs of praise, but also figuratively when he experiences the joy of the inner touch. Then something sings within and he has become a person in the literal sense of the word because God resounds in him. The word 'person' is derived from the Latin word 'personare', where the prefix 'per-' is said to come from the Egyptian hieroglyph 'per' or 'pr' which means 'house'. The original meaning of 'person' thus becomes 'sounding house'. The experience of being a resounding microcosmic home in this sense is accompanied by great joy which stimulates creative activity in accordance with the divine plan.

### **Bridging art**

Through such inspiration, Gnostic-oriented persons can devote themselves to their vocation: to be living connections between the world of the senses and the world of the spirit; that is, to be a bridge between heaven and earth. This connection can lead to wonderful creations that J. van Rijckenborgh refers to as bridging art. In a speech for young people in the 1950s on the vocation and the magic of art, he said the following.<sup>37</sup>

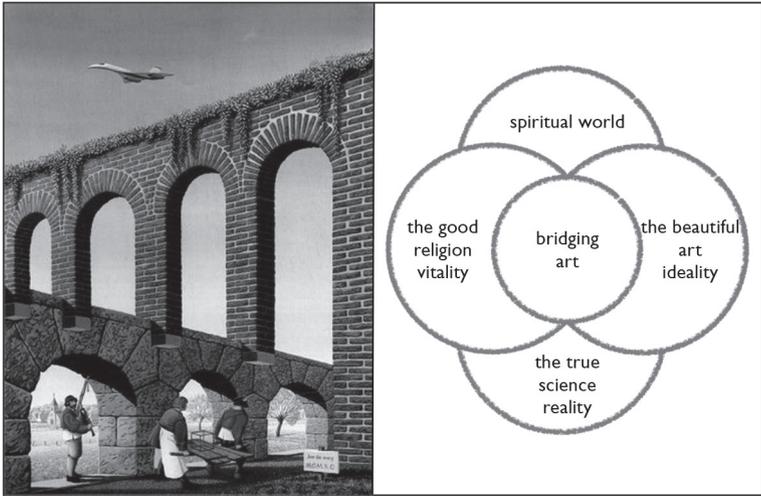


Image 11: manifest the good, the true and the beautiful through your connection with the spiritual world.

*‘We will be able to recognize bridging art at some point. Then the magic of art will finally unfold. [...] Then there is an inner knowing, an urge that radiates out in every possible way. [...] When an artist does not have the points of the triangle of vitality, reality and ideality, he cannot achieve bridging art. A called one is also a magician. His work then emanates great strength. There are works of art of which you say: “How simple it is and yet it has such enormous power.” The artist was a magician.*

*As soon as a real musician sits down in front of a piano, as soon as a real author takes up the pen, that magical power emerges. You can often not say where or what it is, but the entire work radiates from that power. People sometimes pick up that magical power much more than the form, sound or color, and all those who understand the work of art have no difference of opinion about it. They then recognize the bridging art as a spiritual culture. They will say to each other, do you see that? Did you hear that? Have you noticed that and do you see how lights flash everywhere? These are the possibilities that lie in the bridging art of the future. Take up that*

*work; the world awaits your action and decision on this matter. Then great things are going to happen in the future.'*

Every person is an artist in a sense, yet not every person is able to create something that can be referred to as bridging art. We can see bridging art as something that people consciously create via inspiration from the spiritual world, based on a harmonious combination of the good, the true and the beautiful, which are often associated with religion, science and art. J. van Rijckenborgh speaks about the synthesis of vitality, reality and ideality. This is shown graphically in figure 11 according to the diagram that is also included in figure 1 in chapter 1. The painting showing the impossible bridges was made by the Flemish painter Jos de Mey (1928-2007).

In the Middle Ages, the so-called seven liberal arts were first practiced and taught in monasteries and later also at universities. The addition 'free' means that it concerns sciences that have no economic value because they do not generate any income, and also that it concerns intellectual work and not manual labor. This means that practical subjects such as acting, sculpture, dance, architecture, medicine, cooking, metal work, sewing and painting were not counted as liberal arts. In the Middle Ages, students were first taught three languages, the so-called trivium. It concerned grammar (linguistics), dialectics (logic, logical reasoning) and rhetoric (the art of eloquence). Thereafter they could also become proficient in four subjects, the so-called quadrivium. These included arithmetics (arithmetic, number), geometria (geometry, space), musica (harmony, time) and astronomia (cosmology, space and time).

As early as the fifth century BC, the Greek initiate Pythagoras taught the students of his mystery school in the four

mentioned math subjects. Through such intellectual work, students of the mysteries could gradually decrease their fascination with the sensory perceptible world, improve their thinking and concentration and arrive at an orderly knowing. All that is necessary in order to be a truly renewed person in a spiritual sense.

### **From concrete to abstract**

Since numbers played a predominant role in the Pythagorean mystery school, there everything was more abstract than in the older Egyptian mystery schools, which were mainly characterized by impressive temples with hieroglyphics and large statues of gods, all of which exerted a strong influence on the senses and on the feeling.

Pythagoras changed the character of the mysteries by shifting the focus from myths and feeling associated with the world of the soul – called the world by Pythagoras – to science and abstract thinking, associated with the world of the spirit, which Pythagoras referred to as eternity (see image 4).

Pythagoras thought music was very important. He regarded music as a movement of interrupted and uninterrupted sounds in which cosmic laws are expressed. This movement corresponds to the pitches and intervals in the scale. The intervals are related to the spiritual development of the people and the harmony of the cosmos.

Pythagoras set the distance from the Moon to Earth as one tone. From the Moon to Mercury and from Mercury to Venus was a semitone; from Venus to the Sun one and a half tones; from the Sun to Mars one tone; from Mars to Jupiter and from Jupiter to Saturn each a semitone; and from Saturn to the zodiac, one and a half tones. According to Pythagoras these tones together form the octave, the basis of the harmony in the universe. And the person who goes the spiritual path symbolically travels through

the seven heavenly spheres and reaches their fulfillment in the eighth sphere, which is called the ogdoad.

There is no art form that approaches the spirit of divine love as well as the art of tone. Like the mind, music is fleeting and intangible. Like the mind, music has no past or future but it comes to life, to activity, in the immediate 'now'. And just as with a spiritual touch, sparks can jump in music: sparks of the divine fire.

Gods and music are closely linked in Greek mythology. For example the god Apollo carries a lyre as a symbol of his victory over chaos. When Apollo starts to play, all creatures are silent and they listen. All conflicts are over and even Ares, the god of war, stops his bloodshed. Apollo's music calms, harmonizes and enhances inner elevation. Under the effect of its harmony, the soul experiences the majestic order in the cosmos.

The Greek singer Orpheus also plays a musical instrument. He symbolizes the human being who understands divine harmony. His mental powers are so great that even the spirits of hell remain silent in order to listen to his singing. Orpheus dares to go through hell because he is accompanied by divine sounds. The protective, healing and uplifting effect of good music has been known for a long time. The following quotes about music are significant.

- *Music is the can opener of the soul.* Henry Miller
- *Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy.*  
Ludwig van Beethoven
- *Every day: Hear some good music, read from a good book, see a beautiful painting and speak a few reasonable words.*  
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
- *After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.* Aldous Huxley

*Music starts with silence.* Mstislav Leopoldovich Rostropovich  
*Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that  
which cannot remain silent.* Victor Hugo  
*What is best in music is not to be found in the notes.* Gustav  
Mahler

Innumerable scientific studies have been conducted on the influence of music on people. Thanks to the availability of modern measuring equipment, much is now known about the effect of music on the human brain. Most studies show that music we love is life-enhancing: it makes us healthier, nicer and more stable. Whether we listen to music, make music or sing songs, it all appears to contribute to the development of the brain. People with autism, dementia, Parkinson's disease and other conditions can revive when their environment is enriched with music.

While music can be a carrier of eternal truths, its form is subject to change. The essence of the music therefore constantly searches for new expressions that fit the evolving psyche of humanity. Even though some expressions of music have a long flowering period, they will all be forgotten sooner or later just like all other cultural expressions. Much of the music that has been composed did not originate from an elevated state of consciousness and therefore cannot be a support for inner exaltation.

### **Gnostic-inspired songs**

Many ancient gnostic-inspired songs have been written and collected and are still available today. We can think of the Gathas of Zarathustra, the Psalms of the Bible, the Baghavad Gita, the Ashtavakra Gita, the hymns of the Pistis Sophia, the hymns of the Manichean Psalms and of course also the hymns of Hermes. Also noteworthy are the liberating lyrics of the famous Persian

Sufi poet Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273), whose works are still read worldwide today. In his well-known song of the reed flute, Rumi compares man to a flute made from reed. Separated from his origin, he longs for it, and his complaining sound is heard (see hymn 13). This song is about an exceptional beloved one who is an abyss of desire: love itself. The image of man as a reed flute through which God blows his breath also occurs in the mystical hymns of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), for which he received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 (see hymn 14).<sup>38</sup>

The Sufi tradition is an esoteric movement that originated in Islamic cultures in the Middle Ages and to which various current movements still refer. Contemporary Sufis, similar to their classical predecessors, are universal and non-dogmatic. That universal character is easily recognized in the prayers of Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927), one of which is included in the second part of this book. For example, in hymn 15 called 'Salat' names of prophets from many traditions are mentioned. They were all inspired and moved by the ubiquitous universal love power.

Vocal and instrumental music play an essential role in almost every religious and spiritual tradition. Sacred music can greatly enhance the power of worship. This may include listening to appropriate live music made by musicians and singers, but also participating in congregational singing. When the participants in a service sing hymns together in group unity based on understanding and inner exaltation, they are also attuned to one another in their breathing so that a great spiritual outpouring will take place, the blessings of which are not limited to the members of the group but extend far beyond the space where they are located.

Singing spiritual songs together is a way of praising God. Does the eternal Father-Mother need that? Of course we don't

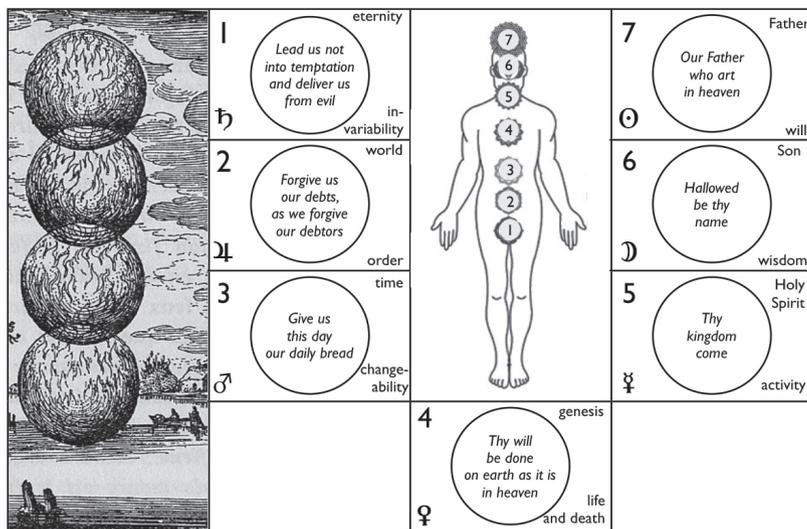


Image 12: the four worlds, the seven chakras and the Lords Prayer.

know that, and if we answer that question with ‘yes’, we are assuming an anthropomorphic image of a God who wants to be admired just like people. From such a view of God, the erroneous idea of an economic exchange can also easily be introduced. We thank and praise God and in return we receive from the Most High all the good things in life that we would like to have. A large majority of believers of all religions take this view, which is diametrically opposed to the gnostic view. The pure gnostic premise or thesis is beautifully expressed in the well-known Lords Prayer that Jesus taught his disciples on the Mount and which can also be sung (Matthew 6: 9-13, see hymn 16).

Numerous people have written comments on this prayer, also within the tradition of the Rosycross, such as Max Heindel and J. van Rijckenborgh. Like other sacred texts, this prayer can be understood on multiple levels. For example, the daily bread that is requested can relate not only to the well-known food that we buy, but particularly to the spiritual power that we long to

receive in order to be able to transfigure into a fellow executor of the plan of God. Furthermore the seven supplications can also be related to the previously discussed four worlds, the seven planets and the seven chakras (see image 12). The high priestly prayer of Jesus from John 17 also is very gnostic and profound, as explained by Catharose de Petri (see hymn 17). Thus we see a vast landscape of poetry, music and song as an expression of the human soul on every conceivable level. As means of communication, they surpass all mutual differences among cultures and denominations. But where music directs the desire for the light, there is a tremendous path open to man that has been trodden by humanity only to a limited extent. At the beginning we hear pure melodies that comfort the heart; at the end of that path they become a song of the spheres. Hermes Trismegistus has practical advice for going that path.<sup>3</sup>

*Beware of letting yourself be turned away from worship of the one God by weariness and distaste; and do not be induced to acknowledge more gods than one; for if you do, you will be distracted and worn out and exhausted by your worship of them, so that your light will be quenched, your strength will be weakened, your high rank will go to nothing, and your dominion will cease; and that will be death to you. Beware then of that death, and turn away from the things which cause it.*

*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.*

(Admonition of the Soul, Chapter 12)



*The hermetic Gnosis explains that it was God's will 'that the link with the Spirit should be obtained by all souls; however, as a prize for the race', and it mentions the great, heavenly Vessel for mingling water and wine, filled with the powers of the Spirit, sent down by God so that those who immersed themselves in it would be purified and could return to their former glory. This, too, is a splendid description of the work of the Brotherhood of the Holy Grail.*

*The prize for the race, the prize for the souls, is the immersion, the purification, the baptism of water, wine and spirit in the Mixing Vessel, the Holy Grail. This baptism is open to everyone; it is withheld from no one. It cannot possibly be kept from anyone. Yet it can manifest itself only to those who have at their disposal a worthy, pure soul. This soul creates a certain state of vibration in the head sanctuary.*

*This enables the radiation of the Seven-Spirit to flow into the human being in a positive way and make a binding with the rose heart, the latent spirit-principle within him. If you think of this, you will easily understand why throughout the ages people have spoken of a cup, a grail, a bowl, a vase, a vessel from which the living water flows. The thirsting soul that has become mature refreshes itself with living water from this cup, the living water of the New Testament.*

## CHAPTER 7

### ASSIMILATING SPIRITUAL POWERS

SPIRITUAL TEXT: *Corpus Hermeticum* 7:4-23<sup>5</sup>

**H**ERMES: Man reflected on God's works and was elated by them and learned to recognize their Creator. Thus, O Tat, God imparted reason to all men, but not the Spirit. Not that He grudged it to anyone, because grudging does not come from above; it comes into being here below, in the souls of those who do not possess the Spirit.

TAT: Why, O Father, did God not impart the Spirit to all men?

HERMES: It was His will, my son, that the link with the Spirit should be obtained by all souls; however, as a prize for the race.

TAT: How did He achieve this?

HERMES: He sent down a great mixing vessel, filled with the powers of the Spirit and He appointed a herald and bade him proclaim to the hearts of men: "Immerse yourselves in this Mixing Vessel, you souls who can; you who believe and trust that you will ascend to Him who sent down this vessel; you who know for what purpose you were created".

Those who gave heed to this proclamation and were purified by immersion in the powers of the Spirit, became partakers in the Gnosis, the living knowledge of God, and, as they had received the Spirit, became perfect men.

However, those who have sinned against the proclamation by not listening to it, remain within the limits of reason, as they have not received the powers of the Spirit and do not know for what purpose they have been created, nor by whom.

The sensorial perceptions of such human beings are almost

equal to those of irrational animals; and as their nature is a mixture of passions, they have no admiration for what is worthy of reflection and contemplation; they devote themselves to their bodily pleasures and desires and believe that man has come into being for such things.

However, those who have partaken of God's gift are no longer mortals, as proved by all their deeds, but divine men who understand with their Spirit-Soul all that is on earth, in heaven and, perhaps, above heaven.

Having beheld The Good, those who have raised themselves in this way have learned to consider their sojourn here on earth as a disaster. They repudiate all things corporeal and incorporeal and hasten to reach the One and only.

These, O Tat, the manifestation of the Spirit-Soul, the emergence of divine things and the beholding of God are the gifts of the divine Mixing Vessel.

TAT: I, too, want to experience immersion in it, O Father!

HERMES: You cannot love your true self unless you first hate your body, my son. But if you do love your true self, you will possess the Spirit-Soul; once you possess the Spirit-Soul, you will also partake of its living knowledge.

TAT: What do you mean by this, Father?

HERMES: It is impossible, my son, to adhere to both material and divine things. As there are two states of existence, the embodied and the bodiless, the mortal and the divine, you will have to choose consciously between these two, for one cannot adhere to both. As soon as the choice has been made the waning of what has been rejected will be proved in the active force of what has been chosen.

Thus the good choice will show its glory not only by the deification of the one who has made it, but also by demonstrating his attachment and devotion to God.

The bad choice, on the other hand, leads to the destruction

of man and is, moreover, a sin against God. Just as, in processions, people walk in the middle of the road and can do nothing else than hinder others in their movement, so those who have made the bad choice can do nothing else than move in this way through the world, urged on by their bodily desires. Therefore, O Tat, the gifts emanating from God have always been, and will always be, at our disposal. It is for us to see to it that what emanates from us is in harmony with it and does not fall short. For it is not God who is the cause of our wickedness, it is we ourselves who choose it in preference to The Good.

Do you realize, my son, how many vehicular states, crowds of demons, veils of matter and courses of stars we have to pass through during our wearisome ascent to the One and Only? The Good cannot be reached by way of a convenient crossing. It is limitless and without end, and in itself it is without beginning, too, though to us it may seem to have had its beginning in the Gnosis, the All-knowledge of God. Indeed, the Gnosis is not the beginning of The Good, but it imparts to us the beginning of what we will come to know of The Good.



CHAPTER 7  
**ASSIMILATING SPIRITUAL POWERS**  
REFLECTION

Life in modern 21<sup>st</sup> century society demands much from us. It presents many challenges and often it is quite demanding to meet all our obligations. The conditions in which we are now living are much better and more comfortable than those of our ancestors. Still, countless people suffer from alienation, psychosomatic complaints, burnout and depression. It is increasingly recognized that such problems can often be explained by the fact that deeper needs are not being met. Are we doing enough to make our lives truly meaningful? Do we perhaps fragment our attention too much over all kinds of things that ultimately are unsatisfying? Are we not disturbing our peace of mind by being constantly alert to the unimportant messages that pour into our beeping and vibrating devices? Do we pay enough attention to what really matters in life?

The market for providers of solutions to the aforementioned difficulties has grown considerably. Online and offline media pay ample attention to the issues and elaborate on remedies that have proven their worth in practice, such as slowing down, drastically reducing digital communication, mindful living in the now, meditating, movement and minimizing possessions and obligations. The advice is also increasingly not to let your life be dominated by linear clock time, which is symbolized in Greek mythology by the god Chronos, but to consciously build in quality time, inner time or soul time, symbolized in Greek mythology by Kairos, the grandson of Chronos.

## **Chronos and Kairos**

Grandfather Chronos corresponds to Saturn and is often portrayed as an old man with a long beard holding in his hand an hourglass, an instrument for measuring time quantitatively. Chronos rules in the world that can be perceived with the senses, in the third dimension or 3D. He stands for objectified time, which is the basis for schedules, plans, agendas, appointments and deadlines, all of which are of course very much needed to manage daily life.

The rebellious grandson Kairos disregards the usual continuity that thunders through like a train; in this way he can arrive at completely new insights and bring about fundamental changes. He lives in a different kind of time, related to the fifth dimension or 5D, the world of the soul.

Kairos deals with qualitative time that matters, that offers opportunities and enables breakthroughs. Kairos is often portrayed as a young, strong and muscular god with a long crest where he can be grabbed or else he could quickly be gone. This symbolizes that you should seize an opportunity when it presents itself, that you should always be receptive to the Kairos moments that arise unexpectedly.

What does all this mean if you want to follow the spiritual path that is the central topic of this book? In doing so, it is essential to pay attention to Kairos moments because if you allow Chronos to guide you, you will keep running around as in a spinning hamster wheel until you drop, without moving forward at all. If there is constant turmoil within us, the spiritual light cannot reach us. Then we will barely hear the silent cry emanating from the spirit-spark in the center of the microcosm that we inhabit. If you constantly stir in a small pond with a stick, the water will remain cloudy; but if you give the pond a rest, the solid particles will settle down, the water will become clear and the light can penetrate down to the bottom, unhindered.

When you make time for Kairos moments, you create circumstances that allow you to sense the voice from your deepest inner self. That does not mean however that going the gnostic path consists solely in creating as many Kairos moments as possible. No, the intention is to make your consciousness so clear that during all your daily activities and also during your nightly sleep you are constantly aware of your spiritual mission in this world. Moreover: during unexpected or planned, beneficial Kairos moments, it can happen that your attention is completely focused on the things of this world. If you experience a certain contact with the vertical dimension, with the divine world, it is usually only about hearing the call and not about sanctification, to which humanity has been called. In chapter 14 of her booklet *'The Seal of Renewal'* Catharose de Petri calls on her readers to work on sanctification.<sup>13</sup>

*'He who is sanctified can sanctify others. He who possesses something can share his possessions with others. Therefore in another part of the holy language we read: "You shall be holy for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:16) This tremendous mantram is of great significance because he who is in the light, reflects this light all around him. Such a one is as a beacon to those who are seeking the way and he also causes the being of darkness to stand out against the brightness of his light and thereby brings truth and clarity, so that no one can be in error any longer. Therefore sanctify yourself with power by the measures of the gnosis. Sanctify yourself for all those who are still seeking so that they too may be sanctified in the truth.'*

Anyone who wants to respond to the call for sanctification must first become aware of the call of the rose heart, which invites us to connect with the divine world. That connection

is of course always there, but it is extremely weak because the human system simply cannot tolerate the high vibration of the spirit so easily. Pupils need a concentrated light power in order to be able to go their paths and to achieve the required cleansing, purification and renewal. Independently they can only absorb light power from the atmosphere in a very 'diluted' or 'reduced' form. In the first instance the required concentrated light power must be given to them. By whom or by what? Either by someone who can himself or herself concentrate the light forces or through a spiritual school.

### **Milk or solid food**

Thus we can understand why the apostle Paul writes to the congregation in Corinth: *'I fed you with milk, not with solid food; for you were not yet able to bear it'* (1 Corinthians 3: 2). In most churches this text is explained as follows: People who have only recently become Christians should have a very simple explanation of the faith and later on, when they have grown a bit more in their faith, the more difficult aspects that are harder to understand can be discussed. After all, newborn babies do not eat kale but milk, which they can tolerate. In spiritual circles, milk is often seen as a symbol of exoteric teachings, based on the literal meaning of sacred texts; and the solid food then represents esoteric teachings, arising from a deeper, symbolic understanding of those same texts.

Both interpretations are of course not wrong, but the interpretation from a gnostic understanding goes a bit further. In doing so, it is important to keep in mind that the milk referred to does not come from an animal such as a cow, goat or sheep, but from a human being. The milk that the mother provides for the infant is the result of the birth of a baby. Paul was a man and of course he could not bear children and his body could not give milk. However, he was the spiritual

father of the Christians whom he took under his care, for he awakened and resuscitated the spiritual soul within them. He was able to provide them with spiritual food in the form of life energy of higher vibration that he had concentrated in himself, that flowed out of his body and that he symbolically referred to as milk.

This phenomenon is also referred to as darshan and relates to being in the personal energy field of an initiate. Darshan is a Sanskrit word that literally means that you are within someone's field of vision. In this connection J. van Rijckenborgh speaks in his book *The Elementary Philosophy of the Modern Rosycross* about the benedictio, a word that refers to blessing.<sup>39</sup> When a person is under the radiating power of the universal Brotherhood, which is also represented as the spiritual Sun, then that power is transmuted and radiated in him. That radiance is referred to in Psalm 121 as 'the shadow on your right hand' (see hymn 18).

What would Paul mean by solid food? Solid food is eaten by people who can feed themselves independently, so they do not need an intermediary in order to support themselves. People who can themselves eat and tolerate solid food symbolize those pupils who are so advanced on the Gnostic Path that they are directly under the radiant power of the Universal Brotherhood and are therefore able to independently attract, concentrate, transform and radiate. They do this partly unconsciously and partly consciously, in order to allow the divine element in them to grow, while at the same time enabling the inner touch and inner growth in others who are open to it.

The activity of consciously working, both individually and collectively, in order to contribute to the realization of the Divine plan is also called gnostic magic. From this description you can immediately deduce the difference between 'ordinary magic' and gnostic magic. Ordinary magic is practiced from the

ego. It does not emanate from the rose of the heart and it is not aimed at the realization of the plan of God, but at the realisation of personal wishes. Gnostic magic has its origin in the prayer that is also formulated as 'not my will, but Your will be done'.

### **Paul as a gnostic**

Orthodox Christian churches regard Paul as the apostle who brought the pure gospel to the Gentiles who were already fighting the gnostics who later on were hated so much by the church of Rome. Jan van Rijckenborgh recognized early in life that Paul's letters are gnostic. Much later the progressive American theologian Elaine Pagels confirmed this assumption on the basis of scientific research, which she published in book form in 1975.<sup>40</sup> One of the gnostic writings found in Nag Hammadi is entitled 'Prayer of Paul the Apostle' (see hymn 19).<sup>24</sup> Most likely its author is not the same person as the author of Paul's letters as included in the New Testament, but possibly he was his direct or indirect student.

Paul was a gnostic who, from about the year 50, founded a spiritual school with various congregations in countries around the Mediterranean. He did so on the basis of inspiration from the Christ impulse which was so powerfully active at that time that it is now sometimes called the big bang of Christianity. Paul saw the individual congregations and their members as part of the body of Christ, the Corpus Christi. Paul writes to the church of Corinth as follows:

*'For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many' (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).*

Paul referred to the separate churches as the 'ecclesia', a word from the Greek; and all congregations together were in his opinion the large ecclesia with a visible and an invisible aspect. In his letter to the Ephesians he calls the invisible aspect a temple:

*'So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit' (Ephesians: 2:21-22).*

Jesus founded a spiritual school and Paul was one of the many apostles who built upon it to enable people to connect with the spirit. The baptism that Jesus and Paul spoke of is usually seen as a sacramental or symbolic act, whereby a student who joins a community is submersed in water. That is correct of course, but baptism can also mean that the person concerned is taken up into the powerfield of a spiritual school, which is part of the body of Christ or the invisible temple. Hermes Trismegistus mentions exactly the same process when he speaks of immersion in a mixing vessel that has been sent down.

*'He sent down a great mixing vessel, filled with the powers of the Spirit and He appointed a herald and bade him proclaim to the hearts of men: Immerse yourselves in this mixing vessel, you souls who can; you who believe and trust that you will ascend to Him who sent down this vessel; you who know for what purpose you were created. Those who gave heed to this proclamation and were purified by immersion in the powers of the Spirit, became*

*partakers in the Gnosis, the living knowledge of God, and, as they had received the Spirit, became perfect men' (Corpus Hermeticum 7:8-9).*

In ancient times, a mixing vessel was used to blend water and wine. Why? Because pure concentrated wine was considered too strong and could not be tolerated well. The mixing vessel of which Hermes speaks is a powerfield in which the powers of the spirit, symbolized by wine, are active, but in such a concentration that they can be absorbed by people who are part of that powerfield. The vibration in such a powerfield is considerably higher than the general vibration of spiritual power in the atmosphere, yet it can be tolerated by those people who partake in that powerfield. Because that vibration in the 'mixing vessel' is considerably higher than normal, the people who consciously live from it can go the path of gnostic awareness and renewal relatively quickly.

### **Blood, wine and grail**

With regard to the mixing vessel, Hermes speaks of processes that can be expressed in words to some degree but can never be fully understood intellectually. This concerns the mystery of the blood of Christ, of which the apostle John writes: *'But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin'* (1 John 1: 7).

As discussed in chapter 5, Hermes formulates this essential cleansing process differently: the expulsion of the twelve chastisements by the ten powers. Those ten powers together actually form what John calls the blood of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament that blood is compared with wine. This is not primarily about the real blood of Jesus that flowed at

His crucifixion, but mainly about the universal Christ power, which has been sacrificing itself for the sake of humanity through the universal Brotherhood every second since the dawn of time. The ancient Christian symbol of the pelican, ripping her chest open to feed her young ones with her heart blood in order to enable them to grow, portrays something of this mystery. As pupils progress on the path of the Gnostic Mysteries, they gradually become fit to partially sacrifice their life-power for others, so that on that basis they receive the spirit and become perfect and initiated ones.

The mysteries of the mixing vessel and of the blood of Christ also relate to what is indicated as the mystery of the holy grail. The many stories, legends and myths about it speak of a quest, a search for the holy grail, to which are attributed healing and supernatural powers.<sup>67</sup> The grail was said to make a human being immortal, to impart knowledge of God and to provide those who hunger and thirst for it with eternal nourishment and drink. Very often, the grail is portrayed in stories as a stone – a philosopher’s stone or heavenly stone – a chalice, a cup, a bowl or a vase. These are all objects from the world of the senses that refer to something higher that is purely spiritual. Throughout all times, the grail was seen as the connecting link between eternity and time.

The Biblical Gospels state that a disciple of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea, with the permission of governor Pilate, took Jesus’ dead body from the cross and buried it in a cave in his garden. Towards the end of the twelfth century, the Frenchman Robert de Boron wrote a poem about Joseph of Arimathea in which Joseph catches the sweat and the blood of the crucified Jesus in the grail, a bowl or cup that would supposedly also have been used during the last supper of Jesus with his disciples. At about the same time, Chrétien de Troyes wrote *‘Perceval*

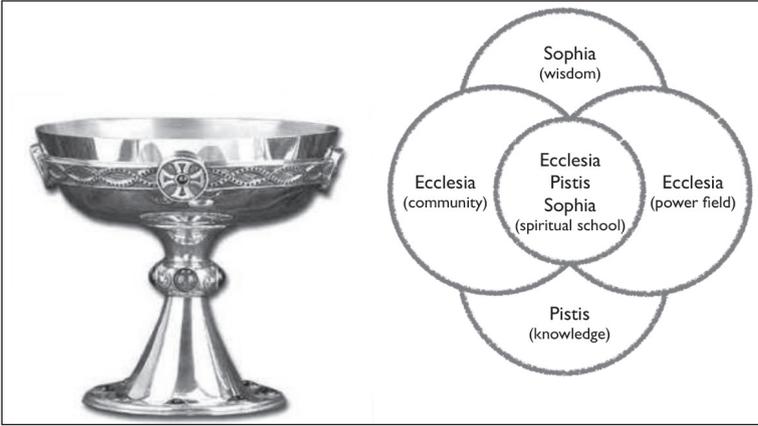


Image 13: the activity of wisdom and knowledge in a spiritual school and its power field.

*or the Story of the Grail*'.<sup>41</sup> In it, the naive but eager youngster Perceval meets knights of the Round Table, after which he enters the colorful world of the knights and after many adventures reaches the grail castle, sees the grail, but fails to ask the essential question. Around the year 1210, Wolfram von Eschenbach wrote a more elaborate grail story called 'Parzival', partly based on the story of Chrétien de Troyes, in which the central character eventually is crowned king of the holy grail by King Arthur.<sup>42</sup> Various authors have extensively analyzed its voluminous and deep spiritual symbolism. The composer Richard Wagner (1813-1883) based his last musical drama 'Parsifal' on it in 1882.<sup>43</sup>

The aforementioned stories of the grail originated in a Christian culture, but the mystery of the grail is universal, timeless and omnipresent. There are also Persian and Russian grail legends. The Egyptian Hermes Trismegistus speaks of a mixing vessel, Celtic texts speak of a cauldron and the Chinese sage Lao Tzu, in the 9<sup>th</sup> verse of his Tao Te Ching, talks about

the filled vase that no hands should touch.<sup>8</sup> The latter refers to the fact that the grail is also connected with a judging power that protects it. The sacred powers may not be sought and used for personal gain and can only be safely approached from a state of surrender. That is why Paul writes: *'For the one who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not properly recognize the body'* (1 Corinthians 11:29).

### **Spiritual school**

Three interrelated levels can be distinguished within the mystery of the grail: the level of the Universal Brotherhood, the level of a gnostic spiritual school and the level of a pupil on the gnostic path. This order is important, because without the Universal Brotherhood, no gnostic liberation is possible. And for most pupils it is not possible to achieve fulfillment on the gnostic path without a spiritual school.

Spiritual schools are not founded by random people, but by those sent from the Universal Brotherhood. They possess a certain aptitude and a fullness of experience, which is often the result of many spiritually striving lives from previous incarnations of the microcosm they inhabit. At a relatively young age they are able to realize the grail in themselves, which is a structure of force lines within their personality that offers them the ability to receive, transform and radiate light forces.<sup>12</sup>

Those who are sent down to build a spiritual school are thus connected with a concentrated light power, with the Sophia. On that basis they are able to develop teachings, methods and working activities to continue walking the gnostic path together with others. These external aspects are referred to as the Pistis and are attuned to the culture and the time in which they are active. In this way a community with an associated power field is developing, on the basis of the Pistis and the Sophia; an Ecclesia, which can gradually develop into a full-

fledged spiritual school, in which the initiation path can be walked, an Ecclesia Pistis Sophia (see image 13).<sup>30</sup>

There are always several spiritual schools active on earth. Their teachings and practices differ, but their ultimate goal is always the same: to help people reconnect with their divine origin. Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) formulates this idea as follows:

*‘Teachings are the barrels, truth is wine. Without barrels, the wine would be lost, but the barrels may be different: they must be, for what vessel can be sufficient for all men, and who could prevent that there are many pitchers, leather bags, and cups? But however the God-given containers may be formed, the wine of knowledge and love flows everywhere. Seen in the light of the gnosis, the divine wine guarantees the earthly container, but seen from the outside, the God-given container guarantees the wine that is still initially invisible.’*

### **Planetary types**

A spiritual school can reach fullness when it has many pupils who reflect the spiritual light in a way that is appropriate for their type. Then there is a kind of round table in which all participants contribute to the big picture with their unique gifts and talents. In holy scriptures, fullness is often symbolized by the number seven, which we also find, for example, in the seven colors of the rainbow and the seven tones of the octave. Seven human types were already distinguished in the Middle Ages and were linked to the qualities of the seven classical planets; they are also correlated to other symbol systems such as the staff of Mercury and the tree of life (see image 14). It is a psychological model that is also linked to metals and the phases of life of a person; it can be summarized very briefly as follows.

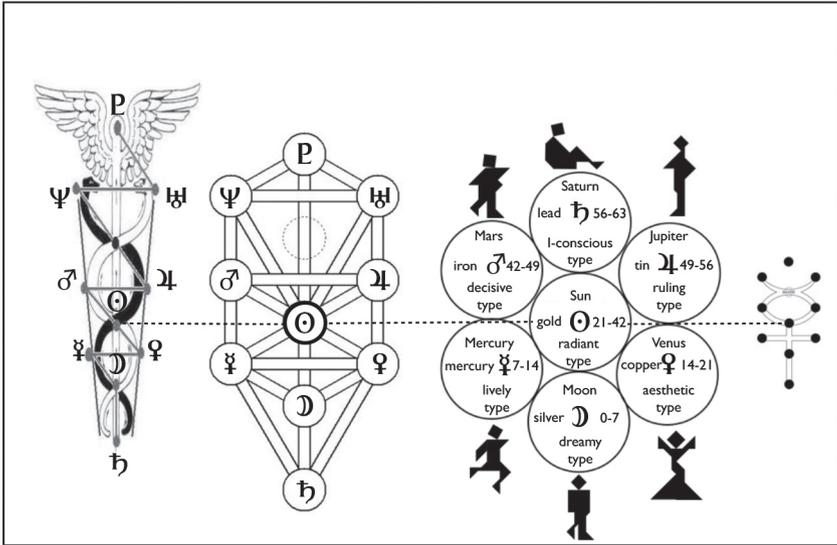


Image 14: the seven personality types corresponding with planets, metals, phases of life, tree of life and staff of mercury.

Moon, silver, the dreamy type

*maternal and protective, 0-7 years*

Mercury, quicksilver

*the mobile and lively type, witty and smart, 7-14 years*

Venus, copper

*the aesthetic type, beautiful and seductive, 14-21 years*

Sun, gold, 4

*the radiant type, self-assured and outgoing, 21-42 years,*

Mars, iron

*the energetic active type, challenging and sporty, 42-49 years,*

Jupiter, tin

*the ruling type, liberal and confident, 49-56 years,*

Saturn, lead

*the I-conscious type, serious and ambitious, 56-63 years.*

Few people have a personality that can be characterized by one pure type. Most personalities are a combination of a few types. In principle, all types are present in a person, but usually each one manifests only part of itself. The sun type is the personality in which all six other types express themselves in a balanced way. As the soul manifests itself more strongly in the personality as a result of an inner path, the qualities of all types will develop more fully, reducing imbalances and creating more harmony. When a group of people works together to pursue specific goals, it is important that the qualities of all seven types are present, because this is how the best results are achieved. When pupils of a spiritual school inwardly lift themselves up during a temple service to attract, transform, and radiate spiritual powers, they are like a symphony orchestra in which everyone involved lets his own particular instrument be played by the gnosis, as it is beautifully expressed in Psalm 150 (see hymn 18). Then they praise the Lord in their outer and inner sanctuaries. Then they manifest something of the divine fullness in this world. Then forces are unleashed that are helping, empowering and creative for themselves and for all those who are receptive to the light of the gnosis.

Historians agree that many religious gatherings were held during the period of early Christianity because there are numerous arguments for this. Have there actually been hermetic churches where hermetic philosophy was shared through rituals and hymns? There is no strong evidence for that, but it is most likely.<sup>11</sup> For example, the initiation ritual with hymn as described in the Nag Hammadi scripture *‘Treatise on the eighth and ninth celestial spheres’* points in that direction (see hymn 20).<sup>24</sup>

Those who have personally experienced the joyful and transformative work of gnostic worship will long to free

themselves as much as possible from the slavery of Chronos, for example by planning Kairos moments to participate in that sacred work. Such a person gradually becomes inwardly free from the whirling of the material world and experiences some of the beneficent peace about which Hermes Trismegistus writes.<sup>3</sup>

*“The revered and exalted Maker of the universe is the highest of all things. Apply yourself then to high things, and by becoming like to the source of your being, draw nearer and nearer to Him who created thee. And know that high things always join themselves to high things, and low things to low things.*

*You are in the world of things that come to be, and yet you seek to be at rest. But how can anything be at rest in the world of things that come to be? A boat, as long as it floats on the water, cannot be still or at rest; or if at any moment it is still, it is so only by chance, and forthwith the water begins again to shake and toss the things that float upon its surface.*

*Then only is the boat at rest, when it is taken out of the water, and drawn up on the land, which is the place of the boat’s origin, and is on a par with the boat in density and weight; then, but not till then, is the boat truly at rest. And even so, the soul, as long as it is involved in the processes of the physical world, cannot be still, nor be at rest, nor get any respite; but if it returns to its source and root, then it is still and is at rest, and repose from the misery and debasement of its wandering in a foreign land’.*

(Admonition of the Soul, Chapter 3)





*The animal soul, the consciousness of the nature-born human being, must become aware of its calling. Why were you born? To devote yourself to the living soul and to the spirit. You need to make yourself subservient to the spirit. You must understand the idea of the spirit and entrust yourself to it. If the animal soul, the mortal consciousness, does not do that, you will die; you will undergo the death of dissolution.*

*If you do devote yourself to your task, you will die in order to live; you will enter into what is called 'transfiguration', the merging of the mortal with the immortal.*

*The true soul given by God, the rose, the nucleus of the microcosm, must be brought to life. It must be freed. The rose must be attached to the cross. If, in this way, you have become a true rosicrucian, the entry of the spirit can be celebrated and the resurrection fulfilled.*

## CHAPTER 8

### GOING THE PATH OF GODLINESS

SPIRITUAL TEXT: **Corpus Hermeticum 12:51-65**<sup>6</sup>

**H**ERMES: The composition of the garments, my son, is realized in the earthly body, since the Spirit-Soul, because of its essence, cannot possibly establish itself in an earthly body without a garment. For the earthly body cannot bear so great a divinity, nor can such a glorious, pure force endure being directly linked to a body, subjected to passions. That is why the spirit has cloaked itself with the soul; the soul which, in a way, is also divine, makes the vital breath subservient, while the vital breath then guides the creature. Now when the Spirit-Soul has detached itself from the earthly body, it accepts forthwith its proper garment. It is a fiery garment which it could not retain when it took up its abode in the earthly body. For the earth cannot endure fire; even one little spark is enough to set it all ablaze. That is why the earth is entirely encircled by water, as a bulwark, protecting it from the fiery flames.

The spirit, the most rapid of all divine thought-creations, has for its body also the most rapid of all elements: fire. The spirit, the creator of all things, uses fire as an instrument for its creative work. Thus universal thought creates the All. The thoughts of human beings create only what is of the earth. Since man's cognitive faculty does not possess a garment of fire, it is not capable of calling into being divine things and is confined by its vehicles to what pertains to man.

The human soul – not every soul however, but the soul truly devoted to God – is in a certain sense good-demonic and

divine. When such a soul, after having walked the path of true piety – a path that leads to knowledge of what is divine and to refraining from injustice or harm towards any man – has detached itself from the body, it becomes Spirit-Soul throughout.

But the godless soul does not change its nature, it curtails and punishes itself and seeks to enter a new, earthly body; a human body, however, as no other body could house a human soul. Divine ordinance does not permit a human soul to debase itself so as to inhabit an animal body, void of reason. This is a divine law which protects the human soul from such a great outrage.

TAT: But how, then, is the human soul punished, Father?

HERMES: Is there, my son, a greater punishment for the human soul than godlessness? What fire consumes like the flame of godlessness? What wild animal ruins the body as godlessness ruins the soul? Can you not perceive all the pain the godless soul has to suffer when, crying for help, it exclaims: 'I am burning, the flames are scorching me. I do not know what to say or what to do. Wretch that I am, I am being devoured by the wickedness that governs me. I no longer see anything, I no longer hear anything'.

Are not these the cries of a soul that is being punished? You, my son, will certainly not believe, as the masses do, that the soul acquires the shape of an animal after it has left the body? That is, indeed, a very great error.

For the soul is punished as follows: every time the spirit has become a demon, it is bound to assume a fiery body so as to serve God; and then, when this demon has entered a very godless soul, it punishes this soul with the scourges of sin; subjugated to this scourging the godless soul then plunges into all sorts of human wickedness, such as murder, baseness, godlessness and all kinds of violence.

If, however, the spirit enters a God-fearing soul, it leads that soul to the light of the Gnosis. Such a soul never wearies of declaring God's praise in jubilation and, following the example of the Father, of doing good to all men in various ways, in word and deed. Therefore, my son, when you are giving thanks to God, you should pray to be allowed to receive a noble spirit. Thus the soul rises to higher good and its decline becomes impossible.

There exists a soul-community: the souls of the gods are linked with those of men, and the souls of men with those of beings void of reason. The higher beings are set over the lower: gods over men, men over the life forms void of reason. And God takes care of all: He stands above all; all are less than He. So the world is subjected to God, man to the world, the irrational being to man; and God stands above everything and everyone, and includes in his care everything that is.



CHAPTER 8  
GOING THE PATH OF GODLINESS  
REFLECTION

*M*odern culture rejects the belief in a great cosmic plan. We are not actors in some world drama. Life has no script, no playwright, no director, no producer – and no sense. As far as we can scientifically ascertain, the universe is a blind, aimless process full of wild noise, but without meaning. During our infinitely short stay on this one small planet we toil a bit and do something, and after that nothing is ever heard from us again.’

*T*his quote aptly summarizes where humanistic faith and science have brought humanity as a whole: into the total, boundless emptiness, the belief in nothingness. It comes from the controversial book *‘Homo Deus - A Brief History of the Future’* published in 2015 by Yuval Noah Harari, professor of history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.<sup>44</sup>

*Homo Deus* is a scientifically well-founded and cleverly written work that invites us to reflect on the future of humanity. The title refers to the successor of the current human species, which would acquire divine qualities thanks to groundbreaking developments, specifically in the area of artificial intelligence and biotechnology. The species name ‘*Homo Sapiens*’ – the knowing man – could then be changed to ‘*Homo Deus*’ – the divine man.

In his book, Harari pays ample attention to religion and spirituality, but not to gnosis, not to inner wisdom, which has been propagated for millennia and still now is propagated by

esoteric and contemplative traditions that speak of becoming God in a very different way. For example, he considers myths to be fabrications, fiction, and does not see them as revelations of divine origin that can help a human being to start on an inner path. If myths are seen as fabrications, then Harari would be right when about halfway through his book he writes:<sup>44</sup>

*‘Egyptian pharaohs and Chinese emperors failed to overcome famine, plague and war, despite millennia of effort. Modern societies managed to do it within a few centuries. [...] Modern science certainly changed the rules of the game, yet it did not simply replace myths with facts. Myths continue to dominate humankind, and science only makes these myths stronger. Instead of destroying the intersubjective reality, science will enable it to control the objective and subjective realities more completely than ever before. Thanks to computers and bioengineering, the difference between fiction and reality will blur, as people reshape reality to match their pet fiction.’*

### **Super-caterpillar**

Man has changed the earth to such an extent that there is already talk of a new geological era – the Anthropocene – and it is most probable that, as a consequence of progressing technology, changes to humanity itself will become more and more feasible. This progress means that not only will people be able to cure themselves both physically and psychologically, but they can in many ways improve themselves, so that they are able to do more and to live longer and more happily. All this can be very valuable, but there is also a danger. When a caterpillar is upgraded to a super-caterpillar, it is possible that it becomes so busy with being a super-caterpillar that there is no opportunity to transform into a butterfly. The personality culture then prevents the personality change or transfiguration, which can result only from going a gnostic path.

Hermes Trismegistus invites his pupils to walk the gnostic path. In this connection he speaks of going the way of true godliness, which leads to knowing the divine and refraining from injustice or harm towards any human being. In the previous considerations and in the other two books of this trilogy, this road has already been elucidated from various sides. The titles of the nine chapters of this book give an impression of the stages that can be distinguished.

1. experiencing the divine
2. distinguishing dimensions
3. consciously perceiving, thinking and acting
4. receiving esoteric teachings
5. realizing purification
6. praising God
7. assimilating spiritual powers
8. going the path of godliness
9. proclaiming the gnosis

This may seem like a linear process, in which one phase develops when another phase is achieved and closed. In reality, the formulated steps all take place at the same time to a greater or lesser degree, but for our understanding it is useful to distinguish them from each other. We can imagine the gnostic path as a cyclical process of steps that cannot be seen separately. It could therefore be enlightening to place them in a proven cyclic process model such as that of the enneagram (see image 15).<sup>45</sup>

It is expressed in the triangle of the enneagram that three forces are always required for a process to proceed. To go the gnostic path, it is firstly necessary to spread the gnosis, as shown in point nine of the enneagram: proclaiming the gnosis. Secondly, it is necessary that there are spiritual seekers who



Image 15: nine steps of the gnostieke path of initiation as rendered in the enneagram, with scale and planets.

are inwardly touched by it and begin to do something with it in their lives. In the enneagram in image 15 this step is formulated at point 3: conscious perceiving, thinking and acting. Thirdly, when going the path of true godliness, a human being should learn to independently attract spiritual powers that accomplish the transfiguration within him. This step is expressed in the enneagram at point 6 as: praising God.

**Turn signals, maps and navigation systems**

There are many ways to speak or write correctly about the path of true godliness or the path of initiation. It is always about the approach to reality and not about reality itself, which can only be experienced. Many people find such an approach too mental, too intellectual or too rational. On the spiritual path, the touch in the heart sanctuary is indeed fundamental – everything begins with that touch – but in the present stage of human development the head sanctuary must also be included in the process. The choice of a particular scheme is determined

mainly by what one wants to emphasize or achieve in a certain context. But without directions, it becomes difficult to get on the road, as it is also very difficult to make a big trip independently without turn signals, maps and navigation systems.

In the past, the path of initiation was often conveyed in symbolic form. Symbolism was used not only because it is most powerful, but also to prevent persecution and mutilations by people who are hostile to the gnosis. At the beginning of the era, a great initiate named Apollonius of Tyana lived and worked in countries around the Mediterranean. This contemporary of Jesus formulated a very veiled twelvefold path of initiation in the form of twelve hours in a text known as the Nuctemeron (see hymn 21). In their manifesto of 1616, called *'The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross'*, the classical Rosicrucians used a sevenfold division in the form of seven symbolic days.<sup>46</sup> And in their manifesto *'The call of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood'* from 1614 they mention a threefold division that is very suitable for specifying the process of renewal in Christian terms from the perspective of spirit, soul and personality, and from different dimensions:<sup>47</sup>

1. Born of God (personality, 3D)
2. Dying in Christ (soul, 4D)
3. Revived by the Holy Spirit (spirit, 5D)

In chapter 1 we mentioned a fivefold division, based on the connection between light power, religion, philosophy and spirituality:

1. being touched inwardly
2. walking together
3. understanding intellectually
4. growing inwardly
5. renewing personally

J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri often use a different fivefold division in their books. They call it the fivefold universal gnosis. As with the classic rosicrucians, inner dying – that is, letting go of obstructing identifications and attachments – is central to the awakening and renewal process. The entire process consists of the following five steps, which can be related to the classical planets as described by J. van Rijckenborgh in his book *‘Dei Gloria Intacta, The Christian Initiation Mystery’*:<sup>48</sup>

1. insight, Mercury initiation, new knowledge arising from awareness;
2. yearning for salvation, Venus initiation, new desire aimed at total healing;
3. self-surrender, Mars initiation, new will in accordance with the plan of God;
4. new mode of life, Jupiter initiation, new action based on inner knowing;
5. fulfilment, Saturn initiation, new attainment as a result of the foregoing.

This overview of ‘the way of the stars’ does not include the Sun initiation and the Moon initiation, because for a human being there is no need to do anything for these two fundamental initiations. They come automatically when a person is ready. The Sun initiation refers to the awakening of the spirit-spark in the heart and the Moon initiation indicates its reflection in the consciousness, thus referring to experiencing what is called ‘the budding of the rose of the heart’. When these two fundamental initiations have taken place, the pupil is faced with the task of being as receptive as possible to the spirit. The poet of the psalms calls that attitude ‘lifting up the eyes to the mountains from which help will come’ (Psalm 121:1, see hymn 18).

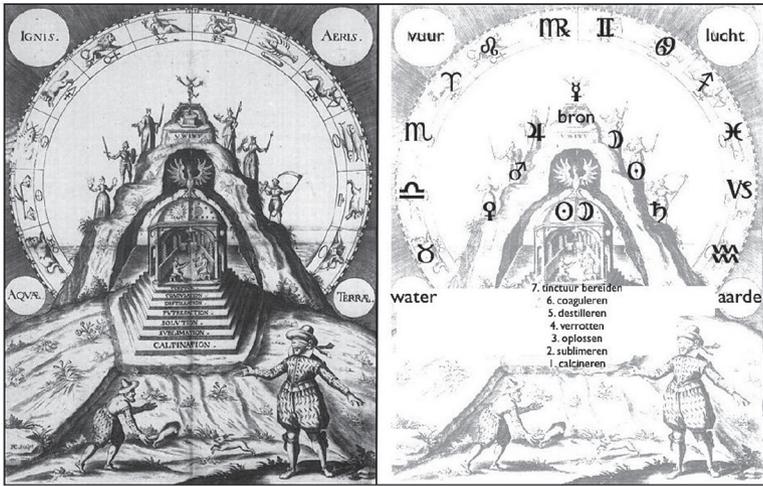


Image 16: the mystical mountain of initiation for alchemists, engraving from the book 'Cabala' by Stephan Michelspacher (1615).

### Top of the mountain

There is an old Chinese proverb that says: there are many roads that lead to the top of the mountain, but the view is always the same. The symbol of the mountain often appears in the hermetic writings, both in texts and in illustrations. In image 16 we see an engraving from 1615 showing the mountain of initiation.<sup>49</sup> The twelve signs of the zodiac can be recognized from the outside in, as well as: the four elements, the human representations of the seven planets, a staircase with alchemical processes that symbolically represent the steps on the path of initiation, and the mystical marriage between the soul and spirit.

What is the view from the top of the mountain concerning fulfillment on the gnostic path? That question can be answered correctly in many ways, but it is important to realize that each answer is only partial. Zarathustra talks in Yasna 51 about rich perspectives for those seeking the Lord (see hymn 22).<sup>50</sup> The engraving mentioned shows Hermes or Mercury – the messenger of the gods – on the top of the mountain. We could

say that the person who has gone the gnostic path experiences a living connection between heaven and earth, through which spiritual powers can ascend and descend. Hermes Trismegistus formulates this as follows:

*‘The man who is truly ‘man’ is above the gods or at least fully equal to them in power. For none of the heavenly gods will leave the boundary of heaven to descend to earth. But man raises himself to heaven and measures it. He knows both the sublime things in heaven and the things down below; he assimilates everything with great precision and, what is greatest of all: to ascend to heaven he need not leave the earth. So magnificent and majestic is that which his consciousness encompasses’.* (Corpus Hermeticum 12: 74,75)

The name ‘Hermes’ means stone. In ancient Greece, there were three kinds of expressions of stone: upright natural stones as a symbol of fertility, stones as markers for graves and stones as signposts. From this order we can recognize the stages of the path of initiation. First, natural earthly life and its continuation are central. When a human being is ready for it, an inner death follows as a result of being touched. That allows the new human being to develop more and more so that he or she is enabled to show other people the spiritual path, providing the necessary powers, in answer to the following question that is heard inwardly:

*‘Now that you have received everything from me, are you not going to those who are worthy of it, in order to serve them as a guide so that, thanks to your mediatorship, the human race may be saved by God?’* (Corpus Hermeticum 1:66)

The treatises of Hermes Trismegistus are somewhat mental, but we cannot conclude from this that stories and myths do not matter. True myths originate from the world of the soul

and can therefore be experienced as nourishment for the soul. It is certainly not always necessary to be able to interpret them intellectually, but where that is done, explanations can confirm what one already knows inwardly because the symbolic messages are recognized. From that background we can now take note of the shortened version of the myth of the Greek god Hermes, after whom Hermes Trismegistus is named.

### **The Greek myth of Hermes**

Hermes was conceived by the supreme god Zeus with the mountain nymph Maia. Born in a cave in Mount Kyllene in the shepherd's country of Arcadia, he has the ability to assume not only the shape of a baby, but also that of an adult.

Soon after his birth, Hermes leaves the cave as an adult to go on an adventure. He arrives at Piera, sees the beautiful cattle of the sun god Apollo graze there and decides to steal fifty cows and to bring them into a cave. In order to prevent his footprints from being recognized, he ties a piece of oak bark under each foot. He also has the cows walk backwards so that their tracks point into the wrong direction.

When Hermes has returned to his birth cave, he sees a turtle blocking the entrance. He kills the animal, robs it of its shield, drills eight holes in it and strings four strings over it. This is how he invented the first musical instrument: the lyre. He is immediately able to make the most beautiful music on the lyre. When Apollo finds out that his cattle have been stolen, he investigates and after some research he finds out that Hermes is the thief. He goes to the cave and accuses Hermes of theft, while Hermes has now assumed the form of a small child. Maia, who is caring for Hermes now that he has returned, defends her child by claiming that he is far too young to be capable of such a thing. Apollo does not fall for this trick and takes the

child to his father Zeus. After a long talk with Hermes, Zeus manages to induce his child to confess guilt and return the stolen cattle to Apollo.

As compensation, Hermes donates his homemade lyre to Apollo. Apollo is so pleased with this unexpected gift that he gives him a magic wand in exchange. This staff has the property of uniting opposites. Hermes tests the staff by throwing it on the ground. Immediately two snakes wind around it and remain there forever.

Apollo appoints Hermes as a guide for human souls. He is also given the task of communicating thoughts and messages to the people inspired by the gods. To facilitate this important task as a guide and messenger, the gods bestow on him winged sandals and a winged helmet, which can take him anywhere he wants to go.

### **Microcosmic reincarnation**

In this Greek myth of Hermes we can recognize the spiritual path that a human being can follow. Hermes is both divine and earthly. Although his father is the supreme god, his mother is a mountain nymph. Hermes can be seen as the human microcosm that alternately takes the form of a baby and an adult. Here we can recognize the principle of microcosmic reincarnation, in which a new mortal personality is constantly evolving in the microcosm. Those personalities have a natural tendency to usurp all kinds of things and achieve their goals through ruse and deception, among other things, so that the microcosm remains bound to the wheel of birth and death. Hermes Trismegistus declares:

*‘But the godless soul does not change its nature, it curtails and punishes itself and seeks to enter a new earthly body; a human body, however, as no other body could house a human soul.’*

(Corpus Hermeticum 12:57)

As a human being develops, he is no longer guided solely by the impulses emanating from his reptilian brain. He cultivates his quadruple personality – composed of a physical body, an ether body, an astral body and a mental body – and learns to work with it. In the myth we read that Hermes kills the turtle, turns it into a lyre and starts playing the instrument himself.

Apollo, who resides with nine muses on Mount Helicon, can be seen as a symbol of the Universal Brotherhood, always seeking and maintaining connection with humanity on earth to offer it possibilities to lift itself out of its fallen state. Apollo makes Hermes aware that his life is not in accordance with his calling. Hermes gradually begins to see this and gives back everything that he has stolen. He also donates his lyre to Apollo. Hermes' personality thus becomes a musical instrument that can be played by the Brotherhood to realize the plan of God. Hermes then receives from Apollo the staff of the serpents – also called the staff of mercury or the caduceus – as a symbol for the spirit fire that becomes active in the spine and the brain.<sup>51</sup>

It is the sign that he has become connected with the spirit, the fastest of all divine thought creations. This bond, reflected in the opening of the crown chakra, is represented by the helmet with wings that Hermes receives. Hermes Trismegistus says about this that the spirit-soul has then detached itself from the earthly body and immediately takes on the garment that is her own: the garment of fire. That fiery garment is a new immortal personality that does not have the physical body as its lowest aspect, but the ether body. The immortal personality, as built on the gnostic path, radiates through the old mortal personality and is also known as the resurrection body, the golden wedding garment or the *soma psychikon*. When that resurrection body has been established, the earthly human being has completed his or her individual gnostic task.

Thus we can understand the following enigmatic statement from the Gospel of Philip. *'In this world, those who put on garments are better than the garments. In the kingdom of heaven, the garments are better than those who put them on.'*

(The Gospel of Philip 20)

Such a person, having acquired the aforementioned fiery garment, has become a messenger of the gods, to whom the following statement of Hermes Trismegistus applies:

*'If, however, the spirit enters a God-fearing soul, it leads that soul to the light of the Gnosis. Such a soul never wearies of declaring God's praise in jubilation and, following the example of the Father, of doing good to all men in various ways, in word and deed.'*

(Corpus Hermeticum 12:62)

### **Conscious living and acting**

How do you follow the way of godliness in the practice of ordinary daily life? Guidelines for this can be found in the many sacred writings of humanity. On the gnostic path it is pointless to just follow authorities, doctrines and rules, because it is about the human being beginning to live consciously and acting from an inner understanding. When the disciples ask Jesus what rules or commandments to observe, he throws it back to them by answering: *'Do not tell lies, and do not what you hate, for all things are plain in the sight of heaven.'* (The Gospel of Thomas, Logion 6) A few centuries earlier, Pythagoras said to his students: *'Never do anything which you do not understand'*. Hermes Trismegistus explains the same thought in *'Admonition of the Soul'* as follows:<sup>3</sup>

*'If you desire salvation, seek things congruous with your own nature; if you desire destruction, seek things repugnant to your own nature; if you desire perturbation, distraction, and doubt, seek things of both kinds at once.'*

*And therefore, if you, O Soul, are by your own nature luminous and bright, do not accustom yourself to dark things; if you partake of life and speech, do not become familiar with things devoid of life and speech; if you are endowed with intelligence and discernment, do not become familiar with things devoid of intelligence and mental light.*

*Sorrow is the fruit of sin. Right action brings happiness. If a man plants date-palms, he gets dates, both fresh and dry, and is glad; if he plants willows and briars, he gets no fruit, and loses his labour. Therefore, O Soul, lay hold on things salutary for you, and abandon things destructive to you; that so you may be received into the number of those souls who enjoy God's help, who follow the right way, and who will participate in everlasting happiness'.*

(Admonition of the Soul, Chapter 8)





*As the workers go out into the harvest fields and the harvest is gathered, the barns filled and an ever-increasing number of entities are attracted, it is obvious that many harvesters will be needed.*

*Finally, yet another question will arise in you. What happens to the soul that is led to an awakening through the polar currents of the gnostic astral field? It enters at once, as if in a lightning flash, into contact with the Spirit, with its Pymander; for the Spirit is also a radiation.*

*As soon as a soul is awakened and raises itself up in the new astral field, in the Golden Head of the gnostic Living Body, the Spirit unites and becomes intimate with it in a fraction of a second. From that moment on the concerned is self-creative, he becomes, in the highest sense of the word, a freemason, a fellow servant, a builder in the home of the living soul.*

## CHAPTER 9

# PROCLAIMING THE GNOSIS

SPIRITUAL TEXT: *Corpus Hermeticum* 1:66-73<sup>4</sup>

**B**ut why do you delay? Now that you have received everything from me, are you not going to those who are worthy of it, in order to serve them as a guide so that, thanks to your mediatorship, the human race may be saved by God? When Pymander had said this, he blended himself before my eyes with the powers. And I, who was now clothed with power and instructed about the nature of the Universe and about the exalted vision, thanked and praised the Father of all Things. I began to proclaim to the people the beauty of the Gnosis and of the life, dedicated to God.

‘Oh, you nations, you men who are born of the earth and who have given yourselves up to intoxication and slumber and to the ignorance concerning God, become sober and stop wallowing in debauchery, enchanted as you are by an animal sleep.’

On hearing this, they came to me with one accord. And I spoke further: ‘Oh you earthly born, why have you given yourselves up to death, whereas you have power to participate in immortality? Repent, you who walk in error and who have accepted ignorance as a leader. Liberate yourselves from the dark light and take part in immortality by taking leave of destruction forever.’

Some of them mocked me and went away, for they were on the road of death. But others, who had thrown themselves on their knees for me, besought me to instruct them. I raised them up and became a guide to the human race by teaching them in

what way they would be saved. And I sowed in them the words of wisdom and they were fed with the water of immortality.

When evening came and the light of the sun had almost disappeared, I invited them to give thanks to God. After they had completed the thanksgiving, they all returned to their firesides. I, however, wrote Pymander's benefaction in me, and when I was completely filled with this, a supreme joy came over me. For the sleep of the body became the soberness of the soul; the closing of the eyes the true seeing; the silence became for me as a pregnancy of the good and the proclaiming of the word resulted in fruitful works of salvation.

All this has come to me, because I received from Pymander, my Spirit-Soul, the Being that exists out of itself, the word from the beginning. Thus I am now filled with the divine breath of truth. Therefore, I direct with my whole soul and with all my powers this song of praise to God the Father:

Holy is God,  
*the Father of all things.*

Holy is God,  
*whose will comes about by means of his own powers.*

Holy is God,  
*who wishes to be known and who is known by those who belong to him.*

Holy art thou,  
*who through the word has called everything into being.*

Holy art thou,  
*after whose likeness the All-nature has become.*

Holy art thou,  
*who is in no way formed by nature.*

Holy art thou,  
*mightier than all might.*

Holy art thou,  
*more excellent than all that is.*

Holy art thou,  
*exalted above all praise.*

Accept the pure offerings awakened by the word in my soul and in my heart, which direct themselves to thee, oh, ineffable, oh, inexpressible One, whose name may be spoken only by silence. Lend an ear to me who prays that I may never be severed from the Gnosis, the true knowledge that belongs to my nucleus being.

Incline thyself to me and fill me with thy power; with this grace I shall bring the Light to those of my race who are in ignorance, my brothers, thy sons. Yes, I believe and testify with my blood; I am going to the Life and to the Light. Be praised, oh Father, thy son will sanctify with thee, for which thou hast given him all power.



CHAPTER 9  
PROCLAIMING THE GNOSIS  
REFLECTION

After Hermes Trismegistus is initiated by his indwelling spirit, Pymander, he is instructed to proclaim the gnosis. That task is a very classical one, resounding in every authentic spiritual tradition. For example, the following words are spoken to advanced pupils on the liberating path.

- Now that you have received everything from me, are you not going to those who are worthy of it, in order to serve them as a guide so that, thanks to your mediatorship, the human race may be saved by God? (Corpus Hermeticum 1:66<sup>4</sup>)
- Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to all creation. (Mark 16:15<sup>22</sup>)
- O brethren, you to whom the truth has been made known, having thoroughly made yourselves masters of it, practice it, meditate upon it, and spread it abroad, in order that pure religion may last long and be perpetuated, in order that it may continue for the good and happiness of the great multitudes, out of pity for the world, and to the good and gain of all living beings! (The Gospel of Buddha<sup>52</sup>)
- Give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim, and seek out him who knows still less than you; who in his wretched desolation sits starving for the bread of wisdom and the bread which feeds the shadow, without a teacher, hope or consolation, and let him hear the law. (The voice of the Silence II:57<sup>53</sup>)

- Do what Enoch did: he fled from this world, and entered into the mystery of the Most High, and became a preacher of God. (Jacob Boehme)
- Rejoice then and exult, for you are blessed before all men who are on the earth. It is you who will save the whole world. (The Gospel of the Pistis Sophia<sup>29</sup>)

Some people who experience that they have awakened inwardly, think they have reached their goal and can therefore focus entirely on living a pleasant life. Others, with the best of intentions, choose the liberal profession of spiritual teacher and teach their followers that they are already enlightened, that they must live mindfully in the present, that they must change their way of thinking, that they must invest in themselves, that they should let go of their old paradigms, that they should listen to their inner voices, that they must start to live from the awareness of abundance and must develop an understanding of the law of attraction, in order to obtain the utmost from it. Then, according to them, their followers will receive what they wish for and live a nice life.

Such teachings of self-proclaimed gurus are in themselves usually correct and sincere, but together they often form one great mystification, because the dimensions are not properly distinguished and what really matters is ignored. The indications mentioned are admittedly reflections of a soul consciousness, but they are often applied from the intentions of a personality consciousness. In other words, wisdom from a 5D-consciousness is abused by a consciousness limited to 3D or 4D in order to achieve success in those dimensions. For that reason the results are not sustainable and certainly not liberating in a gnostic sense: they are stones for bread.

## **Half-truths**

Half-truths are more dangerous than total deceptions, because total falsehoods are recognized much more quickly. Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) repeatedly emphasized that the spiritually striving person should not bring down the truth, but should endeavor to rise up to the truth. At the end of his book *The Egyptian Arch Gnosis*, volume 4, J. van Rijckenborgh writes the following:<sup>7</sup>

*‘Through human heads, human hearts and human actions, you too can, and will, be touched by the truth. All you have to do is prepare yourself for that contact! The hierarchy of lies is sending out its radiations and making every effort to mislead, but the hierarchy of truth is also sending out its radiations and performing its work, and all who open themselves to that astral plenitude will certainly receive it. And remember that it is not only through the spoken and written word that the truth comes to you. No, the truth is an astral principle that, for a very long time, has been concentrated and made available by human beings to human beings. Throughout the ages, there has always been ample proof of this.’*

If, after many experiences in the world of the senses, a person begins to sense something of the divine within – or perhaps has even had a mystical experience – and thereby feels a certain inner peace and tranquillity, then that is not the end of a spiritual path but merely the beginning. Such a person has participated in the first mystery that is part of three interrelated mysteries that the classical Rosicrucians formulate as: *‘Born of God, dying in Jesus, reborn through the Holy Spirit.’*

Just like Hermes’ disciple Tat, some persons may have detached themselves from the world, but this has not yet changed them into new human beings. The vices and ‘castigators’ have been

driven to the periphery of the microcosms that they inhabit and are no longer manifested as quickly as before, but they have not yet been neutralized.

The spirit-spark in the heart has awakened in such persons and therefore it can be said of them that they were born of God, and so they stand in the first mystery. They have not yet died inwardly in Christ and therefore are not yet part of the second mystery, as they have not yet lived through the endura. In the language of Hermes Trismegistus: the twelve zodiacal castigators have not yet been dispelled by the ten planetary forces. Many people who call themselves spiritual are not yet aware that this cleansing and transformation both are essential parts of the renewal process and that they cannot just be skipped and simply passed by unnoticed. Hermes Trismegistus says about this:

*‘Sublime and well-trodden is this road, but difficult for the soul to follow as long as it is in the body. First it has to struggle against itself, to bring about a great separation and allow one part to gain victory over it. For a conflict arises between one part and the other two parts: the former tries to escape while the latter try to drag the former – that is, the soul – down from below. The result is a fight and a great trial of strength between the part that wants to escape and the two others that strive to detain it. [...]*

*See, my son, this is the guide on the way that leads to freedom: you must give up your body before it dies and overcome the life of conflict; then, if you have won that victory, you will return to the Highest’*

(Corpus Hermeticum 5: 9,10,14)

### **Transfiguration**

The essence of all authentic gnostic teachings, including those of Hermeticism and Christianity, can be summarized

in one word: transfiguration. Catharose de Petri defines transfiguration as: *'a gnostic method of accomplishing the endura, which is the process of completely replacing the mortal, separate, earth-born human being with the original, immortal, divine being, the true Spirit-Human-Being intended by the divine plan of creation'*.<sup>54</sup> Transfiguration means that people are spiritualized in that the spirit emanating from God is becoming active within them. This book and the other books of the Spiritual Texts Library are mainly intended to increase insight into the far-reaching and wonderful renewal processes that are connected to it. Their aim is also to strengthen the desire for becoming whole in the broadest sense of the word, because such insight and desire can lead to a further awareness and growth of 'the Other one in us', the immortal microcosmic human being. Enriched with countless experiences, this immortal being is restored to its original splendor and thereby contributes to the redemption of world and humanity.

Although the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the text *'Admonition of the Soul'*, often quoted in this book, have a strong religious and spiritual impact, they belong to the so-called philosophical hermetics because the love for wisdom is a central theme.

Of the many other philosophical hermetic writings we would like to mention one here, published in English in 1908, because it is still well read today and commented on by numerous authors: *'Kybalion – Hermetic Philosophy'*, supposedly written by 'three initiates', a pseudonym of William Walker Atkinson.<sup>55</sup> The *Kybalion* reveals seven universal principles or seven laws that together form a powerful paradigm that is significantly different from the current paradigms of the natural sciences and offers practical points of contact, or clues, to living life consciously and growing inwardly. They can be characterized as follows.

### **1. The law of consciousness**

Consciousness is the foundation for everything that exists, so everything that is manifested. In fact, everything that is manifested is consciousness, in countless dimensions, levels and nuances. This viewpoint is completely different from the materialistic thesis that states that first there is matter and that consciousness may possibly arise from that matter as a result of evolution.

### **2. The law of agreement or correspondence**

Structures and phenomena in different dimensions and levels of consciousness correspond with each other, showing resemblance or similarity. The Tabula Smaragdina (the Emerald Tablet) powerfully formulates this idea as 'As above, so below'. The structures and phenomena within the macrocosm correspond to the structures and phenomena within the microcosm. If people know the world, they know themselves. If they know themselves, they know the world. There are levels of consciousness unknown to a human being, but if we apply the principle of correspondence to them, we can understand some things that would otherwise be unknowable to us.

### **3. The law of rhythm**

Everything that exists is subject to many different cycles or circular courses. We know the rhythm of day and night, the rotation of the moon around the earth in 28 days and the rotation of the earth around the sun in 365 days. Each cycle that we can observe is characterized by appearing, increasing, peaking, decreasing and disappearing, after which the cycle is repeated. Development does not always take place gradually, but also has chaotic periods that create conditions in which drastic changes can take place.

#### **4. The law of cause and effect**

Everything that happens has a certain cause. People often think that there is only one cause for an event. However there are always several factors that collectively cause a certain event to occur. If a person has no insight into the various factors that cause a certain phenomenon to appear, it is often considered to be just a coincidence. What befalls a person does not have to happen from anything undefined. The principle of cause and effect implies that events occur according to certain laws, which to a certain extent can be known by a person.

#### **5. The law of unity and connection**

Everything that exists has emanated from one source and will return to that source again. Everything that exists is invisibly connected to everything else. This means, among other things, that everything a person perceives, thinks, feels or does affects the entire whole.

#### **6. The law of polarities**

Everything that occurs to us has two poles, meaning, a pair of contradictions or opposites with an extensive spectrum of mixed forms in between. Think of male and female, creating and receiving, sun and moon, hot and cold, high and low, light and darkness, sharp and blunt, sympathy and dislike, love and hate, positive and negative, good and evil. Contradictions are a precondition essential for creation and at a higher level they can be reconciled in the form of a synthesis that is more than the sum of its parts.

#### **7. The law of vibration**

Everything vibrates, nothing stands completely still. In essence everything is vibration, energy. There are differences in frequency and intensity. Matter is actually solidified spirit,

and the spirit is of an extremely high vibration. Thoughts, feelings and expressions of the will are also vibrations. Differences in levels of consciousness are differences in levels of vibration. Pure love has a very high vibration frequency.

These are valuable insights that, if you truly fathom them, will change the way you live your life. But it is important to establish that the essence of hermetic philosophy – transfiguration or rebirth – is not expressed in these seven hermetic principles.

### **Personality change**

Many other writings that are also referred to as Hermetic or Christian pay no attention to transfiguration, which is also defined by the terms personality change or rebirth. So the most important thing is not mentioned anywhere! And if it is written or spoken about, it turns out that people have often misunderstood the message. In the first chapter of his 1946 book *'Dei Gloria Intacta, The Christian Initiation Mystery'*, J. van Rijckenborgh writes quite accurately:<sup>48</sup>

*'The initiation system of change of the personality is completely new to the great seeking public and is yet to be proclaimed. As the Christian Mystery is proclaimed throughout the world, in like measure a new world church connected with the Christian Mystery School will develop. From everywhere workers are being sent out in order to lay the foundation of the Work because, although this initiation system of personality change has been in existence ever since its inception by Jesus Christ, relatively only a very small group of chosen candidates had the ineffable good fortune to be liberated by this system.'*

In classical philosophical hermetics, the emphasis is strongly placed on what is referred to as 'personality change' whereby, as

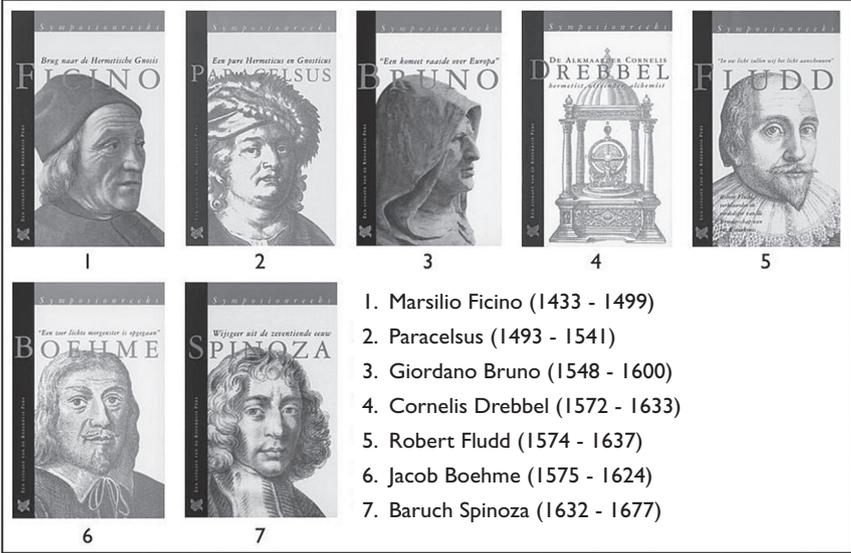


Image 17: seven famous hermetic philosophers from the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

a result of going an inner path, an immortal personality develops that will radiate through the mortal earthly personality. That is not the case, or to a much lesser extent, with writings that belong to the magical, astrological and alchemical hermetics. Most nature religions have a shamanic origin, meaning that a shaman or medicine man manipulates supernatural powers in the service of the tribe or the community of which he or she is a part. It is therefore not surprising that the oldest literature written under the name of Hermes Trismegistus still has a magical or occult character. It contains, for example, spells that can be used in incantations or enchantments to invoke forces that assist humanity to live the most pleasant life possible. It will be clear that such magical practices are not in accordance with the hermetic gnosis as propagated in this book. The same is also largely true with regard to the teachings of astrological and alchemical hermetics.

Astrological hermetic writings are based on knowledge about the movements and constellations of celestial bodies – such as the sun, moon, planets and stars – and their supposed connection with life on earth. Alchemical hermetics mainly focus on the upgrading or purification of matter and humanity through processes of purification, transformation and separation. Although both astrological and alchemical hermetics are largely obsolete, they have laid the foundation for the development of the modern natural sciences.

It is important to realize that teachings do not need to be literally true in order to exercise an influence that is truly liberating. The extent to which a transformative activity of certain teachings emanates is determined not only by their content, but above all by the intentions and in particular by the level of consciousness of those involved as well as by the context in which those teachings are conveyed.

From about the beginning of the sixteenth century, during the Renaissance, there was a strong revival of hermetic ideas among the intelligentsia of Europe. Image 17 shows portraits of famous philosophers who were inspired by hermetic writings. During the Enlightenment, which began in the late seventeenth century, interest in hermeticism subsided quickly because it was condemned by ecclesiastical authorities and rejected by scientists as pseudoscience. From the point of view of human development, this change was probably intentional because it was time for the science based on experiments to develop.

### **Mystery wisdom in literary works**

In that process, in which the focus shifted increasingly to material reality and intellectual activity, the mystery wisdom – known, for example, from Christianity, the Kabbalah and Hermeticism – was not lost. That is why all over Europe

literary works were created in which the mystery wisdom can be recognized.

On the one hand we find a splendid synthesis of the promotion of intellectual development by means of experiments in the world of the senses, and on the other hand we see the spreading of the mystery wisdom in the form of symbolic stories as written by Francis Bacon (1561-1626). This English statesman has become known as a pioneer of the scientific method, as a philosopher and a writer of essays. However, he was much more than that.

Historical research shows that Francis Bacon was a great initiate who worked with complete dedication in order to develop and execute a great plan for the overall reformation of the entire world through the renewal of all arts and sciences.<sup>56</sup> That corresponds well with the intentions of the Classical Rosicrucians who pursued not only the renewal of the arts and sciences but also the renewal of humanity itself. In their mystery novel *'The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross'*, which appeared in print in 1616, the sevenfold path of initiation is painted in the form of a story which the main character Christian Rosycross experiences during seven successive days.<sup>46</sup> During the night after the first day, Christian Rosycross has a meaningful dream.

Christian Rosycross dreams that he and many other people are trapped in a pitch-dark pit. He and his companions in distress are packed tightly together, suffering and longing for redemption. Then suddenly the music of trumpets and kettledrums sounds. Their misery is alleviated somewhat when the cover of the pit is slid away and daylight enters.

Then a rope is lowered down into the pit seven consecutive times and drawn up again by a group outside at the top. A number of prisoners are lifted up from their prison and released. Christian Rosycross succeeds in grabbing the rope

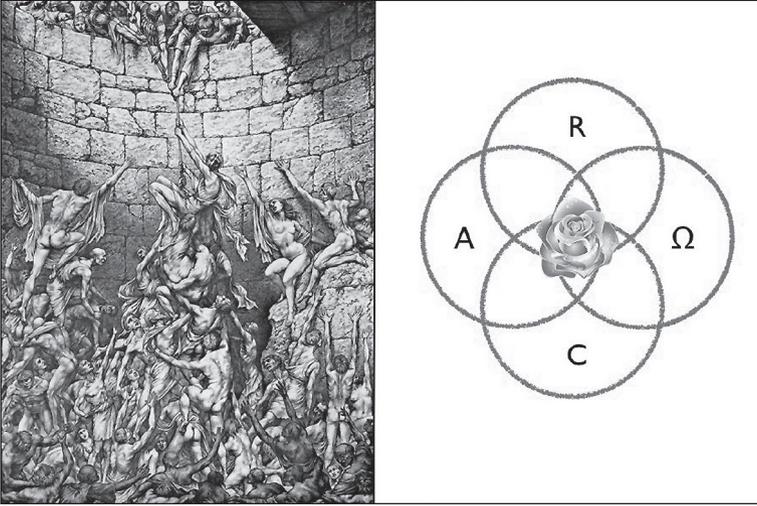


Image 18: the rescuing rope in the dream of Christian Rosycross, by Johfra.

the sixth time and is thus released from captivity (see image 18). Immediately after his liberation, he is asked to lower the rope for the seventh time and to help raise it. How can we interpret this symbolic dream?

1. The prisoners symbolize people who suffer because they are limited in their freedom and experience that they live in darkness.
2. The prisoners cannot liberate themselves, but they can be liberated with help from above.
3. A group of people with a higher degree of freedom works together systematically to liberate the prisoners.
4. The prisoners are not automatically released. Whoever wants to be liberated has to make an effort to grab and hold on to the rope when it is lowered.
5. Lowering the rope symbolizes the work that a spiritual school performs in society in order to make contact with spiritual seekers.

6. The raising of the rope symbolises the work done by a spiritual school for seekers on the spiritual path who are approaching the school.
7. Those who have obtained some degree of freedom are invited to help liberate others.

### **Service**

Many people may think that spiritual schools are intended to teach students how to achieve spiritual awareness and renewal. That is correct, but there is more to it. Spiritual schools are also there to provide students with opportunities to work in the service of the great work undertaken jointly to contribute to the realization of the plan of God. From a certain moment on it is only possible to make further progress on the gnostic path through service. Hermes puts it as follows: *'If you are seeking God, you are also seeking the beautiful, for there is only one road that leads from here to the beautiful: a God-serving life of action, guided by the gnosis'* (Corpus Hermeticum 10:12).

Anyone who becomes an independent spiritual teacher bears a tremendous responsibility. Every little mistake is immediately avenged and gigantic resistances have to be overcome before the work really begins to bear fruit. On the other hand, those who participate in the work of a spiritual school are allowed to make mistakes because the group bears and takes care of those mistakes. Making mistakes is inevitable in learning the trade of fishing people from the swirling sea of life. However, the apprentice worker must be open to being corrected, if needed. It is of course also important that he or she works intelligently in group unity.

Serving within a spiritual school begins with consciously participating in meetings, because being present in this way

means co-experiencing, co-vibrating, co-inspiring and being inspired. There is always a lot of practical work to be done where enthusiastic volunteers are very much needed: from brewing coffee to cleaning, from organizing to promoting, from giving talks to odd jobs, and from administration to playing music. Pupils of a spiritual school are thus enabled to develop the ability to act, to make a habit of tackling and carrying out activities with attention and love. In this way, personal development and inner development go hand in hand, always with the aim of releasing the liberating gnostic power so that it can spread.

You might struggle with the above statement. That is understandable because you probably interpret this from a 3D-consciousness, in which work is often seen as a necessary evil. However by participating in the outer and inner work of a spiritual school, joy and soul consciousness, or 5D-consciousness, can develop within you, according to the following statement by the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941): *'I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.'*

We would also like to emphasize here that everyone who joins a bona fide spiritual school will be given the opportunity to familiarise themselves generally for a long time, and that no one will be forced in any way whatsoever. In the liberating work of a spiritual school, the possibilities and talents of the pupils are taken into account at all times. Pupils can then develop by following the gnostic path in the service of the realization of the plan of God.

We conclude the observations of this book with the following words from Hermes Trismegistus.<sup>3</sup>

*He who plants sweet things eats sweet things; he who plants things good for naught eats things good for naught. For the fruit of good deeds corresponds to the root from which it grows, and the fruit of bad deeds corresponds to the root from which it grows.*

*A little knowledge that you carry out in action is more profitable than much knowledge which you neglect to carry out in action. May God have mercy on him who knows and does, and teaches others; who reads this book, and understands what he has read, and teaches others to understand; who attains to the appointed end and leads others to it; who rightly mediates, speaks truly, and partakes of God's aid'.*

(Admonition of the Soul, Chapter 14)





My friends,

Take note of the things around you  
and amidst which you live and you will experience  
that God, who has so formed it, is an artist  
before whom we can only stammer;  
before whom we reverently kneel.

The one we can only worship in ecstasy  
and thank him for us being here not just by chance.  
Thanking him that we were created in his image  
and his likeness.

Thanking him for designing his will for us  
in the firmament through its planets and solar systems –  
that he has laid down his laws around us.

It is our honor to honor him –  
by taking note of all the wisdom  
that he wants to give, that he  
has brought forth for us.

Z.W. Leene, The fiery glow of ascent

PART II

**HYMNS of GOD,  
COSMOS, HUMANITY**





# 1 HYMN TO THE SUN

(AKHENATON)

You appear beautifully on the horizon of heaven,  
You living Aton, the beginning of life!  
When you have risen on the eastern horizon,  
You have filled every land with your beauty.  
you are gracious, great, glistening, and high over every land;  
Your rays encompass the lands to the  
limit of all that you have created:  
Though You are far away, your rays are on earth;  
Though you are in their faces, no one knows your ways.  
When you set in the western horizon,  
The land is in darkness, in the manner of death.  
They sleep in a room, with heads wrapped up,  
Nor sees one eye the other.  
At daybreak, when you arise on the horizon,  
When you shine as the Aton by day,  
Their arms are raised in praise at Your appearance.  
All the world, they do their work.  
How effective they are, Your plans, O lord of Eternity!  
For you have set a Nile in heaven,  
that it may descend for them and make waves upon the  
mountains,  
like the great green sea,  
to water their fields in their towns.  
Rising in Your form as the living Aton,  
Appearing, shining, withdrawing or approaching,  
You made millions of forms of yourself alone.  
Cities, towns, fields, road, and river –  
every eye beholds You over them,  
For You are the Aton of the day over the earth....

## 2 THE EMERALD TABLET

(Hermes Trismegistus)<sup>4</sup>

It is true!

It is certain!

It is the whole truth!

That which is below is equal to that which is above,  
and that which is above is equal to that which is below,  
in order that the wonders of the One shall be accomplished.

As all things are accomplished out of the One,  
through one mediatorship, so they are all  
born out of the One by transmission.

His father is the sun; his mother is the moon, the air  
has carried it in its womb, the earth was its feeder.

The father of all talismans in the whole world is omnipresent.  
His power remains intact, when it is used in the earth.

Divide lovingly and with great insight and  
wisdom the earth from the fire, the subtle  
from what is gross, dense and congealed.

It ascends from the earth to heaven and again  
descends to the earth, and takes unto itself the power  
of that which is above and that which is below.

So you will possess the glory of the entire world and  
for that reason all darkness will flee from you.

This one is the mighty Strength of all Strengths,  
because he will overcome everything subtle  
and penetrate everything solid.

So the world was created.

Out of it, in the same way, wonderful creations will arise.  
I have been called the thrice-great Hermes,  
because I possess the three aspects of the  
doctrine of wisdom of the entire world.  
Completed is that which I have said concerning the  
preparation of Gold, the activity of the spiritual Sun.

### **3 NO ONE HAS AUTHORITY OVER THE ONE**

(The Secret Book of John)<sup>24</sup>

The One rules all. Nothing has authority over it.  
It is the God. It is Father of everything, Holy One  
The invisible one over everything.  
It is uncontaminated pure light no  
eye can bear to look within.  
The One is the Invisible Spirit.  
It is not right to think of it as a God or as like God.  
It is more than just God.  
Nothing is above it. Nothing rules it.  
Since everything exists within it  
It does not exist within anything.  
Since it is not dependent on anything. It is eternal.  
It is absolutely complete and so needs nothing.  
It is utterly perfect  
Light. The One is without boundaries.  
Nothing exists outside of it to border it.  
The One cannot be investigated.  
Nothing exists apart from it to investigate it.  
The One cannot be measured.  
Nothing exists external to it to measure it.  
The One cannot be seen  
For no one can envision it.  
The One is eternal.  
For it exists forever.  
The One is inconceivable.  
For no one can comprehend it.  
The One is indescribable. For no one can put any words to it.  
The One is infinite light. Purity, Holiness, Stainless.

### 3

The One is incomprehensible. Perfectly free from corruption.  
Not 'perfect'. Not 'blessed'. Not 'divine'  
But superior to such concepts.  
Neither physical nor unphysical.  
Neither immense nor infinite small.  
It is impossible to specify in quantity or  
quality. For it is beyond knowledge.  
The One is not a being among other beings.  
It is vastly superior, but it is not 'superior.'  
It is outside of realms of being and time for whatever is  
within realms of being was created and whatever is within  
time had time allotted to it.  
The One receives nothing from anything.  
It simply apprehends itself in its own perfect light.  
The One is majestic. The One is measureless majesty.  
Chief of all Realms. Producing all realms  
Light. Producing light. Life.  
Producing life. Blessedness. Producing blessedness.  
Knowledge. Producing knowledge.  
Good. Producing goodness.  
Mercy. Producing mercy. Generous. Producing generosity  
It gives forth light beyond measure, beyond comprehension.

## 4 PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

(Nag Hammadi)<sup>24</sup>

We give thanks to Thee!

Every soul and heart is lifted up to Thee

O undisturbed name honored with the name

'God' and praised with the name 'Father',

for to everyone and everything comes the fatherly kindness

and affection and love and any teaching there may be that

is sweet and plain, giving us mind, speech, and knowledge:

mind so that we may understand Thee, speech, so that we

may expound thee, knowledge so that we may know Thee.

We rejoice because Thou hast shown Thyself. We

rejoice because while we were in the body. Thou

hast made us divine through thy knowledge.

The delight of the man who attains to thee  
is one thing: that we know Thee.

We have known Thee, o intellectual light.

O life of life, we have known Thee.

O womb of every creature, we have known Thee.

O womb pregnant with the nature of the

Father, we have known Thee.

O eternal permanence of begetting Father,

thus have we worshipped thy goodness.

There is one petition that we ask:

we would be preserved in knowledge

And there is one protection that we desire:

that we not stumble in this kind of life.

## 5 SONGS OF REPENTANCE

(The gospel of the Pistis Sophia)<sup>29</sup>

– 3 –

Light of powers, give heed and save me.  
May they who would take away my light,  
lack and be in the darkness.  
May they who would take away my power,  
turn into chaos and be put to shame.  
May they turn quickly to darkness,  
who press me sore and say:  
We have become lords over her.  
May rather all those who seek the Light,  
rejoice and exult, and they who desire thy mystery, say ever:  
May the mystery be exalted.  
‘Save me then now, O Light, for I lacked my light,  
which they have taken away, and I needed my power,  
which they have taken from me.  
Thou then, O Light, thou art my saviour,  
and thou art my deliverer,  
O Light. Save me quickly out of this chaos.

– 8 –

On thee, O Light, have I hoped ... Leave me not in the chaos;  
deliver me and save me according to thy gnosis.  
Give heed unto me and save me. Be unto me a saviour, O Light,  
and save me and lead me unto thy light.  
For thou art my saviour and wilt lead me unto thee. And  
because of the mystery of thy name lead me and give me thy  
mystery.

And thou wilt save me from this lion-faced power,  
 which they have laid as a snare for  
 me, for thou art my saviour.

And in thy hands will I lay the purification of my light;  
 thou hast saved me, O Light, according to thy gnosis.

Thou art become wroth with them who keep  
 watch over me and will not be able to lay hold of  
 me utterly. But I have had faith in the Light.

I will rejoice and will sing praises that thou hast  
 had mercy upon me and hast heeded and saved  
 me from the oppression in which I was. And thou  
 wilt set free my power out of the chaos.

And thou hast not left me in the hand of  
 the lion-faced power; but thou hast led me  
 into a region which is not oppressed.

– 13 –

The Light hath become a wreath round my head;  
 and I shall not depart from it,  
 so that the emanations of Self-willed may not rob it from me.

And though all the matters be shaken,  
 yet shall I not be shaken.

And though all my matters perish and remain in the chaos,  
 those which the emanations of Self-willed see,  
 yet shall I not perish.

For the Light is with me, and I myself am with the Light.

## 6 ODE TO WISDOM

(Wisdom of Solomon 7:21-30 en 8:1)

I learned both what is secret and what is manifest,  
for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me.  
For in her there is a spirit that is intelligent, holy,  
unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted,  
distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible,  
beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety,  
all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all  
spirits that are intelligent and pure and most subtle.  
For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;  
because of her pureness she pervades  
and penetrates all things.  
For she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure  
emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore  
nothing defiled gains entrance into her.  
For she is a reflection of eternal light,  
a spotless mirror of the working of God,  
and an image of his goodness.  
Though she is but one, she can do all things,  
and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in  
every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them  
friends of God, and prophets; for God loves nothing so much  
as the man who lives with wisdom. For she is more beautiful  
than the sun, and excels every constellation of the stars.

## 6

Compared with the light she is found to be superior,  
for it is succeeded by the night, but against wisdom evil  
does not prevail. She reaches mightily from one end of  
the earth to the other, and she orders all things well.

## 7 UNIVERSAL CONFESSION OF FAITH

(Karl von Eckartshausen)<sup>57</sup>

I believe in a creative firepower out  
of which heaven and earth  
arose or the fleeting and the firm.  
I believe in a light begotten by this firepower,  
the ruler over the world or the omnipotent power in nature.  
This pure light that has issued from the  
fire is received by the spirit  
and reveals itself in the purest form.  
However, it has to suffer in the realm  
of impurity and be separated,  
killed, and buried in the earth.  
Then the light descends into the innermost  
of matter, and after three periods,  
that is, after three unions of three spiritual  
powers with three purified forms,  
it awakens once more to life.  
It exalts itself to highest perfection as a  
shining light power of the almighty fire.  
After reaching this highest perfection,  
it is able to make everything dead alive and everything  
imperfect perfect.  
I believe in and know the spirit of light that  
emanates from fire and warmth;  
the holy, general, true community of light, the community  
and union of those with the faculty of light;  
the healing of illnesses and the extinction of misery;  
the renewal of our being;  
as well as the highest felicitousness of life.

## 8 HYMNE TO AHURA MAZDA

(Henry van Dyke)<sup>58</sup>

We worship the Spirit Divine,  
all wisdom and goodness possessing,  
surrounded by Holy Immortals,  
the givers of bounty and blessing.  
We joy in the works of His hands,  
His truth and His power confessing.

We praise all the things that are pure,  
for these are His only Creation;  
the thoughts that are true, and the words  
and deeds that have won approbation;  
these are supported by Him,  
and for these we make adoration.

Hear us, O Mazda! Thou livest  
in truth and in heavenly gladness;  
cleanse us from falsehood, and keep us  
from evil and bondage to badness;  
pour out the light and the joy of Thy life  
on our darkness and sadness.

Shine on our gardens and fields.  
Shine on our working and weaving;  
shine on the whole race of man,  
believing and unbelieving;  
shine on us now through the night,  
shine on us now in Thy might,  
the flame of our holy love  
and the song of our worship receiving.

## 9 TESTIMONIES BY MANI

(Mani)

– 1 –

The most Beloved Son, the Savior Jesus,  
the head of all these gifts,  
Who is a refuge for the holy and a  
blessing for the wise, is exalted.  
May he be praised!  
The Maiden of Light, the chief of all wisdom, is exalted.  
May she be praised!  
The Holy Religion, by the power of the Father,  
by the blessing of the Mother and by the  
wisdom of the Son, is exalted.  
May it be praised!  
Well-being and blessing to the sons of goodness  
and to the speakers and hearers of the true Word!  
Praise and honor to the Father and the Son  
and the Holy Spirit and to the holy recollection!  
He (Mani) teaches the word of the Living Gospel  
for Eye and Ear, and he preaches the fruit of righteousness.  
I, Mani, the Apostle of Jesus the Friend,  
by the will of the Father,  
the true God, of Him, by whom I have become ...  
Everything that is and everything that  
was and will be is by His Power.  
The blessed ones will receive this message,  
the wise ones understand it,  
the strong ones will take on the wisdom of the wise ....

– 2 –

You are worthy of praise, beneficent  
 Father, primeaval Ancestor!  
 Blessed are you, beneficent God!  
 You, Lord, are the first *alif* and the last *tau*.  
 Through you yourself your pious wish has been fulfilled and  
 accomplished.  
 All gods and aeons, the deities of Light,  
 And the righteous bring praise to you,  
 singing “Holy” repeatedly.  
 The spirits, the plants and all . . . truly implore you  
 to blessing. And bring forth supplications with one voice.  
 Grant us our pious wish . . . .  
 They bear the form that we have given up from afar.  
 Be merciful unto us in your mercy;  
 show us your form, the noble epiphany, for which we yearn.  
 Let your brightness shine upon us,  
 sweet source and breath of life!  
 Make us, your children, strong.  
 In vain the dark foe boasts, together with the bellicose,  
 rebellious giants, In vain he wishes to cling to the Aeons.

## 10 O FIRE OF THE SPIRIT

(Hildegard von Bingen)

O fire of the Spirit, the Comforter,  
Life of the life of all creation,  
Holy are you, giving life to the Forms.  
Holy are you, anointing  
The dangerously broken;  
Holy are you, cleansing  
the fetid wounds.  
O breath of sanctity,  
O fire of charity,  
O sweet savor in the breast  
And balm flooding hearts  
With the fragrance of virtues.  
O limpid fountain,  
in which it is seen  
how God gathers the strays  
and seeks out the lost:  
O breastplate of life  
and hope of the bodily frame.  
O sword-belt of honor:  
Save the blessed!  
Guard those imprisoned  
By the foe,  
Free those in fetters  
whom divine force wishes to save.

O mighty course  
that penetrated all,  
in the heights, upon the earth,  
and in all abysses:  
You bind and gather all people together.  
From you clouds overflow, winds take wing,  
stones store up moisture,  
Waters well forth in streams –  
and earth swells with living green.  
You are ever teaching the learned,  
made joyful by the breath  
of Wisdom.  
Praise then be yours!  
You are the song of praise,  
the delight of life,  
a hope and a potent of honor,  
granting rewards of light.

## 11 THE HYMN OF LOVE BY THE NYMPHS

(The Alchemical Wedding II)<sup>59</sup>

Naught is better here on earth  
than matchless, noble love,  
whereby all sorrow flees us and  
we're made like God above.  
Therefore, let us praise the king  
that all the sea thereof may ring.  
Now we shall ask; you answer.

What unto life has brought us?  
'Twas love.  
What unto Grace restored us?  
'Twas love.  
How were we lost on earth?  
Without love.

What brings us forth and bears us?  
'Tis love.  
What succours and consoles us?  
'Tis love.  
What do we owe our parents?  
'Tis love.  
What gives them their forbearance?  
'Tis love.

Through what power do we conquer?  
Through love.

How can we love discover?  
Through love.  
On what are good works founded?  
On love.  
How are the two united?  
Through love.

So loudly we'll sing;  
let our praises ring  
in love's honour profound,  
that love may abound  
in our lord the king  
and his consort the queen,  
whose souls have gone hence,  
through their bodies are seen.

As long as we live  
to us God will give  
the power His Love to convey,  
and in service aspire,  
in the flames of love's fire  
the two to conjoin once again.  
Then shal this great sorrow be  
changed to joy eternally,  
that abiding happiness  
many youthful hearts may bless.

## 12 LIFE IS LOVE

(Mikhail Naimy)<sup>60</sup>

This happened to me, my God  
before I understood  
the grandeur and unconditionality of love,  
and realized that she is life.  
That life is to love  
and that there is no boundary  
between the two  
and no difference exists either.  
And now there is nothing  
which is more attractive to me than love.  
And I wish she alone filled the treasury in my head  
and that she would magically seal her.  
It would change all of its content  
in transparent atoms – like the ether –  
closely connected through the elixir of love;  
and they are moved by nothing else  
and radiate nothing but love.  
Then there are no highs and lows anymore,  
nor sadness that touches the heart  
as if pinching with iron tongs,  
nor joy that bursts the heart,  
no more hours of expectation  
and labor pains which produces the twins of suffering,  
no more pride in fortune, fame or honor  
and no more fear for the impermanence of these things,  
no more vanity for big and small victories

and no depression after defeat,  
no longer hooked on a moment of joy  
or flee from sad moments,  
no more regrets about the past  
or clinging to a moment of happiness,  
and no more fear of situations where you can end up.  
No more eye settling on the one  
while turning away from the other, no more ear,  
happy with a beautiful voice but excited by another,  
no more hands that touch with silk when a mercy goes down,  
while throwing off a hairy garment,  
no more tongue who enjoys the taste of honey  
and hates the bitter cucumber,  
no more nose sniffing musk  
and turning away from the polecat flock.  
No more high and deep, no before and after,  
no 'I' and no 'other', no agreement or difference of opinion  
over all that exists in heaven and on earth,  
but instead a mysterious unit, holy and eternal,  
every concept and description beyond,  
in which all contradictions dissolve,  
beginning and end, times and distances;  
a unity that is unchanging and eternal,  
without participants – and that is love.

## 13 THE SONG OF THE REED FLUTE

(Rumi)

Listen to the story of the reed (flute), how it is complaining.

It is telling about separations.

Ever since I was severed from the reed field,

Men and women have lamented.

I want a heart torn, torn from separation,

so that I may explain the pain of yearning.

Anyone who has remained far from his roots

seeks a return to the time of his union.

I lamented in every gathering

I associated with those in bad or happy circumstances.

Everyone became a friend from his own opinion;

he did not seek my secrets from within me.

My secret is not far from my lament,

but eyes and ears do not have the light.

The body is not hidden from the soul,

nor the soul from the body;

but seeing the soul is not permitted.

The reed's cry is fire ... it's not wind!

Whoever doesn't have this fire, may be nothing!

It is the fire of Love that fell into the reed.

It is the ferment of Love that fell into the wine.

The reed is the companion of anyone

who was severed from a friend.

Its melodies tore our veils.

Who has seen a poison and a remedy like the reed?  
Who has seen a harmonious companion  
and a yearning friend like the reed?  
The reed is telling the story of the path full of blood;  
it is telling the stories of Madjnooen's love.  
There is no confidant of this understanding  
except themselves.  
There is no purchaser of that tongue except the ear.  
In our longing, the days became evenings;  
the days became fellow-travellers with burning fevers.  
If the days have passed, tell them to go and don't worry.  
You remain! ... O You, whom no one resembles in Purity!  
Everyone becomes satiated by water, except the fish.  
Everyone who is without daily food, his days become long.  
None who is 'raw' can understand the state of the 'ripe'.  
Therefore, speech must be shortened. So farewell!

## 14 GITANJALI

(Rabindranath Tagore)<sup>38</sup>

– 1 –

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure.  
This frail vessel thou emptiest  
again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.  
This little flute of a reed thou hast  
carried over hills and dales,  
and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.  
At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart  
loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.  
Thy infinite gifts come to me only on  
these very small hands of mine.  
Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and  
still there is room to fill.

– 2 –

When thou commandest me to sing  
it seems that my heart would break with pride;  
and I look to thy face, and tears come to my eyes.  
All that is harsh and dissonant in my life  
melts into one sweet harmony  
and my adoration spreads wings like a glad  
bird on its flight across the sea.  
I know thou takest pleasure in my singing.  
I know that only as a singer I come before thy presence.  
I touch by the edge of the far spreading wing of my song  
thy feet which I could never aspire to reach.  
Drunk with the joy of singing I forget myself  
and call thee friend who art my lord.

– 3 –

I know not how thou singest, my master!  
I ever listen in silent amazement.  
The light of thy music illumines the world.  
The life breath of thy music runs from sky to sky.  
The holy stream of thy music breaks  
through all stony obstacles and rushes on.  
Ineffable: too great or intense to be  
expressed in words; unutterable.  
My heart longs to join in thy song, but  
vainly struggles for a voice.  
I would speak, but speech breaks not  
into song, and I cry out baffled.  
Ah, thou hast made my heart captive  
in the endless meshes of thy music, my master!

– 4 –

Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure,  
knowing that thy living touch is upon all my limbs.  
I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts,  
knowing that thou art that truth  
which has kindled the light of reason in my mind.  
I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart  
and keep my love in flower, knowing that thou hast thy seat  
in the inmost shrine of my heart.  
And it shall be my endeavour to reveal thee in my actions,  
knowing it is thy power that gives me strength to act.

## 15. SALAT

(Inayat Khan)

Most gracious Lord, Master, Messiah and  
Saviour of humanity,  
we greet Thee in all humility.  
Thou art the First cause and the last effect,  
the Divine Light and the Spirit of Guidance,  
Alpha and Omega.

Thy Light is in all forms, Thy love in all beings,  
in a loving mother, in a kind father,  
in an innocent child, in a helpful friend,  
and in an inspiring teacher.

Allow us to recognize Thee in all Thy holy names and forms,  
as Rama, as Krishna, as Shiva, as Buddha.  
Let us know Thee as Abraham, as Solomon,  
as Zarathustra, as Moses, as Jesus, as Mohammed  
and in many other names and formes;  
known and unknown to the world.

We adore Thy past, Thy presence deeply enlightens  
our being and we look for Thy blessing in the future.  
O Messenger, Christ, Nabi, the Rasoul of God!

Thou whose heart constantly reaches upward;  
Thou comest on earth with a message as a dove from above  
when Dharma decayeth, and speakest the word  
which is put into Thy mouth  
as the light filleth the crescent moon.

May the star of the divine light shining in Thy heart  
be reflected in the hearts of Thy devotees.

May the Message of God reach far and wide,  
illuminating and making the whole humanity  
as one single family in the parenthood of God.

Amen

## 16 THE LORD'S PRAYER

(Matthew 6: 9-13)<sup>22</sup>

Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And bring us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.

Amen

## 17 THE HIGH PRIESTLY PRAYER

(John 17<sup>22</sup>)

Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son,  
that the son may glorify thee:  
even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh,  
that to all whom thou hast given him,  
he should give eternal life.  
And this is life eternal, that they should  
know thee the only true God,  
and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.

I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished  
the work which thou hast given me to do.  
And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self  
with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.  
I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou  
gavest me out of the world: thine they were,  
and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.

Now they know that all things  
whatsoever thou hast given me  
are from thee: for the words which thou gavest me  
I have given unto them; and they received them,  
and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee,  
and they believed that thou didst send me.

I pray for them: I pray not for the world,  
but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine:  
and all things that are mine are thine,  
and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them.  
And I am no more in the world,

and these are in the world, and I come to thee.  
 Holy Father, keep them in thy name  
 which thou hast given me,  
 that they may be one, even as we are.

While I was with them, I kept them in thy  
 name which thou hast given me:  
 and I guarded them, and not one of them perished,  
 but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.  
 But now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world,  
 that they may have my joy made full in themselves.  
 I have given them thy word; and the world hated them,  
 because they are not of the world, even  
 as I am not of the world.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world,  
 but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.  
 They are not of the world even as I am not of the world.  
 Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.  
 As thou didst send me into the world, even  
 so sent I them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself,  
 that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.  
 Neither for these only do I pray,  
 but for them also that believe on me through their word;  
 that they may all be one; even as thou,  
 Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us:  
 that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

And the glory which thou hast given  
me I have given unto them;  
that they may be one, even as we are one;  
I in them, and thou in me, that they  
may be perfected into one;  
that the world may know that thou didst send me,  
and loved them, even as thou loved me.

Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me  
be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory,  
which thou hast given me:  
for thou loved me before the foundation of the world.  
O righteous Father, the world knew  
thee not, but I knew thee;  
and these knew that thou didst send me;  
and I made known unto them thy  
name, and will make it known;  
that the love wherewith thou loved me  
may be in them, and I in them.

## 18 PSALMS

(Bible)<sup>22</sup>

– 1 –

Blessed is the man that walketh not  
in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor standeth in the way of sinners,  
nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers:  
but his delight is in the law of Jehovah;  
and on his law doth he meditate day and night.  
And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,  
that bringeth forth its fruit in its season,  
whose leaf also doth not wither;  
and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.  
The wicked are not so,  
but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.  
Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment,  
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.  
For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous;  
but the way of the wicked shall perish.

– 121 –

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:  
from whence shall my help come?  
My help [cometh] from Jehovah,  
Who made heaven and earth.  
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:  
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.  
Behold, he that keepeth Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep.  
Jehovah is thy keeper:

Jehovah is thy shade upon thy right hand.  
 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.  
 Jehovah will keep thee from all evil; He will keep thy soul.  
 Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in  
 from this time forth and for evermore.

– 150 –

Praise ye Jehovah.  
 Praise God in his sanctuary:  
 Praise him in the firmament of his power.  
 Praise him for his mighty acts:  
 Praise him according to his excellent greatness.  
 Praise him with trumpet sound:  
 Praise him with psaltery and harp.  
 Praise him with timbrel and dance:  
 Praise him with stringed instruments and pipe.  
 Praise him with loud cymbals:  
 Praise him with high sounding cymbals.  
 Let everything that hath breath praise Jehovah.  
 Praise ye Jehovah.

## 19 THE PRAYER OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

(Nag Hammadi)<sup>22</sup>

O, Father, bringer of light;  
give me your light, give me your mercy.  
O, Redeemer, redeem me,  
from you I have come forth.  
You are my consciousness: bring it forth in me.  
You are my treasure-house: open for me!  
You are my fullness: take me to you!  
You are my response: give me the  
perfection that cannot be grasped!  
I invoke you, the only one who is and preexisted,  
by name which is exalted above every name,  
through Jesus Christ the Lord of Lords, the king of ages:

Give me your gifts which you do not  
regret through the son of man,  
the Spirit, the Paraclete of truth.  
Give me authority when I ask you:  
give healing for my body when I ask  
you through the Evangelist,  
and redeem my eternal light-soul and my spirit.  
And the first born of the Pleroma of  
grace – reveal him to my mind!

Grant what no angel-eye has seen  
and no archeon ear has heard  
and what has not entered into the human heart,  
which came to be angelic and came to be  
after the image of the psychic God when  
it was formed in the beginning,  
since I have faith and hope.  
And place upon me your beloved elect,  
and blessed greatness, the First-born, the First-begotten,  
and be the wonderful mystery of your house;  
for yours is the power and the wonderful  
mystery of your house;  
for yours is power and the glory  
and the blessing and the greatness for ever and ever.

Amen

## 20 HYMN FROM AN INITIATION RITUAL

(Nag Hammadi)<sup>24</sup>

I call upon you, who rules over the kingdom of power,  
whose word comes as a birth of light.  
And his words are immortal. They are  
eternal and unchanging.  
He is the one whose will begets life  
for the forms in every place.  
His nature gives form to substance.  
By him, the souls and the powers and the angels are moved.  
He created everything.  
He who is self-contained cares for everything.  
He is perfect, the invisible God to  
whom one speaks in silence -  
his image is moved when it is directed, and it governs -  
the one mighty power, who is exalted above majesty,  
who is better than the honored ones.  
[...]

Lord, grant us a wisdom from your power that reaches us,  
 so that we may describe to ourselves the vision  
 of the eighth and the ninth celestial sphere.

We have already advanced to the seventh,  
 since we are pious and walk in your law.

And your will we fulfill always.

For we have walked in your way, and we have renounced,  
 so that your vision may come.

Lord, grant us the truth in the image.

Allow us through the spirit to see  
 the form of the image that has no deficiency,  
 and receive the reflection of the pleroma  
 from us through our praise.

And acknowledge the spirit that is in us.

For from you the universe received soul.

For from you, the unbegotten one, the  
 begotten one came into being.

The birth of the self-begotten one is through you,  
 the birth of all begotten things that exist.

Receive from us these spiritual sacrifices,  
 which we send to you with all our heart  
 and our soul and all our strength.

Save that which is in us and grant us the immortal wisdom.

## 21 NUCTEMERON

(Apollonius of Tyana)

### **first hour**

In the unity, de demons sing the praise of God,  
they loose their malignity and their wrath.

### **second hour**

By the binary, the fishes of the Zodiac sing the praise  
of God, the snakes of fire intertwine around Hermes'  
staff and the thunder becomes harmonious.

### **third hour**

The snakes of Hermes' staff intertwine thrice,  
Cerberus opens his triple mouth and fire sings the  
praise of God by the three tongs of the lightning.

### **fourth hour**

At the fourth hour the soul returns for a visit to  
the sepulcher. It is the time to light the magical  
lamps at the four corners of the circles. It is  
the time for incantations and illusions.

### **fifth hour**

The voice of the great waters sing the  
God of the heavenly spheres.

### **sixth hour**

The spirit remains motionless. He sees the infernal  
monsters work against him and he is without fear.

**seventh hour**

A fire, giving life to all animated beings, is directed by the will of the pure men. The initiate raises his hand and the suffering disappears.

**eighth hour**

The stars speak to each another, the soul of the suns communicate with the breath of the flowers, the chains of harmony make all the beings of nature correspond with one another.

**ninth hour**

The number that is not to be revealed.

**tenth hour**

It is the key of the astronomical cycle and of the circular movement of human's life.

**eleventh hour**

The wings of the geniuses move with a mysterious humming, they fly from one sphere to another and carry the message of God from one world to another.

**twelfth hour**

Here are accomplished the deeds of the eternal light.

## 22 RICH PERSPECTIVES

(Zarathustra, Yasna 51)

For those who seek you, O Lord,  
rich perspectives open up in this world,  
for them the existence of the earth changes completely:  
from a place of iniquity  
it transforms itself into a domain of bliss,  
in which one can realize one's good intentions undisturbed,  
because those intentions are inspired  
through the light of truth.  
May this light illuminate our consciousness.

This domain of salvation - already visible here on earth -  
is your kingdom, oh Lord, and we are the inhabitants,  
because the truth is our only goal.  
It is because of that, that true life is already happening to us.  
Lord, purify our minds  
so that all our impulses are enlightened to pure intentions,  
without which treading the right path is impossible.  
Lord, for this we implore you.

Friends, do not neglect their words and directions,  
in whose action the spirit of the Lord is discerned,  
for inspired by that Spirit  
they speak good words and do good deeds.  
A stream of pure thinking pours through their consciousness:  
they perform that which God  
has placed in their consciousness life.

Why does evil hurt so much?  
 Why are we so sorry when we stray from the right way?  
 What causes our ceaseless search for truth?  
 Why do we allow ourselves to be so inspired  
 by the spirit of devotion?  
 Why do we try our flow of consciousness  
 to flee as cleanly as possible?  
 Why do we so passionately long for your righteousness Lord?

That's because we are citizens of two worlds:  
 of the perishable and the imperishable.  
 Because we are not completely swallowed  
 up by earthly worries.  
 Then we would live like animals,  
 that allow themselves to be set in motion only by the instant.

The human being differs from animal in this,  
 that his thoughts can take flight.  
 Man is on the border of the divine and the animal;  
 he knows that this boundary is a two-edged sword:  
 The divine element gives order and balance to his thinking,  
 the animal makes it chaos.  
 Your righteousness, O Lord, is only  
 partly contained in our being.  
 Our goodness is only a shadow of your luminous goodness,  
 just like our wickedness is a dim twilight of the night of evil.  
 So the purpose of our life is  
 going beyond the limits of this earthly world.

Lead me, O Lord, through the gate of death,  
even then give me strength and confidence,  
You who created things that are visible and invisible.

In the hour of death only two quantities are important:  
the evil that is the domain of the liar,  
and the good that belongs to the kingdom of righteousness.  
Anyone who has sought the truth in his life,  
will awaken joyfully in the realm of your light, Lord.

Awaken our hearts now, Lord,  
put it in light glow by your blazing fire,  
that you may consume what is perishable.  
Then my soul will be forced to reject the  
bad and to strive for the good.



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