

pentagram

volume 35 2013 number 5

After this I left that domain behind me and ascended to the first sphere, shining brightly, forty nine times more brightly than I shone in the firmament. When I approached the gate of the first sphere, all its gates were shaken and opened all at once. I entered the dwellings of the sphere and all the rulers and everything there fell into agitation.

This quotation from the Pistis Sophia refers to the solar field, calling this field 'the first sphere'. It is the field of the solar system of which the earth is a part. To ascend to this field, the radiance of the third light vesture must have become forty-nine times more powerful – and that is possible. The natural, the weak and insignificant, become strong and majestic because a gnostic power that surpasses all control and scientific comprehension vibrates and radiates throughout the entire universe – a gnostic power through which every child of God can take leave of all that comprises earthly understanding and domination, if only we are able to unite with it.

J. van Rijckenborgh, *The Gnostic Mysteries of the Pistis Sophia*



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the secret song of praise

The hermetic gnosis of Hermes Trismegistos offers a threefold vision of creation, the world and humanity perfectly manifested in form, a form in which the human being can become consciously integrated. In order to do that, it is necessary that the human being learns to know the soul, and takes her as his guide. The soul will then turn inward to itself and will reflect on what is true and just. In the fourteenth book of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Hermes and Tat, or the Spirit-Soul and the human being who knows how to listen, raise a song of praise to the One, to the infinite Creator.

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

^{*} Ogdoad means ‘the eighth’; it is the phase of entering into God, of being a complete Spirit.

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!’

THE SECRET SONG OF PRAISE ‘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



Hermes is. Hermes is the true heavenly man who passed through the portals of the Golden Head. For this reason he is called 'Trismegistus', 'the thrice Great One' or 'the thrice Exalted One', for heavenly man is exalted in a threefold sense: religious, scientific and artistic. Religion, science and art constitute a perfect equilateral triangle in him.

J. van Rijckenborgh



Giovanni Fattori (1825–1908), Sunset over the sea, ca. 1890

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 DemiUrge, 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 tranquility 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.'

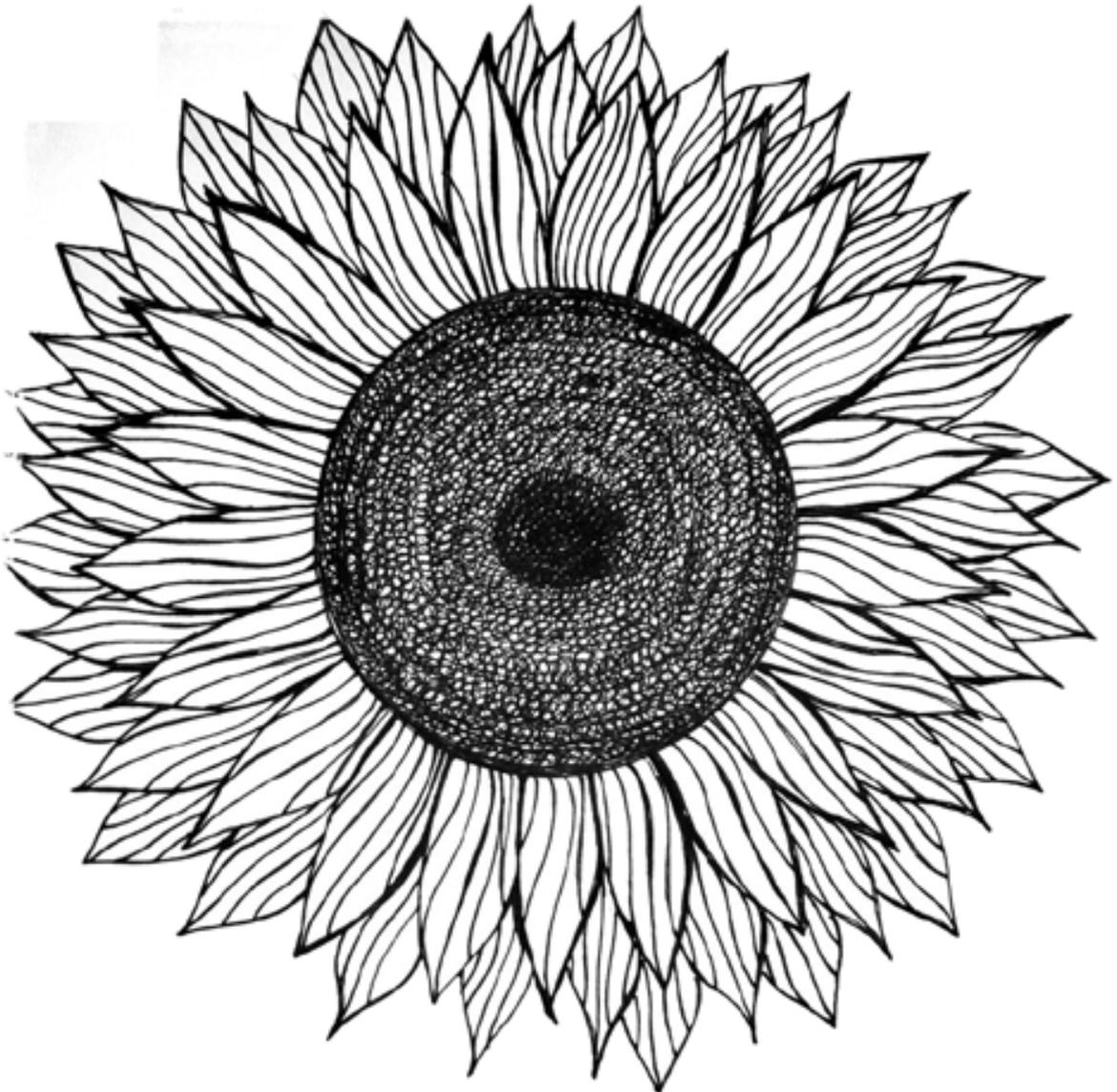
Hermes: 'Do not be rash in doing so, my son.'

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.' ♀

A fragment from the fourteenth book of the Corpus Hermeticum.

The visible sun is an expression of the invisible spiritual sun called Ra or Aten by the Egyptians; Helios or Apollo by the Greeks; and Vulcan by the Romans. It is much more than a material counterpart of the invisible sun. It passes on the powers which the invisible, spiritual sun – as the Logos of the solar system – releases into our cosmos. In this way it is like a call resounding from the east and orbiting ceaselessly from east to west in everyone's daily and spiritual life. Therefore it is said: 'Work while it is day and there is still time.' In this way a human being can testify to the glory of the one, infinite creator.



about the spirit-soul and the human being

I PEARLS FROM THE HERMETICA

'Let the concept penetrate you that nothing is impossible, behold yourself as immortal, comprehending everything, all arts, science; the art (nature) of all that lives.'

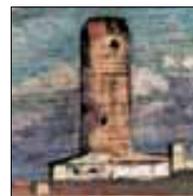
What is the Hermetica? You can see it as a spiritual current that has probably accompanied us since the beginning of our era. Its source is recorded even earlier in antiquity with references to Hermes Trismegistos, the Thrice Great Hermes, linked with the Egyptian world of the gods. However this interpretation becomes vague in the mists of history, and whether it is correct remains to be seen. Looking at the history of humanity, we see multiple schools of thought and approaches to spirituality that come and go, resurface and disappear.

At one time these approaches are more philosophically oriented, at another time more religious in expression, and at another time embedded in a cultural context. It resembles a rope woven of differently coloured strands that regularly appear on the surface and then disappear again to the interior. One of these strands is the Hermetica. Other strands are the ancient Egyptian mysteries, the Hellenistic philosophy, Judaism, Christianity, the Gnosis, Buddhism, Islam, Sufism, rationalism, science – but we can by no means be complete here. These currents are not alien to each other for there are often many points of agreement among them. For example, the Hermetica has much in common with parts of Hellenis-



In our arduous and confused life, the pearls from the Hermetica – the wisdom of Hermes Trismegistos – come as a privilege and a true gift.

© Giovanni Fattori, The Towers of Magnale, circa 1895. Civic Museum Giovanni Fattori, Livorno, Italy



tic philosophy and Gnostic lines of thought. We come across the Hermetica for the first time in the writings of the Corpus Hermeticum. We must realize that the name Hermetica was not used by the first hermetists

but was adopted later, even though relating it to Hermes occurred very early on. Also, the Hermetica is not a closed system for it does display characteristics of a chameleon. There are scholars who note great differences among

The Hermetica is a religion-based philosophy explaining the correlation among God, cosmos, the human being, and ensuing developments

the individual texts of the Hermetica. Indeed there are differences, but it may be that their essential aspect is overlooked.

The Corpus Hermeticum appeared between 100 and 300 AD. It consists of eighteen tracts in the form of teachings and conversations between master and pupil as well as individual prayers. The essays from the Corpus Hermeticum are also supported by other sources, some of them in other languages such as Greek, Coptic and Armenian. It is unclear who authored the Corpus Hermeticum. Its roots are diverse – there are Hellenistic, Egyptian, Jewish and Gnostic influences.

The Corpus Hermeticum began to be formed in the region around Alexandria, the ancient cultural centre where the well-known colossal library was housed. One could call Alexandria the New York of that time.

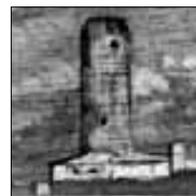
The Corpus Hermeticum remained obscure for many centuries, being known mostly through reference by its critics. That changed in the fifteenth century, however, when Marsilio Ficino translated the Greek manuscript of the treatises into Latin in the Florence of the Medici.

The Corpus Hermeticum was not a bestseller then, nor is it now, not because it is difficult to understand but due to its very esoteric nature as it deals with very intimate spiritual topics. Some people may take offence at some specifics of its content due to differences between the social environment then and now. Some of the text may also come across as pedantic, hypocritical or naive. The essence of the texts, however, is magnificent and has had a permanent influence on the story of the human spirit. It can be very stirring, gripping even, when you read the Corpus Hermeticum: ‘someone there is writing about me, someone understands me; someone almost 2000 years ago has had the same experience as I do now.’ It seems as if 2000 years has just flown by, and in reality, it has.

The Hermetica is a religion-based philosophy explaining the correlation among God, cosmos, the human being, and ensuing developments. Important themes are creation; the relationship among God, the world and humanity; the essence of truth, of good and evil; the vocation and task of humanity; and how this all comes together.

From the large number of topics covered, we choose the following as the essential hermetic concepts: the relationship among God, cosmos, humanity; the human being as a mortal god; and the stimulation, the re-awakening, and the reinstatement of the Spirit-Soul. ☸

about the spirit-soul and the human being



II GOD, COSMOS, HUMAN BEING

'Therefore, God should be worshipped as 'The Good' and 'Father', names which belong to Him alone and to no one else.'

In the Corpus Hermeticum, the answer to the ancient philosophical question 'What is the ultimate cause?' is: God, emphasizing that God is unknowable to human beings. It is presumed that human beings must go through an inner development in order to overcome their separation from God. God is also described as 'the Good' or 'the Only Good' or 'the Good and no other name is fitting for him.' Why is this? A concept such as 'the Good' shows a clear preference for the lasting, the unchangeable, the eternal. Change has a negative connotation in the Corpus, contrasting completely with its assessment in the present. Today when we speak of 'dynamic' we mean it positively. However the Corpus assumes a different point of view. It looks not for movement but for rest.

'Of this suffering of the world consists: the cycle and the disappearance in what is called: death. But a cycle is repetition, wheel-rotation; disappearing is renewal.'

This statement is from the Corpus Hermeticum and not, as might be expected, from a Buddhist document. A clear differentiation is made between the world known to us (with its antitheses, finality, change and death) and the Only Good. Certainly God is immanent in everything.

'It is even more precise to say that He does not contain all creatures, but that in truth, He is them all himself. [...] God contains everything within himself, nothing is outside him, and He exists in everything.'

It is a beautiful message that God is in everything. Many people then draw the conclusion that we must accept this fact, that we must leave behind the illusion that we are separated from him; then the separation from God will have been overcome. From that it follows that it suffices to perceive that God is in everything. Then we have only problems of perception. However the principle on which the Corpus Hermeticum is based is different: it is not only a problem of perception but also one of vibration level. Not only is a change of perception necessary in order to overcome the separation from God; an inner change is also necessary, a rebirth of the divine in us. The fact that God is in everything does not mean that everything finds itself in a divine state; rather it means that in principle a possibility exists for everyone to return to God. The Corpus Hermeticum clearly differentiates the earthly world from the divine world, as we encounter in another hermetic testimony, the Tabula Smaragdina.

'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.'

The return of that which is below to that which is above belongs to the miracles of the

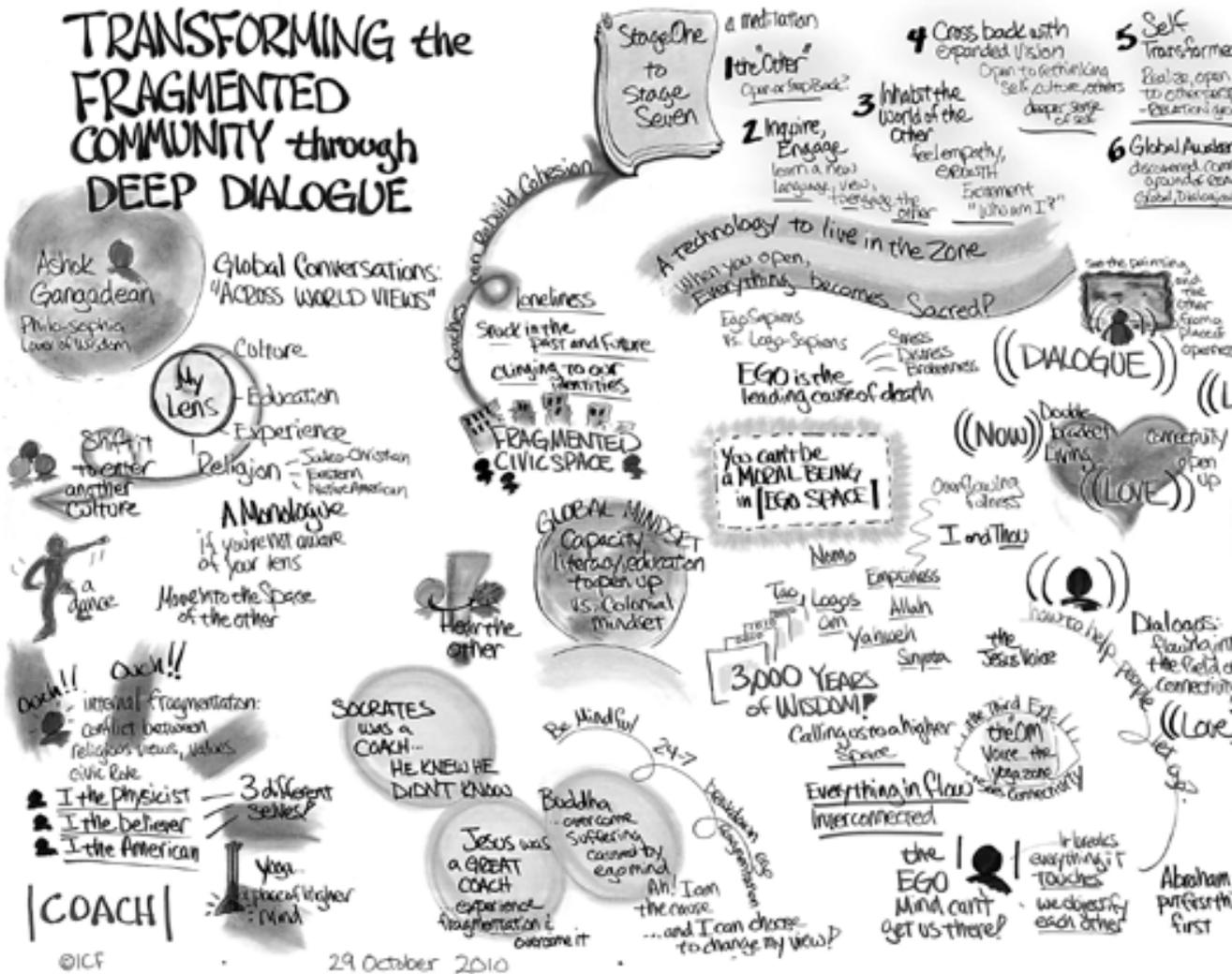
One. The miracles of the One indicate the activity of the deity, and we are allowed to contribute to these miracles. We may do this consciously and actively but also as spectators, for miracles do not happen in our consciousness. We lack understanding as we are involved in a different way of perceiving. 'That which is below, is equal to that which is above' does not mean that there are two equal parallel worlds but that they influence each other. Thereby the subtler (which is above) penetrates the coarser (which is below). That which is below adjusts to the activities of that which is above. In the words of the Corpus Hermeticum:

'Yet, my son, you must understand well that even the illusory activities here below depend on that which is above, that is, on the truth itself. And indeed, since this is the case, I define illusion as the expression of the truth.'

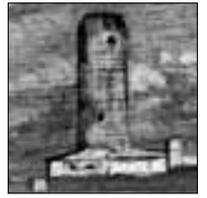
The plan of that which is above is depicted in that which is below in the sense that everything that happens below is not equal to that which is above but testifies to the activity of that which is above. It can also present an image of it. Furthermore the Corpus Hermeticum does not mean by 'above' and 'below' the hereafter and the here-below (where we live) – that which is above is not the realm of the dead.

'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.'

Therefore we do not have to be dead in order to experience this heaven. ☺



about the spirit-soul and the human being



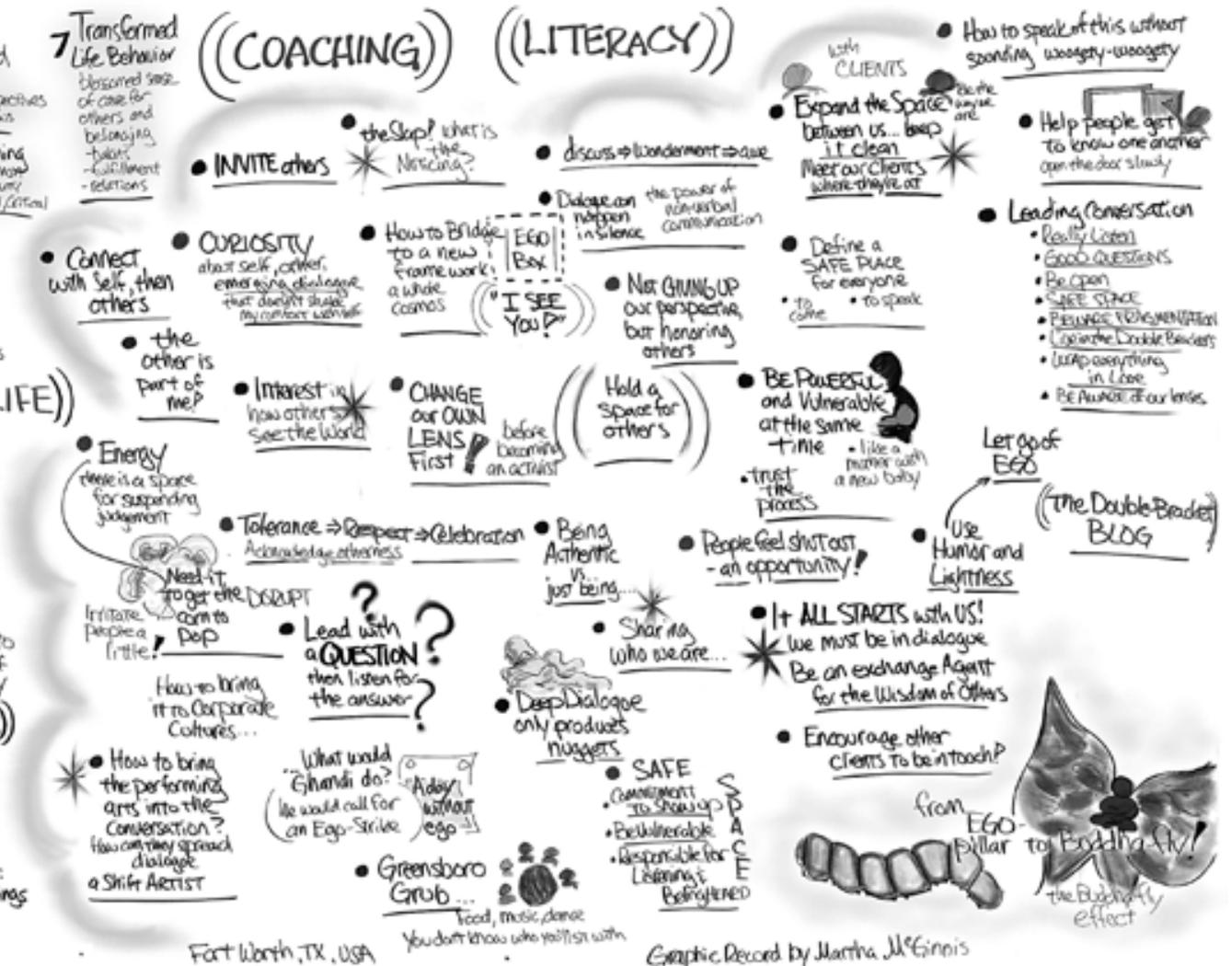
THE HUMAN BEING IS A MORTAL GOD

Following this explanation about the relationship between the above and the below, we now move on to human being.

'That is why, of all the creatures in nature, only man

is dual, namely, mortal as to the body and immortal as to the essential Man.'...for man is a divine being that should not be compared with other creatures living on earth, but rather with those who are from on high, the heavenly ones who are called gods.'

Transforming the Fragmented Community Through Deep Dialogue. Ashok Gangadean. www.http://thelearningcontinuum.biz



‘Therefore, let us dare to say: earthly man is a mortal god; the heavenly god is an immortal man.’

It is a hermetic axiom that human beings are divine beings, mortal Gods. Of course a mortal God is an oxymoron. Mortality does not affect the entire individual. The earthly being is mortal while the ‘true human being’ is immortal. The human being is therefore an assembled being, a twofold being. When we state that the ‘human being’ is a twofold being, it also means we are all twofold beings. We are all familiar with our earthly part – but who is the genuine human being? ‘Here the concepts Pymander and Soul play a role. They refer to the Spirit-Soul, the divine aspect within us. ‘Spirit-Soul’ does not therefore refer to the character of a personality, but instead to an aspect of the immortal one within us.

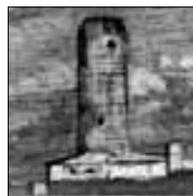
‘The composition of the garments, my son, is realised in the earthly body, since the Spirit-Soul, because of its essence, cannot possibly establish itself in an earthly body without a garment. For the earthly body cannot bear so great a divinity, nor can such a glorious, pure force endure being directly linked to a body, subjected to passions.’

The Spirit-Soul is a part of the ‘true human being’. It is not simply present within us, but it can be established within us, or, as stated in another part of the Corpus Hermeticum, it can be reborn within us. The divine being and the earthly being are, as it were, incompatible,

or stated differently, there is not enough space for both at the same time. We cannot simply exchange one for the other when we feel like it – switching between the earthly being and the divine being is not possible.

The Corpus Hermeticum points out that we as earthly beings are subject to passions. We are emotional beings. All of us are probably familiar with this, with all its pleasant as well as its unpleasant aspects. Many also experience being torn between the different voices within us. Many are familiar with an observed distance with respect to their ego and are familiar with an inner voice that points to the divine. Hearing this voice is not simply imagination. We are not only earthly beings but also sleeping gods, or in the words of the Corpus Hermeticum, mortal god. In reality we are gods, but at the moment we are mortal. The immortality of the true human being is not meant here in the sense of a soul that returns to God after death. Rather the return journey has to be started before death. According to the Corpus Hermeticum, death leads to a new incarnation and this in turn again leads to death. This fact is another element of the hermetic philosophy. Nevertheless, how can the resurrection of the immortal human being be achieved now? ☸

about the spirit-soul and the human being



IV INSPIRATION FROM THE SPIRIT-SOUL

'And 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.'

How the true human being develops within us is partly a question of knowledge, of insight into what has to happen. This knowledge does not come to us because someone teaches it to us. It comes from inside, from an inner dialogue, the dialogue with Pymander.

Now you could say, 'Show me Pymander'. That is not possible. Pymander is not immediately detectable. You cannot switch on Pymander like a lamp in the living room. Pymander reveals himself when someone is prepared to receive him, and then he will receive the 'word of the beginning'.

What is this word? It is clearly similar to the Gospel of John, with the word that was in the beginning. Of course this is no coincidence, for two reasons: A spiritual reality is hidden

behind 'the Word', the Only Good; and the Gospel of John and the Corpus were found in close proximity both in time and in culture.

'You have now seen in the Spirit-Soul the beautiful original human figure, the archetype, the original principle from before the beginning-without-end.'

In the Corpus it is not clearly put what the Spirit-Soul actually is – the soul or the consciousness that has been touched by the spirit. In the long run, however, that is not of overriding importance. We are not trying to explain the Spirit-Soul or Pymander, but rather to awaken this and, through it, be led to life. When the Spirit-Soul is really living within us, then we see further, then the inner being becomes concrete. Then it takes shape and reveals the original human figure within us. ✪

When the Spirit-Soul is really living within us, then we see further, then the inner being becomes concrete

about the spirit-soul and the human being

▼ THE AWAKENING OF THE SPIRIT-SOUL

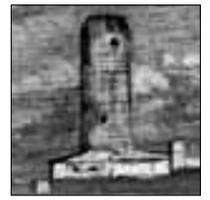
Now we might start to think, 'Activating the Spirit-Soul, this I cannot do'. Perhaps we feel ourselves unworthy. The Corpus Hermeticum takes these kinds of feelings into consideration.

'Penetrate yourself with the thought that nothing is impossible for you, consider yourself as immortal and in a position to understand everything, all art, all science, the nature of all that lives.'

When we experience ourselves as mortal human beings, then the thought that we are immortal is only a dream and a refusal to face reality. Then we ignore our immortal part, the Spirit-Soul.

'Grow up to unlimited greatness, rise above all bodies, transcend all time; become eternity. Then you will understand God.'





The Corpus Hermeticum presents more than a marvelous vision. It attacks more than our faintheartedness, which perhaps only hides our modesty. The Corpus also refers to the concrete help that we receive as we go the path.

'Penetrate yourself with the thought that nothing is impossible for you, consider yourself as immortal and in a position to understand everything, all art, all science, the nature of all that lives.'

'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.'

We are thus taken by the hand and led. The Corpus Hermeticum explains this in a manner that is not mystical, not sugary, but is without frills, and because of that is surprisingly modern. It is also striking that it is said that we are to look up with the heart and not only with the eyes. That reference is to the true human being; sensory perception is thus put into perspective.

The senses do not get a good press in the Corpus, and are perhaps treated a bit too badly by today's standards. The senses are described as misleading because they produce a distorted image and work in a distracting way. The Corpus Hermeticum is radical in its rejection of earthly human beings and their capabilities.

'First it (the soul) 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 inner conflict between time and eternity is portrayed as quite drastic.

'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.'

This statement is clear and shows no doubt. A decision is longed for. The point is that one sets priorities in life. Nowadays we don't really speak about 'hating' the body; that could put one on the wrong track. The point is to give priority to the true self that lives within us.

"Thus, O Tat, I have drawn for you, as far as is possible, an image of God; if you carefully contemplate it inwardly and steadfastly observe it with the eyes of your heart, you will, believe me, my son, find the way to heaven. Or rather, God's image itself will guide you on this way.'✠

as a smile from heaven

A teenager 'in good standing' had new friends. His father, conscious of his responsibility, sounded him out about this. A confrontation resulted immediately, with the teenager reacting, 'You don't need to check up on me!' The father-son relationship quickly deteriorated, but finally the father accepted the advice, 'Give him your trust'. And so it happened.

The magic of that trust remained the tenor of that story and, no matter how innocent and predictable, it did help me – there was 'light' in it. The theme left me with an uncomfortable question, reminiscent of the well-known Sufi saying, 'Come, even if you broke your oath one hundred times, come.' Good, but how for example do you treat that trust in the case of a notorious fibber who doesn't get it even after 'one hundred times'?

Heightened brain activity as with a short-circuit, and I am already searching for ways and means to drastically reduce that trust. Then it becomes silent in me; the light does its work: A curtailed trust is no trust at all. What then do I have to give? An empty vessel.

To be able to give trust, first you have to have it. That is not evident; even the Light itself – in Christ – experienced his closest followers as being 'of little faith'.

Trust in the magic of the Light! Trust is light. It relates not only to incidental relationships or confrontations. This is much broader, limitless, free. 'Come, even if you broke your oath one hundred times, come.' It already contains the acceptance of every reaction, as well as the consequences thereof, whatever direction is taken. When I trust in the light and also in you, it means that I give you that trust – not my suspicion, not my fear. Whoever has anchored his trust in the Light is able to spread light and offer solace.

No longer are superficial platitudes such as

'Tomorrow will be a better day' and 'chin up' extended. Now solace is offered as a light-bath wherein a dislodged soul may be able to recognize its origin and restore both belief in it and also a connection with it. A breathing space opens in an impersonal way. No more I and no more the other person. A blocked stream begins to flow again, a slammed door opens a crack and spreads a light wherein there is no darkness – a glimpse of the Holy Earth, the new Jerusalem. It is only for a moment, but it is enough to perceive the first step on the pathway of return – that step, that firm ground, also called 'faith'.

The terminology 'trust-solace-faith' derives its word-image from the earthly nature, but in essence belongs completely to the light-world. This can justify a certain reticence in daily life. Perhaps this sounds a bit blunt, but in this world the counterpart of 'trust' should sooner be named 'deception'; it is an indisputable reality. This nature, our self-created world, is in itself already a fiction, an illusion; deceit is an integral part of this nature and has been raised to an art form. Animals, plants, even the rocks serve themselves lavishly and cunningly through deception in order to maintain themselves. The innumerable illustrations of this speak for themselves: The lowly little spider opens herself into a monster, the heavenly flower turns out to be a trap for the unsuspecting visitor. The Human activity compromises laboriously between fair trade and legal fraud, spiced with a wink of the eye and a touch of humor.



'searching for wisdom you'll find meaning.' © unknown photographer

In the human being, as a link between heaven and earth, two worlds run seamlessly into each other. Trust finds its source in the touch of the Principle, the unity wherein we can see in everything the light, God, and – halthrough perhaps still unconsciously – the right connection. In this way insight and self-knowledge do determine our attitude, largely dependent of

the level, the field where we are able to meet each other at that moment; a subtle feeling of possibilities and borders, without however lapsing into a judgment and especially: In the knowledge that despite a hundredfold failing, the experience of trust can perform miracles, both for the giver as well for the receiver. As a smile from heaven. ✨

Pythagoras and his school

I A THOUGHT FROM 2600 YEARS AGO

A human being of this time may feel lost, like a fleeting, lonely speck of dust in time and space. He sojourns in a seemingly random town and has seemingly random family and social relationships. He sees and hears his fellow human beings and has feelings of sympathy or antipathy for them. He is afraid of the future and seeks love and certainty. Is he not like a small flame in the dark universe that lights up briefly and is extinguished again? What is the purpose of this life?

However, if he were to encounter the wise Pythagoras, for instance in a book, the latter would tell him: 'You may exist with your body and your personal consciousness in a certain place in the infinite time-spatial world, but as a body with an I, you are the transient incarnation of an eternal being, a thought of God that, like the deity itself, passes consciously through all time and space and is able to develop to ever-greater glory.

We perceive the eternal divine 'harmonies of the spheres', which permeate and surround the whole time-spatial world with love, freedom and peace. We do not hear them, because our body and our I do not possess an organ of perception for it. Since the beginning of time, our immortal being has time and again created a new, mortal instrument of expression, a body with an I. Throughout the depths of space and time, these bodies form a chain of incarnations. Until now, no link in this chain has developed an organ of perception for the 'harmonies of the spheres'.

However, we might be able to do so. We have not only the task but also the possibility to develop such an organ. On a spiritual path of development, our immortal being might become conscious of itself, its divine descent, eternity and the divine world. Then the form of the body and our personal consciousness would totally change. And with new, spiritual eyes, we would see that our current life, this seemingly accidental point in the time-spatial world, is a necessary result of countless incarnations. We would understand the meaning of our current incarnation. Then the coincidence and arbitrariness would vanish, which now seem to be inherent in our life. We would understand how small and limited our current interests, desires and fears are and how large and unlimited the coherence is, in which our body and our I find themselves. ♻



Pythagoras,
drawn after a
relief in Chartres
cathedral,
12th century



AN EXPLORATION IN SEVEN PARTS

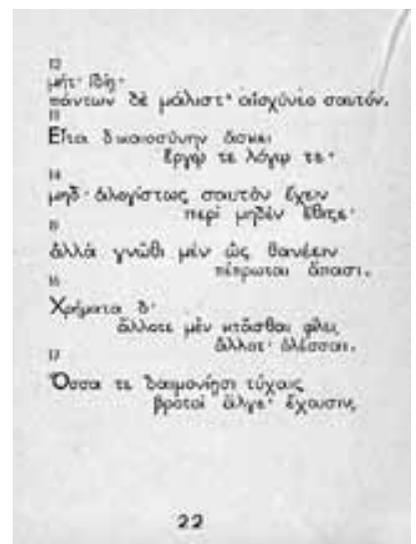
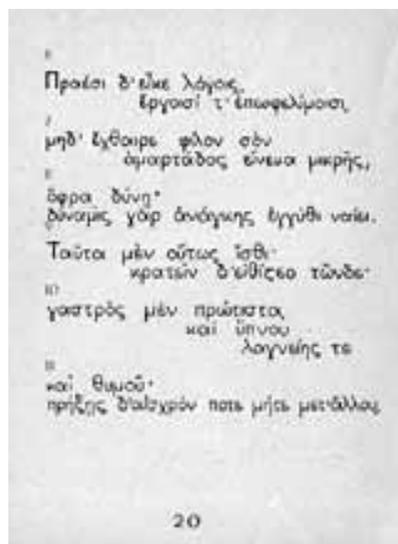
II THE MYTH OF DIONYSUS

Pythagoras (569–474 v. Chr.) said about himself that he knew his previous incarnations and that he had been a certain Euphorbus in his last incarnation. He also heard the ‘harmony of the spheres’, because he had developed organs of spiritual perception in the mystery places of ancient Egypt, Persia, Phoenicia and Greece. During the course of decades, he had become what was called a liberated one or ‘initiate’ of the mysteries of life. This is why he was also qualified to help other seekers for truth in acquiring such qualities. He founded a spiritual or mystery school for all people who were looking forward to becoming acquainted with the all-encompassing meaning of their existence.

Around the year 530, he found a number of people in a town in what is current Southern

Italy, Crotona, who accepted him as their teacher. All customs and rules of Pythagoras’ mystery school were based on his insight that a divine order and energy pervades the universe, which want to become conscious in the human being. An author from antiquity wrote: ‘Everything that they (the Pythagoreans) discover about the comings and goings, can be traced back to what is divine [...], because people do something ridiculous, if they expect (their eternal) salvation from others than the gods.’

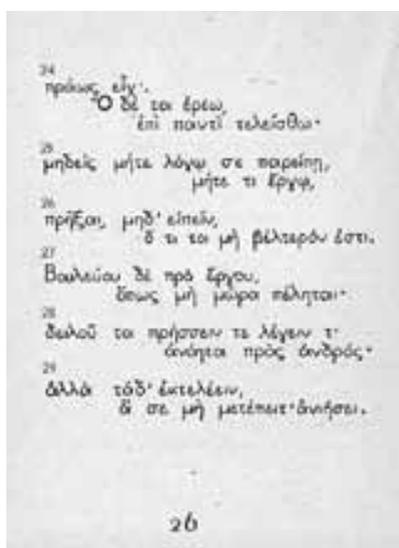
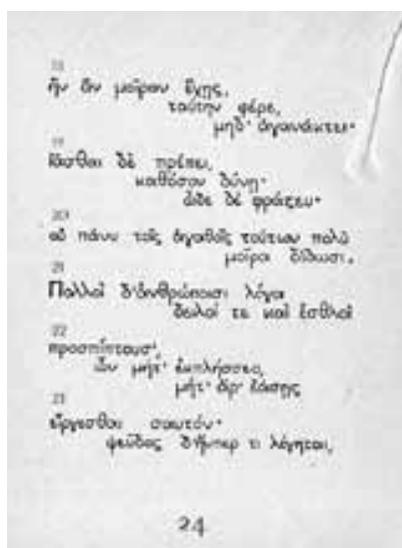
The aim of consciously linking themselves with the divine in the universe pervaded and determined the life of his followers and gave them the power to walk the path. They spent their days by regularly offering food, drink and incense, which always assured the master and the pupils again of their relationship with the gods.



There must have existed a special cult around Dionysus, the rituals of which have unfortunately been lost to us. This is not surprising in light of the absolute secrecy that was maintained in the ancient mystery schools. However, what we do know is that the centre of gravity of this cult was the myth of Dionysus. Dionysus symbolises spiritual exaltation and the immortal, inner deity. He was torn to pieces by the titans, the symbols of the attracting and driving forces of the undivine world, but a female deity, symbol of the regenerating power of the soul, joined the pieces and turned them into a whole again. A son, Dionysus Zagreus, who was begotten by Dionysus with this female deity, defeated the titans. Thus, the seemingly dead Dionysus could be revived. The god, who was torn apart by the attracting forces of the

transient world, became alive again and resumed his place in the divine world. He now had, as a means of expression, a son at his disposal who was able to work in the world and was immortal.

Perhaps, this myth was enacted as a mystery play by Pythagoras' followers on the occasion of special feasts. Perhaps, there were statues in the buildings of the school, representing the figures from the myth. Anyway, the pupils were time and again reminded of their task by the accompanying rituals, in this way receiving the energy needed for it. They had to revive the seemingly dead god Dionysus in their own being by new soul power and undo the links with the earthly world, the titans, and revive them as the new, immortal being, Dionysus Zagreus. ☉



Pythagoras and his school



III THE TETRACTYS

How did they serve this great goal in their daily lives? We imagine that a young man was accepted as a pupil by Pythagoras. Then a period of five years of listening and learning began for him. He learned not to judge rashly about what he heard and not to criticise either, but above all to be silent. He learned to understand that he actually did not know anything essential. He let Pythagoras' teachings affect him and completely opened his heart to them, so that they became active in his inner being.

This attitude of being prepared to listen along with taciturnity was symbolically expressed in Pythagoras' school in that the novices sat before a curtain, behind which, invisible to them, Pythagoras explained his teachings. This expressed that a direct experience between a pupil and the divine world was still out of the question, but that first a veil should be pushed aside.

Or in other words, the sensory organs and the mind are not the instruments with which the layout and the energy of the divine world could be observed. To this end, other, spiritual organs were needed that still had to be developed.

Ever since then, a distinction has been made between exotericists and esotericists. The exotericists are living outside, still standing before the mysteries and only hear speak about them. The esotericists already possess some power of spiritual perception, and are to be found in the mysteries. They experience them.

In this stage of silence of his audience, Pythagoras' teachings concerned theoretical and

practical topics. The theory consisted of the description of the structure of the original nature, the divine nature and that of man. Pythagoras explained: 'The origin of existence is God.' He consists of three aspects:

1. He is an all-pervading, creative will, in other words: the 'father', the Spirit.
2. God is also an all-fulfilling primordial substance, like energy-matter, as we would currently describe it, which receives the will of the father within himself: the mother, the world soul.
3. Subsequently, the result of the cooperation between both aspects, which are reflected in each other, generates Light: the son, the consciousness.
4. From these three aspects, emanations, creatures and thoughts from the divine thinking arise and microcosms from the macrocosm. The eternal aspect of the human being, we ourselves as eternal beings, also belong to them.

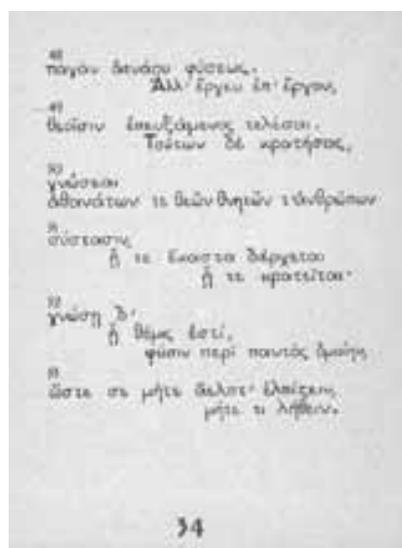
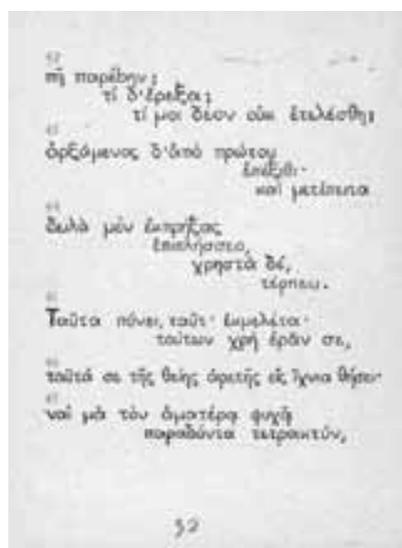
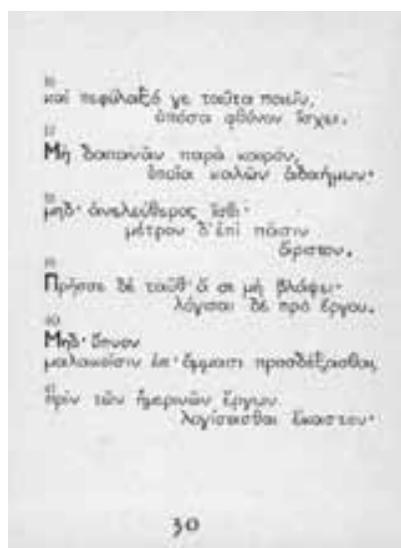
In this way, a quadruple underlies life, like a macrocosm, in its development pervaded and maintained by God. It is not just a global mechanism, controlled by causality or by chance that has originated accidentally from a kind of big bang.

It is quite characteristic of Pythagoras that he saw numeric relationships everywhere in the divine, eternal universe as well as in the time-spatial universe. One of his statements was: 'Numbers encompass all things.' To him, numbers were not limited to something quantitative as this is the case with us, but each number

constituted, above all, a quality. The very first origin was symbolised by the one, God himself, the all-encompassing unity. From the beginning, it possessed polarity and was divided into two poles: father, mother – the two. It is quite remarkable that the two does not originate by adding two ones, but by division of the one, from which a new quality arises: polarity, the two. The dynamism between the

two poles generates the three, the son who is a one, divided in a harmonious way. And from these three, one creation is generated again: the microcosm, the four.

1 plus 2 plus 3 plus 4 makes 10. This is Pythagoras' famous tetractys, the quadruple that in its turn is a one and a zero, the higher octave of the one, the ten. ✪



Pythagoras and his school



IV THE RESTORATION OF THE TRIAD

A pupil was supposed to reflect long and deeply about this scheme and he gradually discovered that it not only referred to the macrocosm, but also to himself – nowadays we would say: as microcosm – because the father is also active within him, for the time being still as an unconscious, divine, creative will, as Dionysus. We might say: as a spirit-spark. In him, the mother, a female goddess, also receives the Spirit as provisional, as yet completely undifferentiated, divine, primordial substance, as energy-matter, as soul. In him, too, the son, Dionysus Zagreus, may result from the cooperation between father and mother, as illumination, as the new light of the consciousness. And in him, too, the possibility can be found to generate immortal work from all three aspects: the fourth.

However, simultaneously, the student discovers that he no longer represents this perfect quadruple at all in his current figure. The spirit-spark, the father in us, is hardly active, the mother, our original soul, is buried under passions and entanglements in transient appearances. This is why there is no room to receive the Spirit. And what has now become of our consciousness, the son?

Our conscious personality may be an immortal expression of the divine will and the pure, divine soul, a true self, an ‘image of God’, as the Bible says. However, instead a mortal I-personality has developed, which lives within a very limited horizon and that often feels lonely, lost in a silent time-spatiality. What

it generates, the fourth, are highly imperfect creations: wars, illnesses, chaotic social conditions and mental deformations. And whatever good and beautiful may arise is often fleeting and will certainly perish, as we know. By whatever cause, we are chained to the world of the titans, the symbols of many motives, desires, interests and illusions, and this is why the deity, the One, is fragmented in us.

It is this very unfortunate situation to which a pupil of Pythagoras would like to put an end when he begins his path. What can he do? He takes care that room is created for the soul, that the inner ‘mother’ becomes pure again in order to be able to receive the Spirit, the inner ‘father’, who has become whole again, consciously. Then an immortal personality, his true self, will arise from this two-unity, which will create his works together with the father-mother. ✪

Pythagoras and his school

▼ THE GOLDEN VERSES

The first principles of this path, the practical aspect of Pythagoras' teachings, were explained to the followers during the first five years they spent before the curtain. The so-called 'Golden Verses' of Pythagoras, which have been handed down to us in their totality, describe the complete spiritual path as a kind of matrix, from the unconscious, divine state and the mortal personality to the resurrection of the completely conscious microcosm with an immortal personality. The first half of the Golden Verses deals with the construction of a new, pure soul by an adapted behaviour that the pupil should adopt and according to which he should live.

Our original, immortal personality possessed three large centres of consciousness: one in the body, in which the energies of the divine love were active, one in the heart, in which the unity with God was experienced and one in the head, in which the divine wisdom ruled in freedom. Our current, mortal personality also has these three centres at its disposal, though in a degenerated state. Egoistic motives, passions and desires dwell in the body. In addition to impulses of goodness and sincere striving, sentimental feelings, jealousy, lust for power and fear also dwell in the heart, and in the head; images and convictions of a moral nature are only inadequately able to temper the negative effects of the other two centres. On the spiritual path, this degeneration of the individual centres and their mutual relationships should subsequently be neutralised. This is explained

in the first half of the Golden Verses. There it is said, for instance: 'Take this well to heart: you must gain control of your habits; first over stomach, then sleep, and then luxury, and anger.' This implies: learning 'moderation', not only with respect to food for the stomach, but in all respects of consumption, nowadays, for instance, with regard to the media. He learns to overcome his lethargy and complacency, the 'sleep'. He curbs any form of 'luxury'. And he learns to set limits on his 'anger', that is, his aggressiveness and destructive criticism. In this way, he orders to a certain extent the physical consciousness, centred in the lower chakras, and he attunes them to the needs of a new ensoulment.

Similarly, he deals with the consciousness in the heart. He learns to replace fear by courage, dependence on other people's opinion by independence, and complacency concerning ethical demands is replaced by a proper sense of honour and soberness. 'What brings you shame, do not unto others, nor by yourself. The highest of duties is honour of self,' the Golden Verses state. The concept of 'courage' summarises virtually all these properties.

In the head, independent thinking, wisdom that knows what benefits our health and the family and social situation, originate. 'Let no one with speech or with deeds ever deceive you to do or to say what is not the best.'

All three centres should cooperate harmoniously: thinking, willing and vital energy. This is 'justice', the fourth great virtue that Pythagoras



ras' pupils and any spiritual student learn to practise. He who is able to develop these properties within himself, thus coming to himself, will as Dionysus Zagreus, the son of Dionysus, be liberated from the countless entanglements, expectations, fears and illusions of the transient world, from the 'titans' which do not let him come to himself and fragment his inner unity. Briefly, he builds on a new, pure, fourfold soul, which corresponds with the tetractys again: the father (the thinking with the head), the mother (the feeling in the heart), the son (conscious vital energy) and as fourth, the acting that is attuned to it.

In Pythagoras' school, this development was supported by symbolic sayings, assignments resembling the koans, images from everyday life that time and again reminded him of his tasks. 'First put on the right shoe.' Immediately after rising, think 'with your right shoe' that you are on your way to an important goal. Make 'your left shoe', your everyday actions, subservient to this goal. There are many examples of this.

On the basis of four great virtues: moderation, courage, wisdom and justice, Pythagoras made his students work on a new personality, attuned to the order of the divine macrocosm. The Pythagoreans were in this context not concerned with becoming virtuous heroes or saints.

Everything served as a means to an end that could be achieved through the forces of the Spirit, energies that flowed freely in the field of learning of Pythagoras' school. Illumination and elevation of the consciousness, determined

the preparation and the means to this end. Making the students gain control over outward and inner circumstances in order to realise pleasure, power or ideals in this way did not matter. The means to this end should make people 'decrease' in their striving for prestige, power and happiness, so that a new, pure en-soulment was able to 'increase'.

In this way, the pupil entered the second major stage of his path: the definitive understanding of the urge, the earthly hunger for life, power and a happiness that is never lasting – and the farewell to them – and the link with the mysteries. The so-called 'oath of Pythagoras' that is to be found exactly halfway between the first and the second half of the Golden Verses, expresses this great change. 'No, I swear it by him who into our souls has transmitted the Sacred Quaternary, the spring of eternal Nature.' The pupil announced that he irrevocably says 'no' to his dependence on urges, ignorance and anger, and irrevocably says 'yes' to the divine world, into which he now, after a long preparation, hesitantly enters. ☸

the golden verses

Part 1

1. *First honour the immortal Gods, as the law demands;*
2. *Then reverence thy oath, and then the illustrious heroes;*
3. *Then venerate the divinities under the earth, due rites performing,*
4. *Then honour your parents, and all of your kindred;*
5. *Among others, make the most virtuous thy friend;*
6. *Love to make use of his soft speeches, and learn from his deeds that are useful;*
7. *But alienate not the beloved comrade for trifling offences,*
8. *Bear all you can, what you can, for power is bound to necessity.*
9. *Take this well to heart: you must gain control of your habits;*
10. *First over stomach, then sleep, and then luxury, and anger.*
11. *What brings you shame, do not unto others, nor by yourself.*
12. *The highest of duties is honour of self.*
13. *Let Justice be practiced in words as in deeds;*
14. *Then make the habit, never inconsiderately to act;*
15. *Neither forget that death is appointed to all;*
16. *That possessions here gladly gathered, here must be left;*
17. *Whatever sorrow the fate of the Gods may here send us,*
18. *Bear, whatever may strike you, with patience unmurmuring.*
19. *o relieve it, so far as you can, is permitted,*
20. *But reflect that not much misfortune has Fate given to the good.*
21. *The speech of the people is various, now good, and now evil;*
22. *So let them not frighten you, nor keep you from your purpose.*
23. *If false calumnies come to your ear, support it in patience;*
24. *Yet that which I now am declaring, fulfil it faith fully*
25. *Let no one with speech or with deeds ever deceive you*
26. *To do or to say what is not the best.*
27. *Think, before you act, that nothing stupid results;*
28. *To act inconsiderately is part of a fool;*
29. *Yet whatever later will not bring you repentance, that you should carry through.*
30. *Do nothing beyond what you know,*
31. *Yet learn what you may need; thus shall your life grow happy.*
32. *Do not neglect the health of the body;*
33. *Keep measure in eating and drinking, and every exercise of the body;*
34. *By measure, I mean what later will not induce pain;*
35. *Follow clean habits of life, but not the luxurious;*
36. *Avoid all things which will arouse envy.*
37. *At the wrong time, never be prodigal, as if you did not know what was proper;*
38. *Nor show yourself stingy, for a due measure is ever the best*
39. *Do only those things which will not harm thee, and deliberate before you act.*
40. *Never let slumber approach thy wearied eye-lids,*



41. Ere thrice you reviewed what this day you did;
42. Wherein have I sinned? What did I? What duty is neglected?
43. All, from the first to the last, review;
44. And if you have erred, grieve in your spirit, rejoicing for all that was good.
45. With zeal and with industry, this, then repeat; and learn to repeat it with joy.
46. Thus wilt thou tread on the paths of heavenly virtue.

The oath of Pythagoras *

- 47 Surely, I swear it by him who into our souls has transmitted the Sacred Quaternary [tetractys]
48a the spring of eternal Nature

Part 2

- 48b Now proceed to the deed.
49. Never start on your task until you have implored the blessing of the Gods.
50. If this you hold fast, soon will you recognize of Gods and mortal men
51. The true nature of existence, how everything passes and returns.
52. Then will you see what is true, how Nature in all is most equal,
53. So that you hope not for what has no hope, nor that anything should escape you.
54. Men shall you find whose sorrows themselves have created,
55. Wretches who see not the Good, that is too near, nothing they hear;
56. Few know how to help themselves in misfortune.

57. That is the Fate that blinds humanity; in circles,
58. Hither and yon they run in endless sorrows;
59. For they are followed by a grim companion, disunion within themselves;
60. Unnoticed; never rouse him, and fly from before him!
61. Father Zeus, O free them all from sufferings so great,
62. Or show unto each the Genius, who is their guide!
63. Yet, do not fear, for the mortals are divine by race,
64. To whom holy Nature everything will reveal and demonstrate;
65. Whereof if you have received, so keep what I teach you;
66. Healing your soul, you shall remain insured from manifold evil.
67. Avoid foods forbidden, reflect that this contributes to the cleanliness
68. And redemption of your soul. Consider all things well:
69. Let reason, the gift divine, be thy highest guide;
70. Then should you be separated from the body, and soar in the ether,
71. You will be imperishable, a divinity, a mortal no more.

Source: <http://www.theosophyonline.com/1er.php?id=146#.UgyqZVLhfRo>

* The oath has been numbered as the verses 47 and 48a

Pythagoras and his school

VI ABOUT THE FOUR VALUE-FREE SCIENCES

In order to promote the further development of the soul, value-free science was very important in Pythagoras' inner school; this is forming and acquiring selfless insight into the coherences of life. This was particularly important to the Pythagoreans. They studied four value-free, qualitative sciences: the first was aritmetica, (arithmetic), next music, then geometry and finally astrology.

Everything is determined by numbers. From unity, God, the duality results by division into two poles, the father-mother. From their interaction, the triple originates, father-mother-son and from it, then a creative process develops, the quadruple.

The second science that was practised by the Pythagoreans was music. It was a true science. Pythagoras had discovered, or had brought along from Egypt, that the intervals in a scale, the third, quart, quint, octave etc. are based on whole numbers. For instance, the quint is related to the basic tone as 3 : 2, also a miracle of numbers. Therefore, there must be the same proportion, based on whole numbers, in us, in our hearing or in the mutual relationship between certain physical elements, which vibrate along like air vibrations and affect them with proportions, based on whole numbers. This is why we experience such intervals as pleasant. There is an inner harmony between these sounds, the external vibration of the air and our feelings. Analogously, we can imagine how it is also possible to perceive the vibrations of the orbits of the planets as the 'music of the spheres'.

Pythagoras also used music in the field of magic. He knew exactly which melodies and instruments had a calming effect on the mind and which ones caused agitation. He used this for therapeutic purposes. However, exciting music was banned from his school. There were no wind instruments that agitated the mind, nor drums that stimulated the centre in the lower part of the body and disturbed the harmony and the justice between the soul aspects, wisdom, courage and moderation.

The third science that promoted the development of the soul of the Pythagoreans was geometry. A follower/pupil of Pythagoras placed, for instance, the coherence of the two catheti of a right-angled triangle and its hypotenuse before his consciousness. He experienced the miracle that for any right-angled triangle, the sum of squares of the catheti is equal to the square of the hypotenuse: $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$.

He who delves into this context with selfless thinking, is also able to transmit this to other things in life or to find it there. Just think of the generation conflict. The Pythagoreans compared the ideas of a young person with those of an adult, which were just as contrary as one cathetus is perpendicular to the other. Then they tried to guide both to a new kind of context, in accordance with the hypotenuse in the triangle. Therefore, their thinking was by the selfless involvement with geometry enabled to distinguish equal from unequal in any situation and to examine the possibilities of a compromise. How much unhappiness might people



be spared, if men and women would, before getting married, acquire clarity concerning the equality and inequality of their characters and living conditions without being disturbed by sexual attraction or romantic illusions.

Fourth and finally, there is astronomy, or rather astrology, logic and the understanding of the stars, again qualitative relationships. The macrocosmic position of the planets at the birth of a human being analogously shows the microcosmic relationships of his character traits. A horoscope describes this schematically. Each planet is not only a body, but also a sphere, a radiation field that fills the whole solar system. All radiation fields of the planets and the sun penetrate each other, and therefore also the earth and every entity on it. At the moment of birth, this macrocosmic constellation leaves its mark on the microcosmic one, the play of the forces of character and fate in the newborn one.

If a spiritually developed person sees these things, he can help others, who have advanced in their new thinking, to reach this very observation. He does not need a horoscope to do so. How did astrology originate then? It did so because people saw the moving, small dots in the sky which they, by calculations, related to the fate of the newborn. Isn't this most unlikely? No, they observed the radiation fields of the planets and the character and fate of a newborn that was influenced by these radiation fields and in this way, they saw the coherence between above and below. ☼

Pythagoras and his school

VII BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Now the pupil came face to face with the Pythagoras who had been behind the curtain, and was standing with him in the mysteries that he gradually learned to recognise. His consciousness and his thinking had become free from (self-)interests. Objective perception and new ensoulment had developed. They constituted the basis on which the further development of the new, spiritual organs of perception would follow.

How can we affect them favourably? In the first place, we affect them by consolidating the new state of the soul. To this end, Pythagoras' school had a splendid means. In the Golden Verses, near the transition from the first to the second part, we read: 'Never let slumber approach your wearied eyelids, ere thrice you reviewed what this day you did: wherein have I sinned? What did I do? What duty is neglected? All, from the first to the last, review. And if you have erred, grieve in your spirit, rejoicing for all that was good.'

By self-reflection, repeated every evening, the new disposition of the soul is enormously reinforced.

The Pythagoreans knew that the mortal human being was not a plaything at the mercy of fate or karma, but that he was able to learn to deal with it, and that he was not impeded on his way to liberation. He may create new karma on his path of life or reduce it. All deeds of a mortal being are registered in the immortal being, the microcosm. The sum of the entries from the lives of all previous incarnations de-

termines the karma of the current one. What we sow in a life, creates new causes and if it is not processed or solved during this life, it goes along and constitutes the point of departure of the next incarnation. The latter will harvest what all previous incarnations have sown. This may be a heavy burden. Individual as well as collective karma may sometimes become so heavy that a person is hardly able to bear it. We can read in the Golden Verses: 'That is the Fate that blinds humanity; in circles, hither and yon they run in endless sorrows.'

A person may also gain insight into what time and again causes new karma. He may learn to understand that this is the discordant consciousness, the struggle for life, the vital drive to maintain himself that determines his life and brings all the heavy aspects of life into the world. Pythagoras even speaks of a 'demon'. 'For they are followed by a grim companion, disunion within themselves. Unnoticed, never rouse him, and fly from before him.' This is what we can read in the Golden Verses.

If a student can recognise this demon with the help of divine energy and a teacher like Pythagoras, he is able to liberate himself from it, from the conflict, from his hunger for life and his ignorance. On the basis of the helping forces, he will accept his fate. We read in the Golden Verses: 'Bear, whatever may strike

The pictures of the Greek text of the Golden Verses have been taken from *Pythagore, Les Vers d'Or*, calligraphed by Marcel Boin, Bourges (France). 1948

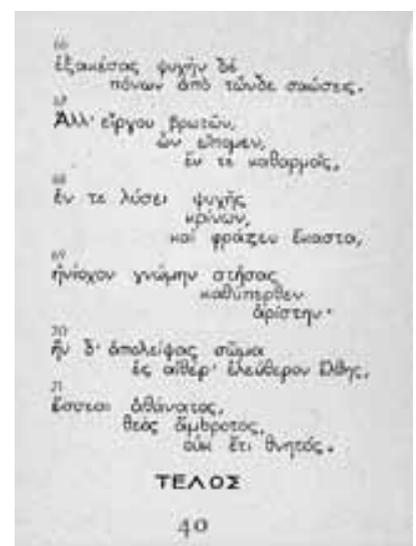
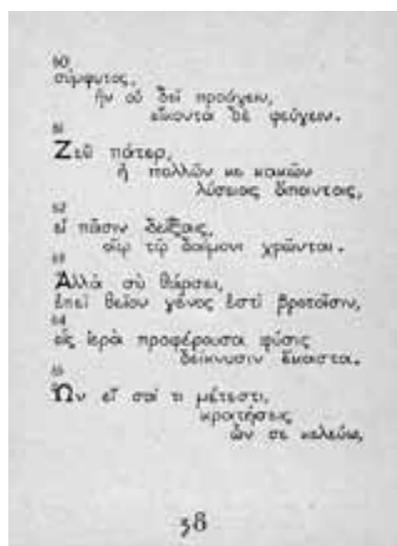
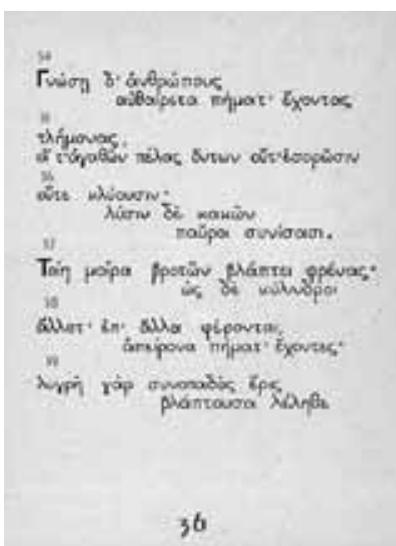


you, with patience unmurmuring.' And further: 'To relieve it, so far as you can, is permitted.' A pupil, walking the path of liberation, is not necessarily a fatalist. On the basis of the spiritual energy in his microcosm, he will gradually become completely liberated. 'Father Zeus, O free them all from sufferings so great, or show unto each the Demon, who is their guide!' If a follower of Pythagoras were to let the laws and energies of the divine world within and outside influence him, he would be able to loosen the ties and receive the Spirit, illumination. And if he then perseveres in acting on the basis of the divine laws and forces, this state would become part of him. This is why it is said at the end of the Golden Verses: 'Let reason, the gift divine be your highest guide. Then should you be separated from the body,

and soar in the ether, you will be imperishable, a divinity, a mortal no more.'

Where, then, is the loneliness, the feeling of being a meaningless speck of dust in the universe? Such a human being is filled by a new, great order and possesses a consciousness of omnipresence, unity with God and all things and creatures, and freedom within the divine laws. He cooperates in the creative love of God for all creatures on earth. The immortal, inner Dionysus, the Spirit, which was seemingly killed and torn up, has been resurrected with the help of a new, purified soul and has a new, immortal personality at his disposal.

From all of this, it will be clear that it is not the limited, self-maintaining and persistent I that reaches the freedom in the ether. On the contrary, it is the result of a separation from



Amongst the many correspondences, not only in their teachings, but also in the lives of Pythagoras and Jesus, this scene of a catch occupies a special place. Pythagoras encountered the fishermen on the beach and told them that he would predict the size of their catch, down to the correct number of fishes caught, when they set sail again. His condition was that they would release the fishes again, if the prediction proved to be correct. During counting, all fish – that were above water – stayed alive. Pythagoras bought the fish and they were thrown back into the sea. The fishermen spread this story and ever since, Pythagoras was worshipped as a demigod.

Salvator Rosa, 1662. Staatliches Museum (State Museum), Berlin





God that unceasingly maintains the ‘conflict’, the separation, by its self-maintenance. The physical consciousness, coarse or subtle, persistent or with foresight, is an impediment for the true self, but on the lengthy path in Pythagoras’ school, it has learned to be silent and to serve the true self – the point of departure of all spiritual schools, both in the past as well as in the present.

Students and pupils of these schools will continue to work in daily life on the development of their insight. And their inner spirit-spark detaches itself from the expectations, fears and illusions, realising an ever more luminous link with the divine world.

Incantations, prayers or channelling are of little use in this context. Such attempts result at best in contact with the world on yonder side, the world of the dead, which was called the ‘underworld’ by Pythagoras. A follower of Pythagoras took this world into account and respected it: ‘Then venerate the divinities under the earth, due rites performing.’ Further, he did not concern himself with it.

Helpers from the divine world voluntarily incarnate to help people to achieve independence and spiritual freedom. They take all difficulties, related to life in the gross-material world, upon their shoulders to support their pupils in overcoming them.

This was the case with Pythagoras. After twenty years of intensive activity, both he and his school fell into disgrace and were persecuted. He had to leave the country and his follow-

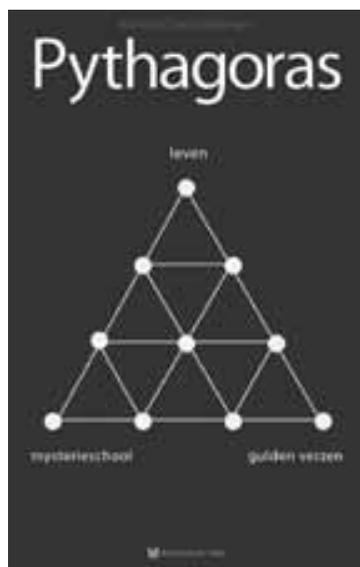
ers were dispersed. This was mainly caused by political reasons. Initially, Pythagoras had good relations with the ruling aristocracy in Crotona. Just as the best people (aristos = the best) developed inwardly in his school, this should also be demonstrated in the external, political structure: through an aristocratic signature. He even hoped to be able to influence the political relationships favourably by the energy emanating from his school.

However, in the whole of Greece, the aristocratic set-up was gradually replaced by a

democratic set-up, which in those days meant in Magna Graeca (Sicily): having points of departure, resting on unlimited freedom and unbridled egoism. This was bound to evoke resistance against the Pythagorean school in which, above all, self-control and friendship ruled. It is always a precarious situation, when a spiritual school becomes dependent on external, political or economic conditions.

There is no better compass to prepare for the spiritual path than the aphorism that Pythagoras time and again propagated to his followers: 'Do not fragment the inner God.' Man is an image of God, a potential god, not as I am, but as a spiritual being, as a microcosm. Do not fragment this spiritual principle by losing yourself in the many aspects of the earthly world, and by no longer being able to come to yourself.

And if you are underway, no longer fragment the inner god, but join him again. Withdraw your soul from identification with the many earthly, good or evil matters and in this way acquire unity, and place the inner, divine energy at your disposal. Do not fragment the inner god! ✪



Pythagoras
life – mystery school – golden verses
Konrad Dietzfelbinger

The article is based on a lecture
by the author.

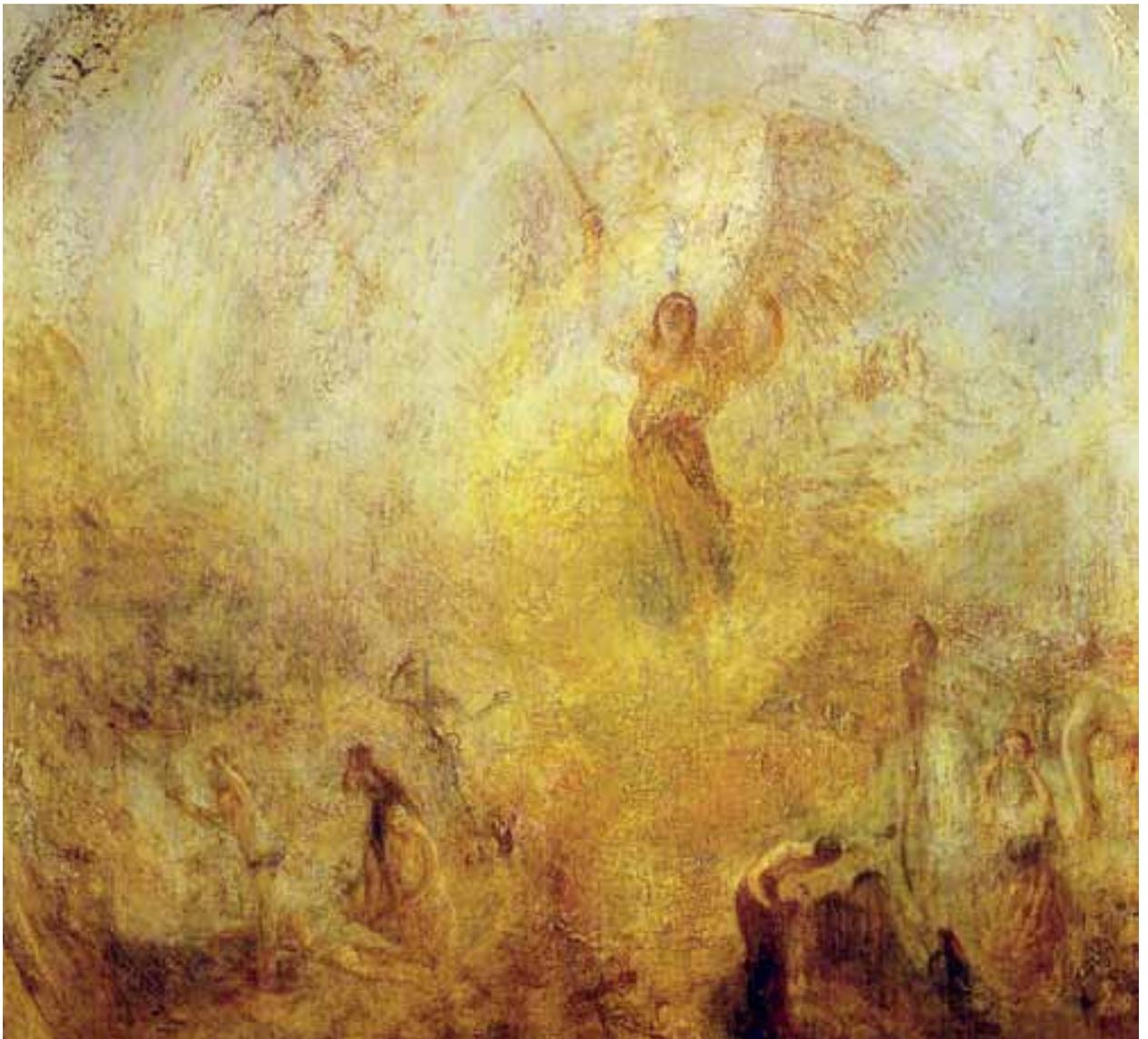
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It is absolutely essential to know that there are two suns, one spiritual and the other natural – a spiritual sun for those in the spiritual world, and a natural sun for those in the natural world. Unless this is understood, nothing can be correctly comprehended concerning creation and the human race [...]

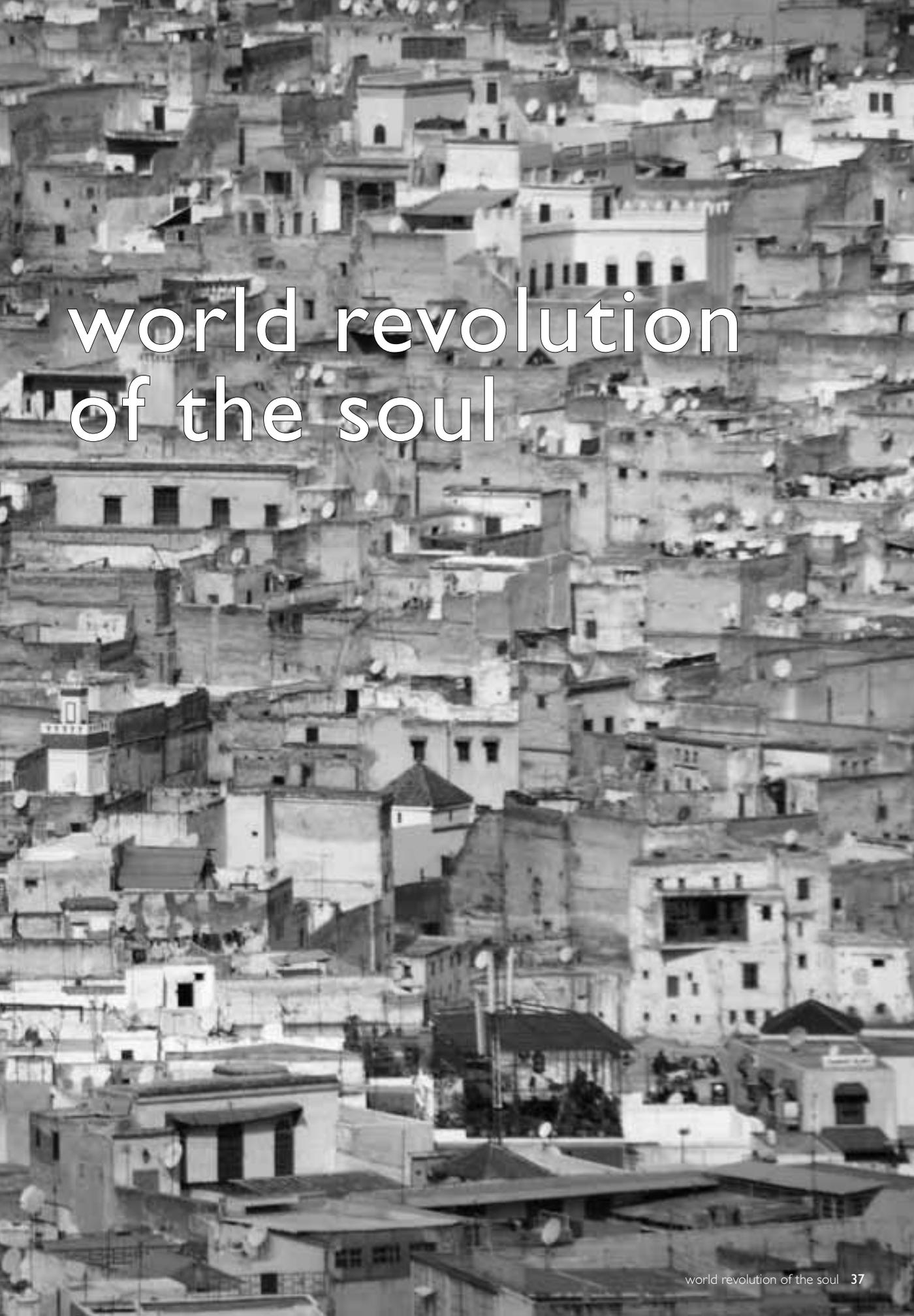
Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), *Divine life and wisdom*, p. 107.

Justinian the Apostate (331–361) taught: ‘There are three suns in one; the first is the universal cause of all things, the greatest good and perfection; the second force is the highest reason, which holds dominion over all reasoning beings; the third is the visible sun.’

The Angel in the Sun. William Turner, 1846







world revolution of the soul

I IMPRESSIONS FROM THE PATH OF EXPERIENCE OF A PUPIL

'Every year the Arabs and Africans meet, inquiring of one another regarding the arts, whether something better had been discovered or whether perhaps experience might have rendered their opinions out of date. In that way yearly something comes to light, through which mathematics, physics and magic (for in these they of Fez are most skilful) are improved. [...] In Fez he became acquainted with those who were commonly called the Original Inhabitants, who revealed to him many of their secrets, just as we, Germans, could likewise gather together many of our ideas, if we were willing to strive in earnest to do so.'

Fama fraternitatis, 1614

I
We see ourselves in the media: A soccer match victory, a severe traffic accident, a murder committed out of jealousy, increased exports, a presidential trip to China, a concert by your favourite pop group. Is that who we are? Are we the information that we absorb? Are we the relationships that we have? What remains

of us if we give up that information and those relationships? As a child and as a young man I have experienced that something doesn't quite tally with us. We are different from those who cross our paths. We are not successful in encountering each other in our entirety. Only parts of us, fragments, meet each other. The essential part remains veiled. It does affect





what we do however. Although a veil deforms, distorts, and exaggerates, still through all that we somehow manage to communicate with each other – but there is no unity. Our thoughts and our words create their own realities. We are closely connected with each other, and yet are far apart. This condition is expressed in the Song of the King's Children: They are not able to get together, the water is much too deep. How can we live this way? We do it because we do not see an alternative. We view ourselves as we are and try to make the best of it. Many people rebel against this form of existence. They refuse it or fight it, in the details or in its entirety.

II

As a result of these defining behaviours, we may be controlled by trends and by our convictions. At one time we show one face, and then the other one. But is that who we really are? We do not know. We have not yet arrived at ourselves. Where is the place of my existence, the place that can be occupied only by

The *Madrasa Nou Inania* is a Koranic school in Fez in Morocco, built around 1350. Here, according to the *Fama fraternitatis* the Arabs and Africans met who, 'although living far remote from each other, not only are of one opinion, despising all contentious writings, but are also willing and ready to reveal their secrets in full confidence.' Here Christian Rosycross became acquainted with those who were commonly called the 'original inhabitants'.

Photographs © Ivar Hamelink

me and by no one else? Where is the place where I am indispensable in the cosmos, that sacrosanct place of my being? The life of many such seeking people seems to be like a cry, a cry without words. But is an answer forthcoming? Our whole life we are circling around something, no matter what we do. We circle around the deepest part of our being, but we do not know it. Often a sigh escapes – then we are strangely moved, we halt in amazement, we observe our existence. We could then be caught up in the urge to stop everything, to escape from everything. Would that be of any help?

It seems that my life is moving itself along a periphery. In the centre is the inner being. Does it make sense to change anything at the periphery? The distance from there to my deepest being would still remain the same. I would like to investigate this distance. I would like to receive information from the centre. It is like an immovable stage where my life takes place. Although I have many roles, I notice that the stage remains unchanged, unaffected and unmovable. These roles that I playing, what sense do they make? People, forces, turbulences and intrigues are all active within me. What I receive from the media also happens inside me. Through what happens inside me I am part of what happens in the world. The world lives in me, it lives me. And my psyche brings into movement all that happens in the world. I am part of all events.

Coming from a Christian background, I call this something different 'the inner being, the redeemer, Emmanuel, God within me'

III

For a long time I have had the feeling that I am a stranger to myself, including being a stranger to everything that takes place. Often I think that I can lift the veil and sense the hidden spaces of the consciousness, identities not yet discovered. Then joy and longing overcome me. Then I know that something great is waiting for us, something great that must be found. The true being is waiting for the moment when we are going to play the true character. When I see trees, I always have the idea that they are waiting; a cosmic patience is at work in them. Many animals also seem to be waiting. Even the space in which the earth moves gives the impression to be waiting. The stars are watching us.

What does everything wait for? For the decision to take the path toward our inner being. When we do that the world will thoroughly change. It will mean a world revolution for the soul, a revolution that will change everything. When the critical moment arrives in the life of a human being – when he arrives at the splitting of the way where the path to the inner being is being shown – evolution seems to come to a stop momentarily. The human being receives the possibility to make an important decision, free from the burdens of the past. For a moment he is set free from all entanglements.

IV

Briefly the inner being reveals itself. It shows the door that leads to the transcendental do-

main existing beyond the stream of time. But the moment passes quickly. The world flows into the vacuum. Seven billion people flood the inner being. They form an enormous turning of the wheel, a turning of the wheel where everyone is swept away by one another. Everyone appears to be a planet rotating around the inner sun. Who is able to withdraw from that? Imagine that a certain number of planets decide to follow a different orbit, one that lies closer to the centre, one that is more transcendent. All of humanity would have to react to that, for everything is connected. Old 'certainties' would disappear. Uncertainty would come into being. The spiritual soul-aspect in the world would be strengthened. Completely new developments would be possible. Could it be that exactly this is happening in our time? What is transcendent wants to once again give us our true identity. It awakens what is higher than the personality, that which is all-encompassing. It awakens the longing for unity, for it is *one*. We are 'human' and our all-embracing unity is humanity, both in outer sense and also in a deeper sense – humanity as eternal beings, as a soul-order, as soul-unity, free from the earthly body, from mortality, from entanglements, knots, intrigues.

Is that a vision? Even as a young man I had similar experiences of unity. Now I can say that the inner being summoned them. I would like to compare that situation with that of a mountain climber who feels himself attracted by a mountaintop. His friends say, 'Stay here.

Why do you want to go there? Why do you expose yourself to that danger?’ The mountain climber replies simply, ‘I have to do it, I cannot do otherwise.’ He checks through his pack and leaves much behind.

My wife and I have gone this path. We have searched, we have studied many movements and ultimately have found a group that means something to us. At present we are still members of that group.

The characteristic of the path is surrender, surrender to the inner being, to the reflection of the most inner field of the group. Does that sound vague? The intellect alone cannot understand this. We felt it was a recognition, a kind of remembrance of a sunken domain of life emerging again into the atmosphere as a future, a future to be conquered anew. Certainty took shape within us. The group used words to show the way, words from the Gospel, from Lao Tzu and the Buddha, and words from our own time. What effect have these words had? They have helped us to distinguish the different things that we encounter. They stimulate the hidden possibilities of the consciousness. When these powers work through the speakers, they actualise the energy of the way in space. Shadow-activities, adverse reactions, also develop immediately, emerging from the many facets of our character. ‘Just like Münchhausen, you are unable to pull yourself out of the swamp. You cannot really turn away from what you are.’ The inner being has made itself known however. It has made clear that it is something completely different from my present personality.

V

Coming from a Christian background, I call this something different ‘the inner being, the redeemer, Emmanuel, God within me’. Christ within me, the element of the other one in me. It is something contrary. I can address it very confidently with ‘you’ and know that this is the real me. There is also the frustrating

experience that when I decide to direct myself to it, I experience darkness, emptiness, nothing. Flashes of thought rise up, however, as well as emotional and physical unrest, desires, and old and mysterious long-forgotten legacies. But these do not form the inner being. Why can I not find it? One day the scales fell from my eyes: When I look with the light of my consciousness into the depth, then I come to what is mine. I cannot discover the eternal, immortal, true self in this way as it is not reflected in my consciousness. It belongs to another dimension. That was a liberating insight. I had to laugh at my many vain efforts, and so was freed from them. Now I understand why an atheist says with conviction, ‘I have not been able to find any God.’

But yet I have experienced the inner being. How did that happen? It often happened during the gatherings of the community to which I belong. There I experienced, and continue to experience, the spiritual soul Light. How is that possible? I am in a group, I am open to the words that are spoken about the path, I am open without expectation – and there is the Light, reflecting itself in me, sharing itself with me, during the meeting or afterwards. It became clear to me that the inner being needs the opportunity to construct its own sounding board within me – the eternal needs its own mirror in which it may be reflected. I understood that I obscure this mirror time and again through fear, strong emotions and aggravated thinking. Nothing else can be meant by ‘mirror’ other than ‘consciousness-level’. The basis for a new soul-consciousness is forming in the old personality. From then on both the new and the old consciousness say ‘I’ with the same voice.

VI

The group to which I belong has been of decisive help to me in processing the growing content and energies. The basis of the consciousness is always decisive. How does the change from the lower to the higher



consciousness initially come into being? I had to think long about that – although it is so simple. The inner being is the originator of everything. It awakens the higher level of consciousness, but it also still operates in the old one. It awakens a homesickness in the old ‘I’, it causes lofty images to arise and stimulates the willingness to surrender. Surrender is the most important key to the entire process. Only through surrender are new experiences

possible, including the ability to differentiate the energies of the inner being from those that belong to the old character. With that there is the possibility to conduct one's life in a new way, for relationships with everything change, thus allowing meetings on the level of the soul. It makes one unbelievably happy.

When we remain faithful to the path, the path also remains faithful to us. A new orbit is established. The new level of consciousness becomes a new soul structure and the inner being occupies it. This is different from anything that we, who pass by on the periphery, could do. The transcendental one, the redeemer, constructs a new soul corporality within the physical body. We experience this process as a great supporting force. Now both levels of consciousness are able to develop together. The new one has obtained its structure and the old one can be swallowed up in the new one.

VII

I believe that this process is the next step in evolution that the world awaits. We are involved in everything. It is necessary to have several spiritual paths. The transcendental is only able to reflect itself in great variety. Its inner riches are able to emerge only as a multitude of forms. Indeed each individual can walk the path to the One. When one recognises itself in a different form, that is the greatest happiness, the greatest blessing. Everything waits for the awakening of the heart where all this takes place. Everything awaits the awakening of the inner being.

A group of like-minded people can serve as a concave mirror for the energy of the inner being more intensely than can an individual. We need the foci of spiritual soul-energy that casts light into the world. These foci form themselves, surpassing all cultures and all religions. Together they activate the world revolution of the soul. ✪

The divine Sun about which we have spoken emits seven kinds of rays into this lost and fallen world. These rays form a complete spectrum of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. They are the seven kinds of radiation of the divine sun with which we from time to time connect the pupils of the School in a mantric song:

*Thus we go forward in the red of blood-community and live out of divine prana's orange splendour.
Ours is the golden heart of Christ's solar glory. We stand together in the green fields of hope.
The blue horizon opens splendidly to us in the distance. The indigo-coloured cloud of the Lord leads our way.
And soon every face is stripped of the veil and the violet king-priest's garment awaits us.*

J. van Rijckenborgh, *The coming new man*

Helios rides the sun chariot. Image on an Athenian Red Figure vase, circa 5th century B.C.



wandering through no man's land

One person is curious and just wants to know. Someone else wants to know everything and even more. Some search for absolute knowledge, for the deepest insight and the highest truth. Who has not known the longing and hunger for knowledge?

We want to know. Knowledge is reassuring and beneficial, it protects us. Knowledge dominates, over-seeing everything and controlling the chaos. Knowledge enables one to rule, to control, to possess. Knowledge is armour against not-knowing, against ignorance. It builds walls around itself. Knowledge is a strong fortress within the vast lands of ignorance. Knowledge poses conditions: if we are healthy, if we have a roof over our heads, if we continue to work, then... Some conditions are less materialistic: if we are honest, true to ourselves, humble, reasonable, peaceful, gentle, then... And then what?... 'Then everything will be all right' we think according to our intelligent understanding of the world. *Intelligent understanding* is

supposed to fill our lives, to fulfill our lives. At the same time there is not-knowing gnawing on us quietly – always, from the outside, from the inside. We try to escape by looking in other directions, ignoring it, shrugging it off. We try to mask it or to get far away from it. But not-knowing is patient, coming at us from unexpected directions. And one day we find ourselves stuck right in the middle of it. Sooner or later, faced with life's fundamental questions, we will find that our intelligent understanding has abandoned us. Who has not felt the uneasiness, the distress, even shame and humiliation when our hunger for complete knowledge and understanding can no longer be satisfied and we have to



ON NOT-KNOWING AND BEYOND

admit that we don't have an answer. One way or another, all of us experience this 'not-knowing' or 'no longer knowing'. Not-knowing does not mean a lack of education or general knowledge, such as being unable to fix a mechanical car problem or not knowing the answer to a quiz-question. Not-knowing as meant here has nothing to do with the physical world in which we live. It is not due to inadequate education, insufficient knowledge, facts once learned but now forgotten, etc. We are not writing about the worldly, insignificant not-knowing of daily life. No, the not-knowing meant here is **silent**. It does not answer our keen, superficial, impatient questions about the deepest depths and the highest heights in life. No door will

open due to our high-powered knocking. The truth cannot be manipulated by our expectations and conditions. In writing about not-knowing, we distinguish clearly between our worldly and insignificant not-knowing and the Great Unknown that belongs to another realm. The Great Unknown cannot be defined by our typical worldly parameters.. It is open on all sides, unlimited, uncontradicted, beyond positive and negative. The Great Unknown, intangible according to our dialectical consciousness, holds within itself another power, a power that underlies everything. This power is the essence of everything, the sustaining force of everything, a power our intellect cannot grasp or understand.



Just as the human head has two organs of hearing, two of sight, two of smell and one of speech, and it would be in vain to expect speech from the ears or hearing from the eyes, likewise there have been times when people saw, times when they heard, and times when they smelt. Now it remains for the tongue to receive its honour, as it will within a short time, which now approaches with rapid strides, when at last may be spoken what once was seen, heard and smelt, as soon as the world has slept off its cup filled with poisons and intoxicants, and merrily and joyfully, with open heart, bare head and unshod feet, steps forth early in the morning to meet the rising sun.

Confessio Fraternitatis, Chapter VIII. Image: Egyptian soul-bird or Ba, circa 330 BC



Then we stand there, with so much knowledge accumulated over the years, so many experiences lived through, but still not knowing about the most essential – what then?

What is this force, this power? How can we relate to it? Can we understand it?

A children's song tells of the wonderful land of angels where we would like to go, but the gate to this land is locked and the key is broken. Who can mend the key?

This Great Unknown, the essence of everything, the power that underlies everything – could this be the key to the land of angels, to Nirvana? Is this the path to the divine realm? Which key fits the lock? Which knowledge do we use to unlock it? It is not our intellectual knowledge, that we know. Admitting that we don't have the answer sends us out searching for it. How often already have we thought that we found it, yet every time we were disappointed. Eventually we have to admit that we are unable to find the answer. It is not easy to accept that, after trying everything, we still did not get anywhere. We found no answer. The more we know, the more knowledge we piled up over the years, the greater the impact of realising that none of it can help to answer life's fundamental question. 'I-want-to-know' is drowned in the bottomless depths of not-knowing. There remains only 'I don't know'. The I gives up, capitulates.

Then we stand there, with so much knowledge accumulated over the years, so many experiences lived through, but still not knowing about the most essential – what then? Despair – a heartbroken outcry – a pleading prayer – silence? This not-knowing is

the turning point in our journey.

*“Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude,
World not world, but that which is not world,
Internal darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property,
Desiccation of the world of sense,
Evacuation of the world of fancy,...”*

T.S Eliot, Four Quartets, Burnt Norton III

If we stay calm and don't try to escape to the safe haven of our worldly knowledge – usually the first impulse – then we will find out how wide and clear and pure is the field of not-knowing. It is possible for us to remain standing there, to breathe. In the beginning we are probably a bit shaky, standing there quietly and unsupported, wavering and insecure yet tolerating not-knowing in the vast infinite field of ideas, ideologies, principles and images.

When we are pushed by our I that wants to know, when we are tempted to try to squeeze everything into a pattern that makes sense to us, when our I is preparing for the next strike against the Great Unknown, then we need to stay calm and persevere.

*“I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come
upon you
Which shall be the darkness of God...”*

T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, East Coker, III

Coming to a stand-still in not-knowing is not the same as capitulating. It requires great courage and braveness to accept not-knowing. Staying in not-knowing means lowering our guard, opening the door a crack, allowing new blood in, opening up for renewal, creating an opening for the other. Not-knowing means slowly comprehending that in this world every side has an opposite and every front has a backside. Then we will see that all these different sides belong to the same complete whole.

This insight is essential. Along with its magnitude comes an easiness and a lightness as well, an unveiling. We don't have to hunt for more and more knowledge to find the truth – we already have it within us.

But there is a warning as there exists the danger of creating a sham not-knowing. Then the fathomless, the unspeakable would be dragged down to a material level.

Not-knowing cannot be added to our 'task-list'. There is no step-by-step instruction manual about how to reach it. Only when our ego, with all its energy and will-power, has tried everything to find it; only when our exhausted ego surrenders, against its will, to our not-knowing – only then can it be found. 'Not-knowing' is the same as being 'poor in spirit'. (Matt. 5,3)

The grip of dialectics is diminishing. Not-knowing means that the I has reached a threshold. It is not the end, for not-knowing is a door, a turning point, the beginning of a path. This path has many detours and can take a long time to accomplish.

The ego is like a caterpillar waiting in a cocoon of not-knowing. The most important stage cannot be accomplished or seized by the ego, it can only be awaited. In not-knowing, we give up control, we surrender ourselves into the hands of the Other. Not-

knowing contains wonders and mysteries. It is a blessing to not-know. In not-knowing, our searching and finding come to an end. Instead, we will be sought, and found. Waiting means moving on.

Completely unexpectedly, we will be given the experience of true knowledge, a knowledge emanating from another realm. It is a knowledge that does not originate in the Ego but in the Other One.

Our worldly, insignificant "knowledge" is unable to penetrate this Great Knowledge, even though they are inseparable.

Let us wait here, then, in no man's land, for the butterfly.

*"I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait
without love,*

*For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is
yet faith*

*But the faith and the love and the hope are all in
the waiting.*

*Wait without thought, for you are not ready for
thought:*

*So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness
the dancing...."*

T.S. Eliot, Four quartets, East Coker, III

