

pentagram

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At the end of the summer of 2012, the Pentagram begins with an article from 1929 by one of the founders of the modern Rosycross. The topic of a fascinating consideration about Jakob Boehme's seven spirits leads us further back, to the seventeenth century; and it does not stop there: a book review about Marsilio Ficino, Platonist and Hermetic-Christian thinker, leads us even further back to the fourteenth-century Renaissance. And as if this is not yet sufficiently far back in time, we also cast some light on a workers' community from Egyptian antiquity, now 3,500 years ago.

Did we go astray? Have we turned into a history magazine?

Or do we succeed in showing how universal the thinking about the Light is? Do we succeed in transmitting the extent to which the unknowable divine element is always active? Do you discover with us that the truth about the eternally other aspect in the human being exists through all times? Do you, reader, see how every newborn human being on earth knows this longing, but also the despair and the yearning for a radical change which speaks from the powerful photos of our short series 'Be human being today'?

Let yourself be inspired; be not distracted. Find the luminous idea. Be human being today.



Manichaean or Buddhist monk in one of the rock temples in Kucha, China

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To illustration on p 41, the inside of the cover: Arjuna repents, thus enabling the divine forces to be linked with the earth in order to raise all creatures

A LECTURE BY ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE SPIRITUAL SCHOOL ABOUT RESURRECTION

a luminous idea

Z.W. Leene

In this first article of a series about the points of departure of the thinking of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum, written by the founders, Z.W. Leene speaks (in 1929!) about the two principles in the human being that seem to be so paradoxically opposed, but which you may be able to bridge through the liberating power of the inner Christ.

The fact of the resurrection may be one of the most difficult doctrines of ancient Christianity. If we want to reflect on it in an esoteric sense, we should properly realise that this fact does not depend on a belief in miracles. It is not a kind of magic, a miracle, which once, long ago, occurred in human history. Believing in sorcery is unworthy of thinking, feeling, conscious, positive people. The fact of the resurrection should be based on rational thinking. The primitive human being is a negative, poor soul, who believes in a miracle, because he is unable to understand. This human being is crushed by every event, without being able to fathom the fact of the event itself. Therefore, the thinking human being is the advanced person because, by his own efforts, he not only learns to behold the fact as an event, but also to fathom it. This is why the doctrine of the resurrection becomes an absolute philosophical necessity for him. For the thinking person, the event itself is only the confirmation of a fact that he had already known for a long time. One person stops at the event and becomes its slave, while another breaks through to understand-

ing and becomes enlightened.

The doctrine of the resurrection is a luminous idea, one in which God is victorious but not only in Christ who arises from the dead. It also means the victory of the divine consciousness over nature, which is symbolised by the first fruit of the days, Jesus, man from man, who arises from the death of nature by the conception of the Christ, God from God. This event signifies more than a conjuring trick of God. It signifies much more than a miracle that occurred two thousand years ago; this event is rational. This means order, the highest order. The historic event is unable to make us, people struggling in matter, happy. Primitive peoples recognise in the fact of the resurrection only the feast of the resurrection of living nature. And this is why they sometimes celebrate it exuberantly. Death has passed; there is no death. With the Jews, this turned into a popular feast. And in the West, it is often the same. There, too, this feast is usually considered not more than an energy that surfaces again and awakens everything to new life. Plants react by an enhanced circulation of fluids, the production of leaves, and



The driving force during the initial period of the Spiritual School was Z.W. Leene (1892-1938). He was a man who was clearly predestined to shape a great work. In 1924, pervaded by Christian experiencing and set ablaze by professor De Hartog, he came, together with his brother Jan (Jan Leene, later known as Jan van Rijckenborgh), into contact with the work of

the Rosicrucians, as it had been shaped by Max Heindel. There he found the deepening and the goal, which he had been seeking for thirty years. It was particularly his inspiration and spirit that, in 1930, convinced Catharose de Petri to help support the work. On the basis of this initial, fiery power, the Lectorium Rosicrucianum was able to arise in 1946.



True Christianity does not refer to the teachings of the resurrection as a 'fact', but as a 'power'

a higher stage of consciousness; everything evolves. Or sometimes, it is the solar event in which the feast culminates, in which we pay particular attention to the signs of heaven and discover the efficiency of creation.

It is a time of love, the dynamic, cosmic impulse that penetrates the earth and permeates everything with new life. However true and certain this may be, it still concerns only the fact of the resurrection of nature. The fact of the true, spiritual resurrection surpasses this many times.

The teachings of the resurrection go much further. They concern the definitive victory, not only an annually recurring fact. Sure, this, too, but how tiresome this is, as we are and remain time and again bound to recurring facts. No, the definitive victory over the death of nature is both the lowest depth and the peak of the feast of the resurrection. Death passes, but the ever-recurring need of reincarnation also causes the return of death each time the human being reincarnates.

The feast of the resurrection does not speak to us of this recurring sorrow, but of the definitive victory over death. Why would we otherwise need esoteric Christianity? This is certainly not necessary in order to speak to us of karma and reincarnation, or even of the principles of cosmic love. Did not many other religions already teach us this? For this, we do not need Christianity, because the Buddhists already knew this and before them, the Brahmans. Christianity refers to the teachings

of the resurrection as 'power', that is, not as a 'fact', but as a 'power'. This power refers to a divine process that seizes us when God creates us as to this nature; it seizes us when God begins to re-create; and it is what seizes us in the resurrection, when God definitively triumphs over nature in the human being. God the creator is crucified in human nature which, by its wrong reaction to the divine laws, nails itself and its God to a cross. Christ continues this process for everyone who wants and is able to give him the power to arise from this cross, to liberate himself. When this is accomplished in our own being, the triumphant cry is justified 'Consummatum est', 'It has been accomplished'.

Jesus, the 'first fruit of the days', man from man, receives what is eternally divine, God from God and, through him, accepts the struggle with himself as to nature. Ultimately, he becomes victorious in Christ and triumphs through him. If he has dissociated from matter, in other words, if he has overcome its nature, if he has spiritualised the material nature of the gross body, he shows his five wounds, the five places where the five higher vehicles are linked with the personality. This is a process that can be achieved by the pupil of the western mystery school.

Similar to what Jesus, as the first one, achieved through the inner Christ, the pupil of the West will also be able to achieve it through the inner Christ, not through a temporary death, but definitively. Dear friend,

you know by now, what the inner Christ means. It certainly does not mean knowing his teachings, studying cosmic laws or analysing difficult passages in the Bible, not even in an esoteric way. You do not need all of this to receive Christ. The inner Christ makes you different, more radiating with goodness, truth and justice. He makes you a person who fights against his lower nature, but this is not all. From day to day, he makes you victorious. Too many seeking people remain standing before the gate and lack the courage to engage in this struggle, and they reveal this. They who receive him and offer him a place within themselves, also demonstrate that. Without this inner one, you can do nothing. Even if you had all the knowledge of the world and commanded all the magic of the world, it would not profit you; you would stay chained to the earth by karma and reincarnation and never be able to celebrate your resurrection. Without the Christ energy, we remain marked by the image of Adam, as Genesis 5 explains. You know that Adam is humanity, which created a son as to its own image, that is, as to nature. Just consult this text. However, if Christ becomes an inner reality, we are reborn as to this image and become victorious as to the Spirit. Adam is the human being who has fallen into matter and has been nailed to the cross of matter by karma and reincarnation, and his 'son', who is 'life from his life', remains marked by this image. However, he who receives Christ is liberated from nature and is

recreated as to the new image. This does not mean prolonging what is earthly, but rather in dissociating from what is earthly. This is the glory of the feast of the resurrection. Then the liberated soul enters the absolute freedom, not once in awhile, but eternally free from karma and the laws of reincarnation. He is forever liberated and, therefore, most suitable to serve and to become a fellow cross bearer until all will have achieved this. Then we experience the resurrection from the dead, not only as a belief in miracles or as supersensory magic, but as a philosophical necessity which every soul must eventually reach, regardless of what he calls himself, because no one can do without Christ. Here the shadows of death have been wiped away. The limitations of birth have been surpassed. It is the result of many generations, much sorrow and many, very many, fearful, sleepless nights. It is the exaltation of our firm goal. It is the joy of the source, which will quench worlds and guide them to the right knowledge that is born from the Eternal One, wide as the heavens and deep as the sea. ☸

how the new reality

The seven spirits in the work of Jakob Boehme

and in the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross

In Jakob Boehme's book *Morning Redness in the Rising of the Sun*, which he published in the year 1612 and which was later called 'Aurora', he wrote that he had been permitted to look 'into the centre of the hidden nature'. There he saw, as he wrote, 'not with my ordinary eyes, but with the eyes of the Spirit', how God's power works everywhere in creation through, what he called, 'the seven primordial spirits'. From second to second, these seven primordial spirits, emanating from the one source, sustain, irradiate and further develop creation. The universal teachings, too, speak of the seven rays of the universal sun that illuminate the all.

We can only try to approach such a great mystery with, we might say, our imaginative power. This is not a kind of effort to seize something by any means, but rather: to understand something, suddenly seeing something that had been there all along.

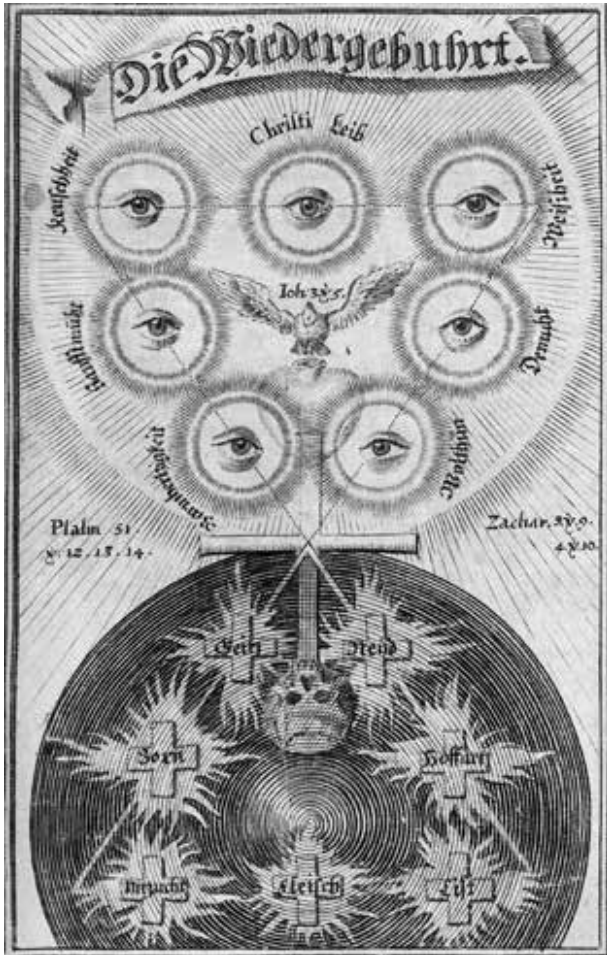
Jakob Boehme writes: 'If you want to know or fathom something, you should simply place yourself before it, with a deep longing to understand. If you do so, you will discover that you will receive two things: insight and power, the insight you asked for and the power to do something with this new insight.'

The fact that new insight is always linked with new power is clearly demonstrated by Jakob Boehme in his description of the sixth primordial spirit. He says that the sixth primordial spirit causes every being to emit, indeed, that he must emit a sound. This sound expresses



resounds within us





everything that lives in this being. Nothing remains behind. Therefore, if we speak of new insight, new knowledge, immediately also a new sound follows, a new way of living. It is very important for us to understand as well as possible this sixth primordial spirit, also called by Boehme the spirit-of-sound, because it contains the key to a proper understanding of the period ahead, to which the Spiritual School often refers as the Age of Aquarius. The Age of Aquarius is namely the period in which everything will be judged by its sound. We sometimes read that a time will come when people will speak without words and when thoughts will simply be transmitted through sound, vibration.

THE SEVEN PRIMORDIAL SPIRITS How can we get an idea of the effect of the seven primordial spirits, the seven rays, and of the sixth one, the spirit-of-sound in particular? Just

as Jakob Boehme, we try to do so by simply 'placing ourselves before it'.

According to the author, the first, the second and the third primordial spirits build every being.

They make the structure, the form and the mobility, but as yet without consciousness; they work 'in darkness', as he calls it. Let us imagine a tree. The first spirit makes the structure, the trunk. Boehme calls it 'the sour spirit' that makes everything contract, and which makes 'something' out of 'nothing'. The second spirit works in the flow of juices and the overall form. Boehme calls it the sweet, soft spirit. The third one originates where the first and the second one interfere with each other as it were. It gives the multitude and the mobility, the motion and the murmuring of the thousands of leaves. These three spirits work in darkness. They work blindly. Life does not originate until the fourth spirit, the spirit of the fire.

This example shows that not all spirits work in all creatures in the same way. The effect of the fourth spirit, for instance, is for our eyes not properly visible in a tree. In every creature, all seven spirits are always active, but not all of them are always equally visible or imaginable for us, because their effect in this nature has solidified, frozen in a certain way.

MAN Let us now imagine man. You will see before you that the first primordial spirit creates the skeleton, the hard structure in him.

Understanding is not the right word... we should place ourselves before it, as Boehme says. Then we receive insight as well as power to do something with it

The second primordial spirit creates what is sweet, flowing, soft, not so much the blood, but rather the hidden streams, the etheric streams. The second primordial spirit creates the form and the softness in the human being. The third spirit creates the multitude, the mobility, which is manifested in the human body in another way than in the tree and is much more hidden, much more inward, for instance in the countless alveoli, in the markings and lines on the skin and the hairs, but also in the hundredfold division and the – relative – mobility of the skeleton. Then there is the fourth primordial spirit, the spirit that brings life and consciousness, the spirit of the fire and the light.

In the human being, it brings the consciousness fire, the ‘serpent fire’. It is the astral consciousness fire that burns in the spinal canal and ends in the brain. The result of it is light, the light of the eyes, which expresses the whole consciousness. Through the fire of the fourth primordial spirit, the human being is vivified and acquires consciousness. However, the way in which he lives is determined by the fifth spirit. This is the spirit of warmth. In other words, it is the way in which the fire radiates warmth – or doesn’t. The fifth spirit is the spirit of love, the way in which a human being transforms fire into warmth – and warmth into love.

Then comes the sixth spirit. We may certainly state that the sixth spirit – we also say ‘the sixth ray’ – has a special significance in the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross.

This is why we try to understand properly what this meaning implies. However, here understanding is actually not the right word. It suggests that we can study something from a book, and assimilate it intellectually. No, we should place ourselves before it, as Boehme says. Then we receive insight as well as power to do something with it.

CHRISTIAN ROSYCROSS AS PROTOTYPE In the story about the dream of Christian Rosycross, a large group of people is imprisoned in a deep dungeon, in pure impotence and misery. Five times, moved by pity, people standing at the edge of the prison tower, lower a rope, but hardly anyone succeeds in seizing this rope to climb up. And even if someone succeeds, the others often drag him down again. Then the sixth attempt arrives.

Christian Rosycross is the prototype of the western human being of our time, seeking liberation. He is the prototype of the human being who now populates this school. He climbs on a stone – that is, on all the work and striving that he has accomplished to the best of his ability and knowledge – and by a miraculous swing of the cord, ‘perhaps by the will of God’, he says, the rope comes his way; he can seize it and he is pulled up from the dungeon. We are people with the signature of Christian Rosycross: we would, in the power of Christ, like to bring the rose of immortal being to bloom on the cross of our personality. Otherwise, we wouldn’t be reading this now.

The microcosm is sometimes compared with a bronze clock or stupa. Sounding this clock, that is, the pure and clear expression of our task in life, links us with this task

The Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross is a school of and for people who have been pulled up from the dungeon by the sixth ray. We are here, we belong here because, deep down, we react primarily to the activity of this sixth ray, because we have a certain affinity with particularly this ray.

What does this mean? In the universal teachings, the sixth ray is sometimes called the ray of devotion, of unwavering devotion. Any esoteric Internet site can tell you so. Only through devotion, is the seventh and last step possible, the new mode of life, gnostic magic, the complete renewal of our individual and collective field of life.

We discussed that Jakob Boehme refers to the sixth primordial spirit as the spirit of sound. He says that it is this spirit that orders and shakes up everything that the previous spirits have brought, and he explains that it makes something shrink and gives it stability. This is logical, because it cannot resound in any other way.

One of the effects of the sixth spirit is the voice, speech, not in the sense of producing words with more or less meaning. No, speech in the sense of sound is quite something else. It is the power to express what lives in our innermost being, without the intervention of whoever or whatever, and without keeping anything secret and unreserved.

In the prologue of the Gospel of John, we read: 'In the beginning was the word.' This is the power of the sixth primordial spirit, be-

cause if God speaks this word, he speaks everything with one word. Then there is nothing that is not spoken. There is nothing of himself that he withholds and that he does not speak with this word. With one word, he expresses his whole being. This is what is meant by the power of speech, of sound.

In the Spiritual School, sound is also the way in which the pupils cooperate and resound together. This is why the microcosm is sometimes compared with a bell, a stupa or a bronze clock. Sounding this clock, that is, the pure and clear expression of our task in life, links us with this task. Therefore, we might say that the sixth primordial spirit makes everything that is within us also radiate outward ever more clearly and strongly, but simultaneously, it causes us to increasingly reflect on what resounds, on what is our true inner being. What is the true inner human being? We call this the one, all-encompassing human principle of life: Christian Rosycross. Christian Rosycross is the symbol, but literally also the power, of the unsullied microcosm within us, the true human being, the exalted human being.

THE NUCLEUS PRINCIPLE OF THE SCHOOL

Through the activity of the sixth primordial spirit, we express ourselves; we cannot do otherwise. And we will, by our mode of life, always reveal everything that we are, what we stand for, and this is what increasingly forces us to set out seeking what this nucleus of the

true inner human being is. This applies to every individual person, but equally for this group of people, for us as the group of pupils of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross.

Now that we reflect on the activity of the sixth ray, the sixth primordial spirit, we would simultaneously like to focus our attention on the nucleus principle of this school. This principle is also referred to by the name Christian Rosycross. In the Fama Fraternitatis, the Call of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross, we read how this fundamental principle, this power principle, is sought and found by the workers in the service of this Brotherhood.

The Fama relates that it began with the death of one of the brothers in a place called Gallia Narbonensis. However, before this happened he chose a successor, who received the task of adjusting the building of the brotherhood to prepare it for a new time. While taking up this task as an able architect, he came across a hidden, bronze tablet that was attached to the wall with a large nail. When he pulled out the nail to transfer the tablet to a more suitable room, a large piece of plasterwork fell from the wall and a hidden door became visible. Behind this door, they found Christian Rosycross.

At first glance, this simple description contains the whole task of this school, and upon closer study, we will see that the essence of sound, the essence of the sixth primordial spirit, plays a crucial role in it. It begins with the memorial tablet, that is, with what shows us the way. This memorial tablet is made of bronze.

Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. Copper is the substance of Venus, that is, the human love nature, the material of the fifth primordial spirit, according to Jakob Boehme. Copper is mixed with tin, the substance of Jupiter. In other words, copper, the love nature of man, his human warmth, his interest, his compassion and his feeling, achieves a truly higher resonance, if it is combined with tin, the element of the Spirit-Soul. Then it also becomes, just as Boehme describes it, a bit more solid, clearer, and it begins to resound.

Then copper becomes bronze. This Jupiter principle does not come automatically: first, we die in Gallia Narbonensis, which means that the old personal striving has been dissolved in the country of servitude. Then it has become completely worn down, finally to disappear. However, what is most mysterious is the nail with which the tablet had been attached. J. van Rijckenborgh writes about this: 'Esoterically, this point is sometimes called the sixth nail, or the sixth cord with the help of which Christian Rosycross climbs up out of the pit. The five other points are to be identified with the five points of the pentagram, the five points of the soul body.'

RELEASING THE NEWLY CREATED ETHERIC VEHICLE Let us call upon our imaginative power again in order to understand what is said here. The one all-encompassing, inner, microcosmic principle of life, to which we refer as Christian Rosycross is, of course, power. It is a princi-

ple of pure power. It is not an object; it is not something; it is not a place; but it is power. Pure power cannot sojourn in the physical body, because our current body and consciousness are too strongly crystallised.

During our pupilship, a new vital body, a true soul body, is generated in us. If a human being wants to find Christian Rosycross within himself, he must first find the memorial tablet and pull out the sixth nail. In other words, he should liberate the new soul body and detach it from the natural, biological life.

Here, too, it is exactly as Boehme says: we should make the soul body resound in the power of the sixth primordial spirit. By this liberating sound, everything will immediately be expressed that must be expressed. As in one sound, everything will become clear for everyone, in any situation, at any moment. However, a bell cannot resound if we hold it. It must toll freely. Finally, this is also related to one special aspect of our work. Again, this has to do with the question: 'What kind of people are those pupils of the Rosycross?' It is a very diverse group; you encounter all types of people and character traits, in a very colourful mixture, but there is one common value at another, much deeper, inner level. Logically, there must be such a value, otherwise we would not have joined this school and would not have been pulled out of the pit by this sixth cord.

J. van Rijckenborgh writes, almost casually, in his explanation of the Fama Fraternitatis, and particularly about finding the memorial tablet: 'Here we take the opportunity to point out the essential difference between a mystic and a gnostic. Both build a soul body, and both extract from their mode of life the essence, the vital power that develops the higher ethers. Both have a link with the world of the Christ spirit, but what now happens is that the mystic

is satisfied with it, but the gnostic isn't.

What is the reason for this? The cause for this cannot, at least not yet, be indicated. Sometimes, it is assumed that the gnostic ultimately possesses more love of humanity. The mystic is absorbed in producing and giving life power for the benefit of the world and humanity, but the gnostic wants something different: he would like to offer his services to the leading powers of human development. He wants to cooperate consciously in the development of humanity. There is something in his being that stimulates him to do so. This is why he cannot act differently. And this is why he wants and *must* penetrate behind the mystery of his existence.

This is why he must ultimately wholly liberate the soul body, which has developed by his efforts, from any material impediment. Otherwise, he is unable to satisfy what is contained in him or her, as human type, as a task.'

This is also why, here and now, the activity of the sixth primordial spirit, the spirit of sound, is decisive. This is why we continue seeking the one, all-encompassing principle of life: Christian Rosycross. We may be very grateful that now, at this moment, a new generation of young people, are willing to enter the spiritual building of the Brotherhood. We hope that the ensuing changes in the building will stimulate all to find the bronze memorial tablet, to pull out the nail and to be wholly assimilated by the sound of the liberated Spirit-Soul body. ☸

be human being today



'Imagine that a child is born, a child endowed with an original Soul. When this Soul becomes linked with the body, it encounters the evil associated with dialectical nature. Now the question is: when this child develops and grows older, and has to accept life, will it combat the evil present within itself? Or will it simply accept the evil and allow itself to follow the lines of least resistance?'

J. van Rijckenborgh,

The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis, part IV, chapter 7

Six days after Betka Tudu was born, female relatives and neighbours assembled in Purulia (West Bengali State) to bless him and protect him against evil influences.

A photo of Abhijit Dey, Purulia, India. Betka Tudu is now 5 years old



a meditation about radical change

A pupil, seeking his way to fulfilment in life and enlightenment, takes a close look at himself. Does his longing reach for knowledge or more knowledge, or does he place his bet on the familiar 'everything or nothing' – with everything unknown and unexpected that, hopefully, lies behind it?

Often, I still become entangled, just like you, in too mental an occupation with philosophy, which I would like to consider teachings, so that I sometimes wonder: does this intended inner revolution, a radical change, really take place within me, without compromising, without sparing myself in any respect? After all, it is everything or nothing. Or am I like an infant who assimilates the power and the knowledge that philosophy and various teachings offer, but who does not use it? Do I remain on the outside, so that I can observe from a distance without partaking of it? Do I forget that what is offered are only keys, beautiful in themselves, but absolutely useless if I am unable to find the inner doors for which they are meant? Then I discover within myself, and in others as well, this human trait of storing, saving and collecting ever more, like the familiar caterpillar which was always hungry, intending to examine, compare, analyse and bring order to it all later. This is the birth of the paradoxes, because this is how it begins: everything seems to be mutually contradictory: all this collected knowledge, one truth as opposed to the other, all those different ways of interpretation, all those words and concepts, all those mental constructions: it has become an impenetrable jungle. And the caterpillar's hunger has seemingly not yet been satisfied! I realise that this human characteristic cannot possibly be used to find God or to be divine one day! Light power – insight – cannot be

stored and saved; it must immediately be converted into deeds. Sometimes one image is enough to see it, and to blow all those mental constructions to smithereens. Often, our intellectual armour prevents true understanding. Metaphors circumvent the smart mind and are in this way able to reach the heart directly.

From this perspective, I am fascinated by the image of the caterpillar that becomes a butterfly. The profound truth that what you receive does not become valuable until you are able to use it in the right way, can be seen very clearly in this. The purpose of the caterpillar is to consume the plant on which it lives. It does not look left or right and does not see sun or horizon. It has no time for this kind of nonsense. It keeps its eager glance focused on the indirect sunlight that is contained in the leaf; it wants to have as much of it as possible. This eagerness reminds me of something: my insatiable hunger for knowledge, truth, excitement, mystical experiences and wisdom. Just think of the countless leaves in our bookcase.

A caterpillar eats until it is filled. Not until then does a change in its pattern of life

'The royal art is not learned or taught; it cannot be studied in advance and can, therefore, not be understood in advance. However, when you enter the process of purification in the only right way, the truth will begin to shine for you. At the same moment, you will understand the royal art from within.'



A thousand keys may provide enormous knowledge, but inwardly, we remain completely the same. We need only one key

begin: it no longer eats, but it begins to digest its food. First, it spins and weaves a mantle around itself, the cocoon, in which it withdraws. Then, hidden to the eyes of the outside world, the caterpillar now enters a peculiar process.

Only few people are aware that, before a magnificent butterfly breaks out of the cocoon, a tremendous struggle is fought inside. The old form must be completely demolished and, indeed, a truly new body must be built. The immune system of the caterpillar violently resists this strange transmutation of cells. It does anything to preserve the caterpillar. Only if it gives up the hopeless struggle, can the transformation of cells continue unhindered. Nothing remains of the caterpillar, except a shapeless, small heap. And exactly one cell contains the building plan of the butterfly, on which basis the completely new body is built. Then I understood. And concerning all those

leaves: philosophy provides the keys, but we need only one key. A thousand keys may provide enormous knowledge, just as the caterpillar that eats its own weight a thousand times, but inwardly, we remain completely the same. This knowledge ferments, begins to bubble, and even runs the risk of exploding, but only if we relate this one key to ourselves, does something happen. Then it no longer accumulates, but rather is transformed, just as the food that we assimilate only becomes useful after it has been digested.

Merely studying philosophy like consumers, irrevocably entangles the mind in a maze of paradoxes, although the liberation of what lies hidden in it, will lead to a radical change, an inner revolution. However, the fact that the ego will do anything to prevent its own ruin, will probably be very familiar to you. ✪

be human being today



'The original atom of the heart, the rose of liberation, is, as it were, a condensed primordial microcosm, a microcosm imprisoned in our current microcosm. It is an inactive, wholly latent, divine being, enveloped by a system of electromagnetic forces that are undivine.'

J. van Rijckenborgh,

The Mysteries of the Pistis Sophia, chapter 18

'I was struck by how one can be sad and dejected, depressed in a world filled with wonder and beauty and wanted to convey that in this art piece. We truly are locked firmly within the walls of self and see the world through our own mind and not as it exists. The translucent nature scene around the bent over saddened figure shows the mystery of creation around her; yet she sees it not, locked within her own thoughts and mind.'

The prison of the self, by Soda Lemondrop. The Workhouse & Art place

only light reflects light

‘Dao is empty, and in its radiations and activities, it is inexhaustible.

Oh, the depth of it. It is the Original Father of all things.

It softens its sharpness, simplifies its complexity,

tempers its blinding radiance and makes itself akin to the dust.’

Words from the *Daodejing* speak their own language. It is the language in which another reality enters our world almost unnoticed. These are words that we recognise, that are familiar to us, but which nevertheless do not fit into our ordinary pattern of thinking. We sometimes speak of a ‘mystery language’, and this is exactly what it actually concerns: a mystery. Mystery is not only the expression that we use to refer to something unknown, something of another world or order. No, a mystery is like a space which we may enter. What this space itself is, is not revealed until we enter it. Experiencing the language of the mysteries is like the experience of opening a door, so that a crack is formed.

A glimpse becomes visible of an infinite room that is still largely hidden to us, like the words from the Chinese wisdom might be:

‘Dao, it softens its sharpness, simplifies its complexity, tempers its blinding radiance and makes itself akin to the dust...’

It is not the dust, but it is expressed in the dust; it makes itself known by being the mystery. Without this mystery, human existence would be unbearable. Without the possibility of being able to experience something of the beauty, of eternity in time, the human being would be lost. Through the miracle of the heart, the divine can be found.

Look at the human being:

Blindly, he destroys and appropriates that to

which he believes he is entitled. Nothing is more destructive than the human being when he, in his blindness, deals with other living beings as if they were objects, when he himself becomes an object and performs acts with incalculable consequences, and when he nullifies the mystery of life. How would people be able to live, if there is no mystery that gives comfort, courage and hope? Even if we are not always conscious of it, the mystery also surrounds us in what is visible.

Look at the human being, the individual: Abandoned by everything and everyone, he leans against a fence and looks down the road, far into the distance. Everything around him seems to have been demolished. And then, suddenly, he sees the similarity with what happens in nature: ‘the evening, the night and the next day’, as if every day, the old world is demolished and submerges in the night, and by sunrise, a new world is built. There, at dawn, the day miraculously rises again from the grey dust, from which it was made...

If we have thus stood at the fence many times, finally the day may arrive when we ourselves submerge in ‘the Other One’. Something of the old I is replaced by a new I, and we can perceive its lustre and enter its space.

For such a human being, Dao is no longer empty. The vibration field of Dao, or Gnosis, or the serene astral field of the Brotherhood of the Holy Grail, far surpasses the ordinary field of life as to refinement, speed and power.



Just as 'light' is 'darkness', if it does not have an object, upon which it can be reflected, the consciousness is unconscious, if it does not observe experiences

For the unconscious human being, it is invisible, incomprehensible to his thinking, imperceptible, empty so to speak. This vibration is revealed to the exalted principle in the heart, the rose, and opens the door to the space of the mystery. Its radiations and effects are inexhaustible for all of us, because their 'sharpness is softened', simplified, without blinding radiance, but they are Light that is related to man. We also find this image portrayed in other words, from Western thought. In his time, Marsilio Ficino wrote about it in an instructive way by means of his well-known letters. He wrote: 'No one rises up to God until God himself has descended to him to a certain extent.'

Inspired by, amongst other things, hermetic wisdom, Ficino uses dialogue as the form in which to transmit ideas in his letters and texts. Thus, he wrote: 'It is not so that I have ascended, but I have been carried up to heaven. The heavy elements of the world do not reach the higher spheres, unless they are pulled up from above. The inhabitants of the earth do not ascend the steps to heaven, unless the heavenly father pulls them up.' It is a matter of ascending or raising ourselves up to the Light, because the Light itself descends into us.

If we look out of the window during the take-off of a plane, we see everything familiar disappear in the depth below us. Humanity, with its hustle and bustle, is covered by the

white blanket of clouds. Silently, the world lies below the clouds that are illuminated by the sun. Suppose that we could rise even further, where there is the atmosphere behind which heaviness ceases to exist and the infinite, dark space lies in which the universe revolves. Perhaps there is, inaudible to the human ear, the sound of stars and planets, while they move in the dark, in the infinitely extended darkness.

In order to experience light, there should be something to reflect the light. The Light shines in the darkness, but man does not understand it. Thus, the human being is standing in the midst of a radiant reality. However, he does not see it. He only sees 'the blinding darkness'. Just as 'light' becomes 'darkness' if it does not have an object by which it can be reflected, the consciousness is unconscious if it does not observe experiences. In this way, the one consciousness of God is also like a blinding darkness. It only appears as the light of consciousness, if there is something to be illuminated, something to be experienced. Hermes says: 'Only the soul consciousness sees the invisible, because it is itself invisible.' For: 'Are you able to see your soul consciousness and seize it with your hands and, admiringly, behold the image of God? If what is within you is even invisible for you, how will God himself then become visible in you through your physical eyes?'

II

The path to liberation, the upward path, runs from and through nature birth to the birth of the soul. Once, in the beginning, when the soul still existed in the world of the living soul state, there was the Spirit, which expressed itself in the body through the soul. Now, the awakened soul in the human being, which obviously does not want to sojourn in 'blinding darkness', would like to develop a vehicle again and draw a mantle around it. If it succeeds in realising this mantle, this power to reflect the one consciousness of God, it will be able to reflect the Spirit again. Once it has found its Pyramider, the soul can express itself in the Spirit-Soul, the realm where it goes up into the spirit of the new life. The heart corresponds to the soul. If the soul is able to express itself in the heart, the one consciousness can be expressed in the head sanctuary, the seat of the Spirit. It is the rebirth, not *of* the soul, but one that must be accomplished *by* the soul itself. This concerns a process of revolution, of dissociation *of* the soul *by* the soul, from the world of matter. We must learn to see things differently, from another perspective or another essence as it were. We may call this soul consciousness or higher consciousness.

In his letters, Ficino made God speak with the soul about this wondrous situation:
'Why do you grieve so much, my unhappy soul? Behold, I, your father, am here with you...
Soul: Oh How I look forward to inspiration by my father! As it is, I do not see how that can

come about. For if, as I thought, the creator of the world created me, his offspring, nearer to himself than his own created world, he who is only outside me is not my highest father. Nor could he who was only within me be my father, for my father is certainly greater than I, yet he who is contained in me must be smaller. But I do not know how anything can be both inside me and outside me at the same time. What sorely distresses me, stranger, whoever you may be, is this: that I do not wish to live without my father, yet despair of being able to find him. God answered: My daughter, look upon your father. Your father is the least of all things in size, just as he is the greatest of all things in excellence; and since he is very small, he is within every thing, but since he is very great, he is outside everything. See, I am here with you, both within and without...'

Thus it is clear that 'seeing' yourself in the right way is very important, that is, consciously looking at yourself in relation to what inspires you. He who is only able to see a part of reality, looks as if in a dim mirror, or sees, as it was once described, 'the underside of a carpet'. In his life, with all its confusion, the human consciousness sees of himself only the underside of a pattern that is woven on a great loom, knotted by divine fingers. The imperfect consciousness sees knots and threads on the backside, while the splendid pattern of the front side remains hidden for the time being. Nevertheless, they exist simultaneously.

III

Let us cast another look on the image of the soul that can become one with the Light, when the Light first enters it. The Corpus Hermeticum describes this descent of the Light as a mixing vessel that is sent down. Together with this mixing vessel, a herald is also sent to proclaim to the hearts of men: 'Immerse yourselves in this Mixing Vessel, you souls who can; you who believe and trust that you will ascend to Him who sent down this Vessel.'

'Why, O Father, did God not impart the Spirit to all men? Tat wants to know, and Hermes continues:

'It was God's will that the link with the Spirit should be obtained by all souls; however, as a prize for the race.'

The activity of the Brotherhood of the Grail is described by the herald and this mixing vessel for water and wine, filled with the powers of the Spirit.

The primordial atom contains the image of true human genesis. The radiations of the Seven-Spirit, which affect the head sanctuary, subsequently form the Pymander. These seven rays structure the lines of force for the new human genesis, the vesture or the lustre of the soul, from and in the space of the mystery, the heart sanctuary. And this creates a new state of consciousness, a fathoming of the mystery, Gnosis, recognising and acknowledging the Light in one's own being.

How will we be able to incorporate and reflect this Light, thus entering the hearts of

men? To this end, we will return to the Dao-dejing. Let us experience the space behind the words of which the door has been opened a crack...:

'The sage holds fast to the One, and in this way makes himself into an example for the world. Not seeking to shine, he is enlightened.'

And the Gospel of Philip expresses it as follows in the 'Mystery of Jesus':

*'Jesus took them all by stealth,
for he did not appear as he was,
but in the manner
in which they would be able to see him.'*

*He appeared to them all.
He appeared to the great as great.
He appeared to the small as small.
He appeared to the angels as an angel,
and to men as a man.
Because of this, his word hid itself from everyone.
Some indeed saw him,
thinking that they were seeing themselves,
but when he appeared
to his disciples in glory on the mount,
he was not small.
He became great,
but he made the disciples great,
that they might be able to see him in his greatness.'*

This is the mystery that everyone sees as he is able to see, but ultimately, we all see the One. ☸

be human being today



'The powerful urge towards religion, or humanism, or the artistic appreciation of beauty, or the acquisition of knowledge, or a combination of these things, which you have been feeling ever since your youth, is actually something very remarkable, and it can form the basis for a wholly new life. For this urge is in fact caused by the touch of the rose power, of the Kingdom of God within you. All you need to do now is to turn this inner basis into an absolute virtue, into a liberating virtue.'

J. van Rijckenborgh,
The Chinese Gnosis, chapter 27-II

The many lights of the candles during the Hindu Diwali festival symbolise the purification of hearts, houses and abodes of people and help to keep evil away

A METAPHOR FROM ANCIENT EGYPT



the brotherhood of truth

‘Art historians and scholars have referred us repeatedly, and with ever greater insight, to the relationship of the ancient Egyptian culture with the arts, and science often had to draw the conclusion that its discoveries were rediscoveries of the wisdom that was already applied in ancient Egypt, and the same is true for religion. We are unable to fathom the origin, the continuation and the significance of Christianity without knowledge of the ancient Egyptian cult.’ J. van Rijckenborgh

J an van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri often compared the Spiritual School to a sheepfold, or with a ship, a heavenly vessel. The image of the sheepfold goes back to a story from the Bible in which Jesus makes a profound comparison with thieves who enter the ‘sheepfold’ in the wrong way, in other words, who want to enter the serene, exalted field of life of original man with the I of nature. The comparison with a ship, with a heavenly vessel, has its roots – or should we say its ‘anchors’ – which lead us still further back in time, namely to the Egypt of the pharaohs.

Catharose de Petri taught that ‘The whole country of Egypt was one large initiation mystery’. He who was born in the Egypt of antiquity and during his entire life abided by Ma’at, the power of the right balance, justice and the right activity, was ensured that, when he was buried on the western bank, he would certainly be helped along in his journey to the eternal life – to Ra in Amenti – in the bark or ship of Isis. This is because Isis, the goddess of love, loved the people and had also revived the murdered Osiris. She would certainly ensure that the vital body of the deceased would be reassembled and would wake up in the fields of Amenti.

Waking up? Reassembling? How so? After all, all of Egypt knew the legend that Osiris was killed by his brother Seth – a power, a god, whom we may compare with Lucifer – after which his body was cut into pieces. Seth

was jealous of the power of Osiris who ruled Egypt – read: the world – during the legendary golden age, a time before death, illness and other misery existed. Harmony, prosperity and bliss ruled everywhere, for all beings. However, according to Seth, there was no development, no dynamism, no momentum and no growth. Therefore, an end had to be put to this spineless fussing of Osiris and Isis. He killed Osiris twice, the first time by guile, and the second time by brutal hatred. What did Seth do? During a feast in honour of Osiris, Seth arrived with a beautifully decorated chest, completely tailor-made for his brother’s body. ‘This nice chest is for him who best fits in it’ was written on it. Everyone wanted to lie in it, but when Osiris did so, Seth slammed the lid closed, locked the chest and threw it into the Nile.

According to the legend, this sarcophagus floated down the Nile and the crafty Isis, his sister-in-law, got wind of it and found Osiris again ‘somewhere near Byblos’. However, Seth did not leave it at that. The second time, he would do better! He cut Osiris’ body into fourteen pieces, and at different places, he fed all these parts to the crocodiles in the Nile! And again, it was Osiris’ sister-in-law, who assembled all the body parts. At every place where a part of the body was found, a temple was built. Helped by Anubis, they wrapped the parts in cloths, reassembled the body and returned Osiris to life.

This is the mystery of death and resurrection,

In the vital body or the ka, the deceased could be in the company of the gods and bring sacrifices to them as, opposite, to Isis and to Horus with the solar disk on his head

of transfiguration! In order to share in this great mystery, in which death was overcome by life, upon his death, every Egyptian was wrapped in cloths in order, like Osiris, to be revived by Isis' love!

HAPI – THE NILE The Nile, Ieru or Hapi to the Egyptians, was simultaneously symbol and reality. The river determined everything related to life. Because the Nile overflowed every year and deposited fertile silt, it was said in antiquity: 'Egypt is a gift of the Nile.' Life took place on the eastern banks of the Nile. It was there that the people worked, and that the temples for the gods and the kings were left standing for later times. On the western banks where the sun sets the tombs were found, the burial temples, the pyramids, the 'houses of eternity'

During his lifetime, every Egyptian had the task of seeking Osiris' dismembered body parts and of helping to rebuild the body. This should be interpreted symbolically. His hands should do a just work. His feet should keep him on the straight path. His mouth should speak the truth, Ma'at. His eyes should show him the Light of Ptah, the creative god in all things. His ears should listen to the truth that spoke in him and to the wisdom that thinks in the silence. With the breath of life, he should be able to inhale the fragrances of the original life and he should know that his heart is linked with the heart of the universe that beats in every human being and in all life on earth.

Thus, man was a reflection of heaven, the abode of the gods, and Egypt the reflection of the universe. As above, so below. On his final journey, if his heart was then weighed in the hall of Amenti and found to be as light as the feather of Ma'at, Isis was able to rejoin the body parts in his etheric body. The Egyptians called the vital body, or the etheric body: ka. The new arrival was able to work with this vital body, or ka, in the heavenly pastures, in Ra's eternal sunshine, until his vital body was so pure, so transparent that Isis could invite him into the bark of Isis and Osiris to travel further to Amun-Ra, the consciousness of the eternal spirit. It is, indeed, a fascinating philosophy – and Egypt was full to overflowing, with this symbolism!

THE BROTHERHOOD OF TRUTH These symbols were protected, and communicated to the hearts of people by the true priest of Hermes, the Brotherhood of Ma'at, the Brotherhood of Truth. However, Egypt was also a country like ours: a society in which Seth had sown the same forces of envy, greed and blind lust for power, which we encounter in our society today. This is why the importance and the preservation of divine equilibrium and, therefore, the link with the divine world, was entrusted to the Brotherhood of Truth. And for the Egyptians, this was symbolised by Hermes, or Thot.

The head of this Brotherhood was the pharaoh, who was not only the worldly ruler, but



also the physical representative of the Light on earth. Through him, who was not only 'the son of Horus' but at the same time, Horus himself though on earth, the heavenly kingdom, the true realm of humanity, was linked with Egypt.

THE PROTECTION OF THE UNIVERSE Wherever this was possible or necessary, the Brotherhood of Truth protected, in its building for eternity, the crafts and the arts, writing, regularity and order. But the Brotherhood of Truth also had another task. To ensure that the coherence between the upper world, Supernature, and our nature was maintained in the right way, the Brotherhood also worked on the western bank, the realm that was reserved for the inhabitants of heaven, the realm where the dead were buried.

Egyptians had little interest in their earthly life, but rather more for life after death. Their earthly dwellings were made of clay; even their palaces and villas were built with wood and thatch, whereas their tombs, which they

called 'the house of eternity', were made of the most precious and hardest stones. The pyramids were made of limestone, and covered with marble. The tombs in the Valley of the Kings and Queens were carved in hard rock and the work on them continued during a pharaoh's entire reign.

From the moment that his rule began on the eastern bank, the Brotherhood of Truth worked on the western bank on... the tomb of the pharaoh. Perhaps we have laughed scornfully about it; a dead man is dead... or is he? After all, such a tomb, however beautiful, won't do him any good. However, in ancient Egypt, this space was not a tomb, but a temple, a place of change, of transformation. This is why it was called: 'house of eternity'; and this is also why the Brotherhood of Hermes, which represented the activity of the great Brotherhood of Life on earth, worked on this 'temple' during the pharaoh's life.

The house of eternity was an expression in stone of the laws controlling creation on earth. And as long as the pharaoh controlled



In the Brotherhood of the Truth, you learned to work with the tools of the builders. The compasses showed them the perfect form, the circle. The square symbolised the right mode of life, sincere and honest to man and god. And the sounding line was the right action.

Right: Workers are building on 'the house of eternity' of pharaoh Seti I.

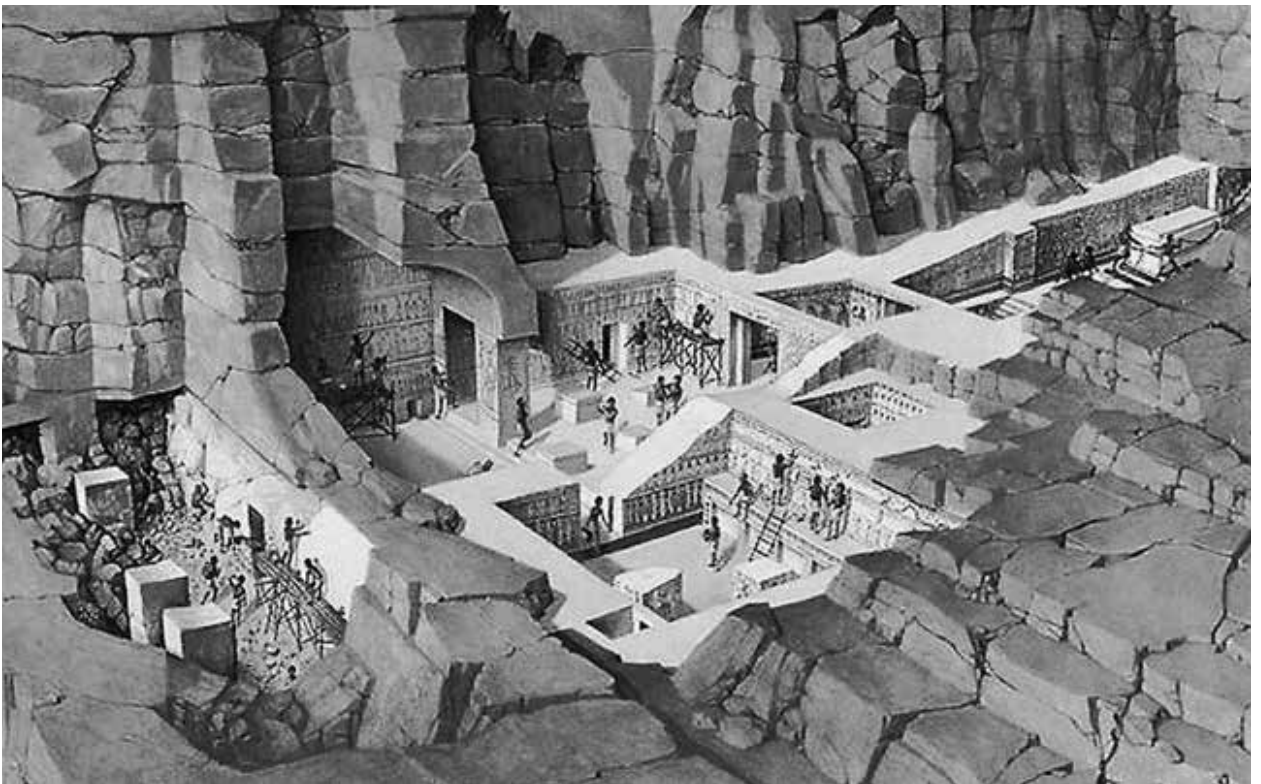
these laws, chiselling them in matter during his rule, his government, and hence Egypt, was ensured of remaining linked with the original world, with the Golden Age of Osiris, who was, after all, present there forever.

Near the Valley of the Kings, where nowadays the tombs of over sixty pharaohs can be found, was a workers' settlement, a small village. There scientists, architects, priests, writers, painters and labourers lived, in strict seclusion from the rest of society. None of them ever visited the eastern bank, and no one from the noisy world was allowed to visit the closed community of these devoted workers on the western bank.

Here the Brotherhood of Truth worked. No outsider could enter their settlement; nevertheless, no one worked there who had not sought this seclusion with joy and wholly of his own will. In order to be admitted, you had to have heard 'the call', and you had to be sure that you wanted to devote your life to Ma'at, to the Brotherhood. Even those who had been born in the village and had gone out into the world, did not return unless they had experienced this call deeply in their innermost being and were certain that it was their task to make a contribution to the Brotherhood!

Modern archaeologists of the conservative type claim that this workers' village was a camp where slaves were forced to do the heavy work of cutting and equipping the subterranean graves under appalling condi-

tions. However, modern researchers with a more open mind know that nothing is further from the truth: the workers had to be able to express what is most exalted. They guarded the greatest secrets of the initiates, which the pharaohs considered their greatest treasure. This would not be possible by force – the work was supervised by the pharaoh himself! It was of the greatest importance for the country that the work was carried out as harmoniously and accurately as possible. Only the best artisans could be admitted: after all, it was the deity himself who built the house of eternity and on earth, it was the Brotherhood that helped to accomplish the work. A young adult, who had heard the call, was admitted, but then a long apprenticeship began. Do not think that a labourer was immediately allowed to work on the house of eternity, where the ka, the living soul of pharaoh would live. Girls and women were trained to be priestesses of the goddess Hathor, the goddess of beauty, fertility, life and healing, who had her abode in the starry sky. They were taught medicine and remedies; they learned the herbs and the science of the serpents, in other words, during illnesses, they were able to distinguish when and how the consequences of a wrong mode of life had made a person ill. The boys and young men learned their trade to perfection, and only then could they be admitted to a group that was involved in the work. These groups were referred to as 'ships'. There were ships for stonemasons and



sculptors, painters, plasterers, etc. Each group formed the crew of a ship. Twenty-eight men constituted a crew, fourteen starboard and fourteen portside. Here we see once again fourteen: the number of Osiris.

Working in perfect harmony and always with an eye for the proper proportions, the right Ma'at, these groups, these ships, re-created the house of eternity or the heavenly vessel. For thousands of years, the same idea was expressed time and again. In each tomb, we find the same texts and the same images, so that people on earth would not forget the heavenly language, the signs of heaven and how to be in the company of the gods.

In the Brotherhood, you learned to work with the tools of the builders. In the museum of Luxor, we can still see a few tools. There are a pair of compasses, a carpenter's square and a sounding line. 'Ordinary tools' we might think, when we see them. However, in the Brotherhood, they were holy instruments for the twenty-eight crewmembers of a ship. The compasses showed them the perfect form, the circle. The square was the right mode of life, sincere and honest to man and god. And the sounding line was the right action.

Therefore, everything a crewmember does should be as pure as the sounding line, because wrong behaviour will never result in the right scale or measurements. The tools help us to determine the right way of acting. An instrument is in no way affected by our moods, our motives or our states of mind of the moment. It is always pure, always in rest and balance, and it never deviates.

In the bygone days of the pharaohs, the house of eternity was built with these instruments, in well-understood collaboration, and this is still what happens. In our Brotherhood, the Spiritual School, the heavenly ship that has been constructed for us, a crew is also needed that serves the truth, knows the right tools and is able to use them with the proper directedness. From close up, we have seen builders at work. We, too, have heard the call and will hear it again more emphatically in the times ahead, because now is the time to take the work in hand, in our own lives. Re-assemble the body parts of Osiris and rebuild his body, the vital body that overcomes time and death. Help with the work on the current house of eternity, the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross. ✪

thirteenth

In gnostic thought, much attention is paid to the meaning and hidden backgrounds of numbers. From the two, the new form develops, the son or the three. The soul rises through the spheres of the seven planets to the eighth and the ninth sphere, which are divine, and from the twelve, the thirteenth arises.

THIRTEEN

It is Friday the thirteenth. On the radio, we hear that there will, statistically, be fewer accidents on this day than on other Fridays with the same weather conditions. Conclusion: people are more careful or people stay at home.

Another example: you are planning your wedding, but everything has been booked already. Only Friday the thirteenth is still available. You book a holiday: there is no chair 13 in the plane, there is no room 13 in the hotel and not even a 13th floor. Peculiar, how persistent an old superstition continues on both sides of the ocean even into the 21st century. It must be something that goes very deeply. What would be its origin?

TWELVE

The number twelve is a quite different story. Throughout history, society and culture have been familiar with it. There were twelve gods on Mount Olympus, we know the twelve labours of Hercules, and the twelve tables in the epic of Gilgamesh. There were twelve tribes of Israel, twelve sons of Jacob, the twelve precious stones of the high priest and Jesus had twelve disciples. Orthodox Christianity knows the twelve holy nights, adopted from the mid-winter time of the Germanic peoples, during which time seemingly stops for a while, until the birth of Christ is celebrated on the thirteenth night. The Book of Revelations speaks of a city with twelve gates and a tree with





Twelve is the fullness of positive as well as negative. The thirteen liberates the twelve from its cycle and puts it on a higher spiral

twelve fruits. The round table of King Arthur had twelve knights, and the jury system knows twelve members of the jury. There are twelve signs of the zodiac; fairy tales speak of twelve princes, brothers (raven), fairies etcetera. And the human body has twelve pairs of cranial nerves.

PRIME NUMBERS

From the book *Rose and Cabala*¹, we quote: 'Twelve is a so-called rich number; it can be divided by 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6, the sum of the divisors being greater than the number itself. Such rich numbers are rare. They express a fullness: they contain all possibilities that exist. It is like a cornucopia. The whole of the twelve is waiting to be fulfilled. If no new situation arises, we can only fall back on what is old and familiar. This twelve as a quality expresses a desire for liberation from the cycle of spatiality. And the thirteen, a prime number [= indivisible], brings this liberation and leads the twelve to a new reality: the world of unification with what is higher. The number 13 contains the 1 as its deeper essence. This 13 liberates the twelve from its cycle and grants it the spiral, upward course.'

Earthly space and time, within which the human being walks his path of life, gains his experiences, and within which the human being is imprisoned, is expressed by twelve. Twelve is the fullness of positive as well as negative. The Jewish cabala knows the Shoshanna, the thirteen-petalled rose that has six red and six

white petals, and one colourless petal as the 13th one. In the book *The World Brotherhood of the Rosycross*², we can read in a text by Rudolf Steiner that in the 13th century, the Brotherhood of the Rosycross consisted of a college of twelve men, who had assimilated the sum total of the spiritual wisdom of ancient times. The 13th, Christian Rosycross, was like a new birth of the twelve streams of wisdom.

Hermes Trismegistus ascertains that the natural human being is, independent from his ordinary behaviour, dominated by twelve fundamental vices. He calls them ignorance, grief and sorrow, intemperance, desire, injustice, greed, deceit, envy, guile, anger, thoughtlessness, malice.³ They stem from the twelve elements of the zodiac, the twelve primordial forces of this nature. These primordial forces have become what the Gospel of the Pistis Sophia calls 'the twelve aeons'. We may derive from this that the human being is not only imprisoned in space and time, but is also in the grip of these twelve aeons, as in boundless grief. Just look around you.

How have these nature forces become aeons that control humanity, and how has humanity itself erected this prison and evoked these demons? Aeons are electromagnetic powers, and archons are the concentrations of these power principles. The aeons are caused by mental activity and by the creation of mental images. Mental images have the property that they are able to increase infinitely, provided that they are nourished by a similar mental activity. In

this way, nature gods are formed, nature forces, that will wholly control the human being. The head is continually busy thinking how the desires of the heart can be fulfilled. These mental images and desires do not have the same nature and vibration and, consequently, neither have the created aeons. Clouds of the lowest vibration have gathered closely around the earth. Layer after layer has been formed, with, at the top, the layer with the highest vibration. This exceedingly varied 'reflection sphere' forces humanity to continue its fateful course. The forces and the energies of these spheres are able to penetrate the human vehicles so that the human imprisonment is virtually complete. Man is lived. No one is able to get out on his own strength. A 'thirteenth one' is needed for this. This thirteenth one exists! It is what the ancient Gnosis called: the 'thirteenth' aeon, the radiation field of the Christ. It is the radiation field of the original, divine nature that has one goal only: to transform and raise the entire unholy creation to holiness, wholeness, and to transform the material world consisting of two poles, the opposites, to the transparent world of the unity. In our time, the vibration frequency of the earth increases and, therefore, everyone reacts to the touch from the spheres of that field. For each human being, the thirteenth aeon creates the possibility to enter a new, higher field of life.

THE REVERSAL

How is a human being able to bid farewell to what is old, that is, to the twelve ruling powers and to concentrate on what is new, on the thirteenth aeon? It is clear that a human being cannot possibly walk this path if he still experiences the touch of the twelve ruling aeons in his daily life as a pleasure. And here we see the reversal of the 'holy thir-

teenth' into the 'doom-predicting thirteenth'. In general, people who do not have the desire to fathom the great question of the why, feel quite all right in this world. They prefer that everything stay as it is – at least, no illness and war, of course – but basically, they are not fundamentally troubled by what they find within time and space and within themselves. And yes, if then the thirteenth fairy enters the stage uninvited (!), and predicts that the Sleeping Beauty will prick herself and sleep for a hundred years – as a symbol for humanity and for every human being in whom the divine principle is still asleep – this thirteenth fairy still does not cause any undue alarm.

Thirteen is threatening, thirteen breaks through what is familiar, and in this way, the holy number 13, the number of the new dimension, the higher spiral, becomes an unlucky number. We do not want it... We skip the thirteenth floor.

However, if you are ready for it, if you want to shake off the pressure of the old twelfefold, and if you long in every fibre for a fresh, new start on a new 'thirteenth floor', then this is possible. Then you can break the cycle of life and death, abandon the twelve and go up into the thirteenth, the higher spiral of life. And even if you are unable to do it on your own, it is nevertheless an absolutely autonomous process. Initially, you become aware of how closed you are, at least your emotional sphere, your inner being, your aura. Just as the Pistis Sophia, you go through the mist in order to reach the luminous certainty of the Christ field. You are assisted by a group, which carves a shaft through this collective field of mist, and which is actually indispensable in this. It concerns a collective of Light-seeking people and they form a new 'twelfefold', from which a truly new, thirteenth (aeon) speaks. It is a truly magical, gnostic-magical miracle! And in

others, this thirteenth will again awaken the 'holy agitation' – the thirteenth becomes the number of the highest happiness.

Catharose de Petri writes about this in her preface to *The Gnostic Mysteries of the Pistis Sophia*⁴: 'How does the human being live towards this thirteenth aeon? The candidate in the gnostic mysteries is confronted with thirteen transformations of the soul, which must be struggled through in order to achieve the true rebirth of the soul. We see these transformations of the soul take shape in the thirteen songs of repentance of the Pistis Sophia:

In the first Song, the Pistis Sophia discovers dialectics and humanity's judgement by it. She sings the Song of Humanity.

In the second song, she achieves the self-discovery of her nature state. She sings the Song of Consciousness.

On this basis, she sings the Song of Humility with regard to the one true Light.

Then follows the Song of Demolition: the ego is being led to the grave.

The Song of Resignation is the next stage: the Pistis Sophia is in full self-surrender.

On this basis, the Song of Trust is sung. The Light is supplicated for in true faith.

In the seventh song of repentance, the Pistis Sophia sings the Song of Decision. It is either the rise or the fall.

Subsequently, the pursuit takes place. The aeons of nature powerfully attack the Pistis Sophia, and she sings the Song of Oppression. After having sung the Song of the Break-

through, she positively shakes off her enemy. Next, the Pistis Sophia sings the Song of the Answered Prayer. She sees the Light of Lights for the first time.

The Power of her innermost faith is now subjected to a final test. She sings the Song of the Testing of the Faith.

Twelfth, she experiences the great temptation that may be compared with the temptation in the desert. She sings the Song of the great Tribulation.

Finally, the Pistis Sophia sings the Song of Victory: the soul has arisen; she sees and encounters the Spirit, her Pymander!

Thus, on this basis, the reader can to a certain extent reflect on the divine wisdom, on the divine power, which must find access in prepared human beings. Wisdom and power are the first conditions to be able truly to walk the path to the liberation of the soul and to lead it to a good end.' ☸

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be human being today



'We repeatedly draw your attention to the fact that time is pressing for a radical, far-reaching change of your entire mode of life.

However, the magnetic systems are disturbed. This causes our needs to differ; we thwart each other and so we face each other in fundamental, biological and hence structural hostility and we unintentionally cause resistance...

Even if you were to be the most modest person and go your way through life with the greatest timidity, you would still be guilty, because there will always be situations in which and through which you will be forced to act. Therefore, understand that whenever you use a concentration of astral force, no matter how, this will have an earth-binding and destructive effect.

You will feel that in such a situation there can never be any question of goodness. Social and moral good is always linked to evil. How true appear the words of the Christ: *No one is good but God alone.*'

Catharose de Petri,
The Living Word, chapter 38

Hope, despair, threat and authority – or how 'the magnetic systems clash during the non-violent protests of the Occupy movement, Wall Street 2012



'the divine plato' as guideline

Guided by Plato's ideas, Marsilio Ficino considered the human being capable of rising up to the divine through the longing and the imagination (the *imaginatio*) of the soul. Within Neo-Platonic thinking, the imagination received a mediating function between what is material and what is divine and through (exalted) inspiration, the devoted soul was able to rise above the prevailing ideas and views and achieve 'ecstasy'. In this view, the soul clearly has two aspects: on the one hand, it links the human being to matter and submerges in it; on the other hand, the soul is able to go out to what is divine.

Part III of Ficino's Book of Letters.

Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) was called 'divine translator' because of his translations of Plato, Plotinus and Hermes Trismegistus. He was the soul and the mirror within the strongly changing nature of the era that we nowadays refer to as the Renaissance. It was a period in which the worldly power was redistributed, which caused a shift of axes between the Christian and the Arab world, culminating in the fall of Constantinople (1453).

What is less known is the rescue at the time of many thousands of Greek manuscripts of the pre-Christian, the platonic, the early Christian and the hermetic world of ideas. And in Florence, Ficino became their translator. Initially, Cosimo de' Medici had ordered him to study the Greek language; then he began translating Plato, and subsequently, Hermes Trismegistus, immediately after Cosimo had acquired the *Corpus Hermeticum*. In this way, the streams of wisdom of the clas-

sical world found a new channel, a safe haven, a new spiritual centre.

The renewing world vision that Ficino and his circle propagated in this way, deeply affected the world of established Christian thinking, and created room for a new religious awareness. Ficino's academy in Florence was, therefore, called the 'academy of the soul'. It showed that, in particular, the awareness of the soul within the human personality, its presence in this world and its quest for the meaning and origin of life, should be placed in a much broader, indeed, wholly new context.

His academy called upon the human being to see and explain life and the world in a greater coherence, and particularly, to begin to understand the meaning of the mysterious relationship between God – cosmos – man. Daily, Ficino was in dialogue about this with his friends, amongst who were authors, artists, philosophers, painters and architects; he was a



BOOK REVIEW MARSILIO FICINO THE LIFE OF *PLATO* AND OTHER LETTERS

personal friend and adviser of the select circle of prominent citizens who were aware that they bore the responsibility for a new society. This resulted in many letters (originally in Latin) that have been preserved and translated, now also into Dutch. Rozekruis Pers has recently published the third part: *The Life of Plato and other letters*. These letters have a timeless value. After all, Ficino is known as platonic philosopher, hermetic magician, priestly minister, inspired astrologer, wonderful physician of the soul and we may justly consider him the spiritual guide of a spiritual world revolution.

FRIEND OF THE YOUTH He considered it his task, nothing more and nothing less, to save living, pure Christianity from certain ruin by linking it with the great Greek wisdom of antiquity and the Egyptian wisdom of Hermes. In addition, he was a friend of the youth, and tried out new teaching methods that were more appealing than the classical system used in schools at the time. In these methods, he used – and how could it be any different – Plato as a guideline.

Socially, he has also meant a great deal: he was an exceptional friend of man who was able to bridge deep chasms and clear up misunderstandings, but, above all, his contemporaries remember him as an example of someone who propagated the human dignity in a royal way. This yielded him unadulterated friendship from European society of the time.

This is the reason why his Florentine academy was considered a dispensary for the soul that could be consulted daily by thousands of people seeking inner healing. His heart was mild and so unfathomably deep that friend and foe were able to find a comforting place in it. Marsilio Ficino was not only a model of the universal man, the *uomo universale* of the 15th century, but as a living example for humanity, he showed society a new way out. He was deeply convinced of the spiritual effect of the divine that is present everywhere in creation as an ensouling energy and is nowhere limited within itself.

Cosimo de' Medici gave Ficino the Villa Careggi in Florence to establish his Academy



Leonardo da Vinci. A musician; possibly Marsilio Ficino as a young man, 1485.

Oil on walnut wood, London,
The National Gallery



LETTER III

He who is not wise regarding himself, wastes his wisdom.

Marsilio Ficino to the moral philosopher without morals: greetings.

How absurd is a tailor whose clothes are all torn!
How useless is a doctor who is always sick!
How distressing a musician whose lyre is untuned to his voice!
Just as base is a moral philosopher without morals.
He who speaks well but acts badly, speaks in vain,
whether he is preaching good
to men who will not believe him,
or beseeching gifts from the gods
who will not grant them.

NETWORK In *The Life of Plato and other letters*, we experience not only how Ficino considered Plato his teacher in everything, but also how he, with playful ease, linked universal wisdom with the life and the problems of his friends. As mentioned before, these friends constituted a very broad and important network, personalities who facilitated the bloom of the arts and sciences, and the development of the universal man during those hopeful

and spiritually light years of the Renaissance. He gave a motto or title to all his letters that in themselves yielded a splendid collection of aphorisms. This third part of the Letters ends with a description of Ficino's life by Giovanni Corsi in which the latter, as a contemporary, once again clearly explains the great work that Ficino has accomplished for western society. ❁

LETTER IV

**The medicine for worldly maladies is
adoration of God who is above the world.**

Marsilio Ficino to Bernardo Bembo of Venice, the illustrious knight.

Since man's heavenly Father has ordained that our homeland will be heaven, we can never be content while we dwell on earth, a region far removed from our homeland. Yet such a fate is common, not only to men, but to all created things without exception, so that nowhere do they seek rest save at their own source; and for the sake of rest they try to set their end where they had their beginning. Thus water and earth descend to the depths; but fire and air seek the heights; moles and suchlike hide themselves in the bowels of the earth; fish born in the sea, swim in the sea. Even so the souls of men, by a common, natural impulse, continually seek heaven, whence they are created, and the King of heaven, beyond. But since the natural desire for God, instilled in us by God, ought not to be unfulfilled (otherwise supreme reason, which does nothing in vain, has bestowed it upon us in vain), it follows that the souls of men are eternal, in order that one day they may be able to reach the eternal, divine good which their nature desires. From what we have said it follows that, as our souls are never fulfilled with earthly food, nor while they gorge on earthly things can they enjoy the heavenly feast, so in this life they strive with all their might to cling to the King of heaven. For the less they are tainted by the bitter tastes of



earth, and the more they are refreshed by the sweet waters of heaven, the more eagerly are they drawn towards the spring of sweetness which is above heaven. The nearer we approach the Lord of the world, the further we depart from worldly slavery. And, as in our homeland we hold fast to Him by beholding and rejoicing, so, away from that homeland, we hold fast to Him by total loving and adoring. For this reason, nowhere is there found a medicine adequate for earthly diseases, except divine love and worship. Nor is that wrong. For in any illness, where the medicine does not overcome the condition of the evil humour, it is transformed into the humour, disorders the body, saps the strength and thus increases the burden upon them.

Therefore, as all our infirmity and adversity is of the body, and worldly, undoubtedly anyone who tries to help an ill of this sort with bodily and worldly medicines labours in vain.

Believe me, the need here is for a far stronger medicine; a medicine, I say, which is spiritual and above the world, whence it may drive out bodily and worldly illnesses. Were we suffering only from one ailment or another, then perhaps any doctor would suffice.

But our plague is everything evil. Therefore our antidote is everything good.

Our disease is insatiable desire and continual turbulence, therefore our doctor is immeasurable good and eternal peace.

Should anyone deny that our medicine is the true adoration of God, there is no remedy left for his ills, and all hope of health is removed.

But in truth, he who trusts in divine remedies, grows strong as soon as he trusts.

