

# Mysteries and Symbols of the Soul

Becoming a spirit-inspired person



Roze kruis Pers



MYSTERIES AND SYMBOLS

OF THE SOUL

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**MYSTERIES AND SYMBOLS  
OF THE SOUL**

Becoming a spirit-inspired person

ANDRÉ DE BOER



Rozekruis Pers | Haarlem

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Rozekruis Pers

Bakenessergracht 5

2011 JS Haarlem

(023) 532 38 52

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

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

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## preface

As human beings, we do not only live in an era of change but most notably also in a change of era. We find ourselves at the beginning of a 2160-year period that is known as the age of Aquarius or the Aquarius era. Consolidated structures are eroding, as new cosmic forces drive mankind towards consciousness and renewal. It concerns a development that is entirely in keeping with the divine plan. This development, this changing from a material to an etheric predominance, finds its purpose in building regeneration out of degeneration.

The profoundly changing circumstances force us to become aware of our soul and to start being inspired by it. How can we do this? We do not have a cut and dry answer to this question. We might search for inspiration in the classical holy texts of several traditions and in the writings of spiritual torchbearers. They may be able to alter our vision on the relationship between God, cosmos and man to ignite our soul flame and to illuminate the spiritual path for us.

Every person is ensouled, but it is so hard to explain what the soul is. The soul is invisible and immeasurable. Scientists of the past have tried to prove the existence of the soul by weighing a human body before and after its passing away. The average of 21 gram difference in weight that was discovered still has not made the soul any more tangible.

Originally, man was a spirit-soul being. The original soul medi-

ates like an instrument to connect body and spirit. The soul, this mediator between body and spirit, can be restored. The essence of this ether form resides in the top right heart chamber and is a spirit-spark, a divine atom. It is the primordial atom that will be the source of the birth of new mankind.

This primordial atom is a miracle in itself. It is a sevenfold atom of radiant beauty. When the birth of the inner Christ is unfolding in someone, the start of recreation in that person is enabled. In a sense, the gnostic fire causes an explosion of this sevenfold atom. In that process, one of the seven principles remains behind in the heart. A second principle forms the light-vesture in the shape of a pentagram. The other five principles lie within this light-vesture and correspond with the head, the hands and the feet.

Approximately five hundred years ago a renewing development called the Reformation was heralded in Europe. Then, Martin Luther attached a placard with 95 theorems on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg in order to address the deplorable state of affairs of the Church at that time. The Reformation has considerably contributed to the development of mankind but it was accompanied by much strife and rivalry. This caused an enormous fragmentation and crystallisation in the Christian world.

Roughly a hundred years after the start of the Reformation in 1517, a lot of people realised it had not amounted to what had been hoped for by many. Dogmatism and religious dissensions were paramount.

This explains the urgently necessary impulse of the Rosycross, expressed particularly by Tobias Hess and Johann Valentin Andreae at the beginning of the seventeenth century in southern Germany, by Jacob Boehme in eastern Germany, by John Dee and Francis Bacon in England and by Jan Amos Comenius in the Czech

Republic. Together with many others, they made an effort to come to universal world reformation based on the timeless mystery wisdom, science, religion and arts. They labored for the future by sowing seeds and it is only now that we are able to harvest the fruit of this labour on a large scale.

As mankind, we stand on the threshold of a complete world reformation based on universal spiritual principles that are increasingly recognised and understood by many. The internet has a key role in this process. Already in 1641, Comenius foresaw something that we now know as the world wide web. He referred to it as every-one-everything-everywhere.

This book, ‘Mysteries and Symbols of the Soul - becoming a spirit-inspired person’, has been created in the International School of the Golden Rosycross and was published in Dutch in 2016. It is part of the book series of Spiritual Texts Academy. The editions are intended to be a helping hand to 21<sup>st</sup>-century people who are looking to make the journey on a path of spiritual consciousness and renewal in daily life. The editions are based on carefully selected classical spiritual texts and insightful reflections on these texts. They draw on the more than four-century old living tradition of the Rosicrucians. Every book by the Spiritual Texts Academy is spiritually inspired, widely oriented and deeply rooted.

In ‘Mysteries and Symbols of the Soul’, the soul and the path of soul-spirit development are discussed based on observations about the nine holy texts originating from several traditions, Advaita Vedanta, Hermetism, Kabbalah, Gnostic Christianity, Raja Yoga, Judaism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Pauline Christianity. This book is the first volume of a trilogy of gnostic mysteries intended for modern people. You will be able to recognise these three books by a sun on their covers, each one in a different colour.

The mysteries have an inherent universal character and therefore do not exclusively target specific religions, philosophies or spiritual movements. Universal wisdom is expressed by many and various religions but unfortunately, it often has been watered down, subject to crystallisation and degeneration, causing the spirit to recede from it.

In 2017 and 2018, the second and the third volumes of the said trilogy was published in Dutch. In the next few years, we intend to publish these books in English, entitled 'Mysteries and Challenges of birth, life and death – becoming a new man' and 'Mysteries and Hymns of God, cosmos, man - realising the divine plan'.

The last chapter, entitled 'The soul as a world worker' centres on the great importance of cooperation in the spiritual field. Ideally, this book would be used in a contemplative circle, for a group of like-minded people discussing and vivifying its contents would allow for a deeper understanding and realisation in their personal lives. After all, the purpose is to become a spirit-inspired person who will cooperate to heal the world and mankind and who will contribute in the realisation of the divine plan.

Rozekruis Pers,  
Doride Zelle

# introduction

## THE WAY OF THE SOUL

*Midway upon the journey of our life  
I found myself within a forest dark,  
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.*

*Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say  
What was this forest savage, rough, and stern,  
Which in the very thought renews the fear.*

*So bitter is it, death is little more;  
But of the good to treat, which there I found,  
Speak will I of the other things I saw there.*

*I cannot well repeat how there I entered,  
So full was I of slumber at the moment  
In which I had abandoned the true way.*

*But after I had reached a mountain's foot,  
At that point where the valley terminated,  
Which had with consternation pierced my heart,*

*Upward I looked, and I beheld its shoulders,  
Vested already with that planet's rays  
Which leadeth others right by every road.*

ALIGHIERI DANTE,  
*Divina Commedia, Inferno, from Canto 1*  
(translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

How can a pen describe what is beyond words? How can a fragment attain unity? How is a person able to think thoughts that are beyond thinking, or create concepts out of thoughts? How is a person, mortal as to the body, able to have thoughts about that what supersedes mortality? Dante attempts to do so and it is said that the honour of being the world's greatest poet has been bestowed on him.

Every person has a soul like every person has life, but there is no one able to praise her to her full riches. Is the soul not an immortal being? But what then is immortal? Where do I end and where does the soul begin?

*'The soul is one', so we are able to read in world literature. 'She is so elementary, that she continues to surprise us, to touch us, to move. We owe quite a number of valuable remarks to people who are not very astute or profound and who have yet been able to pinpoint effortlessly what we need and what we have been pursuing in vain for so long. Often, the soul acts on the basis of what is felt and what remains unsaid, rather than what is said during a conversation.'*

The soul is the observer and revelator of truth. She feels, knows what is true in a second, and I owe her all that I am able to recognise in beauty, truth and goodness. Only simplicity, purity and courage are able to accept her. Thinking of Mozart's Magic Flute: *'Valiant of spirit, pure of heart, soon he will be worthy of us.'*

The spirit brave, the heart pure, Self-aware, that is how you engage with her. Alas, we human beings are not one, we are fragments. Like a kaleidoscope, our inner worlds are subjected to the flashing of colours and fragments of our interests and concerns, delights and doubts.

But she, the soul overarches every gathering and unconsciously, we look for her in friendship and love. And she is so much more generous! She does not exclude and as I am surrounded by her

glow, when she endows me with her radiance from time to time, I immerse everyone, I am one with everyone, I embrace everyone with love, also those who taunt me and wound me. Oh, not I, far be it from me, but she in me!

*'We know better than we do'*, says Emerson. *'We do not yet possess ourselves and we know at the same time we are much more.'* We live in that state of tension and the electric energy is crackling inside me while this is slowly becoming clear. How often have I not experienced this as being true when I interact with colleagues, my loved ones, who often are my antipodes! Is there not always something higher or beyond the eternal interaction between people? Is the soul not the motive force behind each and every one of us looking for the soul? Soul to soul. Spirit to spirit. Unity to the One? Is that the soul, then? That what yet has to come into being, that what yet has to develop? But yet, I live, I speak and I reveal what stirs and speaks inside of me. That must be the soul, too. What else can it be?

*'Water flood calls out to water flood, once your waters are effervescent,'* how apt these ancient words bridge both extremes. Old, but definitely new to each and every one who will rediscover it.

Plato teaches us that the human soul can be compared to a charioteer in a horse-drawn chariot. Both horses in front of the cart are fiery and winged, they can take to the sky, yes even traverse the realms of the gods. One animal is noble and elegant, it knows passion and has a determined will and perseverance. The other animal is a rambunctious and obstinate horse, full of greed and passion. Lastly, the charioteer is the sage, the grandmaster, the spirit. When the horses traverse the realm of the gods, the wings of the soul are nourished particularly and will develop subsequently. However, they will languish and die as a result of the opposite, the ugly and the bad. In this beautiful image from *Phaedrus*, Socrates and Plato describe the earthly battle in order to reach the state of

full consciousness. Nourish yourself with the right ideas, live a dignified life, remember!

When the charioteer bridles his horses properly, the world of the soul, called the celestial spheres by Plato, will be unlocked for him. The forces of these spheres, the gods, will help the soul with each successive step. And thus, each development will spring the next one.

The following words by Plato reach us through Socrates.

*'How numerous and delightful are the movements in the celestial spheres where the blissful gods dwell and each fulfils his own task. All those who wish it and are able will participate and follow because there is no envy in the line of gods. One is able to control the chariots of the gods without effort because the horses are in harmony. But the other chariots are in trouble. The bad horse, ill-trained by the charioteer, bucks and attempts to pull the latter down to the earth. Major difficulties and struggle await the soul down there. However, the souls that are called immortal, will come outside after they have reached the top and line themselves up at the border of the celestial spheres.'*

Now, Socrates takes the listener to the outer edge of the celestial spheres, to the point where the soul has become entirely transparent and aglow, the moment where it will merge with the spirit.

He continues:

*While the souls are standing on that border... 'the rotation of the celestial spheres carries them around and they behold what is outside the spheres. The realm that extends itself beyond heaven has never been praised for its true merits by an earthly poet, nor will it ever be. There, the colourless, formless and immaterial essence prevails, enveloped by knowledge.'* – The Spirit!

Infinite, eternal development, where never-ending delight, invariably creative energies, brimming compassion and truth reign.



Truth that bears the knowledge of all causes, Gnosis, where souls are self-creating causes! Socrates continues, *'Since the divine spirit is nourished with understanding and pure knowledge, it is delighted to briefly see the great reality of the world of the spirit again. That divine spirit finds its nourishment in the face of the True and thrives on it until the rotation takes it back to the same place. During that rotation, the spirit can see justice, it sees self-containment and knowledge. This knowledge has no beginning, this knowledge does not separate the realities of what the spirit considers to be truths at some point. It is the knowledge that resides in Being.'*

Is there a better way of saying what Gnosis really is? This is the way of the aspiring soul.

*'Now the other souls. One is following the gods very well and has become quite similar to them. She lifts the head of the charioteer upwards to the extra-celestial spheres and is carried by the rotation, although she is hampered by the horses and has trouble seeing reality. Another soul erects itself, falls back down and it is only able to see reality occasionally because of the unruly horses. All the other souls are persistently trying to ascend, but are not able to do so and are carried by the rotation of the lower atmospheres. There, they trample and displace each other, and try to surpass one another. Thus, confusion, competition and hard labour arise, causing many souls to be hurt by the inadequacy of the charioteer. Many also have their wings broken. After much effort, no one has something to show for their pains, they have never seen reality. And once they have left, they nourish themselves with false perceptions. The reason why the soul makes every effort to behold the Plain of Truth is because over there, it will be able to take the right kind of nourishment for the noblest part of the soul. The Plain of Truth, these lushest meadows, have the nourishment that allows the soul to grow its wings, to ascend.*

*There is a law of Justice that ensures that every soul that has seen but even a glimmer of the truth in the company of a god, remains un-*

*harmed until the next rotation. When the soul succeeds in persevering, she will remain unharmed forever.'*

Seldom, a more beautiful and passionate plea has been written. Do not take this too literally, because the soul is not by any means a literal being. One should read it as a plea to regain that what seems to drown in the tempestuousness of external factors so unpleasantly quick, the soul. No human factors and alleged vices are keeping us from getting to know her better and more intimately. Those are part of being human, and it's the charioteer's job to manage these and keep them balanced.

What initially oppresses us the most, is the restlessness that forces us to stay away from contemplation and reflection. A restlessness that seems to be part of the atmosphere, keeping us from the unparalleled panoramas that are 'unveiled in the Light of the soul' as the Rosicrucians say.

The Mysteries of the Soul know no limitations, no death, no suffering. They are immortal and offer eternal deepening and immeasurable happiness, because those are, among numerous other ones, characteristics of the soul. This present book, that has been given the same aspiring title, attempts to be an aid to start this never-ending discovery.

Peter Huijs

*O Light Eterne, sole in thyself that dwellest,  
sole knowest thyself, and, known unto thyself  
and knowing, lovest and smilest on thyself!*

*That circulation, which being thus conceived  
appeared in thee as a reflected light,  
When somewhat contemplated by mine eyes,  
within itself, of its own very colour  
seemed to me painted with our effigy,  
Wherefore my sight was all absorbed therein.*

*As the geometrician, who endeavours  
to square the circle, and discovers not,  
By taking thought, the principle he wants,  
even such was I at that new apparition;  
I wished to see how the image to the circle  
conformed itself, and how it there finds place;  
but my own wings were not enough for this,  
had it not been that then my mind there smote  
a flash of lightning, wherein came its wish.*

ALIGHIERI DANTE,  
*Divina Commedia, Paradiso, from Canto 33*  
(translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

Insight is the open gate  
to our Liberation,  
cleanses my entire blood-state,  
give me aspiration.  
From that Source springs the force:  
Rose's power and endless grace  
over all my pathways.

Craving for Salvation's might,  
the Mount I am nearing,  
and in Gnosis' sublime light  
grief is disappearing.  
I will strive, all my life,  
in a great endeavour,  
to be free forever.

The surrender of the self,  
self-annihilation,  
is the way to nullify  
nature's machination.  
From that doom we see bloom  
Rose-tree with its Roses,  
thriving in the Gnosis.

The new attitude-of-live  
need wise contemplation.  
He who walks the Path to Life  
lives his true vocation.  
Night and day, ban delay,  
lived in I-declining,  
with the Group aligning.

Onward go those on the Path  
who are this world's strangers.  
They all treasure the true Way,  
they traverse all dangers.  
Always light, Salvat's Height  
conquers the dark earthly might  
in the New Morn's daylight.

PART 1

**MYSTERIES OF THE SOUL**



*You do not consist of any of the elements –  
earth, water, fire, air, or even ether.  
To be liberated, know yourself  
as consisting of consciousness,  
the witness of these.*

Ashtavakra's song

## CHAPTER 1

# LIVING FROM A SENSE OF UNITY

SPIRITUAL TEXT:

ASHTAVAKRA'S SONG – CHAPTER 1<sup>1</sup>

**J**anaka: 'O Master, tell me how to find detachment, wisdom, and freedom!'

Ashtavakra: 'O friend, if you wish to be free, shun the poison of the senses. Seek the nectar of truth, of love and forgiveness, simplicity and happiness.

Earth, fire and water, the wind and the sky - you are none of these.

If you wish to be free, know you are the Self, the witness of all these, the heart of awareness.

Set your body aside. Sit in your own awareness. You will at once be happy, forever still, forever free.

You have no caste. No duties bind you. Formless and free, beyond the reach of the senses, the witness of all things.

So be happy!

Right or wrong, joy and sorrow, these are of the mind only. They are not yours. It is not really you who acts or enjoys.

The heart of awareness, you are everywhere, forever free. Forever and truly free, the single witness of all things.

But if you see yourself as separate, then you are bound. "I do this. I do that." The big black snake of selfishness has bitten you!

"I do nothing." This is the nectar of faith. So drink and be happy!

Know you are one, pure awareness.

With the fire of this conviction, burn down the forest of ignorance. Free yourself from sorrow, and be happy. Be happy! For you are joy, unbounded joy.

You are awareness itself. Just as a coil of rope is mistaken for a snake, so you are mistaken for the world.

If you think you are free, you are free. If you think you are bound, you are bound. For the saying is true: You are what you think.

The Self looks like the world. But this is just an illusion. The Self is everywhere. One. Still.

The Heart of Awareness free. Perfect. The witness of all things, awareness without action, clinging or desire.

Meditate on the Self. One without two, exalted awareness. Give up the illusion of the separate self. Give up the feeling, within or without, That you are this or that.

My friend, because you think you are the body, for a long time you have been bound.

Know you are pure awareness. With this knowledge as your sword cut through your chains. And be happy!

For you are already free, without action or flaw, luminous and bright. You are bound only by the habit of meditation.

Your nature is pure awareness. You are flowing in all things, and all things are flowing in you.

But beware the narrowness of the mind! You are always the same, unfathomable awareness, limitless and free, serene and unperturbed. Desire only your own awareness.

The heart of awareness whatever takes form is false. Only the formless endures. When you understand the truth of this teaching, you will not be born again. For God is infinite, within the body and without, like a mirror, and the image in a mirror.

As the air is everywhere, flowing around a pot and filling it, so God is everywhere, filling all things and flowing through them forever.'





## CHAPTER 1

# LIVING FROM A SENSE OF UNITY

## REFLECTION

As a human being you are so much more than simply a complex biological organism with intelligence. You are also much more than a psychological individual with personal thoughts, feelings and will power. Your very essence is pure consciousness. Your very essence is soul: a potential living connection between the unity and the multitude, between the eternal and the temporary, between the Holy and your personality. To experience this connection is a great joy, a supreme bliss. Every human being is invited to free himself from delusion, to sense this lasting peace and inner joy.

This possibility may seem very distant from how you experience yourself, your life and the world right now. That is because you are living in a self-created prison of delusion which has arisen because you have placed externalities above yourself, because you have identified with transient forms. These words are all but flattering. The author of 'Ashtavakra's song' certainly did not express them in order to make reproaches but to make an appeal to you to pay attention to who you really are, in essence: the witness of revelations of a magnificent reality, all-pervasive and perfect.

The founders of movements that grew to become world religions encouraged their followers to no longer identify with their mortal personality but to merge into a higher soul life in order to become and to be a new man, inspired by the spirit. The concepts 'consciousness' and 'soul' are essential to many religions and worldviews. There are enormous differences among world religions and there is also a wide range of teachings to be found within the separate world religions.

## Numerous similarities

However, if we look at the more esoteric and contemplative traditions within religions, we find numerous similarities among them. That is logical, as esotericism and contemplation concern the living experience of a reality that is at odds with the world as perceived by our senses and observed with our psyche. Therefore it cannot be easily understood by everyone but only by the ones who are, in a sense, 'initiated' into the other reality.

The structure of the living experience of humanity is universal – just as the anatomy of the human body is the same in different people – but it requires a certain education to gain access to that living experience. In this book, *'Mysteries and symbols of the soul'*, we explore that aspect of ourselves known as soul, Self, inner man or consciousness. To our usual way of thinking, soul is a mystery. It is neither a subject nor an object, yet it can be experienced. It has no shape, it goes way beyond time and space and still it can grow within us.

When we connect the concepts 'consciousness' and 'soul' with one another, then we mean being aware of your consciousness as something that characterises humanity. It is good to realise this fact since, according to spiritual principles, consciousness is the basis of all manifestations. A well-known Sufi saying expresses this idea as: 'God sleeps in the rock, dreams in the plant, moves in the animal and awakens in man'.

We can define and understand the living experience of the soul only through the use of universal symbols, analogies and myths, all of which are part of the world of experience of the soul. Our rational thinking capacity is a great gift, one we very much need to be able to live in the sensory perceptible world. However it is not intended that we become stranded in it or further develop ourselves exclusively in that direction.

As human beings we must not go back to the mythical consciousness of our remote ancestors; we can no longer linger in

our intellectual brain consciousness, even though it could still be extended endlessly. We must advance to the gnostic soul consciousness – to the world of experience of the soul, to the domain of the archetypes – to which every human being is summoned internally.

The first part of this book is called ‘Mysteries of the soul’, and it consists of nine classical spiritual texts and nine reflections about them. The selected spiritual texts come from nine different traditions, successively:

Advaita Vedanta;  
Hermeticism;  
Kabbalah;  
Gnostic Christianity;  
Raja Yoga;  
Judaism;  
Buddhism;  
Zoroastrianism; and  
Pauline Christianity.

There are many symbols that refer to the human soul. We link the following symbols of the soul to the nine reflections of the first part. In the nine essays of the second part, named ‘Symbols of the soul’, these are further elaborated:

1. The soul as a centre;
2. the soul as tree;
3. the soul as flame;
4. the soul as traveller;
5. the soul as fortress;
6. the soul as creator;
7. the soul as sevenfold being;
8. the soul as mirror; and
9. the soul as world worker

## **To become receptive**

The objective of this book is to make you conscious of the life of the soul and to increase your receptivity for its influences. As a consequence you will experience life differently. Not the life of *your* soul, because you do not have a soul. The soul has you, and it is barely able to express itself in you. You yourself form the barrier that makes it difficult or impossible for the soul to manifest itself. This remark is not intended to be personal, because this fact applies to nearly everyone on earth.

You have the right to be here, in this world. More than that: you must be here! And you can become transparent for the light of truth that glows imperishably. You can be renewed internally and experience great happiness. You can cooperate joyfully with the realisation of the divine plan of creation; however, for this purpose, you must first undergo a thorough transformation process.

Holy scriptures play an important role in many religious and esoteric traditions. Their origin is found in the world of the soul which manifests itself through an underlying numerical structure that has not been laid there on purpose. These scriptures are therefore often expressed in poetry – intended to be recited or sung – rather than prose. Among the holy scriptures that have been chosen for this programme are three songs: Ashtavakra's Song, the Hymn of the Pearl and a hymn by Zarathustra.

In translating the original holy scriptures into another language the particular numerical structure is most often lost, but they still enable you to connect with the high, shining level of consciousness that created them. The same applies, for instance, to visual arts and music. Artistic creations that are inspired by the world of experience of the soul possess the ability to temporarily raise the consciousness to the world of the soul. They therefore can be experienced as food for the soul.

In this programme we will not explain the chosen texts very extensively, not only because we have no room for it within the

chosen set-up but also and primarily because it would be of little use. If we would clarify phrase after phrase and verse after verse – assuming that we had the capability – you would process the information in a way that you are used to process other information. This raises your level of knowledge, but it does not make you a new you.

Holy scriptures can be seen as gifts that invite you to work with them. Only if you start your inner work with holy scriptures can they have a transforming influence. Certain holy texts are repeatedly spoken or sung as mantras in spiritual traditions, thus deeply engraving them in the subconsciousness of those involved. This conditioning not only creates new, powerful neural connections in the brain, but also allows forces to be absorbed from the domain of the soul, the world of experience of the archetypes.

These energies transform the living experience, purifying and renewing it down to the level of the physical body.

### **Kōans**

The Zen tradition often works with so-called kōans. The Zen master gives a kōan – a kind of riddle – to the pupil. It is the task of the Zen pupil to ‘crack’ this kōan in order to find both understanding and also the right answer. Ultimately, the answer that the pupil produces is not the primary objective, but rather the efforts that he or she has made to come to a correct answer, as it is only the effort and not the answer that works in a transforming way. The efforts are needed to transcend the usual way of thinking.

Inner renewal is not a merit but a result of grace, of heavenly forces that are given. As a result of aspiration – that is your longing and efforts to be inwardly renewed and better equipped to serve – you can receive divine grace; the all-encompassing love can then manifest itself and new capacities will gradually develop. If you would consider yourself as the source or the cause of spiritual growth that you are experiencing within yourself, you would fall

prey to self-identification and you would not form a living connection between heaven and earth. Like many other holy texts, Ashtavakra's song can be seen as a large collection of kōans. Every verse contains wisdom that we can probe further. The scripture begins with a genuine and profound question that Janaka poses to the wise Ashtavakra. Janaka is a mighty and influential personality who has become conscious of the fact that he is bound and does not live in the truth. For this reason he is longing for liberation and detachment. Ashtavakra tells him, and us too:

*'O friend, if you wish to be free, shun the poison of the senses. Seek the nectar of truth, of love and forgiveness, simplicity and happiness. Earth, fire and water, the wind and the sky - you are none of these. If you wish to be free, know you are the Self, the witness of all these, the heart of awareness. Set your body aside. Sit in your own awareness. You will at once be happy, forever still, forever free.'*

Here Ashtavakra encourages Janaka to give up his fascination for the sensory perceptible world in order to allow the qualities of the soul – like selflessness, simplicity, compassion, peace of mind and sincerity – to manifest. He also advises Janaka not to identify with all the forms that appear in his consciousness but to be a witness to them, because only if he is a neutral witness will his very nature be happy, peaceful and free from bonds.

### **Mindfulness**

In fact, Ashtavakra here advises practicing 'mindfulness', a phenomenon that has gained popularity during the past decades. Called 'self-observation' by the esoteric teacher George Gurdjieff, mindfulness is one of the aspects of the eightfold path that was described by Buddha as 'right mindfulness'.<sup>2</sup>

Someone who is mindful is attentively present in the here and now, observant without judgement and accepts what is. When there is no judgement and a situation is accepted entirely as it is, there results a certain unity, or non-duality. Living from this state

of unity (or non-duality) of the soul provides great advantages. Numerous scientific studies have proven the beneficial effects of correctly-practiced mindfulness.

In society, mindfulness is used mainly as a means to reduce stress and overcome and prevent physical and psychological complaints, thus improving the functioning of the personality. Within spiritual traditions it is not the body or the personality that is central, but the soul. Buddhists speak about 'loving friendliness', a quality of the soul that is nowadays referred to as tenderheartedness or compassion. Genuine spirituality aims at a new genesis, based on the soul, which Ashtavakra calls 'awareness'.

He says: *'Right or wrong, joy and sorrow, these are of the mind only. They are not yours. It is not really you who acts or enjoys. The heart of awareness, you are everywhere, forever free. Forever and truly free, the single witness of all things. But if you see yourself as separate, then you are bound.'*

According to Ashtavakra, the thinking capacity makes distinctions and gives meaning to events. That approach is recognised not only within spiritual traditions but also, to a certain extent, within psychology. For example people are taught during therapeutic sessions that they should be conscious of how the reality that they experience is determined by their thinking, due to a certain sequence in which something is expressed.

### **Thinking and reality**

When you experience a certain event, it evokes a certain thought in your mind. This thought subsequently leads to a certain feeling and that feeling then results in a certain behaviour. Finally the behaviour leads to certain consequences. So if in your life you experience certain consequences that you do not want, then you should begin by changing the events (image 1). Naturally, that is not always possible because you cannot completely control your life. It is possible though to direct your thoughts about an event for a large

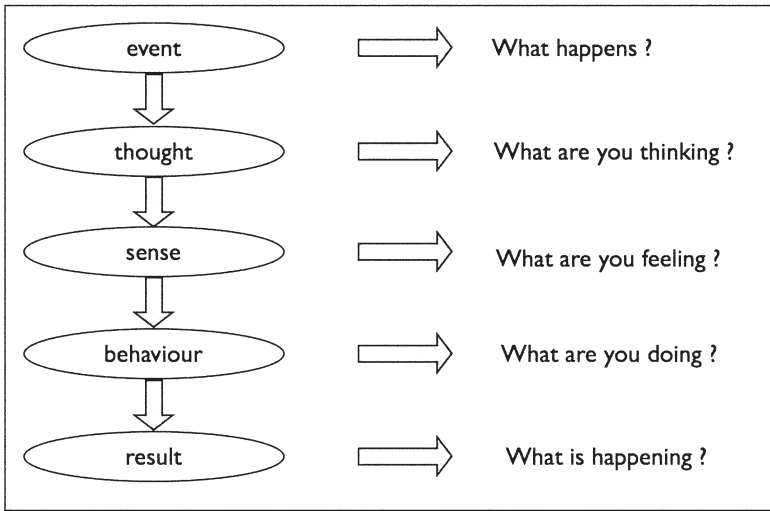


image 1: the influence of thinking, feeling and doing, and their mutual connections

part. If you begin to do this, your feelings and behaviour are influenced and thus also the consequences.

On a spiritual path people gradually free themselves from the prison of delusion through inner detachment, thus enabling them to dedicate themselves to their actual assignment: to give soulful significance to revelations of reality so that they are in accordance with the domain of the soul, with the world of experience of the archetypes. The essence of that is thinking, feeling and acting from the world of the soul. When earthly forms are connected with heavenly structures in this way, then actual liberation appears on the horizon both for the person concerned and, at the same time, for all humanity as well as other life-waves.

In the earthly dimension we primarily experience repetition, attachment and fear. When we gain access to the dimension of the soul there will be an experience of unity, freedom and love. Thus we can signify much more for humanity when we live from the soul rather than from our self-preserving personality, as the development of the soul benefits everything and everyone.



Ashtavakra's Song says: *'Your nature is pure awareness. You are flowing in all things, and all things are flowing in you. But beware the narrowness of the mind! You are always the same, unfathomable awareness, limitless and free, serene and unperturbed. Desire only your own awareness. The heart of awareness whatever takes form is false. Only the formless endures. When you understand the truth of this teaching, you will not be born again.'*



*Here below, o soul, is the physical world,  
the abode of unsatisfied desire, fear,  
degradation and sadness;  
there above is the world of the spirit,  
the abode of satisfaction, freedom from fear,  
high dignity, and joy.*

The admonition of the soul

## CHAPTER 2

# TRANSCENDING DUALITIES

SPIRITUAL TEXT:

THE ADMONITION OF THE SOUL – CHAPTER 3<sup>3</sup>

You, o soul, are simple, they are multiple; you are consistent, they are in mutual conflict; you are devoid of guile, they are deceptive; you are truly existent, they have no true existence; you are a good thing lasting and stable, they are things falsely coloured, illusions, mutable and perishable. Shun them, then; be on your guard lest you be enslaved by them, and thus prevented from attaining to your appointed end. Abandon not, o soul, your essential nature, which is simple, true, and of high dignity; and trust not to these corporeal things, which are multiple, mutually repugnant, deceptive, base, and perfidious; lest you be led astray, and fall into destruction.

How long, o soul, will you continue to be vexed by unsatisfied desires, ceaselessly fleeing from each sensation to its contrary, now from heat to cold and now from cold to heat, now from hunger to saturation and now from saturation to hunger.

As long as you are in want of these corporeal goods, you are vexed by unsatisfied desire for them; if you get possession of them, then, all the time that you have them, you are tormented by fear of losing them; and if they quit you, and you no longer have them, then you are freed from that fear, but the loss of them affects you with grief and sorrow.

So lay down, o soul, the cause of this pain and sadness. Do not regret to leave thus sadness, sorrow, fear and pain, caused by

unsatisfied desires. Do not let it bother you any longer that you, satisfied in this way, become free of fear and happy.

Lay aside then, o soul, the thing whereby you feel these pains and grief. Regret not that in doing so you are quitting griefs and cares, fear, and the pain of unsatisfied desire; and be not annoyed that you attain to satisfaction, freedom from fear, and joy.

For he who prefers unsatisfied desire to satisfaction, fear to absence of fear, and degradation to high dignity, is a fool; he who is a fool goes astray; and he who goes astray comes to destruction.

Here below, o soul, is the physical world, the abode of unsatisfied desire, fear, degradation and sadness; there above is the world of the spirit, the abode of satisfaction, freedom from fear, high dignity, and joy.

You have seen both worlds, and had experience of both; now make your choice between them, in accordance with your experience. You can dwell in which of them you will; you will not be repelled or rejected from either. But it is impossible for a man to be at the same time vexed with unsatisfied want and fully satisfied, tormented by fear and free from fear, exalted and degraded, joyful and sorrowful. And therefore it is impossible for a man to combine love for this world with love for the other world. That cannot possibly be done.

You have grown forth, o soul, from a certain tree-trunk; and of that tree you are a branch. However far the branch may go forth from its trunk, there is still connection and contact between trunk and branch whereby every branch seeks nutriment from its trunk. If anything were interposed between the trunk and the branch it would cut off from the branch its supply of nutriment, and so the branch would forthwith wither and die.

Meditate on this, o soul, and be assured that you are destined to return to your creator, who is the trunk out of which you have grown. For that reason, rid yourself of the defilements and burdens of the physical world, by which you are hindered from returning to your own world above and to the trunk out of which you have grown.

If you wish to shun base and ignoble deeds fix your thought on the source whence they issue, and flee from it; that source is love of the things of this world. If you aim at doing noble and divine deeds, fix your thought on the root whence they spring, and plant that root in yourself and foster it; that root is contempt for the things of this world. And in so doing, let there be no false pretence. Take care that you be not, through excess of caution, led on to cowardice, lest you lose courage and the praise it wins, and undergo humiliation and the ignominy that goes with it.

All that is immaterial is true being, and all true being is immaterial. But the space of that which is immaterial always corresponds to the extent of the space of the matter that is assigned to it.

Remove yourself, o soul, as far as possible from the dismemberment, but if you are led by the things themselves to the universal unity, accept this willingly, and acquiesce in it; by so doing, you will be relieved from the trouble of care and toil. Even so, in the darkness of the night, a man seeks light from a lamp, which gives him much trouble to keep alight; but when the sun has risen, he no longer needs the lamp, and is released from that trouble.

Beware of applying yourself to things that are low and unworthy, lest the habit of doing so be established in your mind, and you acquire a character repugnant to your proper nature, and, by desire and appetite for these things, be cheated out of your return to your

true home. The revered and exalted maker of the universe is the highest of all things; apply yourself then to high things, and, by becoming like to the source of your being, draw nearer and nearer to him who created thee. And know that high things always join themselves to high things, and low things to low things.

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

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



## CHAPTER 2

# TRANSCENDING DUALITIES

## REFLECTION

As a soul, you are called to become a link between the unity and the multitude, a living connection between heaven and earth. This new genesis will arise when you realise, based on boundless awareness, that the soul is formless and timeless; when you experience that your consciousness is a revelation of a grandiose reality, all-pervasive and perfect. The domain of the soul is characterised by unity, freedom and love. These are not objective characteristics but rather qualities that can be experienced intensely, for the world of the soul is not localised in time and space but encompasses living experience, where there is no distinction between subject and object. To lead a conscious and attentive life in the here and now – to be alert, in fact – contributes to the possible awakening of the soul. Another classical and proven way to make the soul wake up and become active is to let holy texts speak to you and to reflect on them. Mistakes are easily made in interpreting holy texts, mainly because different kinds of language are used all together. A distinction is often made between:

1. *Descriptive language*, where the phrases literally reproduce what is meant; this language is usually the easiest to understand;
2. *Veiled language*, where jargon that has been developed to identify notions that are not very concrete and sometimes also to hide deep truths from persons who do not understand;
3. *Mystery language*, where texts or parts of texts have been received from heavenly areas of experience. These texts are usually completely incomprehensible until they are understood on the basis of insights and powers derived from spiritual traditions.

It is also a very important fact that holy texts have been created within a certain context, that they are meant for certain people, in a certain period, in a certain area, in a certain culture. The Quran is said to have been given by the angel Gabriel to the prophet Mohammed and written down in virtually one session. The gospels in the Bible were probably inspired mainly by oral tradition.

### **Divine revelations**

The Quran and the Bible can be considered divine revelations in which universal truths have been revealed. These revelations are not the only disclosures of the divine reality. There are many other holy scriptures from many cultures and from different eras. It would not be wise to seek the truth only in holy scriptures. If you would place divine authority so exclusively outside yourself, you would tie yourself to forms that can never be entirely true, ignoring your inner knowledge and the prospect of divine revelation in the present moment.

The sacred does not reveal itself only in holy scriptures but also in nature and in man. In this regard the classical Rosicrucians from the seventeenth century spoke of the book T (*Theos* = God or Testamentum = covenant), the book M (*Mundi* = world) and the book H (*Homo* = man).<sup>4</sup> Humans are capable of reading these three books, that is to say, we can probe into deeper realities, into other dimensions, in order to fulfil our inner assignment. (See image 2)

In the past, much trouble has been caused by holy texts having been taken out of context, objectified and interpreted literally. Humanity is still struggling with significant problems arising from fundamentalism and fanaticism in the pseudo-religious field. Fortunately fundamentalism – the literal interpretation of holy texts – does not always lead directly to social difficulties, but it can contribute to the encapsulation of the soul, hindering its manifestation and development. To prevent mistakes in the



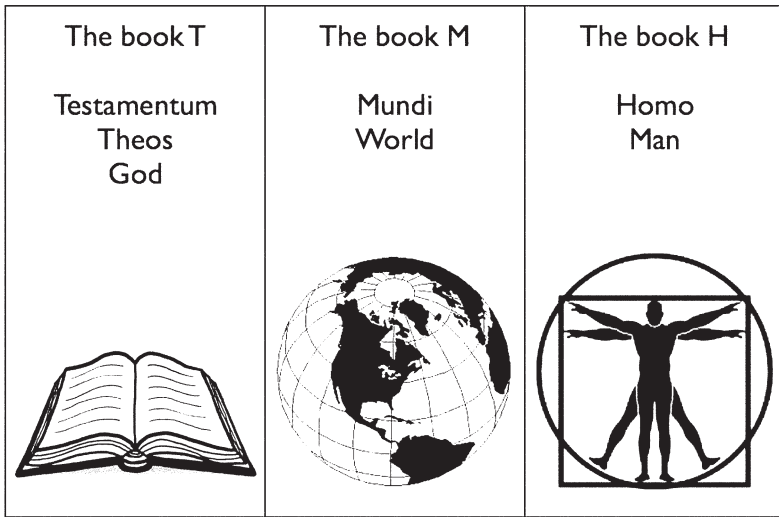


image 2: three ways in which the sacred reveals itself

interpretation of holy texts, it is wise to verify interpretations not only against your inner self but also especially against an authentic spiritual tradition, or better still, against several spiritual traditions. Tested methods are in use within these circles and experiences and findings have been extensively shared and often written down as well.

In chapter 1 of Ashtavakra's song there is a verse that can be easily misunderstood: *'You have no caste. No duties bind you. Formless and free, beyond the reach of the senses, the witness of all things. So be happy! Right or wrong, joy and sorrow, these are of the mind only. They are not yours. It is not really you who acts or enjoys'*.

These words are meant for the soul. The soul is totally free indeed, having no desire. Some people infer from the above text that they are free if they are aware of the soul and live mindfully. Such living does lead to a certain enlightenment, but not to the resurrection of the inner man of which the holy scriptures speak, as clarified in the book *'Spiritual Easter and Pentecost'*.<sup>5</sup>

## Impeding conditioning

The resurrection of the inner man is the result of a new creation that unfolds in an entirely natural way, for such a renewal has nothing to do with time and space. Yet going a spiritual path requires a considerable amount of time and attention because dissolving obstructing conditions takes time. When those barriers are gone, the new creation unfolds by itself. It is comparable to a block of wood that is hidden under a heap of stones at the bottom of a deep lake. The wood has a natural tendency to rise to the surface of the water due to its lower density, but it can do that only after all the stones on top of it have been removed.

According to several authentic traditions, the awakening of the soul evokes an inner struggle. And it requires a lot of attention, energy, time and endurance to win this struggle in favour of the soul. Within Islam the term *jihad* is used in this respect. This notion is often mistakenly translated and understood as a holy war involving violence. In reality the word *jihad* refers to the aspiration and the struggle to do the right thing, to live in accordance with Allah's will.

To live a mindful and heartfelt life is merely the beginning of the spiritual path. On the basis of awareness and receptivity for the truly holy and inner elevation, a personal and shining, twofold garment of the soul will gradually be woven as one progresses on the gnostic path. First the shining garment of the soul – symbolized by the pentagram or five-pointed star – will be woven, and subsequently the golden robe of the spirit-soul.

Chapter 3 of the booklet '*Admonition of the soul*', accredited to the legendary Egyptian sage Hermes Trismegistus, may seem very clear at first glance. Both for the successful entrepreneur having achieved all that he or she wants, and also for the loyal employee suffering from burn-out in the rat race of high-performance society, the following age-old words may be a feast of recognition and a source of encouragement.

*'How long, o soul, will you continue to be vexed by unsatisfied desires, ceaselessly fleeing from each sensation to its contrary, now from heat to cold and now from cold to heat, now from hunger to saturation and now from saturation to hunger.*

*As long as you are in want of these corporeal goods, you are vexed by unsatisfied desire for them; if you get possession of them, then, all the time that you have them, you are tormented by fear of losing them; and if they quit you, and you no longer have them, then you are freed from that fear, but the loss of them affects you with grief and sorrow.*

*So lay down, o soul, the cause of this pain and sadness. Do not regret to leave thus sadness, sorrow, fear and pain, caused by unsatisfied desires. Do not let it bother you any longer that you, satisfied in this way, become free of fear and happy.'*

### **To give up fascination**

This text is clearly meant to drive those people who have experienced the limitations of a life that focuses only on the sensory perceptible world to higher life, to the life of the soul. There is a risk that those people will exchange the fascination for the sensory world for a fascination for the world of the soul because they cannot wait to be liberated from the earthly life, which they experience as a vale of tears. This is an understandable albeit selfish thought that does not comply with man's spiritual assignment to be a living connection between heaven and earth.

If earth is your exclusive focus, you live in a symbolic darkness and do not establish a connection between heaven and earth. If heaven is your main focus – or what you consider to be heaven, although it is not – you neglect the earthly reality and you cannot be a bridge between the two.

Classical holy texts sometimes lack subtlety because they are intended to drive people to inner renewal, to actual soul life. It is therefore necessary that impeding conditioning that may have been of value in the past but is no longer functional, is broken open,

so that processes of renewal can take place. This renewal will, in the end, also become manifest in the cells of the physical body.

In this twenty-first century our minds are much further developed than the minds of our ancestors. The New Zealand psychologist James Flynn concluded that the average scores of intelligence tests have continued to increase over the past century. He attributes this mainly to the ever-growing complexity of society which has gradually increased the importance of abstract thinking.

Now that our cognitive capabilities have grown significantly, it would be to our benefit to interpret the subtle meanings of holy texts through inner comprehension. It would, for instance, be foolish to consider material reality as an illusion, as suggested in the texts of Ashtavakra and Hermes. Whoever thinks that matter is not real should try to walk through a closed door.

### **To live in illusion**

Matter as such is not an illusion, even if it does keep changing form. We are living in illusion, however, if we consider the sensory perceptible world and forms in general as the only reality and immerse ourselves in it, just like the chained people in the allegory of Plato's cave consider the moving shadows on the rock wall as their only reality. Hermes Trismegistus is – to put it mildly – not expressing approval about someone who is focused solely on the hunt for earthly delights. In *'Admonition of the soul'* he wrote:

*'For he who prefers unsatisfied desire to satisfaction, fear to absence of fear, and degradation to high dignity, is a fool; he who is a fool goes astray; and he who goes astray comes to destruction.'*

Although this is a very clear statement, it can cause quite a bit of pain. Does it demonstrate soul quality to call a fellow human being who hunts for unsatisfied desires a 'fool', when in fact he is doing the only thing that he can do? It does not, does it? The statement is easier to accept when it refers to someone who has inner knowledge, someone in whom the soul is awake and who has

every possibility to avoid the wrong track but has intentionally chosen to follow it anyway.

Is satisfaction really a better choice than chasing unsatisfied desires? Chasing desires, after all, at least provides experience while satisfaction can lead to stagnation – ‘*use it or lose it*’. It is no use to isolate yourself in order to gain false satisfaction. The earthly life has to be lived.

This interpretation implies that here it is wrong to view ‘satisfaction’ as a synonym for passivity; harmony is the issue here. The soul human being is not passive; she is harmonious, because there is a good balance between activity and passivity, between breathing in and breathing out. The satisfaction that is mentioned here refers to *resting in consciousness*: there can be serene silence, but it can also occur in noisy, crowded places.

Ashtavakra said: *‘Earth, fire and water, the wind and the sky – you are none of these. If you wish to be free, know you are the Self, the witness of all these, the heart of awareness. Set your body aside. Sit in your own awareness. You will at once be happy, forever still, forever free. You have no caste. No duties bind you. Formless and free, beyond the reach of the senses, the witness of all things. So be happy!’*

We have all followed foolish ways and all of these ways have provided experiences that were often far from pleasant, but they did make us who we are now: a person probing into the mysteries of the soul. So foolish ways are followed not only by fools and fortunately they do not all lead to a downfall. Moreover fools who recognize their own foolishness can be transformed into enlightened sages.

This text from Hermes Trismegistus speaks directly to the soul and makes a clear distinction between two life fields. The soul is asked to make a choice in order to free itself from its inner attachment to the world in which everything in our experience moves between polarities. As a human being we can only be conscious of differences, of contrast, and so we need polarities in order

to become conscious. And if we are able to handle the sword of the power of distinction – that is the gift that we receive after countless lived experiences, the knowledge that can cut through your chains – then the inner master speaks to us:

*‘Here below, o soul, is the physical world, the abode of unsatisfied desire, fear, degradation and sadness; there above is the world of the spirit, the abode of satisfaction, freedom from fear, high dignity, and joy.*

*You have seen both worlds, and had experience of both; now make your choice between them, in accordance with your experience. You can dwell in which of them you will; you will not be repelled or rejected from either. But it is impossible for a man to be at the same time vexed with unsatisfied want and fully satisfied, tormented by fear and free from fear, exalted and degraded, joyful and sorrowful. And therefore it is impossible for a man to combine love for this world with love for the other world. That cannot possibly be done.’*

### **Inner comprehension**

Here too inner comprehension is essential. The text says that the love for this world and the love for the world of the spirit cannot be united. Does this not contradict the assignment to love everything and everyone in an impersonal sense? And does it actually comply with the vocation of the inner man to be a living connection between this world and the world of the spirit? Real love, after all, does not exclude anything or anyone!

The expression ‘love for this world’ obviously means ‘fascination for this world’ and ‘attachment to this world’. This fascination and this attachment have to disappear so that one can live in ‘the world above’ while at the same time working in ‘the world below’. Then such a man or woman is a living connection. He or she is like a tree, firmly rooted in the earth and at the same time stretching its top up into heaven.

Man can be a living connection between the sensory world and the

divine world if he crosses – in a symbolic sense – the water of the ever-changing world of forms. The following passage of Hermes can give us insight and hope as well as inspire us to overcome the dualities internally and thus gain, from the non-duality or unity, the rest of consciousness that we seek.

*'A boat, as long as it floats on the water, cannot be still or at rest; or if at any moment it is still, it is so only by chance, and forthwith the water begins again to shake and toss the things which float upon its surface.*

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



*When the personality-soul and soul  
have duly readied themselves,  
they are worthy to receive the 'spirit-soul'.  
The spirit-soul stands preëminent, and not to be perceived.*

Zohar



CHAPTER 3

**CONNECTING THE THREE GRADES  
OF THE SOUL**

SPIRITUAL TEXT:

ZOHAR<sup>6</sup>

The ‘personality-soul’ (*nefesh*) stands in intimate relation to the body, nourishing and upholding it; it is below, the first stirring. Having acquired due worth, it becomes the throne for the ‘soul’ (*ruah*) to rest upon, as it is written, ‘until the spirit be cured upon us from on high’ (Isa. 32:15).

And when these two, personality-soul and soul, have duly readied themselves, they are worthy to receive the ‘spirit-soul’ (*neshamah*), resting in turn upon the throne of the spirit (*ruah*). The spirit-soul stands preëminent, and not to be perceived. There is throne upon throne, and for the highest a throne.

The study of these grades of the soul yields an understanding of the higher wisdom; and it is in such fashion that wisdom alone affords the linking together of a number of mysteries. It is *nefesh*, the lowest stirring, to which the body adheres; just as in a candle flame, the obscure light at the bottom adheres close to the thick, without which it cannot be.

When fully kindled, it becomes a throne for the white light above it, and when these two come into their full glow, the white light becomes a throne for the light not wholly discernible, an unknowable essence reposing on the white light, and so in all there comes to be a perfect light.

It is the same with man who arrives at perfection and is named

'holy' as the verse says, 'for the holy that are in the earth' (Ps. 16:3). It is likewise in the upper world. Thus, when Abram entered the land, God appeared before him, and Abram received *nefesh* and there erected an altar to like grade of divinity.

Then he 'journeys toward the South' (Gen. 12:9), and received *ruah*. He attained at last to the summit of cleaving to God through *neshamah*, and thereupon he 'built an altar to the Lord,' whereby is meant the effable grade which is that of *neshamah*.

Then seeing that he must put himself to the test, and pass through the grades, he journeyed into Egypt. There he resisted being seduced by the demonic essences, and when he had proved himself, he returned to his abode; and, actually, he 'went up out of Egypt' (Gen. 13:1), his faith was strong and reassured, and he attained to the highest grade of faith. From that time, Abram knew the higher wisdom, and cleaved to God, and of the world he became the right hand.



## CHAPTER 3

# CONNECTING THE THREE GRADES OF THE SOUL

## REFLECTION

**A**s a soul, you are called to be a link between the unity and the multitude, a living connection between heaven and earth. If, based on boundless awareness, you acknowledge that the soul is formless and timeless, and you experience that your consciousness is a revelation of a grandiose reality – all pervasive and perfect – then this realisation evokes a new genesis. You were born to abandon slavery and return to the trunk from which you have grown. You are called to become free from misery, humiliation and error in the land of strangers. You are invited to live in the world of the soul, of rest of consciousness, inaccessible to fear, showing a high dignity and joy.

### **How can you know all this?**

You know this certainty from the living experience of your state of awareness and also from holy scriptures of humanity, which can be viewed as maps of the soul-world. With these maps, with your inner compass of awareness and with help from above, you can start your symbolic journey home, pursue it and complete it.

Many problems with which humanity struggles are direct results from the fact that people do not or only barely live from the world of the soul – the pure astral field of experience of the concrete archetypes, the field of unity, freedom and love – but rather identify themselves with their personalities. They search for solutions in the dimensions of the sensory perceptible world and the psychologically perceptible world, but these methods usually address the symptoms rather than the causes.

In general, sustainable solutions for problems are not to be found in the dimensions in which they arose. In the light of a higher dimension – the world of the soul – difficulties vanish into thin air and there instead is radiant joy. How can you gain admission to and live from this mysterious world of the soul?

Through self-knowledge! Not without reason were the words *'gnothi seauton'* – 'know yourself' – written above the entrance of the temple of Apollo in Delphi.

### **Self-knowledge**

How do you achieve self-knowledge? Perhaps by studying psychology? Psychology is the science of the psyche, and *psyche* is the Greek word for *soul*. Psychology, however, does not engage the soul, at least not what esoteric traditions mean by soul; rather it engages the earthly personality. A stable personality is an important condition for proper functioning in the material world.

If a personality is unstable and is troubled by certain disorders, psychological or psychiatric interventions may offer solutions; but they can never lead to the world of the soul. You can do countless psychological tests: to determine what type of person you are, for instance; to find out your strong points; to discover where work still needs to be done and what really suits you. This work can, of course, be very useful in order to construct a way of life that accords with who you are. But do those interesting test results really tell you who you are? They are all forms, labels, that stand alone and do not relate to the essence. Ashtavakra advises us not to identify with forms. He sings:

*'Earth, fire and water, the wind and the sky - you are none of these. If you wish to be free, know you are the Self, the witness of all these, the heart of awareness. Set your body aside. Sit in your own awareness. You will at once be happy, forever still, forever free.'*

*You have no caste. No duties bind you. Formless and free, beyond the reach of the senses, the witness of all things. So be happy!'*

The Advaita Vedanta tradition, a philosophical-religious movement within Hinduism, emphasises that man can come to real self-knowledge through awareness. Throughout history this practice has been known as *raja yoga*, of which Patanjali is regarded as the progenitor because of his reference work compiling the *Yogasutras*. This type of yoga is quite different from what the western world usually considers yoga to be, which is *hatha yoga*.

Raja Yoga does not primarily concern physical exercises. Yoga means unification and as such refers to unification of the high and the low, of the heavenly and the earthly. This spiritual unification is also found in the Kabbalah, a mystic tradition within Judaism. The Kabbalah values the study of the three grades of the soul. In the most important book of the Kabbalah, the *Zohar*, we read: *'The study of the three grades of the soul gives some insight into the higher wisdom; and only in this way can wisdom connect a number of the mysteries'*.

### **Study and reflection**

To study the soul is not contradictory to awareness; the two can even reinforce each other. Study can give guidance to perceptions, for example, and can promote the power of discrimination and help assimilate and stimulate mental energies. Conversely perceptions can be an invitation to study the soul in order to give it more depth and put it in context. To achieve self-knowledge by studying and reflecting on what is revealed by living experience and the spiritual tradition is a practice that is known in India as *jnana yoga*. This philosophical type of yoga is closely related to what the western world calls *gnosis*, inner knowledge, the knowledge of the heart. The most important features of *gnosis* have been defined by the well-known Dutch theologian Roelof van den Broek as:

- the conviction that the essential core of the human being derives from a divine world of light and peace and must return to

- it, but has been kept from it in many ways in the material world in which we have become entangled;
- this understanding of the origin, current position and destination of humanity at the same time means our liberation from the grasp of the material existence and our return to the divine world;
  - self-knowledge and knowledge of God are therefore two sides of the same coin;
  - this knowledge is not the result of rational reasoning, however, but arises from inner enlightenment on account of a revelation from the divine world;
  - this spiritual insight, the gnosis, is not accessible for everyone, but only for those who are worthy, and for that reason alone its essence must be kept secret.

If you wish to realise something, then it is necessary to have an idea for it. This idea will gradually gain more and more life and clearer contours; it will guide your thoughts, feelings and actions and at a certain moment it will concretely manifest itself in the form of consequences. That is why Ashtavakra sings: *'If you think you are free, you are free. If you think you are bound, you are bound. For the saying is true: You are what you think'*.

What are the three grades of the soul? In Hebrew they are called nefesh, ruach and neshama and the terms all refer to the notion 'breath'. Helena Blavatsky, founder of modern Theosophy, referred to the three grades of the soul as self (lower case), Self (with a capital) and SELF (in capitals). We might also speak of I, not-I and I AM. In this programme we use the terms personality-soul, soul and spirit-soul. These terms run parallel with what Christianity calls body, soul and spirit.

The personality-soul can be experienced as a garment of light, or aura, around the physical body and within it, expressing itself particularly in the blood, the nerve fluid, the hormone fluid, the

spinal fluid and the brain. The system of the seven large chakras is part of the personality-soul as well.

The notion 'spirit' in the triad of body-soul-spirit does not have much to do with our common reasoning power – the spirit of thought, or the mind, which is part of the earthly personality-soul – but rises way beyond it, belonging to another dimension. The spirit or spirit-soul encompasses, among other things, the power to create in accordance with the divine plan.

### **The three souls**

It is good to keep in mind that there are not three souls. There is only one soul and, in principle, everyone can experience these three dimensions with their clear hierarchy and great differences in range of action. The personality-soul is much more powerful than the physical body and encloses it. The soul is potentially much more powerful than the personality-soul and encloses it. The spirit-soul is potentially capable of greater things than the soul and encloses both it and the personality-soul.

Image 3 gives an impression of how we can imagine this in relationship to the four worlds of experience that will be covered in the next narrative. The reality is, of course, different since it is impossible to draw something that goes beyond time and space. But such an image can indeed contribute to our understanding and make clear that the soul entity can awaken as a trinity from the divine spark.

We read in the Zohar:

*'It the personality-soul, the lowest stirring, to which the body adheres; just as in a candle flame, the obscure light at the bottom adheres close to the thick, without which it cannot be. When fully kindled, it becomes a throne for the white light above it (the soul), and when these twosome into their full glow, the white light becomes a throne for the light not wholly discernible (the spirit-soul), an unknowable*

*essence reposing on the white light, and so in all there comes to be a perfect light.'*

The comparison with a candle flame is very striking, for the soul is often experienced as light or as a garment of light. In every human being the basic structure of the threefold soul is present within the human microcosm. This microcosm is now only partly vivified: the personality-soul is active and sometimes there are also influences from the soul, reflected in certain virtues like compassion, love, harmony in word and deed, mild patience and equanimity, for instance.

Consciousness, therefore the soul, is definitely not equal to the spirit-soul. The spirit-soul stands apart from the soul and encloses it. The spirit-soul is sometimes presented as a spirit field that sends its influences out to the personality-soul. Consciousness, the soul, reacts to it and carries out the prospective suggestions of the spirit-soul.

There are, as yet, very few people in whom the spirit-soul is active. That is not surprising, if we know that the Zohar tells us that the spirit-soul is active in the person who has perfected himself and is called 'holy', meaning that he has actually been 'healed' and has forged the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul into a harmonious and dynamic unity. That becomes possible when a twofold, personal, shining garment of the soul has been woven: the shining garment (the soul) and the golden robe (the spirit-soul). When the spirit-soul has become active in a person, he or she is a living connection between heaven and earth. The mortal earthly personality-soul is then transfigured into an immortal heavenly personality-soul. That does not mean that his or her growth has come to an end because development goes on forever, even outside time and space, from strength to strength, from glory to glory.



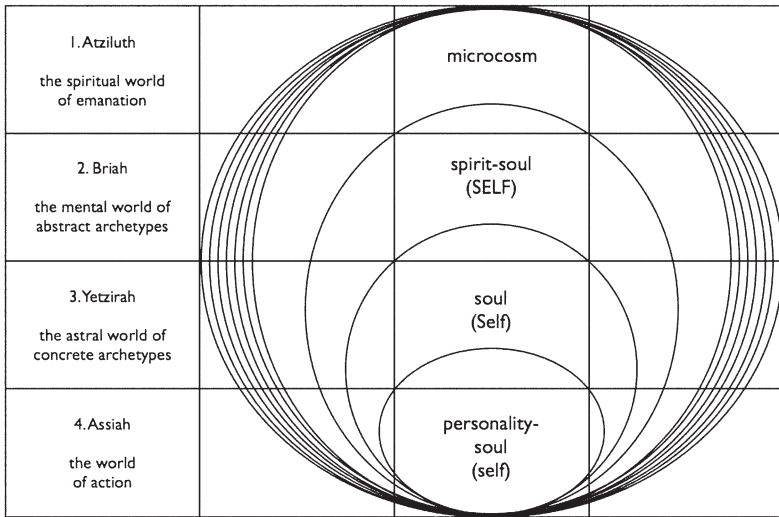


image 3: the three grades of the soul in the microcosm

### The divine plan of creation

The threefold soul comes into being in order to cooperate in the divine plan of creation. It is the task of the spirit-soul to give birth to the divine idea, to conceive the proper guidance. The soul has the mission to work, full of love, with the divine idea; to provide the energy that can be used to go in the chosen direction. And it is up to the personality-soul to bring the divine idea to reality and to realize the desired forms concretely.

Real spirituality aims to let the spirit-soul become active in the personality-soul. This is not an easy task, for the personality-soul cannot directly endure the high energy of the spirit-soul. Therefore a spiritually striving person will have to first wake up the soul, and bring it to maturity. When that intermediary has been created, the spirit-soul can be received. Only then will the soul and the personality-soul be fundamentally renewed and synthesized into a dynamic trinity, together with the spirit-soul. That process is called transfiguration.

If we take a look at what is on the market nowadays under the

heading 'spirituality', we must conclude that most of it relates to the personality-soul, and not to the soul or the spirit-soul. That is not necessarily serious. For instance, if someone is very much out of balance and certain interventions not acknowledged by medical science ensure that this person comes to balance again, that is a fine result, of course.

It is quite different, however, if one is systematically working towards the development of so-called 'spiritual powers' which stem from the personality-soul. In principle it is, for instance, possible for anyone to learn to see auras, to become clairvoyant, to remember previous incarnations or to become a medium.

Authentic spiritual traditions strongly advise against the deliberate development of psychic abilities. Why? Because in such a case a person – just like the archetypal sorcerer's apprentice – ties himself to spheres, influences and powers that are mostly unpleasant, ones that he cannot control. Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov wrote about this subject in his book *'The Mysteries of Yesod'*.<sup>7</sup>

*'Imagine that you have successfully developed clairvoyance before having developed in yourself the qualities of love, patience, goodness, tolerance, forgivingness and self-control; you surely do not know what is in store for you. If you were able to see the hidden vices and crimes, and also the creatures, that accompany your friends – all kinds of monsters and monstrosities, etcetera – you would cry day and night in dismay and beg the Lord to free you from your clairvoyance. You would have to admit that you felt much better before, and that was a thousand times better, even if you were living in illusion at the time.*

*If, on the other hand, you have overcome many weaknesses within yourself; if you are prepared and purified; if you can control yourself and feel much love for the people, then you will not see these horrors anymore; you will see things that correspond to your essence.*

*You will see the future of the people and the happiness that awaits them. And even if you notice something wrong, you will – by virtue of your love, your courage and your self-control – not be scared or discouraged, but you will support them with your thoughts.'*

### **Abandoning psychic powers**

During paranormal development of the I, powers will arise that are easily misused by the person in whom the soul does not yet reign. There is also a danger that the personality-soul identifies with its paranormal tricks and thus starts to feel tremendously important and becomes proud. These are temptations from demonic spirits.

There has been a long period in the evolution of humanity in which the people had a natural and unconscious clairvoyance at their disposal, as is still the case with many animal species nowadays. In most people this sensitivity has almost completely disappeared, as it was meant to, because consciousness was to be developed through the lived experience of material reality.

Deliberately developing clairvoyance therefore usually does not mean a step forward in the human evolution, but rather a step backward and a cause of delay in human evolution. On the gnostic spiritual path, totally new spiritual powers will appear in a perfectly natural way – free gifts that we will consider in the ninth and last reflection.

Psychic powers (also called *iddhi*, or *siddhi*) are, therefore, no measure for spiritual development, and identifying with them poses major obstacles for the soul. They all need to be abandoned on the spiritual path so that an entirely new human being can evolve, a person with entirely new abilities, a person inspired by the spirit. That is why the booklet *The Voice of the Silence* starts with the warning: *'These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower iddhi.'*

## Surrender

When the earthly personality-soul symbolically dies on the gnostic spiritual path, then such associations are abandoned. That process of dying is necessary in order to come to renewal. It is complete surrender to the divine. The mythical firebird, the phoenix, must first burn before it can rise from its ashes, renewed, in full glory. That is why Hermes Trismegistus said in *'Admonition of the soul'*: *'By dying, he regains the true life and captivity, humiliation and depreciation are kept far away from him.'*

The fact that Hermes has realized this truth appears in the name 'Trismegistus', which means literally 'thrice-greatest'. In a spiritual sense he was born, died and was resurrected. Hermes has connected the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul, thus becoming a living connection between heaven and earth. In Greek mythology Hermes is the messenger of the gods. The name Hermes Trismegistus is therefore, just like Christian Rosycross, a mystery-name that expresses the essence of the spiritual path.

By means of the life of the patriarch Abraham, the Zohar concisely describes the spiritual path on which the three aspects of the human soul gradually evolve. Abraham leads the way for us and you can follow him, if you wish. Just like Abraham, your inner being is called to remain faithful to God and to become and to be the right hand of the world.

*'When Abram entered the land, God appeared before him, and Abram received nefesh and there erected an altar to like grade of divinity. Then he 'journeys toward the South' (Gen. 12:9), and received ruah. He attained at last to the summit of cleaving to God through neshama, and thereupon he 'built an altar to the Lord,' whereby is meant the effable grade which is that of neshama.*

*Then seeing that he must put himself to the test, and pass through the grades, he journeyed into Egypt. There he resisted being seduced by the demonic essences, and when he had proved himself, he returned*

*to his abode; and, actually, he 'went up out of Egypt' (Gen. 13:1), his faith was strong and reassured, and he attained to the highest grade of faith. From that time, Abram knew the higher wisdom, and cleaved to God, and of the world he became the right hand.'*



*If thou goest down into Egypt,  
and bringest the one pearl,  
which is in the midst of the sea  
around the loud-breathing serpent,  
thou shalt put on thy glittering robe  
and thy toga, with which thou art contented ...*

Hymn of the Pearl,  
translated by William Wright from the Gospel of Thomas

CHAPTER 4

**DEVELOPMENT IN THE FOUR WORLDS**

SPIRITUAL TEXT:

HYMN OF THE PEARL<sup>8</sup>

When I was a little child, and dwelling in my kingdom, in my father's house, and was content with the wealth and the luxuries of my nourishers, my parents equipped me and sent me forth, from the East, our home. Of the wealth of our treasury they took abundantly and tied up for me a load large and yet light, which I myself could carry, gold of Beth-Ellaya, and silver of Gazak the great, and rubies of India, and agates from Beth-Kashan, and they furnished me with the adamant, which can crush iron.

And they took off from me the glittering robe, which in their affection they made for me, and the purple toga, which was measured and woven to my stature. And they made a compact with me, and wrote it in my heart, that it might not be forgotten:

*'If thou goest down into Egypt, and bringest the one pearl, which is in the midst of the sea around the loud-breathing serpent, thou shalt put on thy glittering robe and thy toga, with which thou art contented, and with thy brother, who is next to us in authority, thou shalt be heir in our kingdom.'*

I quitted the East and went down, there being two guardians, for the way was dangerous and difficult, and I was very young to travel it.

I passed through the borders of Maishan, the meeting-place of the merchants of the East, and I reached the land of Babel, and I entered the walls of Sarbug. I went down into Egypt, and my companions parted from me. I went straight to the serpent, I dwelt

in his abode, waiting till he should lumber and sleep, and I could take my pearl from him.

And when I was single and alone and became strange to my family, one of my race, a free-born man, and Oriental, I saw there, a youth fair and loveable, the son of oil-sellers; and he came and attached himself to me, and I made him my intimate friend, an associate with whom I shared my merchandise.

I warned him against the Egyptians, and against consorting with the unclean; and I dressed in their dress, that they might not hold me in abhorrence, because I was come from abroad in order to take the pearl, and arouse the serpent against me.

But in some way or another they found out that I was not their countryman, and they dealt with me treacherously, and gave their food to eat.

I forgot that I was a son of kings, and I served their king; and I forgot the pearl, for which my parents had sent me, and because of the burden of their oppressions I lay in a deep sleep.

But all this things that befell me my parents perceived, and were grieved for me; and proclamation was made in our kingdom, that every one should come to our gate kingdom, kings and princes of Parthia, and all the nobles of the East. And they wove a plan on my behalf, that I might not be left in Egypt; and they wrote to me a letter, and every noble signed his name to it:

*'From thy father, the king of kings, and thy mother, the mistress of the East, and from thy brother, our second in authority, to thee our son, who art in Egypt, greeting! Call to mind that thou art a son of kings! See the slavery, – whom thou servest! Remember the pearl, for which thou was sent to Egypt! Think of thy robe, and remember thy splendid toga, which thou shalt wear and with which thou shalt be adorned, when thy name hath been read out in the list of the valiant,*



*and thy brother, our viceroy, thou shalt be in our kingdom.'*

My letter is a letter, which the king sealed with his own right hand, to keep it from the wicked ones, the children of Babel, and from the savage demons of Sarbug. It flew in the likeness of an eagle, the king of all birds; it flew and alight beside me, and became all speech. At its voice and the sound of its rustling, I started and arose from my sleep.

I took it up and kissed it, and I began and read it; and according to what was traced on my heart were the words of my letter.

I remembered that I was a son of royal parents, and my noble birth asserted itself. I remembered the pearl, for which I had been sent to Egypt, and I began to charm him, the terrible loud breathing serpent. I hushed him asleep and lulled him into slumber, for my father's name I named over him, and that of my mother, the queen of the East. And I snatched away the pearl, and turned to go back to my father's house. And their filthy and unclean dress I stripped off, and left it in their country; and I took my way straight to come to the light of our home in the East.

And my letter, my awakener, I found before me on the road; and as with its voice it had awakened me, so too with its light it was leading me. It, that dwelt in the palace, gave light before me with its form, and with its voice and its guidance it also encouraged me to speed, and with its love it drew me on.

I went forth and passed by Sarbug; I left Babel on my left hand; and I came to the great Maisan, to the haven of merchants, which sitteth on the shore of the sea.

And my bright robe, which I had stripped off, and the toga that was wrapped with it, from Rantha and Reken my parents had sent thither by the hand of their treasures, who in their truth could be

trusted therewith. And because I remembered not its fashion, – for in my childhood I had left it in my father’s house, – on a sudden, when I received it, the garment seemed to me to become like a mirror of myself.

I saw it all in all, and I also received all in it, for we were two in distinction and yet gain one in one likeness. And the treasurers too, who brought it to me, I saw in like manner to be two and yet one likeness, for one sign of the king was written on them both, of the hands of him who restored to me through them my trust and my wealth, my decorated robe, which was adorned with glorious colours, with gold and beryls and rubies and agates and sardonyxes, varied in colour. And it was skillfully worked in its home on high, and with diamond clasps were all its seams fastened; and the image of the king of kings was embroidered and depicted in full all over it, and like the stone of the sapphire too its hues were varied.

And I also saw that all over it the instincts of knowledge were working, and I also saw that it was preparing to speak. I heard the sound of its tones, which it uttered, saying: ‘I am the active in deeds, whom they reared for him before my father; and I perceived myself, that my stature grew according to his labours.

And in its kingly movements it poured itself entirely over me, and on the hand of its givers it hastened that I might take it. And love urged me to run to meet it and receive it; and I stretched forth and took it. With the beauty of its colours I adorned myself, and I wrapped myself wholly in my toga of brilliant hues.

I clothed myself with it, and went up to the gate of salutation and prostration; I bowed my head and worshipped the majesty of my father who sent me, – for I had done his commandments, and he

too had done what he promised, – and there at his gate, I mingled with his princes, for he rejoiced in me and received me, and I was with him in his kingdom, and all his servants praised him. And he promised that to the gate of the king of kings with him I should go, and with my offering and my pearl with him should present myself to our king.



## CHAPTER 4

# DEVELOPMENT IN THE FOUR WORLDS

## REFLECTION

You are the son of the king from the ‘*Hymn of the Pearl*’, and you have travelled to Egypt. More precisely: the human system in which you are momentarily living has descended from a heavenly realm down to the world of sensory perception and has made a connection with what you now experience as your physical body, referred to in the mythical story as the dress of the Egyptians.

The major question now is whether you will wake up because of the letter of invitation that you have received from higher regions. Can you accept the inner assignment to seize the pearl and return it to the ones from whom you originated: your royal parents in the land of the East – the realm of the sunrise?

It only makes sense to procure the pearl and start the journey to heaven if it is in compliance with your inner being, if it resonates with what is written in your heart. If you do undertake this pilgrimage – for which you will certainly receive help from the heavenly realms – the reward will exceed all your expectations.

Before we take a closer look at the hidden gnostic wisdom in the ‘*Hymn of the Pearl*’, we first wish to emphasise that symbolism can always be understood in several ways. In addition, far from all of the interpretations are correct, that is to say, in accordance with authentic spiritual traditions.

Furthermore we advise you not to immediately analyse myths. It is better to think them through thoroughly first, for then there will be a living experience of them and no separation between object and subject, between the story and the person who wants to inter-

pret it. If you start by reading the holy texts attentively or listening to them with your heart, the work will be done by the undivided consciousness of the soul. On the contrary, if you listen or read with your head because you want to unveil the symbolic images, the result will be the work of the objectified consciousness of the earthly personality-soul, and you will lack inner enlightenment from the world of experience of the soul.

### **The prodigal son**

The theme of the '*Hymn of the Pearl*' may seem familiar to you. It is much like the famous parable of the prodigal son, which is much shorter than the '*Hymn of the Pearl*' and is described in the Bible in Luke 15. There is also a similarity to the even shorter parable from Matthew 13:45-46, that consists of the following two sentences: '*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls: and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*'

What does the pearl represent? Most classical holy scriptures do not answer this question directly because the answer belonged to the inner teachings that were passed on orally and not written down. The pearl means the same thing as what other traditions refer to as the divine spark, the spirit-spark, the primordial atom, the rose or the lotus. This element is the high-energy spiritual core of the human system, of the microcosm. It contains the personal blueprint of an individualised soul that is able to evolve.

The original human microcosm has the same internal structure as does the cosmos. It is spiritual by nature and was created to cooperate in the execution of the divine plan of creation. We could say that it is the task of the human microcosm to absorb divine energies, to transform them internally and subsequently radiate them outward again. That is the essence of creation.

In a symbolic sense we may see this process of creation as breathing in, a transformation and then breathing out. These processes

are made possible by virtue of the soul of the microcosm, in which three aspects can be distinguished: spirit-soul, soul and personality-soul. If the soul has been individualised, then creation can take place in a better, greater and more glorious way; comparable to the way that a grown-up, through knowledge, experience and power, is more able to create something useful and beautiful than is a child.

The *Hymn of the Pearl* can be seen as a symbolic representation of the journey of the microcosm through countless states of existence and incarnations in order to gain much experience and thus be more suitable to cooperate in the divine plan.

If the son of a king is a young human microcosm, naturally the same goes for his brother who stays home with his royal parents. What do we imagine that the royal parents represent? They have conceived this heavenly being. If we compare the '*Hymn of the Pearl*' to the creation myth from the Bible (Genesis 1), the obvious view is to regard the king and the queen of the East as God, whom the Hebrew text refers to as Elohim (plural). In the Kabbalah the Elohim are seen as creative spirits who are members of a hierarchy of hosts of angels, and thus are not the highest deity.

In order to give human microcosms the opportunity to develop themselves more splendidly, the plan of creation includes the possibility for them to follow a long path of experience, first of all descending from the heavenly realms to the earth and then rising from there to the heavenly realms following their numerous experiences.

### **Involution and evolution**

In esoteric philosophy these processes of descending and ascending are called involution and evolution and for the most part take place outside time and space. 'Involution' means immersion in both subtle and coarse matter; and 'evolution', in this view, has to do with self-liberation from both coarse and subtle matter.

Therefore the word 'evolution' is used here in quite another

sense than in the 'scientific' theory of evolution for which Charles Darwin provided the basis, which is limited to the biological aspect of organisms. By descent, or 'involution', we mean a decrease in frequency and taking on forms of a more material nature. And by ascent, or 'evolution', we mean taking leave of material forms based on a growing consciousness, thereby increasing in frequency. Involution is a more or less automatic process for a person. The evolution to which we refer, requires a conscious effort from an individual. As a comparison: one can slide down a long slide virtually unconsciously, but climbing the same slide can only be done with a strong body, concentrated attention and a considerable physical effort.

The fourfold earthly personality has come into being during the descent through four realms. The personality as we now know it from our experience of ourselves and of our fellow human beings has a physical body, an etheric body, an astral body and a mental body. This involution, this descent through areas with an ever-lower frequency, is guided by angels, as symbolized by the two guardians in the '*Hymn of the Pearl*'. The four areas that the young prince traverses can be identified by the valuables that he receives from his parents for the journey: gold, silver, rubies and agates. He also receives a diamond, with which he can crush iron. That is what Ashtavakra calls 'the sword of consciousness'.

Before the prince descends, he has to leave behind two garments: the shining garment and the golden robe ('the glittering robe and the toga'). These garments represent the original soul and the original spirit-soul. They are of no use to him on his descent as his earthly personality-soul must be developed first. When a stable fourfold personality-soul has been constructed and the spirit-spark is awakened – i.e. when the pearl has been captured – this mortal personality-soul can then first work on the development of an immortal individualised soul and, subsequently, on an immortal individualised spirit-soul.

## Worlds of experience

How can we depict the four worlds through which the prince has to descend in order to fetch the pearl? Here the Kabbalah can be helpful. Four manifested worlds of experience are distinguished in the tradition of the Kabbalah, and we can combine their descriptions with information about the descent and the ascent in the ‘*Hymn of the Pearl*’. From top to bottom it concerns the following four manifested world of experience and correspondences, consecutively<sup>9</sup>:

1. *Atziluth*, the spiritual world of emanation, gold, Maishan, the eagle
2. *Briah*, the mental world of abstract archetypes, silver, Babylon, humanity
3. *Yetzirah*, the astral world of concrete archetypes, rubies, Sarburg, the lion
4. *Assiah*, the sensory material world of action, agates, Egypt, the bull

After the unconscious ‘descent’ through these four worlds, the conscious ‘ascent’ through the astral world, the mental world and the spiritual world will follow. Esoteric philosophers such as Helena Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner and Max Heindel depicted this involution and evolution as a process of development through seven spheres, much as shown in image 4.<sup>10, 11, 12</sup> Their vision of the descent – of involution – which they derived from classical holy texts and personal research – accords with the descent as described poetically in the ‘*Hymn of the Pearl*’:

*I quitted the East and went down, there being two guardians, for the way was dangerous and difficult, and I was very young to travel it. I passed through the borders of Maishan, the meeting-place of the merchants of the East, and I reached the land of Babel, and I entered the walls of Sarbug. I went down into Egypt, and my companions*










1. Atziluth the spiritual world gold Maishan eagle			
2. Briah the mentale world silver Babylon man			
3. Yetzirah the astral world rubies Sarbug lion			
4. Assiah de sensory world agates Egypt bull			

image 4: the development of an individualised personality in 'The Hymn of the Pearl'

*parted from me. I went straight to the serpent, I dwelt in his abode, waiting till he should lumber and sleep, and I could take my pearl from him. And when I was single and alone and became strange to my family, one of my race, a free-born man, and Oriental, I saw there, a youth fair and loveable, the son of oil-sellers; and he came and attached himself to me, and I made him my intimate friend, and associate with whom I shared my merchandise.*

*I warned him against the Egyptians, and against consorting with the unclean; and I dressed in their dress, that they might not hold me in abhorrence, because I was come from abroad in order to take the pearl, and arouse the serpent against me. But in some way or another they found out that I was not their countryman, and they dealt with me treacherously, and gave their food to eat.*

*I forget that I was a son of kings, and I served their king; and I forgot the pearl, for which my parents had sent me, and because of the burden of their oppressions I lay in a deep sleep.'*

### **The earthly personality**

The genesis of the fourfold earthly personality is outlined here in symbolic language. When the prince arrives in Egypt – symbol for the sensory world – the son of an initiate advises him not to interact with the impure ones who are completely captivated by the sensory world and therefore have no knowledge about higher soul life, nor any desire for it whatsoever.

So the prince is a stranger among the Egyptians. He dresses in an Egyptian garment in order to avoid drawing attention to himself, meaning that he receives a physical body at that moment. The gnostically sensitive person is often experienced as ‘different’ by his fellow men who are not – or not yet – conscious of the gnosis. It is therefore understandable that the Egyptians perceive the prince as a stranger. When the prince subsequently starts to think, feel and act like the Egyptians, and when he – in a symbolic sense – eats the food of the Egyptians, he falls into a deep sleep. This sleep indicates his identification with the body and the personality and his fascination with the sensory world and its astral counterpart.

This state of sleep in a spiritual sense can last a very long time. Many incarnations are involved, with each earthly life providing the necessary experience that will have to be gained. The microcosm can be viewed as a castle with more and more inhabitants – earthly personalities who, after the death of their physical bodies, leave traces behind in the castle in the form of karma. And so the essence of experiences from all earthly lives remain accessible in the microcosm.

### **The inner invitation**

When the microcosm has reached a certain fullness of experience, then the slumbering spirit-spark can be awakened. At that moment the inner invitation is heard to return to the lost house of the

father – the invitation that comes flying in like an eagle, symbol for the spiritual world. Although the journey home is relatively slow, it always requires a deliberate effort from the person. The journey can be shortened, however, by following the path of initiation. As Helena Blavatsky wrote:

*‘There is a road, steep and thorny, beset with perils of every kind, but yet a road, and it leads to the very heart of the Universe. I can tell you how to find those who will show you the secret gateway that opens inward only, and closes fast behind the neophyte for evermore. There is no danger that dauntless courage cannot conquer; there is no trial that spotless purity cannot pass through; there is no difficulty that strong intellect cannot surmount. For those who win onwards there is reward past all telling – the power to bless and save humanity; for those who fail, there are other lives in which success may come.’<sup>13</sup>*

Helena Blavatsky is quite explicit about the dangers that a deliberately accelerated development involves. In the ‘*Hymn of the Pearl*’, the prince seems to have little trouble. How is that possible? Because he carries the pearl with him! That means that he is listening to the impulses coming from the spirit-spark. That means that he is going the path of initiation known as transfiguration, allowing himself to be led by the letter that guides him, symbolising the help of fellow pupils and human microcosms who preceded him.

### **Avoiding illusion**

If the traveler would not be open for the help from the group and from the heavens, or only barely so, then he would indeed be exposed to extreme danger. For his ascent he must, after all, go through the polluted astral sphere of humanity in which he can easily get lost, considering all the illusion there. That sphere is referred to as Sarbug in the ‘*Hymn of the Perl*’.

If a traveler on the evolutionary path of initiation succeeds in

safely crossing the earthly astral sphere, he must still cross the mental world, which is not pure either. It is characterised by a Babylonian confusion and so is called Babylon in the *Hymn of the Pearl*.

Due to the focused attention from the spirit-spark there will be the help from the letter of invitation, and Sarbug (the earthly astral world) and Babylon (the earthly mental world) can both be safely avoided during the ascent. This ascent is possible because the focus of the person concerned is directed not at the personality-soul but primarily at the development of the soul and the spirit-soul, both of which offer protections. Yet precisely for that reason the three higher aspects of the sevenfold personality-soul will develop: the spirit self, the spirit of life and the spiritual being. The three together are also referred to as the threefold ego.

The prince, by virtue of guidance from the letter of invitation, arrives quickly at Maishan, the spiritual world of emanation, and there he receives the new garments. Subsequently the majestic finale of the '*Hymn of the Pearl*' will follow, in which the traveler returns to the lost house of the father after a long path of experience, dressed in the soul (the shining garment) and the spirit-soul (the golden robe).

*'And in its kingly movements  
it poured itself entirely over me,  
and on the hand of its givers  
it hastened that I might take it.  
And love urged me to run  
to meet it and receive it;  
and I stretched forth and took it.  
With the beauty of its colours  
I adorned myself,*

*and I wrapped myself wholly  
in my toga of brilliant hues.  
I clothed myself with it, and went up to the gate  
of salutation and prostration;  
I bowed my head and worshipped the majesty  
of my father who sent me, –  
for I had done his commandments,  
and he too had done what he promised, –  
and there at his gate, I mingled with his princes,  
for he rejoiced in me and received me,  
and I was with him in his kingdom,  
and all his servants praised him.  
And he promised that to the gate too  
of the king of kings with him I should go,  
and with my offering and my pearl  
with him should present myself to our king.’*



*The union (or yoga) is achieved through the subjugation of the psychic nature,  
and the restraint of the chitta (or mind).  
When this has been accomplished,  
the yogi knows himself as he is in reality.*

Yoga Sutras

## CHAPTER 5

# CONTROLLING THE FIVE STATES OF MIND

SPIRITUAL TEXT:

THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI – 1:2-16<sup>14</sup>

*T*his union (or yoga) is achieved through the subjugation of the psychic nature, and the restraint of the chitta (or mind).

When this has been accomplished, the yogi knows himself as he is in reality.

Up till now the inner man has identified himself with his forms and with their active modifications.

The mind states are five, and are subject to pleasure or pain; they are painful or not painful.

These modifications (activities) are correct knowledge, incorrect knowledge, fancy, passivity (sleep) and memory.

The basis of correct knowledge is correct perception, correct deduction, and correct witness (or accurate evidence).

Incorrect knowledge is based upon perception of the form and not upon the state of being.

Fancy rests upon images which have no real existence.

Passivity (sleep) is based upon the quiescent state of the vrittis (or upon the non-perception of the senses).

Memory is the holding on to that which has been known.

The control of these modifications of the internal organ, the mind, is to be brought about through tireless endeavour and through non-attachment.

Tireless endeavour is the constant effort to restrain the modifications of the mind.

When the object to be gained is sufficiently valued, and the efforts towards its attainment are persistently followed without intermission, then the steadiness of the mind (restraint of the vrittis) is secured.

Non-attachment is freedom from longing for all objects of desire, either earthly or traditional, either here or hereafter.

The consummation of this non-attachment results in an exact knowledge of the spiritual man when liberated from the qualities or gunas.





## CHAPTER 5

# CONTROLLING THE FIVE STATES OF MIND

## REFLECTION

If you wish to follow the gnostic path of return to the lost heavenly father's house, you will have to start listening to the subtle impulses emanating from the symbolic pearl, the core of the microcosm, the spirit-spark. It is definitely not an easy task to perceive the silent voice of the rose heart, and even more effort is needed to follow the glimmers of spiritual light as a beacon. The roaring sea of sensory stimuli, compelling emotional activity and chaotic flashes of thought, together with the mesmerising, hissing snake of illusion, ensure that you forget the pearl.

If you immerse yourself entirely in everyday life, you may tend to function like a machine, reacting almost automatically to impulses from outside. Then you go through life symbolically as if sleeping just like the fallen prince sleeps in Egypt because he eats the food of the Egyptians. How can you escape from the treadmill on which you are plodding forward like a slave of the kings of the Egyptians?

Hermes Trismegistus advises: *'Meditate on this, O Soul, and be assured that you are destined to return to your Creator, who is the trunk out of which you have grown. For that reason, rid yourself of the defilements and burdens of the physical world, by which you are hindered from returning to your own world above, and to the trunk from which you have grown, your origin.'*

That is well stated, but of course you must earn a living, the bills need to be paid, the children must be fed, the household and the administration have to be done, the pets and the garden must be tended, e-mails must be answered, social contacts need to be main-

tained, there must be time for personal care and physical activity, for study and recreation, the news must be followed, the house must be refurbished, the holiday planned and prepared, *etcetera, etcetera, etcetera...*

### **False focus**

There will always be something to do. Unless you consciously make space for the life of the soul, this space will not come. Your life will be filled automatically with all kinds of things, except for the one thing needful. And when your inner life is ripe for it, life will send you something on your path that forces you to let go the fragmentation of your attention, or your false focus. It may be an invitation, a book, an encounter, a divorce, a death, a dismissal, a burnout, an illness, an accident ... or something completely different.

Hermes says: *'Migrate as far as possible, O soul, from fragmentation. If life itself leads you to unity, to the universal, accept it in freedom and resignation. Hence torments, concern and effort will leave you. Like a man at sunrise puts away the lamp that he obtained with so much difficulty to see at night.'*

Actual spirituality is not limited to a few moments of reflection, but radiates when one's entire life is good. A pupil's daily life is a continuous practice, a possibility to be subservient to one's own inner being and those of other people as well, thus offering opportunities for inner growth and renewal.

If you wish to undertake the journey to heaven with the pearl in your daily life, you will have to enchant the hissing snake of illusion and lull it to sleep. How can you do that? By pronouncing the name of your heavenly father and mother, by binding yourself to *them*, to whom you can return the soul and the spirit-soul. Your personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul will then become a living trinity with the result that eternity will pour itself out in

time to a spiritual awakening and a renewal of yourself and of humanity.

Are you looking for concrete directions how to apply this science of unification? You might consult the ancient but still very current yoga sutras of Patanjali. This collection of statements about unification can be seen as a helping hand to make and maintain contact with the soul so that your personality-soul can unite with it. Patanjali writes:

*“This union (or yoga) is achieved through the subjugation of the psychic nature, and the restraint of the chitta (or mind). When this has been accomplished, the yogi knows himself as he is in reality. Up till now the inner man has identified himself with his forms and with their active modifications.”*

Here we recognize the above-mentioned importance of self-knowledge and the detachment of identification with forms. What does Patanjali mean by the subjugation of the psychic nature? At that point he means exactly the same as what Hermes calls putting an end to the pursuit of unsatisfied desires, consciously and without force. The candidate on the spiritual path of unification must free himself from the prison of instinctively following all kinds of cravings. That is possible through controlling the mind on the basis of insight, longing to be healed and boundless awareness. For if you change your thoughts in this way, this will also change your feelings, your actions and the consequences.

### **Transforming the mind**

Transforming the mind is very important. If it does not raise itself to a higher level, then the saying from the book *‘The Voice of Silence’* is applicable: *‘The mind is the destroyer of what is real.’* (1:4)

Thought processes, hence mental activities, can take place by virtue of the use of a specific energy that is called *citta*, or thinking

matter, also known as reflecting ether. The pupil of the soul must learn how to control the use of it.

The emotional life and mental life of humans are generally rather chaotic. The mind is associative by nature, skipping from subject to subject, determined for the most part by what arrives by means of the senses. It is difficult to focus on something for a long time. It costs energy.

Patanjali encourages the pupil of the soul to constantly practice the restraint of the mind in daily life. He distinguishes five states of thinking of the mind which are either painful or not painful: correct knowledge, incorrect knowledge, imagination, passivity (sleep) and memory. The importance of correct knowledge will be obvious. A problem arises when a person thinks that his knowledge is correct whereas, when seen from the world of the soul, it is incorrect. Knowledge based on forms is sometimes important for daily life but always bypasses the essence which forms are expressing. Therefore external knowledge is not gnosis, for the essence can never entirely express itself in a form. It is for this reason that Ashtavakra says: *'If you place externalities above yourself, you will create a prison of illusion.'* The pupil of the soul must learn to experience the essence of the forms.

### **Our 'Fancies'**

Humankind has a tendency to make 'graven images', to evoke internal images that have no real existence but are, for example, associated with cravings and anxieties. The *Yoga Sutra* of Patanjali refers to these images as 'fancy'. For example, someone could become very scared by seeing a rope that looks like a snake. The saying 'He suffers the most from the suffering he fears' indicates that we had better free ourselves from our fantasies. Another form of delusion occurs when people make themselves believe that they make conscious choices whereas in reality they just follow their natural inclinations because they cannot do otherwise.

Every person has to struggle not only with his own delusions, but also with delusions that have been projected into the astral sphere during thousands of years of human history. These projections have started to lead a life of their own, trying to maintain this sham life at any cost. In Ephesians 6:12 the apostle Paul noted: *'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.'* These powers intend to be fed by means of peoples' thoughts and so do everything to keep them away from the spiritual path, both in daily life and also during the night. Sleep is the state in which the body is resting, when there are no sensory perceptions and no watchful consciousness. In yoga traditions sleep can also mean that the person concerned has no remembrance of self.

When you sleep during the night, your astral body temporarily detaches itself from your physical body and your etheric body and gains experience in the astral sphere. A good night's sleep is important for everyone in order to recover from the waking life, to process experiences and to gain fresh vitality. For the pupil of the soul, sleep has yet another dimension because of the fact that the soul can be awake during the sleep of the body and so can both grow and also imprint suggestions for the daytime life in the sleeper's unconscious, and perhaps also in his or her consciousness. In the book *Pymander* Hermes Trismegistus noted: *'And I was exceedingly glad, for the sleep of the body was the sober watchfulness of the mind; and the shutting of my eyes the true sight, and my silence great with child and full of good; and the pronouncing of my words the blossoms and fruits of good things.'*<sup>15</sup>

In order to create the opportunity for consciousness to rise to the domain of the soul during sleep, it is vital that the person concerned goes to sleep directed to the soul. Much would be gained if there were no busy activities, watching television or computer work just

prior to sleep. It is also very valuable to do the so-called evening practice – a retrospective or review of the day – in which you let the day's events appear before your mind's eye, in reverse order, to learn from it. The Greek initiate Pythagoras already taught this in his mystery school in the fifth century before Christ.

Focusing your attention on a spiritual text before going to sleep is also helpful. Do not expect to receive all kinds of exceptional dreams, nor try to remember them, because most dreams belong to a lower region than that of the soul, often concerning coping processes, anxieties and desires of the personality-soul and the polluted astral sphere. Hence the saying that the best sleep is a deep, dreamless sleep, from which you awake refreshed and happy.

## **Memory**

Patanjali distinguishes – in addition to correct knowledge, incorrect knowledge, fancy and passivity (sleep) – yet another state of mind: memory. A good memory is useful for the personality. It is possible to train the memory so that one will forget less. Most of the time that is not necessary since the soul is concerned with inner understanding and not with storage of information on forms. And this understanding arises from awareness, attentive living and reflection. Moreover, awareness also contributes to a better memory.

The most important memory – one you had better not forget – is that you are a king's son who has been sent to Egypt to fetch the pearl and return it to the divine domain from which you came. Other memories may be very valuable but at the same time contain a potential danger because they are based on the past, which is no longer here. Everything changes continuously and it is your assignment to live in the eternal now, the point where time and eternity touch.

You can view the soul as a fortress into which you can safely retire, and also from where you can run the country, or design

your life. That fortress must be organised for if there is chaos in the fortress, there will also be chaos in the country. And this organisation originates from the mind.

The five states of mind can be controlled through awareness and detachment. Detachment signifies that there is no longer a desire for forms because desire is directed at the essence, and that can never be fully expressed in forms. If you are detached in this way, you are certainly not cold and indifferent, as the light of the soul will radiate within you and through you.

To become free of inner attachments costs a considerable struggle. If your heart has been touched by the spiritual light – if the sleeping spirit-spark has begun to awaken – this freedom will be accompanied by enormous joy. You will then know why you are alive and what it is that you have to do, because there is inner recognition. The feeling is a bit like being in love: someone else has come into your life, for whom you have strong feelings and with whom you very much like to be. In this case it does not concern a person outside you, but a person-to-be within you, the inner being.

You can be assured that that lovely feeling will pass after a while, and may even be reversed. Joy, security and hope can turn into sadness, doubt and maybe even despair. That is understandable, for when the spiritual light is shining more strongly in you, you will be painfully aware of the less beautiful aspects of yourself with which you had not previously been confronted so harshly.

### **The dark side of yourself**

Now questions and problems that you must resolve crop up in your life and cause you to take a decision either to let go or to hold on to that which stands in your way. This stage is a definite given that you can recognize in all sorts of stories and myths.

In the biblical book of Exodus it is stated that first ten plagues will have to come over Egypt before the pharaoh will let the people

of Israel go. In the Christmas story in the book of Matthew we read that King Herod does all he can to kill the young Jesus, the symbol for the newborn soul. In the *'Hymn of the Pearl'*, the Egyptians and the hissing snake try to prevent the pearl from being returned to the domain where it belongs.

On the spiritual path you will irrevocably be confronted with the dark sides of yourself, characteristics perhaps you did not even know you had, such as pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth – vices that are also known as the seven deadly sins. They have been there a long time, of course, but you did not want to recognise them consciously because you thought that the people around you would not like you anymore. In this way you built yourself an unreal self whom you kept alive at great cost and who kept you away from your own inner source of energy.

In this respect the psychology of the psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung speaks of the shadow.<sup>16</sup> This is formed by that side of yourself that, until now, you have disregarded, denied or neglected, but absolutely belongs there and needs to be integrated. Hence it is not by definition a 'bad' side but it is definitely a side that was not supposed to be there according to your education, your social environment and your self-image.

In the fairy tales *Snow White*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Little Red Riding Hood* we may recognise the false ego in the stepmother, the witch and the wolf (see image 5). At the end of the stories they will be killed, burnt or drowned, in full compliance with the Hermetic statement: *'By dying, he regains the true life and captivity, humiliation and depreciation are kept far away from him.'*

It can be very sensible to recognise and admit your shadow side for this makes it possible for you to become free of restrictive, addictive and destructive behaviour and to make contact with your inner source. On the spiritual path this is not only sensible, but even urgently needed, as it is an essential part of the path. Thus







grandmother	Little Red Riding Hood	wolf	hunter
microcosm	personality	false ego	spirit spark
			

image 5: symbolism in the fairytale of 'Little Red Riding Hood'

an end will come to 'incorrect knowledge and fancy', spoken of by Patanjali, and the person will be liberated from delusion. Do not fight features of yourself that you consider negative (though they may not be) and do not condemn them, for in that case you would suppress them. You should recognize and acknowledge your less attractive aspects so that you will become conscious of them. Accept the fact that you have everything in you: the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad, the light and the darkness.

### **The giraffe and the jackal**

Within the method of non-violent communication is the message that every person has two animals symbolically within himself: a giraffe and a jackal.<sup>17</sup> The giraffe is both gentle and strong. The giraffe is the land animal with the largest heart (symbol for love and compassion) and the longest neck (symbol for overview, insight and intuition). The giraffe regards what presents itself with mildness, communicates from the heart and seeks connection and clarity.

The jackal, on the other hand, is result-oriented, coercive, judging, accusing and authoritarian, both to others as well as to itself. The jackal has more or less closed the door to feeling (heart and gut). Fear and pain are denied or buried to a certain extent and quite often other methods, such as force, aggression and manipulation, are used in order to maintain oneself or to survive. The jackal in you has an important role as it points to your deeper needs, ones that are not fulfilled or in which you experience a deprivation. You can accept the jackal in you and give it space, and be the giraffe at the same time. The giraffe helps the jackal to express itself, thus giving its ruthlessness the chance to turn into compassion. Both elements may be there, because they are both part of your being. The Rosicrucians when writing about these aspects did not write about the jackal and the giraffe but rather the snake and the swan (Serpentarius and Cygnus).<sup>18</sup>

In the past there have been many who have tried to reach spiritual enlightenment by applying jackal methods, such as extreme fasting, refusing all comfort and physical penance. These practices will result in something, of course, but not in the living, dynamic connection between heaven and earth that humanity is to become. Siddharta Gautama had practiced such ascetic exercises for years before he became the Buddha, and he found this approach to be misguided, and a wrong track.

### **Detach and enjoy**

And what about the detachment that Patanjali finds so important? Many people are afraid that they may no longer enjoy life if they become a pupil of the soul. That fear is not justified. Enjoyment and the happiness that comes with it are part of the human experience and if you would deprive yourself of these, you would dehumanise yourself and you could not be an open passage for energy streams between heaven and earth. On the spiritual path enjoyment is not

an aim, but a pleasant side effect. Fortunately enjoyment is not limited to what advertisements, commercials and films offer us; rather it is present in very small things or maybe in even nothing at all. As Ashtavakra says: *'Do not identify anything with form, and establish your rest of consciousness. You will experience inner joy, lasting peace, freedom from delusion.'*

When you live from the spirit-spark – the symbolic pearl close to your heart – and unattached to anything else, then you will act conscientiously, without worrying about the results. That is the essence of karma yoga. You then show great dedication and love for the Source that brought everything about, to which everything returns and which is active in your rose heart. That is the essence of bhakti yoga. You control your thoughts – and with it your feelings and your will – through boundless awareness. That is the essence of Patanjali's raja yoga. And if you think all this through, then you will reach true self-knowledge, knowledge of the self, the Self and the SELF. That is the essence of jnana yoga, of gnosis.

Thus unattached actions, loving dedication, awareness and thorough contemplation on the basis of the spirit-spark will lead to the unification of the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul. Then there will be a living connection between heaven and earth to the benefit of everything and everyone.



*And God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God created he him;  
male and female created he them.  
And God blessed them ...*

Genesis 1:27-28

## CHAPTER 6

# RENEWAL THROUGH THE SIX EMANATIONS

SPIRITUAL TEXT:

THE BIBLE – GENESIS, 1:1-31<sup>19</sup>

**I**n the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land earth; and the gathering together of the waters he called seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, that hath life, and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moveth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created

him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.



## CHAPTER 6

# RENEWAL THROUGH THE SIX EMANATIONS

## REFLECTION

If you follow the gnostic path, you are not expected to become like Ashtavakra or Hermes, like Abraham or Patanjali. It is expected that you will be your own radiant self, understood to mean with the radiance of the soul. On the spiritual path it is no use to imitate others or to copy their behaviour. In the book *'The Voice of the Silence'* it is noted: *'The teacher can but point the way. The path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the pilgrims'*. (III:2)

You are unique and you were born to give form to your uniqueness, first of all in your personality-soul and then, when you are ripe for it, in the soul and the spirit-soul. In the *'Hymn of the Pearl'* that process of individual renewal through transformation is referred to as collecting the shining pearl from Egypt.

Your uniqueness is the result first of all of the unique spirit-spark of the microcosm in which you live. Secondly, you are determined by the experiences that former residents of the microcosm have gained, which are designated as karma. Thirdly, there is the influence of the genes that you inherited from your parents, designated by the word *nature*. A fourth aspect is the influence of your personal history, all the things that have fed you, in the broadest sense of the word: *nurture*.

The karma of man is quite often seen as Pandora's box from which all kinds of catastrophes are poured out over this person. That view is distorted as your karma is, in reality, an immense treasure of



pleasant and less pleasant experiences which together may lead to real insights.

Like a shining pearl evolves in a mollusc as the result of pain and irritation by grains of sand, setbacks and disappointments in this life and past lives can contribute to the process of manifestation of the radiance of the soul. You can make the rubble of your past transform into your unique pearl of tomorrow!

So in this process of renewal the ignobility is converted into nobility. It is spiritual alchemy, requiring concentrated attention and energy. It is therefore important that the pupil of the soul learns to no longer identify with forms, including his past and his current state of being. Instead he will control his mind through awareness. He recognises the jackal and the giraffe within, without identifying with them, so that sufficient energy and orientation become available to go the spiritual path.

### **Inner renewal**

The label 'the spiritual path' is a metaphor, of course, and thus has its limits. It is not as if others have constructed a path and you have only to walk on it. The ones who preceded us on the gnostic spiritual journey created the circumstances, in their own personal life situations, through which they could be renewed internally. The experience that they gained during this process was shared within the spiritual tradition to which they belonged.

You yourself will have to clear your own path in the same way in order to reconnect with the lost kingdom. And that path will disappear behind you, while you go forward. You will not be able to go back and others will not be able to follow your path, because your path fits only your unique circumstances. There is no general recipe or step-by-step-plan that you must follow consecutively in order to return to the divine origin. The author of *'The Voice of the Silence'* said this as follows: *'You cannot travel on the path before you have become that path itself'*.

So do not follow the footprints of the sages from the past, but search for what they sought. Nevertheless the process of spiritual transformation which you can undertake does have a universal structure. This structure can be found in, for example, the creation myth in the Bible.

Is that not outdated? Have not natural scientists more than clearly demonstrated that the biblical story of the creation of heaven, earth, plants, animals and man cannot possibly be true? Evolution, in which increasingly more complex life forms evolve, is surely not nonsense? Is the creation myth only an invention in times past to make clear to primitive people that everything comes from God?

The creation myth from Genesis 1 is a holy text that cannot be easily understood with ordinary reason. Here it is a question of veiled language and a mystery language. The bible book of Genesis, which literally means ‘coming into being’, is the beginning of the Torah. These are the first five books in the Jewish Bible and are attributed to Moses. According to the Kabbalah the stories from the Torah are not merely historical but especially symbolic. A famous statement from the Zohar therefore reads: *‘Thus the tales in the Torah are simply her outer garments, and woe to the man who regards that outer garb as the Torah itself.’*

According to the Kabbalah, a deeper reality lies hidden behind the stories of the Torah, one that you cannot derive from the literal interpretation. If we look at the creation myth with some Kabbalistic knowledge and inner understanding, it becomes clear that this story is not about the sensory world but that it sits outside of time.

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

In fact, the creation myth is comparable to the ‘*Hymn of the Pearl*’. We can detect the same sevenfold structure in it (compare images 4 and 6). The creation myth can be applied to the macrocosm and also to man – the microcosm – in compliance with the hermetic law: as

above, so below; as in the great, so in the small. The creation myth in Genesis 1 is about the birth of the microcosm, the spirit-spark, the soul and the personality-soul. The '*Hymn of the Pearl*' relates only to the development of the personality-soul, which takes place on the fourth day of the creation myth.

The six creation days that are mentioned are not periods of 24 hours, nor are they indications for other stretches of time. They are not even successive phases. The creation days are emanations. An emanation is a radiation, a diffusion or an outpouring by which the essence of the source itself immerses in the result of its diffusion. All emanations are present simultaneously.

In the Kabbalah and also in other esoteric traditions it has often been stated that the One, the Unmentionable, manifests itself as continually more powerful, grand and glorious by setting up more and more differentiated or distinctive emanations. The Source of all splits into emanations, which in turn split into emanations, which in turn split in emanations, to infinity!

The four worlds of experience from the Kabbalah have already been mentioned in the fourth narrative. We bring them in again because they may lead to a deeper understanding of the creation myth, and hence of the transformation of man. From top to bottom it goes consecutively through the following four manifested worlds of experiences and analogies:

1. *Atziluth*, the spiritual world of emanation,  
creation of the microcosm
2. *Briah*, the mental world of the abstract archetypes,  
creation of the spirit-soul
3. *Yetzirah*, the astral world of the concrete archetypes,  
creation of the soul
4. *Assiah*: the world of action,  
creation of the personality-soul

## No beginning and no end

By means of this overview we can come to a deeper understanding of the creation story concerning evolution. Evolution did not occur only in the past but is still taking place and will do so indefinitely because it concerns a universal structure of emanations that does not relate to time and space. If creation were not unfolding from moment to moment, everything would suddenly disappear. As far as creation is concerned, there is no beginning and no end. It is hard for our minds to understand this, which is why the first sentence of Genesis has often been incorrectly translated and understood. For example one of the recent bible translations states:

*'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.'*

But it is not a question of a beginning but of emanations that do not manifest themselves (heaven) and emanations that certainly do manifest themselves (earth). The word 'God' appears in this text but in the Hebrew text the plural form Elohim is used, indicating seven creative spirits or angels. The earth –so all of the manifested emanations – was still void and dark, because there was as yet no differentiation. That situation is comparable to a rough piece of marble from which a skillful sculptor can, in principle, make any form by distinguishing and eliminating material, in accordance with the statement of the famous artist Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564): *'Beauty is the purgation of superfluties.'* Creation is therefore limitation.

God's spirit moves on the primordial waters, the cosmic primordial substance or *materia magica* which does not belong to the world of time and space.

*'And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God*

*saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.'*

Here the manifested spiritual world (Atziluth) comes into being as a result of the creative word. If evolution is the issue, the human microcosm emanates on the 'first day', with the radiating, shining spirit-spark in the centre.

*'And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.'*

Next a separation is made in the cosmic primordial substance, therefore the primordial waters, so that two water masses are separated by a firmament. The sky that is created here is different from the heaven that is mentioned in the first sentence of Genesis where it concerns an unmanifested heaven. Here it concerns a firmament that makes itself known: the world of the abstract archetypes (Briah), the domain of the spirit-soul.

*'And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land earth; and the gathering together of the waters he called seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.'*

On this third day the creative word realises further differentiation: the water under the skies is being divided into sea and earth. Thus the world of the concrete archetypes (Yetzirah, the united waters, sea, the domain of the soul) and the world of action (Assiah, drought, earth, the domain of the personality-soul) emerges. All this remains outside time and space.

### **Unique to you**

The structures of the soul and the personality begin to come about in the light of evolution. Everything that is unique to you will become manifest in the form of the personality-soul that can reproduce itself like a seed-bearing plant or a fruiting tree. That is possible because the personality is renewed to a certain extent by the breath of the soul.

At some stage that development will stagnate. Then descent or involution has taken place. Then it is time for the ascent, the spiritual evolution of man, which is a gift that came about through the emanation on the fourth day.

*'And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.'*

The great light here is the spirit-spark that was slumbering but now flames up and awakens the personality-soul, making it receptive for the world of the soul. The lesser light and the stars are the gates between the world of the concrete archetypes and the world

of action, in which everything moves between the polarities. Sometimes you may experience this connection with the higher spheres, meaning in a symbolic sense that it is daytime. If you do not experience this connection then it is symbolically nighttime: the light is there, but you cannot perceive it.

As a consequence of the influences from the world of the concrete archetypes on the world of action, the process of transformation can begin in man – a process of renewal that is symbolically presented in the change of seasons from autumn through winter and spring to summer. During the fifth day, the soul grows as a result of living exchanges between the world of the concrete archetypes and the world of action.

*‘And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, that hath life, and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that moveth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.’*

Now real soul development is taking place by virtue of the fifth emanation. At first this is not visible: the developments unfold in the water and are invisible under the water’s surface. There is a swarm of living creatures and large sea monsters in the soul, but on earth there is not yet any sign of it.

Thus can you flounder for years and years on a spiritual path without seeing any results. Only a little renewal may be experienced in the dimension of the personality-soul, but much has already been prepared in the dimension of the soul. You might not see the great light, but it is definitely there.

## Living exchange

Soul development will soon be noticed in the aspect of the personality-soul when there is a living exchange between the world of the archetypes and the world of action within the human being. In the creation story this living exchange during the fifth day is represented by birds – representing deeper thought, feelings and activities of the will – that fly to and fro between heaven and earth.

The sixth emanation of the sixth day concerns the development of the spirit-soul, which relates to the world of experience of the abstract archetypes that will influence the soul and the personality-soul. Then the livestock, the crawling animals and the wild animals come into being.

*‘And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind: and it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the ground after its kind: and God saw that it was good.*

*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’*

The results of the spiritual path are made clearly visible on earth, the world of action, because the personality-soul is now not only connected with the soul but, through the soul, also with the spirit-soul. The livestock symbolise virtues such as faithfulness, servitude, helpfulness and self-sacrifice. In that sense the giraffe in yourself, mentioned earlier, can also be counted among the livestock. The symbolic jackal in yourself clearly belongs to the wild animals.



1. Atziluth the spiritual world of emanation	light <b>1</b> microcosm		Elohim resting <b>7</b> man completes creation
2. Briah the mental world of abstract archetypes	firmament heaven <b>2</b> base spirit-soul		cattle, wild animals and man <b>6</b> spirit-soul
3. Yetzirah the astrale world of concrete archetypes	sea, earth, plants <b>3</b> base soul		fowl, water animals <b>5</b> soul
4. Assiah the sensory world of action		great and lesser lights <b>4</b> personality- soul	

image 6: the six days of creation by the Elohim

### Image and resemblance

The wild animals in you do not simply disappear as you follow the spiritual path. The issue is that you succeed in controlling them, that you – just like Daniel in the lion’s den – prevent them from causing damage by being oriented on the divine; that you tame them, so that your individualised personality-soul, soul and spirit-soul will form a dynamic unity. When that has been realised, the six emanations will have transformed you into a unique person in the image and the resemblance of the Elohim so that you can cooperate in the joyful execution of the divine plan of creation (see image 6).

*‘And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

*And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for food: and it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.'*





*I see the PATH; its foot in mire,  
its summits lost in glorious light Nirvânic.  
And now I see the ever narrowing Portals  
on the hard and thorny way to Jñâna.  
Each Portal hath a golden key that openeth its gate.*

The Voice of the Silence I, Fragment III, The Seven Portals

CHAPTER 7

**HANDLING THE SEVEN GOLDEN KEYS**

SPIRITUAL TEXT:

THE VOICE OF SILENCE – III: 1-25<sup>20</sup>

‘*P* adhyaya, the choice is made, I thirst for Wisdom. Now hast thou rent the veil before the secret Path and taught the greater Yâna. Thy servant here is ready for thy guidance.’

‘Tis well, Śrāvaka. Prepare thyself, for thou wilt have to travel on alone. The Teacher can but point the way. The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims.

Which wilt thou choose, O thou of dauntless heart? The Samtan of “eye Doctrine,” four-fold Dhyâna, or thread thy way through Pâramitâs, six in number, noble gates of virtue leading to Bodhi and to Prajñâ, seventh step of Wisdom?

The rugged Path of four-fold Dhyâna winds on uphill. Thrice great is he who climbs the lofty top.

The Pâramitâ heights are crossed by a still steeper path. Thou hast to fight thy way through portals seven, seven strongholds held by cruel crafty Powers – passions incarnate.

Be of good cheer, Disciple; bear in mind the golden rule. Once thou hast passed the gate Srotâpatti, “he who the stream hath entered”; once thy foot hath pressed the bed of the Nirvânic stream in this or any future life, thou hast but seven other births before thee, O thou of adamant Will.

Look on. What see'st thou before thine eye, O aspirant to god-like Wisdom?

“The cloak of darkness is upon the deep of matter; within its folds I struggle. Beneath my gaze it deepens, Lord; it is dispelled beneath the waving of thy hand. A shadow moveth, creeping like the stretching serpent coils. . . . It grows, swells out and disappears in darkness.”

It is the shadow of thyself outside the Path, cast on the darkness of thy sins.

“Yea, Lord; I see the path; its foot in mire, its summits lost in glorious light Nirvânic. And now I see the ever narrowing Portals on the hard and thorny way to Jñâna.”

Thou seest well, Lanoo. These Portals lead the aspirant across the waters on “to the other shore”. Each Portal hath a golden key that openeth its gate; and these keys are:

1. DÂNA, the key of charity and love immortal.
2. SHÎLA, the key of Harmony in word and act, the key that counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for Karmic action.
3. KSHÂNTI, patience sweet, that nought can ruffle.
4. VIRÂG', indifference to pleasure and to pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived.
5. VÎRYA, the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal truth, out of the mire of lies terrestrial.

6. DHYÂNA, whose golden gate once opened leads the Naljor toward the realm of Sat eternal and its ceaseless contemplation.
7. PRAJÑÂ, the key which makes of man a god, creating him a Bodhisattva, son of the Dhyânis.

Such to the Portals are the golden keys.

Before thou canst approach the last, O weaver of thy freedom, thou hast to master these Pâramitâs of perfection — the virtues transcendental six and ten in number — along the weary Path.

For, O Disciple! Before thou wert made fit to meet thy Teacher face to face, thy master light to light, what wert thou told?

Before thou canst approach the foremost gate thou hast to learn to part thy body from thy mind, to dissipate the shadow, and to live in the eternal. For this, thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in self.

Thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind. Thou shalt not separate thy being from BEING and the rest, but merge the Ocean in the drop, the drop within the Ocean.

So shalt thou be in full accord with all that lives; bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother.



## CHAPTER 7

# HANDLING THE SEVEN GOLDEN KEYS

## REFLECTION

**F**rom day to day you can be transformed by opening yourself for the six emanations. The Elohim never stop creating. The six days of creation from the creation myth in Genesis stand for the six emanations that are always active. So there will be no end to the (re-)creation process.

When we read that the Elohim rest on the seventh day, it means that man has been transformed, after a sixfold process, into personality-soul, soul and spirit-soul, and thus is able to independently execute the divine plan of creation. It is the task of that person to contribute, on the basis of the glow of the soul, in such a way that all creation will glow like a pearl. The creation myth of Genesis ends with the words:

*“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.”*

In response to all the previous reflections, there is the possibility that you experience a certain form of regrets. ‘I should have focused on spirituality much earlier. I have wasted decades. Now I am older and have only a limited amount of time left to go the spiritual path!’



The thought is understandable, but not justified. You can safely assume that everything comes and goes right on time. As mentioned, we can regard the story of the *Hymn of the Pearl* as a process of development – descending and ascending – that unfolds during many incarnations. However this process of involution and evolution can also be accomplished during one human lifetime, one in which the person concerned takes the spiritual path very seriously as a ripe, mature adult.

When a human child has just been born on earth, it is still somehow connected with the heavenly spheres. What the child experiences as heavenly forces diminishes more and more as the child grows up. It is a necessary development as the child has to construct a personality in order to experience the sensory world and to function in it.

### **Children and spirituality**

So in a symbolic sense the child must be sent to Egypt to collect the pearl; he must forget his origin in order to become an individual, after which, as a mature adult, he can once again long for his divine origin, having received the invitation from ‘above’.

During the youth of the child, parents, grandparents and other educators can support the return of this longing for our divine origin both by being examples themselves and also by taking time to develop authentic spirituality. Secondly they can tell authentic mythical stories to the children or read to them and talk to them about God and the divine world. Thirdly they can encourage them to take part in the youth work of a spiritual tradition.

In a certain sense these three aspects correspond with the three jewels of Buddhism to which the student can turn: the buddha (the awakened one); the dharma (the teachings) and the sangha (the spiritual community). If a child gains positive experiences in this way by virtue of the one who ignites of the light (the buddha), the teaching that leads the way (the dharma) and the group that

goes the path (the sangha), then the chance is increased that the child will go the spiritual path later on, as an adult, when the time is ripe for it.

It is excellent when children grow up in an atmosphere in which spirituality goes without saying. They live mostly out of the energies of the adults around them, absorbing that energy as would a sponge. If those adults are pupils of the soul, their energies will help to maintain a certain openness for the impulses from their spirit-sparks in the auras of the children and in their environment.

It is, however, wrong to force children and adolescents to go the spiritual path. It is important that each person first build up a more or less stable and integrated personality before a certain path of development can be followed in full autonomy. Too strong a focus on spirituality in the life of a child, teenager or adolescent can lead to fragmentation of the personality before it has been developed, resulting in a life full of difficulties that could have been avoided.

Only a very small minority of humanity is actually following an authentic spiritual path. This has always been the case and it will be for a long time still. It is therefore not a good idea to lean on the opinion of the majority when it comes to inner enlightenment, because the majority is not enlightened and lives – in a symbolic sense – in darkness.

### **For the very few**

Quite practical instructions for going the spiritual path can be found in the booklet *'The Voice of the Silence'* that emerged in the Middle Ages from a Buddhist tradition. Helena Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, published an English translation of it in 1889, two years before her death, and dedicated it – quite rightly – to 'the very few'.

Much of what has been covered in this program can be recog-

nised in *'The Voice of the Silence'*, acknowledging the assumption that human experience – thus including the spiritual path – has a universal character. *'The Voice of the Silence'* speaks directly to the soul, in poetic language. The first thirteen verses of Fragment I read:

*"These instructions are for those ignorant of the dangers of the lower  
IDDHI.*

*He who would hear the voice of Nâda, "the Soundless Sound," and  
comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of Dhâranâ.*

*Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must  
seek out the râja of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes  
illusion.*

*The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real.*

*Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.*

*For:*

*When to himself his form appears unreal, as do on waking all the  
forms he sees in dreams;*

*When he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the ONE – the  
inner sound which kills the outer.*

*Then only, not till then, shall he forsake the region of Asat, the false,  
to come unto the realm of Sat, the true.*

*Before the soul can see, the Harmony within must be attained, and  
fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion.*

*Before the Soul can hear, the image (man) has to become as deaf to  
roarings as to whispers, to cries of bellowing elephants as to the silvery  
buzzing of the golden fire-fly.*

*Before the soul can comprehend and may remember, she must unto  
the Silent Speaker be united just as the form to which the clay is  
modelled, is first united with the potter's mind.*

*For then the soul will hear, and will remember.*

*And then to the inner ear will speak –*

*THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE'*

These directives are thus given to the person who is not focussed on the development of psychic powers (the lower *iddhi*), one who is willing to listen to the impulses that come from the spirit-spark, one who will no longer be fascinated by the sensory world (the hall of ignorance) and who wants to free himself from the illusions of the astral world (the hall of learning) so as to be able to live from the spiritual world (the hall of wisdom, the kingdom of *sat*).

### **Liberation from the wheel**

Why, in fact, should you make the effort to follow a spiritual path that in the end requires everything from you? To become free from the earthly vale of tears? To be liberated from the wheel of birth and death? To slide back into the ocean like a drop? To be able to immerse yourself in heavenly bliss forever? These are all legitimate reasons. Wisdom teachers advise you to act without being attached to the results. Practising this karma-yoga is important not only for attaining liberation but also and most importantly for afterwards as well. When the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul are connected within man then he will be liberated and will no longer need to incarnate on earth after death of the physical body since an immortal personality-soul will have been created.

When such a person dies, the three more tenuous aspects of the fourfold personality-soul – the etheric body, the astral body and the mental body – will remain intact and will not be dissolved (as is the case with those who have died without having transfigured). The liberated deceased one may choose to enjoy the accrued great happiness permanently. If that is his choice, he will be – according to *The Voice of the Silence* – a *Pratyeka-Buddha*.

He or she can, on the other hand, choose to refrain from this heavenly bliss and instead help humanity, either from the heavenly spheres or by voluntarily incarnating on earth again in order to propel struggling humanity to spiritual awareness and renewal.

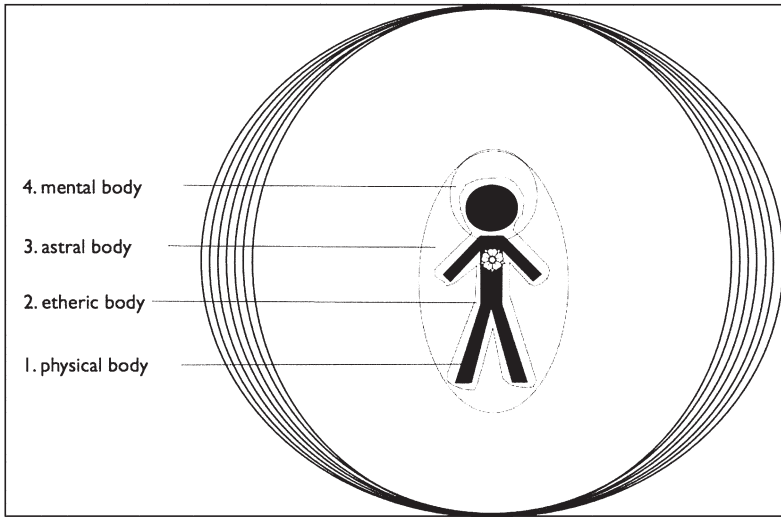


image 7: the personality in the microcosm

A liberated soul, voluntarily incarnating on earth, is called a *Bodhisattva*. At the end of the second fragment of ‘*The Voice of the Silence*’ (II:88-92) we read:

*“Thou hast the knowledge now concerning the two Ways. Thy time will come for choice, O thou of eager Soul, when thou hast reached the end and passed the seven Portals. Thy mind is clear. No more art thou entangled in delusive thoughts, for thou hast learned all. Unveiled stands truth and looks thee sternly in the face.*

*She says:*

*“Sweet are the fruits of Rest and Liberation for the sake of Self; but sweeter still the fruits of long and bitter duty. Aye, Renunciation for the sake of others, of suffering fellow men.”*

*He or she who becomes a Pratyeka-Buddha pays tribute only to his own Self. The Bodhisattva who has won the battle and holds the prize in the palm of his hand, but – in his divine compassion – says: “In the interest of others I will give up this great reward”, accomplishes the greater renunciation. A saviour of the world is he.’*

## Seven qualities

In order to reach liberation, the pupil of the soul must thus pass through the seven gates. Seven qualities of the spirit-soul must be developed. As *'The Voice of the Silence'* says (Fragment III:11-18):

*"Thou seest well, Lanoo. These Portals lead the aspirant across the waters on "to the other shore". Each Portal hath a golden key that openeth its gate; and these keys are: —*

- 1. Dâna, the key of charity and love immortal.*
- 2. Shîla, the key of Harmony in word and act, the key that counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for Karmic action.*
- 3. Kshânti, patience sweet, that nought can ruffle.*
- 4. Virâg', indifference to pleasure and to pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived.*
- 5. Vîrya, the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal TRUTH, out of the mire of lies terrestrial.*
- 6. Dhyâna, whose golden gate once opened leads the Naljor toward the realm of Sat eternal and its ceaseless contemplation.*
- 7. Prajñâ, the key to which makes of a man a god, creating him a Bodhisattva, son of the Dhyânis.'*

It should not be a surprise that the first key to reach the other shore concerns charity and immortal love. Love is the strongest force in the universe. Love is essential for healing wounds that have arisen in the past. Love is essential to bring humanity and the cosmos to the highest state of development. Love is the fulfilment of the law. Hence Jesus formulated the highest commandment as follows: *'Love God above all and your neighbour as yourself'*.

Everything and everyone is connected at a deep level. All souls are a manifestation of the All-soul and all souls are inextricably connected. Someone who loves everything and everyone in a supra-personal sense surrounds himself with a protective field and

reflects that in his environment. Accordingly he or she will receive help and power from the heavenly realms. Love must announce itself. It is the reason for its existence.

Those who reach harmony in word and act – the second golden key – will no longer create negative karma and so will gain inner strength. Speech and action will then form a unity. Conscious speech will at the same time be conscious creation, in harmony with the plan of God. From this the power will grow what Psalm 33:9 describes: *‘For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.’*

The third golden key is mild patience. This quality grows out of intelligent thought, feeling, intention and action without attachment to the results, in full faith that everything will be there in the moment that it must be. The issue is to keep sowing without worrying when the seeds will sprout. We never know exactly how certain developments come about and we do not need to. The point is that we become ‘executors of God’s divine council’, as it was called by the classical Rosicrucians of the seventeenth century.

### **Pleasure and pain**

The fourth golden key, indifference toward pleasure and pain, appears when man – based on inner knowledge and awareness – no longer identifies with forms such as his body, his feelings and his thoughts. There may be pleasure and there may be pain, but they do not form part of your deepest being. They come and they go, like everything else in the world of forms, and they are not part of your all-pervasive being, which exists outside time and space.

The fifth golden key is dauntless energy. That is needed to withstand the inevitable ordeals and to pursue on the path. It does not matter if you fail and fall again, as long as you get back up and go on again.

Falling and getting back up is part of the process, just like when a

child learns to walk. That goes for the usual daily life, and it goes for the spiritual path as well.

One-pointed orientation based on the correct mindfulness is one of the aspects of the eightfold path of Buddha. It is also the sixth golden key. The pupil breathes in the kingdom of the soul by means of this ceaseless contemplation.

The seventh golden key can be regarded as the synthesis of the preceding six golden keys; it makes a man a god, an immortal creative being, a living connection between heaven and earth. The pupil has endured the struggle of the soul and has conquered. The question now is whether this mature spirit-soul man will be enjoying the heavenly spheres forever following the death of his physical body and therefore become a *Pratyeka-Buddha*, or if he will return from the other shore once he reaches it and re-incarnate in a physical body on earth to go the spiritual path once again and, as a bodhisattva, help his fellow human beings in both a spiritual and also a practical sense, as a living bridge between heaven and earth.

### **Choose your way**

Now *'The Voice of Silence'* reaches the gratifying apotheosis on the endless end of the one who went through the seven gates, on the man or woman who has become a person who is entirely inspired by the spirit.

*'Now bend thy head and listen well, O Bodhisattva — Compassion speaks and saith: "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?"*

*Now thou hast heard that which was said.*

*Thou shalt attain the seventh step and cross the gate of final knowledge but only to wed woe — if thou would'st be Tathâgata, follow upon thy predecessor's steps, remain unselfish till the endless end.*

*Thou art enlightened — Choose thy way.*

. . . . .

*Behold, the mellow light that floods the Eastern sky. In signs of praise*



*both heaven and earth unite. And from the four-fold manifested Powers a chant of love ariseth, both from the flaming Fire and flowing Water, and from sweet-smelling Earth and rushing Wind.*

*Hark! . . . from the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the Victor bathes, ALL NATURE'S wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:*

*Joy unto ye, O men of Myalba.*

*A Pilgram hath returned back "from the other shore."*

*A new Arhan is born. . . .*

*Peace to all beings.'*



*The poet of your praise, I call myself, o Lord!  
And so shall I remain, o truth, as long as my power lasts.  
Let the world-creator help me through the good mind,  
through his grace let that be done  
which shall most promote the great cause!*

The gâthâ's of Zarathustra 50:10

## CHAPTER 8

# CONVEYING THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

SPIRITUAL TEXT:

YASNA 50 FROM 'THE GÂTHÂS OF ZARATHUSTRA' –

FROM THE AVESTA 21

**O**n whom can I count for help?  
On whom can I depend to protect my possessions?  
On whom but on your truth, and on yourself, o Lord,  
when invoked with the enlightened mind!

Tell me, o Lord, how should they act and work who care for this joy-giving world with its pastures? Living upright lives under the recurring splendour of the sun, apart from the repudiators, living ordered lives in harmony with the law of truth, these shall reap the blessed reward!

The resolute one who moved by the principles of your faith, extends the prosperity of order to his neighbours, and works the land the evil now hold desolate, earns through righteousness, the blessed recompense your good mind has promised in your kingdom of heaven.

With truth moving my heart, with best thought inspiring my mind, with all the might of spiritual force within me, I venerate you, o Lord, with songs of your praise!

And at the last, when I shall stand at your gate, I shall hear the echo of my prayers from your abode of songs.

To your prophet inspired by your truth, o Lord, to your prophet revealing your message in hymns.

You come with your grace, o Lord! You give him your hand of manifest help, that he may bring enlightenment and bliss.

As I lift my voice in songs of your veneration, actuated by truth to direct my speech to the right path of wisdom; give to me, o Lord, the inspiration of the good mind to enunciate your ordinance. Yoked are the ardent steeds of your veneration, as we approach your realm, o Lord, come, great power, unto me with your spirit of truth and your good mind. Hasten thus unto my help!

Singing hymns of your praise, o Lord, and with hands outstretched I shall approach you. In adoration, with enlightenment from truth and the good mind I shall verily reach your presence, o Lord!

With these hymns shall I come to you, o Lord! To your truth, aided by the deeds of the good mind, seeking earnestly the reward of the beneficent, and receiving it, I shall be master of my own destiny. The good deeds that we shall perform as those we have performed, the things that are precious to the eye illumined by the good-mind, The radiance of the sun shimmering down which heralds the day, They all, in accord with truth, testify to your glory, o Lord!

The poet of your praise, I call myself, o Lord! And so shall I remain, o truth, as long as my power lasts. Let the world-creator help me through the good mind, through his grace. Let that be done which shall most promote the great cause!



## CHAPTER 8

# CONVEYING THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

## REFLECTION

Great souls, who have been liberated from the wheel of birth and death following the dying of their physical bodies, have the choice to be born again on earth in a physical body as a bodhisattva in order to aid humanity. If they do choose to reincarnate, what do they do then? There is no specific answer to that question, for there is a wide range of possibilities.

It is certain that, just like all other people who incarnate, a bodhisattva will receive a draught of oblivion, due to which must search for that vocation within his own life. The form in which the vocation manifests itself depends greatly on the possibilities of the person concerned and the circumstances in which he or she was born. In spite of the great inner wisdom which she possesses, such a bodhisattva must again go the path of liberation in order to once again weave a new shining garment and a new golden robe. All natural resistances must be conquered so that the soul and the spirit-soul may become active.

We know about great initiates such as Krishna, Moses, Zarathustra, Buddha and Jesus who began movements that grew into widespread religions.<sup>22</sup> And there are the well-known names of great souls whose actions brought about renewal within existing religions. From the West we can think of Meister Eckhart, Paracelsus and Jacob Boehme; from the East, for example, Aurobindo Ghose, Bodhidharma, Rumi and Vivekananda.

We also know the names of great souls who were leaders on a practical level, such as Mohandas Ghandi, Mother Theresa and Nelson Mandela. We do not know if they were bodhisattvas, but we

can determine that they were blessings for humanity. Fortunately there have been and still are many bodhisattvas on earth who did not or do not become well-known because they serve more or less anonymously.

### **In harmony with culture**

When a bodhisattva incarnates on earth and considers it his vocation to drive people directly towards spirit-soul development, he will first of all have to go the path of spirit-soul development himself, on the basis of a deep inner desire. This will cause a gradual growth of the inner understanding and on this basis a philosophy can be developed, that is in harmony with the people and the culture in which he or she lives.

Siddharta Gautama Buddha developed teachings containing the so-called eightfold path. Patanjali also spoke about an eightfold path, but then again it was different from the one developed by Buddha. The eightfold Buddhist path to enlightenment is summarised as;

1. right understanding
2. right intent
3. right speech
4. right action
5. right livelihood
6. right effort
7. right mindfulness
8. right concentration

This simple list, combined with an extensive philosophical system, offers practical guidelines for pupils of the soul to follow the spiritual path, to live the teachings and to come to soul-realisation. Lists such as the four noble truths are not just the result of thought-processes, but arise from a knowing that proceeds from numerous experiences and inner elevation. A bodhisattva can

address the public directly. He or she can also address a group of devoted pupils with whom he or she is actually going the inner path. The latter situation is sometimes referred to as a mystery school, in which pupils of the mysteries follow the mystery-path.

Founders of mystery schools sometimes use philosophies of predecessors or contemporaries in order to conform to that with which pupils of the mysteries are accustomed. However they do not, in principle, depend on these sources, because they are able to create in an original way. After all, the spirit-soul is active within them. They are living from the world of the soul and the spirit-soul and therefore they are capable of drawing directly from these sources.

It is naturally paramount that a founder of a mystery school and every other servant within a mystery school actually lives the teachings that he or she conveys, not by following the rules but from a renewed state of being. That state is a precondition for gathering together a group of pupils of the mysteries who can go the spiritual path collectively by virtue of the active liberating force that radiates from the founder and the teachings.

Here we recognise the three Buddhist jewels of wisdom to which the pupil can resort: the buddha (the igniter of the light), the dharma (the teachings) and the sangha (the community of pupils). This is a universal structure that can be seen in all mystery schools such as those of Buddha, Pythagoras, Socrates and Jesus.

The further a mystery school develops, the further the teachings develop as well. The basic principles remain the same, of course, but when the pupils of the mysteries have reached a certain level of realisation, a new impulse is needed to be able to continue the inner process of renewal. The renewed teachings are not contradictory to the original teachings, rather they are subtler, higher and experienced personally. The teachings must be renewed when necessary, as expressed in the cyclic process model of the enneagram in which the three elements of a mystery school have

been integrated with six coherent process steps (see image 8).<sup>23</sup> Siddhartha Gautama, who became the Buddha, lived in a multi-deity Hindu culture that had long ago been pure but had degenerated and fallen into idolatry. Buddha did not give the gods a place in his teachings not because they do not exist – the divine, after all, can express itself in infinite ways – but because they were worshipped out of selfish motives, enriching the priestly caste of the Brahmins.

### **Ora et labora**

A mystery school is not only meant for learning, but particularly for praying and working. It is only possible to reach fullfilment – to possess an active spirit-soul – by means of both inner and outer work. In earlier days this principle was indicated by the Latin adage ‘ora et labora’, or ‘pray and work’. In this context, praying is to be understood as being in harmony, through the force of the spirit-spark, with the divine dimensions outside time and space.

The power field of a mystery school has to be of a great purity and a high vibration in order to drive pupils of the mysteries to spiritual awareness and renewal. But that does not mean that a mystery school must be perfect. That is impossible, as such a school consists of people, and human personalities are not perfect, not even if the spirit-soul is active within them.

Pupils of the mysteries face the challenge of learning how to deal with imperfections and frictions that they encounter within their mystery school in a soulful way, as this way is precisely the path to inner growth.

There is the possibility that a spiritual school may have too many pupils with meager soul quality and inner comprehension. Then the question arises if such a school should be continued. In this respect it is useful to refer to a great spiritual teacher who considered it to be his mission to unconditionally liberate people from organisations and rituals that obstruct the search for truth: Jiddu Krishnamurti



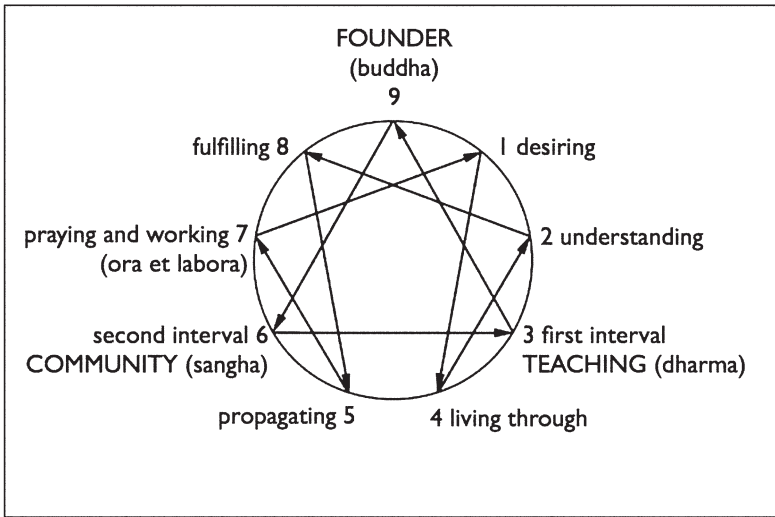


image 8: the cyclic development of a mystery school projected on the enneagram as a process model

(1895-1986).<sup>24</sup> In his youth and adolescence, theosophical circles considered him to be the world teacher. So he became the head of the Order of the Star, an organisation with some 40.000 members worldwide! In 1929 he emphatically distanced himself from it by dissolving the organisation, because he had experienced that someone who follows somebody else, stops following the truth. In his dissolution speech he said, among other things:

*'You have the idea that only certain people hold the key to the kingdom of happiness. No one holds it. No one has the authority to hold that key. That key is your own self, and in the development and the purification and in the incorruptibility of that self alone is the kingdom of eternity. ... Those who really desire to understand, who are looking to find that which is eternal, without beginning and without an end, will walk together with a greater intensity, will be a danger to everything that is unessential, to unrealities, to shadows. And they will concentrate, they will become the flame, because they understand. Such a body we must create, and that is my purpose.'*

After this he gave lectures all over the world in order to refer people back to themselves and to stimulate them to discover the truth themselves, on the basis of awareness. He did not want any followers. It was his objective to liberate people, to drive them towards freedom and to help them to distance themselves from all limitations, because that is the only way to find eternal joy and bring about the unconditional realisation of the soul.

### **Inner development**

Krishnamurti knew and fully understood the spiritual path. He had been thoroughly educated in the theosophical philosophy and had such a high grade of soul quality that it took no effort for him to live in accordance with elevated spiritual directives. Krishnamurti ascertained that elevated teachings can be a prison for people who lack inner understanding because they place authority outside themselves, thus obstructing their own inner development.

A special paradox can be recognised on the spiritual path. On the one hand, if we pursue inner development on the basis of the spirit-spark then certain teachings and practices are urgently needed, because for inner growth you need someone to direct your attention. Inner growth does not unfold automatically, but requires conscious attention. On the other hand, teachings and practices can prove to be prisons if there is no understanding, or too little of it, and if little or no corresponding work has been done in the practice of life. As *'The Voice of the Silence'* states:

*'Yea, ignorance is like unto a closed and airless vessel; the soul a bird shut up within. It warbles not, nor can it stir a feather; but the songster mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies. But even ignorance is better than head-learning with no soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it.'* (II:12:13)

Teachings and methods are therefore essential for a spiritual path, but they may turn into cages – dogmas that hamper spirit-soul

development. If the intended inner transformation has taken place in a pupil of the soul, then the teachings are no longer necessary for him or her, in principle. The teachings may even become like ballast.

Teachings are intended to be realised, and if you have realised them in your life, you are free from them. One day when the Buddha had explained the doctrine of 'karma' – of cause and effect – to his pupils and they indicated that they understood, he immediately put his explanation into perspective by saying:

*'O monks, even this insight that is so pure and clear; when you cling onto it, cherish it, guard it, become attached to it, you do not understand that the teachings are like a raft that has the purpose of crossing over, not the purpose of being clung to.'*

*Suppose, monks, there is a man journeying on a road and he sees a vast expanse of water, of which this shore is perilous and fearful, while the other shore is safe and free from danger.... Now, that man collects reeds, sticks, branches and foliage, and binds them into a raft. Carried by that raft, labouring with hands and feet, he safely crosses over to the other shore. Having crossed and arrived at the other shore, he thinks: 'This raft, indeed, has been very helpful to me. Carried by it, labouring with hands and feet, I got safely across to the other shore. Should I not lift this raft on my head or put it on my shoulders, and go where I like?'*

*What do you think about it, O monks? Will this man by acting thus, do what should be done with a raft? ...*

*In the same way, monks, have I shown to you the teaching's similitude to a raft: as having the purpose of crossing over, not the purpose of being clung to.'*

After his enlightenment Buddha passed the teachings that he had developed on to the people of his time, of his culture, during his entire life. And that can also be said of Zarathustra. This Persian prophet developed extensive teachings that grew into the religion of Zoroastrianism.

## Thinking, feeling and doing good

In line with many spiritual teachers, Zarathustra, or Zoroaster, emphasised that true faith is not simply the acceptance of a philosophy but thinking, feeling and doing good by means of reflecting the divine light. It is the inner assignment of man to reflect the light of the heavens on earth, through the awakened spirit-spark, by means of which the creation can be saved from evil. This reflection of the divine light is possible only when man has become receptive and transparent for that light.

Zarathustra expresses this beautifully, from a prophetic vision, in his song of praise of Yasna 50:

*With truth moving my heart, with best thought inspiring my mind,  
with all the might of spiritual force within me, I venerate thee, o Lord,  
with songs of thy praise!*

*And at the last, when I shall stand at thy gate I shall hear the echo  
of my prayers from thy abode of songs.*

*To thy prophet inspired by thy truth, o Lord, to thy prophet revealing  
thy message in hymns, do thou come with thy grace, o Lord! Do thou  
give him thy hand of manifest help, that he may bring enlightenment  
and bliss.*

*As I lift my voice in songs of thy veneration, actuated by truth to  
direct my speech the right path of wisdom; give to Zarathushtra, o  
Lord, the inspiration of the Spirit to enunciate thy ordinance.*

*Yoked are the ardent steeds of thy veneration, as we approach thy  
realm, o Lord, come, great power, unto me with thy spirit of truth and  
thy good mind, hasten thus unto my help!*

*Singing hymns of thy praise, o Lord, and with hands outstretched  
shall approach thee. In adoration, with enlightenment from truth and  
the Spirit I shall verily reach thy presence, o Lord!*

Here we see that Zarathustra is clearly a person who is inspired by the spirit. He experienced an unwavering certainty, a great joy and

a powerful drive, all of which came to expression in this vision. That was not always the case. When we read earlier songs of Zarathustra, it becomes clear that he experienced loneliness, doubt, desolation and inner darkness as well. That is understandable, as every pupil of the soul goes through a phase on the spiritual path called 'the dark night of the soul' by the Spanish mystic John of the Cross.

### **The dark night of the soul**

At the beginning of the spiritual path, the personality-soul is creative and the soul is receptive. What matters now is that the personality-soul surrender to the soul, and thereby die in a symbolic sense, so that the spirit-soul can become creative and a renewed personality-soul can arise, thus becoming a suitable instrument for the spirit-soul.

The purifying period of the dark night of the soul begins when the old personality-soul has more or less died but the spirit-soul is not yet active. As the name implies, this phase, which can last for many years, can be an unpleasant experience. The pupil of the soul has lost his worldly interests, feels lonely and abandoned and has no more future perspective left.

In this case there are two ways to escape from that unpleasant situation which feels rather like a depression. The first way is to no longer pay attention to the spiritual path and to return to the fleshpots of Egypt, that is to say to once again immerse oneself in all kinds of fascinations that this world has to offer, so that the soul will fall asleep again.

The second way is to practice patience and perseverance and continue to feed the soul with what is good, true and beautiful, remaining in contact with fellow pupils who are also going through that process or have passed through it. Then, over time, the light of the spirit-soul will irrevocably break through.

Zarathustra had experienced this and therefore began his song with the words:

*'On whom can I count for help? On whom can I depend to protect my possessions? On whom but on thy truth, and on thyself, o Lord, when invoked with the enlightened mind!*

*Tell me, o Lord, how should they act and work who care for this joy-giving world with its pastures?*

*Living upright lives under the recurring splendour of the sun, apart from the repudiators, living ordered lives in harmony with the law of truth, these shall reap the blessed reward!*

From the moment of the inner breakthrough, the earthly figure of the pupil of the mysteries will begin to shine, due to the reflection of the light of the soul. Then the pupil of the mysteries will be able to clearly think and to be a beacon of light for all who still wander in darkness. This person who is inspired by the spirit will announce the dawn of a new era in accordance with the prayer in Zarathustra's hymn.

*'With these hymns shall I come to thee, o Lord! To thy truth, aided by the deeds of the Spirit, seeking earnestly the reward of the beneficent, and receiving it, I shall be master of my own destiny.*

*The good deeds that we shall perform as those we have performed, the things that are precious to the eye illumined by the Spirit, the radiance of the sun shimmering down which heralds the day, they all, in accord with truth, testify to thy glory, o Lord! The poet of thy praise, I call myself, o Lord! And so shall I remain, o truth, as long as my power lasts, let the world-creator help me through the Spirit, through his grace let that be done which shall most promote the great cause!*





*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.  
And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord.  
And there are diversities of workings,  
but the same God, who worketh all things in all.*

I Corinthians 12:4-6



CHAPTER 9

**WORKING WITH THE NINE  
SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

SPIRITUAL TEXT:

1 CORINTHIANS, 12:4-31<sup>19</sup>

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all.

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gift of healings, in the one Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits: to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For in one Spirit were we all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.

If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where is the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where is the smelling?

But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. And if they were all one member, where is the body? But now they are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those parts of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; whereas our comely parts have no need.

God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honour to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof.

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you.



## CHAPTER 9

# WORKING WITH THE NINE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

## REFLECTION

**I**n this programme *Mysteries of the soul* we have approached the human soul from different angles, always based on the philosophical ideas of several spiritual traditions. Such a working method is useful in order to come to a correct understanding of the soul. And such a correct understanding is essential in order to allow the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul to develop in a harmonious way.

It is important to be aware that the mysteries of the soul are so formidable that everything that we say about them can be only fragmentary. What is more: what can words say about something that has no yesterday, no today and no tomorrow?

In the beginning we may be like the blind men in a well-known Sufi story who try to determine what an elephant is like by feeling it and make false conclusions (see image 9). The blind man who touches the trunk of the elephant says that the elephant is a kind of snake. The blind man who feels the tusk concludes that the elephant is a kind of spear. The blind man who holds the ear is under the impression that the elephant is a rug. The blind man who embraces the leg of the elephant is of the opinion that the elephant is a type of tree. The blind man who examines the side of the elephant's torso with both hands experiences a wall. And the blind man at the tail thinks that the elephant is a rope.<sup>25</sup>

If these blind men would share their findings with each other in order to get a better understanding of the elephant through a joint effort, they might – after a long period of research – come

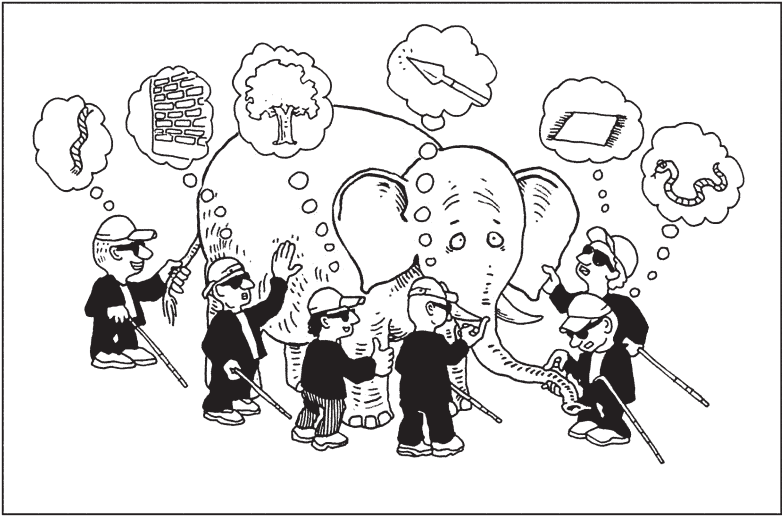


image 9: six blind man exploring an elephant

to a model that forms a better approximation of reality. If their blindness could be cured, they would – in a fraction of a second – get a much more accurate impression of the elephant. But this impression would be very restricted too, even if other senses would be involved in addition to seeing and touching. You can examine the behaviour of an elephant but you will still know nothing about the feelings and thoughts of that elephant. You also know nothing at all about the essence of the form that we call ‘elephant’. For this purpose you would have to become an elephant yourself. And even if you were an elephant, the question is whether you would have an impression of the archetype ‘elephant’, of which you yourself would be one of the many manifestations.

### **Regenerative development**

The soul is part of several dimensions that are far beyond the time and space of the sensory perceptible world. If you want to get to know the soul, you must become soul. Spirit-soul development is now more important than ever. All the possibilities to consciously

work on this development are now abundantly available. Yet, at the same time, there are still powerful counterforces in our world that want to lull the awakening souls to sleep again. Instead of driving humanity towards a regenerative development through which the new man comes into being – the man who forms a living connection between heaven and earth – these negative forces would drive humanity towards a degenerative development process.

Spirit-soul development does not unfold automatically. It requires much attention, which is hard to summon up as an individual. In practice it therefore proves to work well if you go the spiritual path jointly with like-minded others. When there is intensive collaboration in reflecting the spiritual light within a group of gnostic-striving people, then many sleeping souls can be awakened and become active.

There are countless religious, humanistic and idealistic groups in the world that we can refer to as 'schools for the soul'. People are working together in these groups to promote all that is good, true and beautiful, based on the desire for a beautiful world in which people treat each other with respect, respecting nature and the environment and perhaps also God or the transcendent. Such soul schools play an important role as they stimulate the development of soul qualities within man. There are many soul schools in the world, but there are only a few spiritual schools. Spiritual schools focus not only on the development of the soul but particularly on the spirit-soul. Spiritual schools are mystery schools where pupils of the mysteries endeavour to make themselves, the population and the earth spiritual; to transform them to a higher state of being with the aid of the spiritual light.

It requires an enormous amount of time and attention to build up a spiritual school that spreads a great liberating force into the world. Peter Huijs, in his book *'Called by the World Heart'*, writes that J. van Rijckenborgh, one of the founders of the School of the

Rosycross, once said that it takes a hundred years before the entire apparatus of a spiritual school is completely ripe.<sup>26</sup> Jesus founded a spiritual school in which his disciples could develop into apostles, into people who were capable of receiving and conveying the fire of the holy spirit. The first Christian communities founded by the apostle Paul in the first century can be regarded as incipient spiritual schools.

### **Spiritual powers**

Certain spiritual powers will develop in the pupil of the soul in whom a certain degree of renewal has been realised, especially one who endeavours to encourage others to also go the spiritual path. It is obvious that we do not refer here to the psychic powers that are called the lower iddhi in *The Voice of the Silence*. In chapter 12 of his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul mentions nine gifts of the spirit.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord. And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.

1. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom;
2. and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit;
3. to another faith by the same Spirit;
4. and to another gifts of healing, in the one Spirit;
5. and to another workings of miracles;
6. and to another prophecy;
7. and to another discernings of spirits;
8. to another divers kinds of tongues;
9. and to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally as he will. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

All these nine powers are given in order to establish the community, or the sangha, to every man's profit. That community builds and maintains a joint force field, in which spirit-soul development can come into being. A certain gift comes to expression more strongly in one person than in another, and it is also possible – sometimes even necessary – that several of these spiritual gifts be given to one person. Just as with common talents, all these gifts will show greater development the more they are used. In this work the saying 'practice makes perfect' applies, but this practice must always be based on inner elevation.

These spiritual gifts are set out in detail by J. van Rijckenborgh in the third part of his book *'The Coming New Man'*.<sup>27</sup> A large part of this reflection is based on his explanations.

### **Group unity**

Of course there are more than nine spiritual gifts, but as far as reaching gnostic fulfillment in group unity, it is sufficient to restrict ourselves primarily to the nine points mentioned above and continue to consider them in their mutual coherence.

All the powers mentioned are needed. Since they are not distributed equally among the members of the community, it is important that these members cooperate. Harmonious cooperation is essential not only to meet each other's shortcomings and to complement each other with regard to personal skills, but also and particularly to develop a force field in which an abundance of holy spirit power can bring about inner renewal.

The first-mentioned power of the spirit is 'the word of wisdom'. This gift means that the servant can project his or her inner understanding onto listeners who have receptive hearts by means of the spoken word. The listeners easily understand what is meant and then many questions may arise in them as it concerns ideas with which they are not yet familiar.

In order to answer those questions, the servant can deploy the

second power: the word of knowledge. In this way a subject is considered rationally on the basis of inner understanding so that there does not need to be a contradiction between what the heart understands and what the head thinks.

The gift of faith – the third power that Paul mentions, though in reality it precedes the other eight powers – relates to the reflection of the spiritual light mentioned earlier.

As soon as the sleeping spirit-spark awakens in a person, he will start reflecting the spiritual light without the spirit-spark bearer having to do anything for it him or herself; it concerns a process that unfolds beyond consciousness. As the pupil of the soul progresses on his or her spiritual journey, the reflection becomes more intense.

When a person reflects the spiritual light, this will contribute to the awakening of the sleeping spirit-spark of people in the environment of the person concerned. And when pupils of the soul gather for a service in a temple, for example, the reflection of the spiritual light may be so powerful that its awakening influence will stretch far beyond the temple walls; yes, it can even influence other parts of the world because the soul, the spirit-soul and the released light forces are not bound to time and space.

## **Healing**

Viewed from the heavenly spheres we, as humanity, are sick, even though we may be balanced personalities with perfectly healthy bodies. The microcosms in which we live have been damaged and the soul and the spirit-soul are not yet active, or barely active, in the personality-soul. For this reason the spiritual path is called a path of healing or sanctification. That is why Jesus ordered his apostles to not only proclaim the gospel but also to heal the sick. In his first letter to the congregation of Corinth, Paul called this power of healing a gift by the spirit, and he was not referring to medical assistance.



It is very important that we are aware that the gift of healing does not relate primarily to healing physical ailments or diseases, but to healing the whole microcosm. As a result of this healing, the microcosm will reconnect with the heavenly spheres where it originated: the royal parental home in the East in the *'Hymn of the Pearl'*.

The gift of healing implies that the servant can contribute to making a pupil of the soul autonomous with regard to the absorption of light forces. The servant can prepare a group of pupils so that an ignition can take place within them, enabling them to independently attract and convert light forces, thus contributing to the healing of the microcosm.

The process of healing or sanctification of the microcosm can alleviate physical ailments and diseases somewhat, but most of the time they do not disappear. Often, however, it does become easier to live with any physical difficulties because the pupil of the soul identifies with them less, or even not at all.

The fifth gift of the spirit Paul calls 'workings of miracles'. Here he refers to the power of a servant, on the basis of inner elevation, to collect light forces within herself that can be poured out over people in her environment, as they wish, thus encouraging them to go – or continue going – the spiritual path.

The sixth gift of the spirit that Paul mentions can manifest itself in a servant only when the five previous gifts have been received and the person concerned has worked with them intensively. It is the gift of prophecy which, contrary to what is often thought, has not so much to do with predicting the future but rather involves creation of the future on the basis of inspiration from heavenly spheres.

## **Prophecy**

Prophesying means that a servant who is entirely immersed in the serving spiritual work has an inner vision of what is needed in the near future in order to execute the work of liberation, efficiently and effectively; and subsequently endeavours with all his might, in

cooperation with others, to realise that vision concretely. Countless prophets are active in this world. Not all of them convey a pure message. How do you recognise whether what they say and write is correct or not? You can investigate if their vision is in accordance with what authentic spiritual traditions teach. You can also rely on your heart, but if you have just begun your spiritual journey, your power of discernment may still be limited.

The power of discernment – the seventh gift of the spirit that Paul mentions – will develop on the gnostic path. If you have received that gift, you will not have to investigate extensively whether or not something is right. You will know in a fraction of a second to what extent a teaching, a human being or a group is pure. You will know, for instance, that the so-called speaking in tongues, as practiced by some Christian circles, has nothing to do with the holy spirit, but concerns, in fact, spiritual séances. These séances consist of confused messages relayed by unsophisticated human entities on the other side of the veil of death. They are dotted with Christian and spiritual clichés and are passed on to certain persons who are in trance and act as mediums.

Yet Paul speaks about speaking in tongues, considering it a spiritual gift – the eighth in his listing. However with these words he means something quite different than the mediumistic practices that various groups have made of it. If a person is really inspired by the holy spirit, that can be sensed; some sensitive people can observe this in the shape of fiery tongues in the aura around the head – the tongues of fire that are mentioned in the Pentecost story in the Bible, in Acts 2.

When a servant in whom the spirit-soul is active testifies to the spiritual path, the sound of the voice will act as a carrier wave for a high energy from the heavenly spheres. To be able to say something about realities that go far beyond the sensory perceptible world, he or she must use symbols and concepts the significance of which is

not immediately clear: veiled language and mystery language. Such spoken language can penetrate deeply into the listeners and have a transforming influence. Yet it is important that they receive a rational understanding as well. That can be achieved by explaining what the veiled language and the mystery language really imply. And this brings us to the ninth and last gift that Paul mentions: the interpretation of tongues.

### **Living experiences**

Contemplations, explanations and clarifications are all very well, but we must remember that not everything can be explained, and this is specifically characteristic for the mysteries. Pupils of the mysteries attain inner knowledge on the basis of living experience.

In these nine narratives based on nine classical spiritual texts from different spiritual traditions, we have tried to clarify the path of spirit-soul development that you can follow based on the more than four-hundred year old living tradition of the Rosycross. We hope that these texts on the mysteries of the soul have contributed to the actual or future ignition of your inner lamp, so that you will become and remain a person who is inspired by the spirit. And when your new soul flame is burning, we still have the following advice for you: keep your lamp burning and make sure to have sufficient oil!

We conclude this programme 'Mysteries of the soul' with a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke.

*Have patience with everything  
that remains unsolved in your heart.  
Try to love the questions themselves,  
like locked rooms  
and like books written in a foreign language.  
Do not now look for the answers.*

*They cannot now be given to you  
because you could not live them.  
It is a question of experiencing everything.*

*At present you need to live the question.  
Perhaps you will gradually,  
without even noticing it,  
find yourself experiencing the answer,  
some distant day.*

Rainer Maria Rilke





THE CHAMBRED NAUTILUS

Year after year beheld the silent toil  
that spread his lustrous coil;  
still, as the spiral grew;  
he left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
built up its idle door  
stretched in his last found home, he knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
child of the wandering sea,  
cast from her lap forlorn,  
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born  
then ever triton blew from wreathed horn!  
While on mine ear it rings,  
through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:

Build thee more stately mansions, o my soul!  
As the swift seasons roll  
leave thy low-vaulted past,  
let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
till thou at length art free,  
leaving thine outgrown steel by life's unresisting sea!

Oliver Wendell Holmes



PART 2

**SYMBOLS OF THE SOUL**

*The sun was often been obscured for me,  
but always broke through for me again.  
The more often it set,  
the brighter and more radiant it rose again.*

Jacob Boehme



## THE SOUL AS THE CENTRE

### ESSAY 1

**M**an is like a little biochemical robot that has a very short life on a little planet of a medium-sized star on the edge of the galaxy in a corner of the infinite universe, which came into being some fourteen billion years ago and will one day disappear again. This brief summary expresses the approximate well-accepted view of most natural scientists about humanity and the world. And that vision is supported by a large part of the world population. This view is understandable, as we cannot simply reject the conclusions of numerous scientific studies. The enormous progress that natural and technological sciences have made over the past centuries have yielded great achievements for humanity, for which we can be extremely grateful. Nevertheless many people experience resistance with regard to the materialistic view of humanity and the world presented to us by the natural sciences. That is also understandable for, according to spiritual traditions, all of us possess the inner knowledge that life is meaningful and that there are hidden reasons why we live on Mother Earth as thinking, feeling and acting beings.

#### **Meaning of life**

The meaning of life is not, by definition, covered by the natural sciences. As far as giving meaning to life is concerned, we may encounter what we could call the science of the soul, for the search for meaning is inherent in being human; it is a quality of the human soul. It is fortunate that it is so, for if we do not give meaning to our lives, we experience little or no inspiration at all and depression

will be looming, with its corresponding downheartedness and consequences. By giving meaning to our lives, we can slowly but surely discover our vocation as a human being, and follow it.

If we confine our sense of meaning exclusively to 'leading a nice life' and 'having possessions', our soul will fall asleep and we will focus only on the material world and its astral counterpart, which will never be able to give us overall fulfilment. An unsatisfied desire will remain, one that drives us towards more, prettier, better, and so forth. Every time when, after intense endeavour, we receive what we desired, again and again it will become clear: the thrill is only in the chase. The science of nature, in the broadest sense, is by definition limited to perceivable things, with the senses or their extensions. According to the science of the soul, the sensory perceptible world is only one out of many dimensions that man can experience, and not by far the most important. After all, everything in the sensory world, is constantly subject to construction and breakdown, nothing is permanent. Natural sciences, restricted to knowledge of ever changing objects, will never identify the essence. The science of the soul concerns the living experience of the essence consciousness' contents.

It is wrong to think that sensory perception is the only form of reliable knowledge. For starters, a person wanting to conduct natural-scientific research in a responsible way, must follow a training course that lasts for years. Similarly, a person wanting to experience the dimensions of human consciousness that reach out beyond time and space, will have to practice too. Then, it will become clear that inner experiences can be reduced to universal structures, comparable to formulas that describe natural laws.

### **The sun and the earth**

If our image of mankind and our worldview are based exclusively on what we perceive with our senses, we can make considerable mistakes. For thousands of years, man thought that the sun re-

volved around the earth, because this complies with what we see. The Polish priest and astronomer Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543) studied the starry sky in the evening and at night with the bare eye, without a telescope, from an elevated terrace at his home in a fortification wall near the cathedral in the Polish town of Frauenberg. Based on his perceptions from that observatory, he proved that the sun does not revolve around the earth, but that the earth revolves around the sun.

Copernicus wrote his discoveries down in a book, but waited years before publishing it, because he knew that people would laugh at him because of his new ideas, that they would tell him that he had lost his wits and possibly prosecute him for his heretical views. After his death, it took 150 years before the authorities acknowledged that Copernicus was right. The geocentric approach, in which the earth was considered to be the centre, had to be replaced by heliocentric approach, in which the sun is the centre.

In the science of the soul, the earth is a symbol for the personality of man and the sun is a symbol for the soul. If you want to embark on a spiritual path, your personality, with its many sub-personalities, should not be put at the centre – the earth – instead, it should be the soul, symbolised by the sun. This will irrevocably lead to a reversal in your life, a transition from a geocentric to a heliocentric starting point. As a result, you will experience life in quite a different way and you will change fundamentally. The spiritual sun will gradually shine in and through you, more and more.

Indeed, if you identify with your physical body, you are a biochemical robot in the periphery of the universe. On the other hand, if you experience yourself as pure consciousness, through which all kinds of conscience contents flow in and out, you are the centre of the universe. The centre of the universe is, to the soul consciousness, exactly the place where you are now. It is not a geographical centre, but a symbolic centre, outside time and space, a centre that is everywhere.

## **The world of the soul**

According to several spiritual traditions, the sensory perceptible world is one of the many shadows of a much greater, deeper, higher, more radiant and more realistic world: the world of the soul. From that view we can consider everything that is manifest in our outside world or in our consciousness, as symbolic representations of the domain of the soul. In the best case it concerns concrete manifestations that arise from the domain that the Greek philosopher Plato (427-347 B.C.) called the world of ideas and the philosopher Henry Corbin (1903-1978) the imaginal world or *mundus imaginalis*. It is the divine astral world of the concrete archetypes that we can contact through mythical stories, holy texts, universal symbols and, of course, life on earth itself.

In the world we live in we can experience beauty, love and joy. But if we look at the world news or our own experiences, we instantly know that there is also a terrible lot of suffering, misery and horror. According to the science of the soul all this hardship comes from the polluted astral sphere that man is consubstantial with as he was born from it, grew up in it and breathes in it.

Greek mythology refers to the polluted astral sphere as the underworld, as Hades. Christianity has the notion of hell, elaborated (upon) in detail in for instance the epic 'The divine comedy', by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) and in the paintings by Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516). We readily associate the words hell and heaven with areas, but it may be more accurate to relate to them as a state of consciousness, ranging from very low, dark and grim to very high, light and joyful.

In their masterpieces, Dante and Hieronymus Bosch, show us that man can be delivered from evil, that he can make an inner journey to the lost paradise. And that is also the joyful message that is conveyed in all world religions. The Chinese sage Lao Tzu, for instance, wrote about life from Tao. Buddha spoke about entering nirwana – a state of being beyond our imagination – and

Jesus encourages his followers to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, the lost paternal home.

How did this polluted astral sphere in which humanity is captured, come into being? We can read about it in the downfall of the rebellious angels (Revelations 12) and the fall of man (Genesis 3). Of course, these are, mythical stories, providing favourite themes for artists, but that does not alter the fact that the deep truths of those myths can be very intensely experienced. The German protestant shoemaker Jacob Boehme (1575-1824) has written a lot on this subject in a visionary way, based on personal mystical experiences.

### **Visionary shoemaker**

In the year 1600, Jacob Boehme had an overwhelming mystical experience, while he was watching several pewter dishes on a scaffold. In an inner vision, he saw how heaven, earth and mankind came into being, how evil entered the universe and how it could be eliminated. He was seized by the spiritual light several times later on in life, similarly.

The visionary shoemaker from Goerlitz found it extremely difficult to express his experiences and insights in words, but still he bequeathed extensive and impressive works that have inspired many great thinkers: no less than thirty books and over a hundred epistles. Boehme experienced much resistance in his life, because people considered his teachings as heresy, among other things. Personally, he thought this opposition to be necessary to strengthen the inner man. In one of his works he wrote: 'To me, the sun was often obscured, but it always came out for me again. The more often it sank, the brighter and more radiant it rose again.'

If we look at the soul as a centre, we cannot neglect the symbol of the sun. The physical sun, the gigantic fusion power station at a distance of around 92,900,000 miles away from earth, is a manifestation of the archetypical sun, the spiritual sun. Life, warmth

and light radiate from that ultimate source – aspects referred to in Christianity as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### **The centre is everywhere**

The sun is strikingly displayed in both astrology and astronomy, as a symbolic circle with a central point in it. It is a two-dimensional, static representation of a multi-dimensional, dynamic whole. Light radiates in every direction from a central point,. Sunlight is a gift and man may receive it. Reading or hearing that the sun was worshipped and adored in ancient cultures, you may associate this with primitiveness and idolatry. Naturally it did have these aspects too, but most of the time it was rooted in a deep inner knowledge. For instance, the hymn to the sun of Pharaoh Echnaton, can be recognised as a very pure prayer., It can be recognised as a holy text that is indeed about the physical sun, but it can also be used to tune in to the spiritual sun. The sun is approximately 109 times bigger in diameter than Earth is, and its mass is 300,000 times as large. If you let yourself be guided by the voice of the soul, you will surrender to the spiritual Sun, an energy source that is much bigger and more powerful than yourself. This source is aware of what is good for you and for the greater whole, more so than you could ever fathom.

It is possible to imagine the spiritual Sun as a sphere, with an omnipresent centre of which is everywhere and a nonexistent circumference. Obviously, this is hard to comprehend with your conventional mind. The spiritual Sun is everywhere, also in you, and its focal point can be spatially defined. It is in your heart, the centre of the human system that you live in, the microcosm, which reflects the macrocosm.

### **The mystical heart**

The heart is a mystery. It beats roughly a hundred thousand times a day. That comes down to forty million heartbeats a year and almost

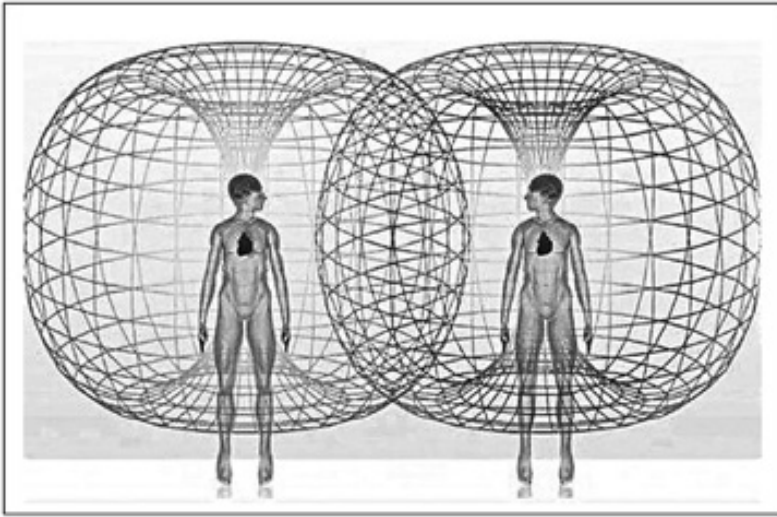


image 10: the electrical field of the heart is about 100,000 times stronger than that of the brain

three billion heartbeats in a human life span of seventy years. We humans are able to hear our heart beating, continuously. This is so with other organs. The heart has its own rhythm, one we are able to feel not only at the pulse, but throughout our body. We are only able to feel other organs when something is wrong, such as a physical discomfort or illness.

In the human embryo the heart has already been formed around the twenty-fifth day after conception. Then, the heart starts beating already. The heart is the most powerful muscle of the human body. Contrary to all other muscles, the muscle tissue does not age. In a continuous rhythm of contracting and relaxing, the heart permeates man with energy, throughout his entire life. That rhythm is subject to change as a result of fear or other emotions, such as physical exertion, meditation and sleep. All the cells in the human body – around 75 trillion – bathe, as it were, in the energy of the heart.

Scientific research has shown that the human heart generates the strongest electric and magnetic fields in the body. The brain

also generates electric and magnetic fields, but these are much weaker than the ones emanating from the heart. The electric field of the heart is approximately 100,000 times stronger than the one emanating from the brain. And the magnetic field of the heart centre is about 5,000 times stronger than that of the brain.

Natural science demonstrates that if we change the electric and magnetic fields around molecules, atomic changes will occur, which allows other processes to take place. In the new activity of the human heart lies the key to fundamental renewal of humanity and the world. This renewal originates from the flashes of the spirit-spark near the heart, near the top of the right ventricle, to be exact. As the name suggests already, it concerns a spiritual principle.

Heart surgeons cannot see this mystical or sacred heart with the bare eye or with microscopes, but some people in whom the soul has awakened, are able to experience it. It is referred to with all kinds of terms, which are only symbolic, like: divine spark, primordial atom, pearl, grain, rose, lily and jewel in the lotus.

### **Purification**

When a person has become receptive to the omnipresent spiritual light, the spirit-spark is able to ignite and start off a process of purification, a cleansing of the heart sanctuary. This process is symbolically reflected in the myth of the fifth labour of Hercules, or Heracles. This Greek hero receives the seemingly impossible assignment to remove, in one day, the thick layers of manure of thousands of cattle from the stables of King Augeas. Still, he succeeds. How? By re-routing water flow of two nearby rivers. First, through the stables and subsequently back to the former riverbeds, and thus Hercules fulfils this gigantic labour in only one day. If a person allows the living water or spiritual energies to access his life, his heart sanctuary will be purified and he will be gradually liberated from the passions that have been summarised



in the seven deadly sins: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth. Then, the foundation for further renewal has been laid.

In one of his writings, Jacob Boehme compares the inner spiritual transformation with turning man inside out. In the original man, the earthly or material aspect resides in Adam, the man of light. Because he eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he must leave paradise and is turned inside out, as it were: the earthly aspect becomes the outside with the light captured within.

Now the issue is whether man, on the basis of the awakened spirit-spark in the centre of the microcosm, will cooperate in a process of being symbolically turned inside out again, thus liberating the light and enabling the original man of light to shine in full glory again.



*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.  
And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the respect of the Lord.*

Isaiah 11:1-2

## THE SOUL AS A TREE

The soul is often seen as a potential connection between unity and diversity, between spirit and personality. A tree expresses this beautifully, as from the trunk, the symbol of origin, many branches grow out. We are also able to recognise this phenomenon in schematic trees, like family trees and tree diagrams.

No mystery schools were present in ancient India. Esoteric teachings were taught in person, by a teacher to a pupil. Many of the secret Vedic teachings dating back to that period can be found in the so-called Upanishads, approximately written down in 750 B.C. and onwards. However, they have been passed on orally for ages beforehand. In chapter 12 of the sixth part of the Chandoy Upanishad, we read about a son wishing to be taught by his father about the mysteries of life. He wonders how it is possible that the diversity of names and forms come forth from pure Being. The father subsequently asks his son to fetch a fruit from the fig tree, to break it open and tell him what he sees. The son answers that he does not see anything at all. His father then explains to him that the existence of the mighty fig tree is rooted in the subtle essence invisible to him. The Self of the world and his personal Self are such subtle essences, too.

An enormously extensive symbolism is associated with trees, as countless meanings can be attached to them. Trees thus symbolise, for instance:

- FIRMNESS, as they are often able to withstand all kinds of weather conditions: warmth, coldness, humidity, drought and storm
- GROWTH, because they arise from a small seed principle, they

develop steadily and are able to grow much older and taller than a human being

- CONTINUITY of life through the seeds from the fruits
- CYCLES, because many trees have a distinct annual cycle related to the seasons: flourishing in spring, forming leaves in spring and summer, shedding fruits and leaves in autumn and resting in winter.

### **Initiation**

The tree is also associated with initiation. Buddha attained enlightenment after a long meditation under the bodhi tree.<sup>28</sup> It is said that Jesus taught his disciples in a circle of palm trees.<sup>29</sup> Verse 3 of Psalm 1 compares the devout man with a tree, it is planted next to water streams, it offers fruits when the time is due and it has leaves that do not wilt. And in Matthew 7 we read that every good tree brings forth good fruits, a good tree does not bear bad fruits and a bad tree does not bear good fruits.

What is initiation anyway? In a general sense initiation is understood as an action or a series of consecutive actions that take place to include an outsider in a certain group or community. Initiation often involves a learning process that ends and begins with a ritual. This generic description can also be applied to the mysteries of the soul. This involves a lot more, however.

In authentic spiritual traditions initiation primarily refers to self-initiation. A person attains new inner knowledge and new powers by self-activity. A teacher or a mystery school is able to support the pupil of the soul and give him strength, but in the end the pupil must do the work himself. If you want to get a more accurate impression on initiation in the mysteries, you might contemplate on the following quotes from spiritual teachers in the twentieth century. Initiation is a victory over the four elements: earth, water, air and fire. Nowadays, initiation does not take place in temples anymore, but in everyday life. Everyday life is where you

encounter the four elements and where you must overcome them. (Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov)

- Initiation is the result of the power to overcome delusions and illusions that veil the truth and restrict consciousness. (Alice Bailey)
- Initiation is also suffering ordeals, as they are a sign of real progress in the pupil. (Hazrat Inayat Khan)
- Initiation is founding the Kingdom of God within you, by yourself. (Wim Leene)
- Initiation is the tiered inclusion in the hierarchy of the newborn man by the sacramental sealing of forces and powers of the original man (J. van Rijckenborgh)
- The knowledge and proficiency received by initiation cannot be obtained in any other manner, except in some far distant future, after many incarnations, by quite different means and in quite a different form. (Rudolf Steiner)

An initiate in the mysteries of the soul could also be referred to as a living connection between earth and heaven. He or she has accepted the assignment to take root downwards and bear fruit upwards (2 Kings 19:30). The earth is the sensory perceptible world in which we live and act. And the notion *heaven* refers to the domain of the soul, the pure astral world of the concrete archetypes and worlds rising even beyond it. Such an initiate, unlike most people, does not breathe the polluted astral sphere of the earth exclusively anymore, nor is he sustained by it. The polluted astral sphere is the joint result of the downfall of the rebellious angels, the fall of man and thousands of years of unholy life by mankind.

### **Ascent and descent**

A tree too, is a living connection between earth and heaven. A deciduous tree is rooted in the earth and stretches its crown out into the heavens. A tree is a living and breathing being, through which

water and nutrients rise up from the soil, through the roots, the trunk and the branches towards the crown. A downward stream carrying organic nutrients created from carbon dioxide, water and sunlight through photosynthesis in the leaves, flows to the roots from the branches and the trunk. Likewise there is a continuous rising and descending of light forces in the renewed human soul. The importance of the correct balance between ascent and descent is also expressed in the following phrases from the classical text *Tabula Smaragdina* or the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus: 'It climbs from the earth and descends from the sky, and it absorbs the force of things superior and things inferior. Thus, you will hold the glory of the world and all obscurity will flee from you.'

It contains a beautiful promise: all obscurity will flee from you. The light can manifest itself then by ascending and descending. Physically, we recognise ascent and descent as breathing in and out. That is partly the reason that the spirit is referred to as breath or *pneuma*, also. If something does not breathe, it is dead. Every living human being breathes, but that does not necessarily mean that every human being breathes spiritually, of course. If a seeker encounters an authentic spiritual tradition, it is made clear to him that – in a symbolic sense – he lives in darkness, that he is not enlightened and has been cut off from the abundant heavenly grace. In other words, he does not form a living connection between earth and heaven.

In the first verse of chapter 11, the prophet Isaiah compares man with the remnants of a felled tree, which he calls the stump of Jesse. At the same time he or she is offered the greatest of perspectives. A divine seed resides within him or her, enabling a mighty recreation process if man pays attention to it.

### **The fruits of the spirit**

For Isaiah writes about a shoot that will develop, bringing forth the fruits of the spirit. What are those fruits? In chapter 5 of his letter

to the Galatians, the apostle Paul refers to them as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control.

A symbolic tree resides in all of us, one that we could call – the tree of knowledge of good and evil, based on the paradise myth from Genesis 3. It is the central cerebrospinal nerve system of the body, its trunk is formed by the spinal cord and the crown is formed by the brain. The spinal cord contains a fiery consciousness force called the serpent fire. Unholy energies circulate throughout the central cerebrospinal nerve system. Jacob Boehme speaks about a fire that is ignited in Lucifer, and thus, relates to the downfall of the rebellious angels and the fall of man, among other things. According to the paradise myth the serpent in the tree of knowledge of good and evil has tempted man to eat from the fruits of that tree, with the result that man was forced to attach himself gradually to the material earthly reality and take on a physical body.

Apart from the symbolic black serpent that sparked the involution of man, for the purpose of reification, a white serpent exists. The white serpent encourages man, to take the path back to the lost paradise, the path of evolution, starting from the lowest point of materiality, the nadir. We see the black and the white serpent in a blended symbolic tree of the knowledge of good and evil, known as the staff of Mercury, the Hermes staff and the caduceus.<sup>30</sup>

### **The staff of Mercury**

Both serpents are twisted around the trunk in three and a half turns, and the crown has been replaced by two wings, enabling the ascend and descend in order to be a messenger of the gods, a living connection between heaven and earth, just like the Greek god Hermes or his Roman equivalent Mercury. The two serpents represent the spinal nerves of the *nervus sympathicus*, to the right and left along the spinal cord in the human body. Indian philosophy distinguishes these three energy channels as *Ida*, *Pingala*

and Sushumna. The story about the restoration of Lazarus from death, as described in chapter 11 of the gospel of John, allows for associating the three channels with Maria, Martha and Lazarus of Bethany. The little spheres on the top and the bottom of the staff symbolise the opened root chakra and the opened crown chakra. In earlier days, initiation often involved letting the fiery force in the root centre rise up through the three energy channels into the crown chakra, by means of all kinds of exercises. This yoga-path entails major dangers for modern man, as this path has been out of line with man's development for a long time already. It is also out of line with the highly polluted astral sphere of the earth.

The three energy channels also play an important role in the transfiguristic initiation mystery for modern mankind, but the process works in an entirely different and much safer way. Totally different renewing energy streams emerge on the basis of the kundalini of the heart. The latter being the result of an active spirit-spark, and without performing exercises. That process is described in the module 'Spiritual Pentecost' in the book 'Spiritual Easter and Pentecost'.

In the staff of Mercury we are able to recognise the structure of an extremely important composed symbol, known as the tree of life from the Kabbalah. This gnostic tradition emerged within Judaism and later on influenced esoteric movements within Hermetism and Christianity. Hence, not only a Jewish Kabbalah exists, but also a Hermetic Kabbalah and a Christian Kabbalah.

The word Kabbalah literally means tradition. Many people associate this word directly with numerical mysticism and numerology. That is only a minor aspect of the Kabbalah. First and foremost, the Kabbalistic tradition emphasizes the importance of getting through to the deeper meanings hidden in the Jewish Bible, Christians call this the Old Testament. This implies definitely much more than an intellectual activity. Rituals, prayers and songs play a significant role as well in many Kabbalistic traditions.



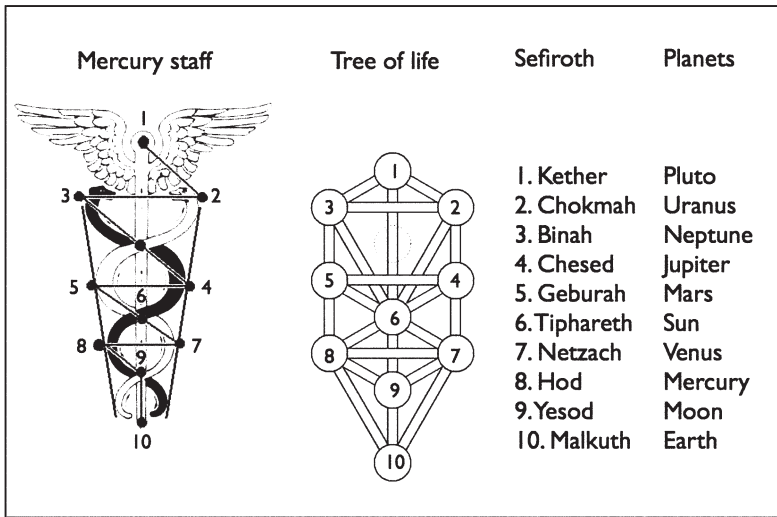


image 11: similarities between the tree of life, the sefiroth and the planets

### The tree of life

The tree of life consists of ten circles – also called sefiroth – that are connected to one another. This abstract figure somewhat resembles a real tree rooted in the earth and its crown stretching out into heaven. According to the Kabbalistic tradition, it is a sacred symbol that is not created by man but, just like holy scriptures, has been given by the angels to enlightened people. The tree of life of the Kabbalah does not belong to the world of experience of the concrete archetypes, but to the world of experience of the abstract archetypes, also home to numbers and geometric shapes, for example. The tree of life is a blueprint for the divine creation plan and demonstrates how the divine light manifests itself step by step at all levels, as a bolt of lightning or a flaming sword. Whoever understands that blueprint, experiences it and consciously forms a part of it, will be recreated into a new man.

The ten sefiroth are force activities, emanations or properties.<sup>31</sup> The tree of life always clearly distinguishes between the three higher sefiroth – Keter, Chokmah and Binah – and the other seven lower

sefiroth. This distinction is also referred to as the veil or the abyss. Among other things, this implies that the higher three sefiroth are not manifest and remain spiritual. The 22 connections between the sefiroth correspond with the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and also with the 22 great arcana of the Hermetic tarot.<sup>32</sup> The 10 sefiroth and the 22 connections together form the so-called 32 paths of wisdom, described in the classical Kabbalistic book *Sefer Yetzira*.

An important concept behind the tree of life is that creation or manifestation takes place because while the heavenly light descends it is tempered by ten transformation stations, called sefiroth. That happens in the cosmos and in man alike, in a way that is much like a bolt of lightning and it is reflected in the picture of the staff of Mercury. In general, the Hebrew names are used for the sefiroth. From top to bottom these are Kether, Chokmah, Binah, Chesed, Geburah, Tipharet, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malkuth. The English translations for these words do exist, but they are hardly ever used because this could easily cause confusion, as it would not be immediately clear that it concerns sefiroth.

A lot can be said about the properties that are connected with the ten particular sefiroth. Here, we confine ourselves to the statement that the sefiroth correspond with the planet forces. In more recent books on the tree of life, the sefiroth are mostly linked to the planets in a way that is represented in image 11.

The body, the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul of man can all be regarded as a tree of life. Thus, all those dimensions of ourselves have the same inner structure. In the seventh essay, titled 'The soul as a sevenfold' we will elaborate upon this further.

### **Annual cycle**

We conclude this essay with a short explanation of the transfiguristic spiritual path by means of the annual cycle of a fruit tree. When a child is born, it is to a certain extent still united with heavenly spheres, and it is able to experience the beauty of it. This

condition is comparable to the beginning of autumn. The fruit tree still shows itself in full glory. As autumn progresses, more and more leaves will fall from the tree, until it is virtually bare at the beginning of winter. As a child grows up, it will experience less and less of the heavenly spheres, until it is practically even reduced to zero. This is a necessary precondition for building a personality that is able to function in this world. But unnoticeably, during the maturing of the personality-soul, preparations take place that enable a spiritual awakening. In secrecy, buds are formed. At some point the spirit-spark may wake up in an adult and he or she will be clearly conscious of it.

This moment of the birth of the soul is similar to the beginning of spring, in which the blossom buds of the fruit tree are opening. The new soul is born, grows, increases in power and, after a long-standing process it will reach its peak at the beginning of summer. At that moment the spirit-soul is born and everything will be focused on bringing forth fruits on behalf of the greater picture. This is when man completes his inner assignment.

What can we say, in this regard, about the pine trees, that are always green? Pines are green in every seasons and have therefore been considered as a symbol of eternal life over the centuries. That is why they have been playing an age-long significant role in the midwinter feast or yule, celebrated on December 21<sup>st</sup> and the festivities usually last twelve days. When eternity descends into time, as is remembered at Christmas, the new soul is born in man.<sup>33</sup> And this new soul is able to grow into an immortal soul garment, referred to by the hymn of the pearl as the shining garment. From this perspective you could regard a decorated Christmas tree with lights as a symbol for the immortal soul garment that is able to evolve in you, a shining appearance that brings light, life and joy.



*You are the light of the world.  
A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.  
Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket,  
but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house*

Matthew 5:14-16

CHAPTER 12

**THE SOUL AS A FLAME**

ESSAY 3

A sacred fire is burning in the cosmos. The spiritually prepared man who makes contact with it, will be fundamentally renewed. He or she will then be recreated, by the light of the spiritual sun, into an entirely new man, a man of light. That sacred fire is indispensable for the pupil of the soul, who is creating the conditions that will enable transfiguration in him or her.

The material sun – that gigantic ball of fire that rises and sets every day and whilst continuously giving life, light and warmth – is one out of the countless manifestations of the spiritual sun. In turn, it is one of the numerous expressions of the unknowable primordial light that the Kabbalah Ain Soph Aur and the gnostic gospel of the Pistis Sophia refer to as the Light of Lights.

The sacred fire that ensures the necessary inspiration on the spiritual path is one and threefold at the same time. The Rosicrucians therefore wrote in their first manifest, issued in print in the year 1614, about the *trigonum igneum*, the flaming erect triangle that has three equal sides. This fire triangle is represented by the three highest sefiroth in the tree of life of the, and situated beyond the veil: Keter, Chokmah and Binah (see essay chapter 11).

Christianity refers to the three fires of mercy as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and in ancient Greece they were called Osiris, Horus and Isis. They successively relate to the divine will, divine love-wisdom and divine activity. This trinity is transcendent and immanent at the same time, it surpasses man and is in him at the same time.

In natural man the divine trinity is only latently present. It

cannot simply become active in him, because it is behind the veil. We should be grateful for that, for a person who is not thoroughly prepared, is not able to endure the high energies of the fire triangle. That is because we are able to distinguish three dimensions within the human soul. They partially overlap one another; the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul.

### **Candle flame**

In the Zohar, the most important book of the Kabbalah, the human soul is compared with a candle flame. The wick represents the physical body. The dark light around the wick is comparable to the personality-soul. The white light on top of it is a symbol for the soul while the light above it, not entirely visible, refers to the spirit-soul. This image of the human soul not only expresses the multiplicity of the soul, but also that it is characterised by continuous dynamics. The flame may seem to be a constant factor, but in reality it is renewed at each moment by the incineration process. A candle flame can also be regarded as a symbol for a sacrifice; the candle sacrifices itself to spread light. Naturally, only the personality-soul is vivified in man. However, when the soul too is born and growing in man, the divine will, the divine love-wisdom and the divine activity is gradually able to become manifest in the personality-soul. That principle also applies to higher dimensions. When the spirit-soul is stirring within man, the forces of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit will engage the soul as well as the personality-soul. In essay 7 this will be further clarified.

The classical alchemical text *'Tabula Smaragdina'* attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, clarifies how the alchemical process of renewal requires a focused activity from the pupil of the soul. For that text holds the assignment: *'Separate the earth from the fire, the subtle and thin from the crude and coarse, lovingly, with great insight and wisdom.'* This refers to the weaving of the resurrection body, the soma psychikon.

It is important to be aware of the fact that not only a sacred fire burns in both cosmos and man, but also an unholy fire, a fire ignited by the downfall of the rebellious angels and enhanced by the fall of man. This ongoing process, from second to second –is maintained by (among others) people and unholy power formations referred to as archons and eons by the gospel of the Pistis Sophia.

Humanity and individuals are chased by that unholy fire and thus creating regrettable situations that certainly do not comply with the divine creation plan. That blazing fire expresses itself, for instance, in fanaticism, intolerance, violence and exploitation.

The astral sphere of both the earth and man is heavily contaminated. You might picture this as a thick fog practically impenetrable for the sunbeams. In order to offer man the opportunity to liberate himself from that grey and lightless reality, divine envoys regularly descend to earth to bring the fire of the gods to the people, just like Prometheus. They incarnate on earth and thus allow themselves to be chained, to breach the astral sphere and make way for the outpouring of light forces, energies that enable people to wake up inside, and embrace the spiritual path. Like a candle, they sacrifice themselves to release light.

### **Saviours**

According to some Hindu movements (particularly within Vaishnavism) the god Vishnu incarnates ten times on earth to give mankind the opportunity for liberation. Vishnu is part of the Hindu trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, respectively symbolising god the creator, god the maintainer and god the destroyer.

The scripture Bhagavata Purana mentions the ten incarnations of Vishnu. They are, in succession: the fish (Matsya), the tortoise (Kurma), the man-lion (Narasimha), the boar (Varaha), the dwarf (Vamana), the warrior (Parasurama), Tama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki. The first seven are mythical by nature, Krishna and Buddha are historic world teachers and Kalki still has to incarnate, accord-

ing to Hindu teachings. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says that he will take on a physical form again when people have forgotten the dharma, that we could also call the universal wisdom teachings. He speaks:

*'Whenever the dharma has been forgotten, when injustice prevails, I take on a physical form. I shall return every era, for the purpose of liberating seekers for truth, for destroying the powers of the depraved, for re-establishing dharma.'*

This reminds us of a statement by Jesus about himself, in Luke 19:10: *'For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what is lost.'* Jesus is a saviour too, and according to most Christians he even is the only one. Within esoteric Christianity several saviours are acknowledged, but that does not alter the fact that the orthodox-Christian interpretation is correct as well.

Indeed, the power of Christ united itself with the man Jesus at the time of baptism in the river Jordan. During the mystery of Calvary the power of Christ united itself with the earth, principally enabling every human being to journey back to the paternal home, in self-authority. Christ has never left mankind, but has been working for two thousand years already, through his disciples and inspired men and women of every faith and of every conviction.

Stories on the life of Krishna and the biblical gospels about Jesus' life show surprising similarities. Krishna was born to a virgin some 5000 years ago in a grotto or stable. His birth – like Jesus's – was announced by a star. Krishna's birth too, preceded infanticide to make him vanish from the face of the earth, and he too, accomplished miraculous healings.

Krishna gave his blood for mankind; he is – just like Jesus – depicted, hanging on a cross. He, too, descended to hell, rose after his death and ascended to heaven. The names Krishna and Christ have the same purport. Christ is called the good shepherd, Krishna is called the shepherd. Krishna too, was tempted by the devil. He,



like Jesus, experienced a glorification. He too, gave a sermon on the mount and figures in miraculous fish catches.

All this might be an indication that mankind is repeatedly given a more or less similar message. We are able to conclude that universal wisdom teachings are timeless, but its forms are culturally defined.

### **Cravings and desires**

How might someone act on a practical basis, when they want to follow the living examples of world teachers who have conveyed the message of the spiritual path? The pupil of the soul might heed the advice given in the booklet 'The voice of silence' and regard the fire of desire not as the sunlight of life (1:28). Desire may indeed be experienced as a fire, a fire that provides the strength to reach what is desired, but also a fire that destroys, if it is not restrained.

Fire can be used to produce steam, and steam can be used to make a steam machine run, making it more or less automatically work for you. If you are not attentive and careful, you can easily become hurt by the fire, the steam or the running machine.

In religious and spiritual circles, desire is often seen as something unwanted, as something that should disappear. That is, in a sense, correct because a pupil of the soul must indeed extinguish his desires brought on by the polluted astral sphere. But that does not mean you must suppress your desires and cravings, for if you do that, tensions will arise in yourself. These tensions will discharge in a disharmonious and destructive way, like a volcanic eruption. The challenge is to manage your desires and steer them in the right direction, guided by the impulses of the spirit-spark.

The power to crave or desire is a divine gift. It is one of the seven aspects of the personality-soul, and of the soul, and of the spirit-soul. It is to be considered as one of the seven candelabras that should be ignited by the fire triangle (see Revelations 1:20).

Desire is not something that only exists in animals and human beings. We are able to read how the highest angels, the seraphim,

praise their creator continuously, not because God asks them to do so, but because it is their highest desire. The apostle Paul wrote that creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed (Romans 8:19). This revelation becomes possible when the children of God follow the desire instigated by the activity of their spirit-spark.

### **Magnet**

Your desire is a magical instrument, it works as a magnet. When you desire something, you transmit a vibration that is defined by your desire, your intentions and your consciousness. This vibration evokes an activity in a corresponding vibration realm in the cosmos, in accordance with the law of attraction. You will receive a reaction to your desire from that realm. So be careful with what you wish for, as you just might get it!

There are lots of self-help books, instruction videos and trainings for sale to teach you the techniques you can apply to receive what you desire. A perfect love relationship, a dream home, a top job, spiritual enlightenment or whatever. The book *'The Secret'* and the film by the same name are very well-known in this respect.<sup>34</sup>

Mostly, these methods come down to visualising what you wish to achieve on a daily basis whilst experiencing the image and the positive emotions that belong to it as vividly as possible in the here and now. Subsequently, you will have to take action to bring the desired goal closer. These techniques will work indeed. When you apply them, you might receive what you desire, but you will have to pay a price for it and it remains to be seen whether or not it will make you happier. If those methods prove to be unsuccessful, you may be better off, as it could indicate that your desire does not fit the path that life has mapped out for you.

Perhaps you will own your favourite car one day, but you might have a traffic accident with it. Maybe you will live in your dream home one day, but as you do so your relationship breaks down. You

might get an offer for your top job, but suffer from a burnout some time later. Perhaps you attain a state of great bliss and large crowds come to you for your wise counsel, but you will totally identify with the persona that you have created yourself, thus bringing you back to your starting point or even past it.

Maybe everything will go exactly as you wish for a long time because you, just like Faust in Goethe's story, sold your soul to the devil. Your false ego will grow enormously, smothering the voice of the soul. By then, your sevenfold personality will have built a thick wall around your deepest inner self. The wall is only able to collapse after several round tours or earthly lives, like the walls of Jericho came down.

It would be a misconception to think that your strongest power lies in your personal thoughts, feelings and desires. Your strongest power will become able to manifest itself if you will walk the spiritual way to which you are called, if you start living out of the soul.

### **Hierarchy of needs**

Every human being has certain basic needs and it is important that they are met. In 1943, the American clinical psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) published a theory on the motivation of man that has become well-known. The so-called hierarchy of needs by Maslow – also called the pyramid of Maslow – shows that a minimum of fundamental inborn human needs must be satisfied to be able to develop a healthy personality. First of all, according to Maslow, your basic needs must be fulfilled, before you are able to focus on more luxurious needs. Once you have met the four levels of basic needs, you will be able to begin with self-realisation or self-actualisation – the fifth and highest level – resulting in a mentally healthy state.

The five basic needs consist of:

1. primary biological needs or physical needs like food, drink, clothing and shelter;

2. livelihood security or personal security;
3. social needs, including a sense of belonging, togetherness and love;
4. recognition, including self-respect, self-esteem and reputation;
5. self-realisation or living in accordance with your desire to create.

This model by Maslow shows surprising similarities with what is known about the seven large chakras of man in esoteric and therapeutic circles.<sup>35</sup> Chakra's are invisible energetic centres in the human personality that are regarded as transformation stations between the etheric body and the astral body. They are connected to the energy in the spinal cord, also referred to as the serpent fire.

Image 12 shows the positions, the qualities and the names of the seven large chakras and their correspondences with the tree of life from the Kabbalah. Already in ancient India already, a lot of knowledge existed about the chakra system of man, especially in various yoga traditions. Several decades ago it was hard to find information about chakras in the western part of the world. That is not the case anymore now. An enormous amount of easy to read books and articles have been written on the subject.

However, you do not need to have knowledge about the chakras in order to walk the spiritual path. If a personality lacks balance, it is often the result of too strong or too weak functioning the activity of certain chakras being too strong or too weak and insufficient coherence in the activity of the chakras. Experienced therapists who are familiar with the chakras are usually able to restore the balance in a disturbed chakra system with certain treatments, but the question is whether this will take away the cause of the imbalance.

The life energy of people who mainly live through their feelings, is usually concentrated in the chakras under the heart. Those people are often said to be earthly and to 'live well within their bodies'.

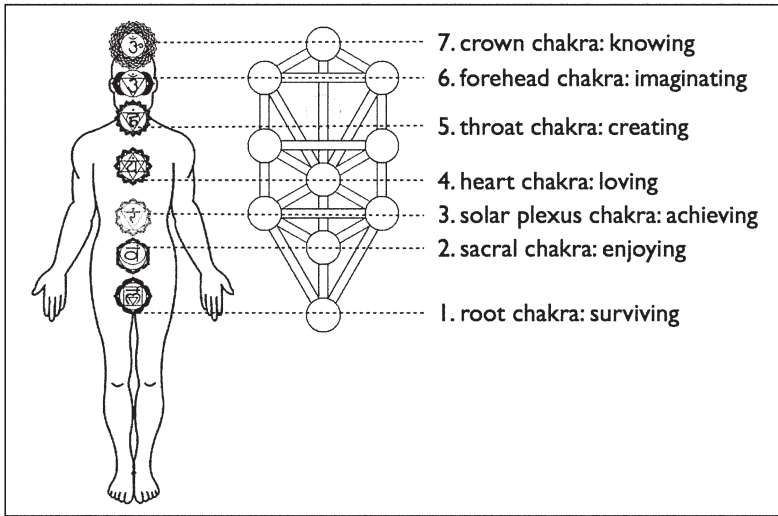


image 12: the seven large chakra's, their characteristics and their correspondences with the tree of life

The life energy of people who mainly live through their thinking faculty, is often concentrated in the chakras above the heart. They mainly live out of an intellectual, mental energy.

The proper functioning of the whole chakra system is important for developing spiritually. The heart centre, consisting of the physical heart and its etheric counterpart, the heart chakra and the spirit-spark, plays an indispensable connecting role. It is essential to pay attention to the physical body, as it is the matrix for building the immortal resurrection body or, alchemically formulated, the retort for making the philosopher's stone. But that is not enough. Therefore, Max Heindel used the threefold motto: a sane mind, a soft heart and a sound body.

## Health

In his mystery school Pythagoras taught his pupils according to the golden verses that are attributed to him: *'In no way neglect the health of your body, but give it drink and food in due measure, and*

*also the exercise it needs. Accustom yourself to a way of living that is neat and decent without luxury.'*

From this point of view we are also able to interpret certain statements in the Bible. Paul wrote: *'It is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.'* (1 Corinthians 15:46). And Jesus said: *'Render to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.'* (Matthew 22:21). In this statement we may regard the emperor as the personality and the body.

We, as human beings, naturally tend to shape our lives within the five need levels that have been formulated by Maslow. We could dedicate our whole life to the self-realisation of the personality-soul. In that case we would give the emperor the things that are the emperor's, but we would not give God the things that are God's. There are other kinds of self-realisation, that is the one of the soul and the one of the spirit-soul. These are spiritual needs beyond the fifth level of Maslow, beyond the top of the pyramid of needs.

If your needs develop a strong selfish nature, you are rekindling the unholy fire in yourself. At that moment, you are desiring things that are not in compliance with your inner assignment. Sooner or later you will have to adjust, for the universe knows better what is good for you than you do. While walking the spiritual path you are driven towards a state of surrender that is expressed in a phrase in the Lord's Prayer: *'Not my will, but thy will be done.'*

At that moment, the focus will shift from self-interest to the interest of the greater whole, that is served by a complete spirit-soul development. Then, the old personality-soul will burn in the sacred fire and the new man re-emerges out of its ashes like the firebird phoenix. That man will then be able to let the light of his inner flame shine in silence, for everything and everyone.





*The journey that one undertakes in the inner life  
is as long as the distance between life and death;  
it is the longest journey one experiences in life  
and one must prepare everything well in advance,  
so that one does not have to return  
after having covered a certain distance.*

Hazrat Inayat Khan



## THE SOUL AS A TRAVELLER

ESSAY 4

In every culture there are fairy tales, myths, legends and parables in which people undertake a journey. Many of these travel stories refer to the great inner journey that man can undertake. They arose from, and align with, a universal desire that is present in man: the unconscious or conscious desire to reach the Source of everything. It is an urge that originates from the spirit-spark, near the heart, in the centre of the microcosm.

An external journey from A to B within a certain timeframe, can be seen as the metaphor for an inner journey, following a path that leads to awareness and renewal. On that journey man develops – as a result of knowledge, experiences, contemplation and inner knowledge – a wider understanding of himself, the world and the source of everything. Because of this awareness he or she becomes receptive to energies with a higher frequency, which transform him or her. The person who arrives is therefore someone different from the person who set out for the journey.<sup>36</sup> This is expressed in many famous classical stories, full of symbolism, on the inner journey that we can undertake ourselves, like:

- the exodus of the people of Israel from their slavery in Egypt, through the Red Sea and the desert to the promised land in 40 years, as described in the bible book *Exodus*;
- the life of Jesus according to the biblical gospels in which he went the way from Bethlehem to Calvary in 33 years;
- the legend on the fourth wise man from the East, Artaban, who cannot worship the new born king because he is occupied in helping his suffering fellow men on his journey;<sup>37</sup>

- the *Hymn of the Pearl* in the apocryphal book ‘*The acts of Thomas*’, in which a king’s son is sent to Egypt by his parents to obtain a pearl of great price;
- medieval tales about knights on a quest for the holy grail;
- the journey of Dante Alighieri (symbol for the personality-soul) in the divine comedy (*Divina Commedia*) in which he is led through hell to the top of Purgatory by Virgil (symbol of the soul) and from there may enter paradise with his beloved Beatrice (symbol for the spirit-soul);
- the dream-song of the Norwegian king Olav Åsteson in which he falls asleep on Christmas Eve (24th December), sleeps through the whole period of the 13 holy nights and days and has inner experiences somewhat like those of Dante in the *Divine Comedy*;
- the mystery path of seven days that Christian Rosenkreutz (symbol of the personality-soul) goes in order to be present at the alchemical wedding between the queen (symbol of the soul) and the king (symbol of the spirit-soul), as Johann Valentin Andreae describes this in his profoundly symbolic story;<sup>38</sup>
- the hard way that the wooden puppet Pinocchio (symbol of the material man) must go in order to become really human, through challenges and resistances. At the end of the story Pinocchio transforms into a boy.

Anyone who travels much gains much experience, is confronted with himself and may lose certain prejudices. Traveling offers the opportunity to look at yourself against a different background. That does not automatically imply that someone who travels much thereby becomes a wiser and more soulful person.

There are people who spend more time planning and organising their holidays than they do living their lives. Holidays can be very wholesome for a person, because he or she can be temporarily empty of the usual daily worries and so obtain new strength. Traveling can be an escape from a life that is considered dull or stressful. That

is why it is sometimes said that the fool seeks his fortune far away but a wise man cultivates it where he happens to be.

### **The inner journey**

When you are young, traveling is part of your education. When you are older, it is part of your experience. There may arrive a moment for a person when there is no great desire anymore for external traveling, but that his or her interest is mainly focused on the inner journey - on discovering and experiencing new regions in the domain of the soul. Great thinkers wrote and spoke about such an inner journey. Five quotes on this subject:

‘We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey.’ (Stephen R. Covey)

‘The longest journey Is the inner journey of him who has chosen his destiny.’ (Dag Hammarskjöld)

‘The spiritual journey does not consist of arriving at a new destination where a person obtains what he did not have or becomes what he is not. It consists in the dissipation of one’s own ignorance concerning oneself and one’s life, and the gradual growth of that understanding which begins the spiritual awakening.’ (Aldous Huxley)

‘The journey that one undertakes in the inner life is as long as the distance between life and death; it is the longest journey one experiences in life and one must have prepared everything well, so that one does not have to return after having covered a certain distance.’ (Hazrat Inayat Khan)

‘Without stepping out the door, you can know the world. Without looking through the window, you can see heaven’s way. The longer you travel, the less you know. Therefore: the sage knows without traveling, perceives without looking, completes without acting. (Lao Tzu, 47)

If we compare the human soul to a traveller, a good understanding

of the subject is important. Man is a very complex being. Hermes Trismegistus characterizes him quite rightly as a great miracle. The human body is a majestic organism and a harmonious developed personality-soul can be regarded as a weak reflection of the divine. But man is potentially much more than that! He is a microcosm and the whole organization of the universe is reflected in his being.

### **Carriage, horse, coachman and passenger**

We can compare the human body and the three grades of the soul with a carriage that is pulled by a horse and driven by a coachman in order to carry out the plans of the traveller, seated in the carriage. The carriage symbolizes the physical body. It is a beautiful vehicle that enables us to move, is subject to wear and tear but may, with timely repairs, remain in reasonable condition but must be discarded at a given time. The horse in front of the carriage is the symbol here of the personality-soul: an intelligent and sensitive animal with its own self-awareness and character with a tendency to follow its own impulses. The horse is what we normally call the 'I'. More precisely: the many 'I's' in us together denote the horse in this metaphor. The 'I' as such is not essential because it is a social construction that is necessary to function in the material world and the world of our psychological experiences. In our lives we play all sorts of roles that suit a specific context: child, partner, parent, grandparent, citizen, club member, customer, employee, patient, and so on.

All these roles are not essential and can be compared to small vortices in a larger whirlpool that we call 'I'. Although our attitudes and behaviour differ from situation to situation, we are still conscious of the fact that these roles are all played by the same person. That is a good thing, because otherwise we would develop a serious personality disorder. When spiritually oriented people search for their true selves, they often search in the dimension of the horse, of the personality-soul,

where it cannot be found. It is not difficult to add a spiritual self to all the other selves, but that has nothing to do with true spirituality, but more with an effort to feel better, which of course is not wrong in itself. True spirituality always focuses on the dimension of the soul, of pure consciousness. Spirituality is about obtaining a different, broader and higher consciousness. In our metaphor, the coachman stands for the soul. It is his task to control the horse, that is the personality-soul, but in practice it often appears that he is sleeping and that the horse has taken over and determines the route. Our problem is that we almost always automatically react to stimuli coming at us from the outside world through a limited, narrow consciousness. We identify ourselves with our material body (the carriage) and our personality-soul (the horse). Some of our selves certainly have a function and are useful, while others are less compatible with a spiritual path.

These selves dissolve automatically after the death of the physical body because they are based on transient forms. Real spirituality aims at eliminating identification with the selves so that the soul may awaken and take up the reins. It is not about mastering them and keeping them under control, but with the correct coordination between coachman and horse. The horse then feels exactly where the coachman wants to go. If the horse would decide where to direct the carriage, the passenger in the carriage will certainly not arrive where he should be. The passenger in the carriage stands for the spirit-soul who has some understanding of the divine plan of creation and has the necessary qualities to cooperate in its execution. When the driver does not, or will not, listen carefully to the wishes of the passenger, the passenger does not accomplish what he wants to achieve because the coachman then determines his own way and destination. It is therefore important that the soul becomes receptive to the impulses emanating from the spiritual-soul. This makes it possible for an immortal soul to develop.

## **Game of the goose**

The spiritual path is a way inward for you are approaching the divine core of the microcosm, the spirit-spark. This is expressed in a special way in the symbolism of a classic board game: the game of the goose. The game of the goose has existed since the fourteenth century and is more than just a children's game. It can be seen as a wisdom game in which the human path of life is depicted through the use of a variety of symbols. The players of the game of the goose actually go a path through life with their travel companion: the goose.

In many cultures, this water bird which can take off and descend as it pleases, symbolizes the human soul. Geese are also associated with soul qualities such as vigilance, love and loyalty. In the event of bad news, they immediately start to honk, and a goose pair will stay together for life. The Greeks associated the goose with the gods Hera, Apollo, Eros and Hermes (the messenger of the gods). In ancient Egypt, the goose was the bird that laid the legendary cosmic egg. With Indian tribes, the goose symbolizes the migration that leads to inner change. And in ancient India, the goose represented the desire of the soul to be freed from samsara, from the wheel of birth and death, from reincarnation and karma.<sup>39</sup>

The basic form of most varieties of the goose game is an oval representation of a coiled spiral that starts in the lower left corner and turns counter clockwise with two or three turns inwards.

The midfield, in which initially the game rules were written, is an open space.

Over the centuries, games of the goose have been depicted in more or less the same form. A board has 63 numbered squares, 62 of which are located in separate squares. Number 63 is the destination: the player who reached it first has won the game. The numbers on the goose board can be seen as a referral to the age or the stature of man, represented by the years of his age. 63 was



image 13: the game of goose is a game of wisdom about the life journey of man in relation to the soul

approximately the age that people reached at that time, and has at the same time a symbolic connotation, as it is the outcome of nine times seven years. Nine is the highest single-digit number, it expresses a fullness. Seven is a sacred number and refers, among other things, to the cycles of 7 years that can be distinguished in the development of the personality-soul.

In the age period of 0 to 7 years, the development of a human child is directed on the development of the physical body. This first life stage ends with teething.

Between the age of 7 -14, the ethereal body, that is associated with life processes, is growing. The child is then more capable of controlling his body and reaches sexual maturity.

From 14 to 21 years the astral body in particular, which relates to feelings and desires, is developed. The growing person is then connected more strongly with the karma of the microcosm that he lives in.

The mental body is developed in the period of 21 to 28 years.

According to most present-day laws, people are full-grown at eighteen, but research shows that the brain only fully develops between the 24<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> year of our life. Until the brain is full-grown, the so-called executive functions like starting something up, slowing down keeping our impulses in check, organising, planning, focusing and perseverance do not perform optimally in many young adults.

### **Becoming like a child**

Based on all we have now discussed, you might think that the last square of the goose board, number 63, stands for death, because death is the definite end of the physical body. The game of the goose, however, concerns the interaction between the personality-soul and the true Soul – the Soul that cannot die, as it is part of eternity. The centre field is not about death, but about victory. In an old-time board of the game of the goose, we see in the midfield a picture of a young girl sitting on her knees with two geese beside her, feeding the foremost goose.

This young girl as the born-again personality-soul, the foremost goose that is fed by her as the Soul with a capital S, and the other goose as the Spirit-soul. In the young girl we recognize the surrender of the personality-soul to the true Soul. We can also make a connection here with the fact that people in whom the soul works powerfully, are like children because they are open, innocent and eager to learn, and can marvel and rejoice over everyday things. This is reminiscent of Jesus' statement: *'If you do not repent and become like children, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoever considers himself small as this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'* (Matthew 18: 4-5).

Repentance implies that as a result of an inner reversal everything within us that does not conform to the spiritual path, shall die. Death is pictured in square 58 in the game of the goose. A player



who lands on that number must start all over again. If the old personality-soul has not died during life, it will die soon after the death of the physical body. Due to the law of reincarnation, in the microcosm that we are, must in time be born a new physical body and a new personality-soul. In squares 1 to 62 there is constant interaction between the personality-soul and the true Soul, but it is much less in intensity than is the case in midfield, the field of victory. On the squares denoting a multiple of nine as well as on the squares denoting a multiple of nine minus four, geese are pictured. Those squares symbolize moments with a fruitful interaction between the personality-soul and the true Soul. A player who enters such a square develops faster and may continue with the same number of squares as dots on the die.

A young child is still in contact with the world of the soul, but round about its sixth year that connection will weaken. That is as it should be because the child has to build its personality.

That is why the bridge is situated on square six. A player who comes on the square of the bridge has grown and may continue to square 12.

The next square with a special meaning is the inn at number 19. The young man or woman disconnects himself from the parental home and enters into new social contacts at the inn. This often creates a fascination with pleasure and diversions, which makes it even more difficult for the soul to express itself in the personality. This situation slows down the inner development and therefore the player who comes into the inn must skip a turn.

### **Is this all there is?**

When someone has passed the age of thirty years, he or she is usually well settled with a life partner, children, a position and property. It is then quite a job to manage everything, especially if, in addition to the crowded life and the stress, there are also emotionally charged conflicts. Important choices have been made

and there is at least some understanding of how the outer world works. An uneasy feeling may come up that is strikingly worded in a pop song, by the Dutch band Doe Maar (Just do it).

*Sit down, 'cause I want to talk to you for a moment  
I have not been as happy as I used to be a long time ago  
No, don't get scared: I don't want to leave you, no.  
There is something, and I can't do anything about it*

*We have no lack of anything, we have it all  
A child, a home, a car and each other  
But, you know, darling, what is the matter, ah  
I am looking for just a bit more, I only don't know what*

*Is this all  
Is this all  
Is this all there is?*

That is when soul can begin to make itself known.

Then a thirst for the living water may develop, a yearning for the inspiration of the soul. This thirst can be quenched with the water from the well at number 31.

It is important that the traveller on his way through life shall take his time for this, and that he realizes that he cannot solve his problem by himself and therefore must accept the help of others. That is why he is only allowed to continue when a fellow traveller comes to the well.

Around the age of 42, a new crisis may occur - a crisis that is at the same time also an opportunity. The traveller has the feeling that he has become entangled in a thorn bush or a maze. He now travels paths that have little or no satisfaction for him. It is then advisable to take a few steps back, to find out what his deepest desire is and to pay attention to this. The traveller who arrives at

square 42 with the thorn bush, must therefore return to square 39. Ten years later, on square 52, the distress experienced in outer life can be so great that the traveller longs for deliverance from what he experiences as a prison so that the soul can breathe freely again.

He is now open to external help in the form of, for example, books, lectures, symposiums, courses, reflection groups and online spiritual information.

The traveller on this square can now only continue if he is rescued by fellow traveller.

### **Overcoming death**

From that moment on it is essential that the traveller is constantly aware of his mortality and that he will centre his life on the motto 'memento mori' that is: 'remember to die' in order to win True Life, in accordance with the lines of the mystic Angelus Silesius:

*'And if you do not live in God, this truth to you appears:  
you are and will remain for dead, though live a thousand years.*

*I need not answer death, for I die all the time,  
that is how True Life conquers me – I live through death sublime.'*

The traveller who has died inwardly and has thus passed square 58 (death) in the game of the goose, can now start the work on the resurrection body – on the weaving of the golden wedding garment. Thus, death is overcome in a spiritual sense.



*Our soul can be seen as a castle,  
formed of a single diamond  
or a very transparent crystal,  
containing many rooms,  
just as in heaven there are many mansions.*

Teresa of Avila

## CHAPTER 14

# THE SOUL AS A CASTLE

## ESSAY 5

Castles still appeal to everyone's imagination. These fortified buildings for aristocracy appear in famous stories with a deeper significance, like the fairy tales of Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty, the legends of king Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, the legend of Parcival and the grail castle, the mystery script about the alchemical wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz (Rosycross) and the books about Harry Potter.

Castles are primarily a symbol for safety, wealth, power and fame. They can be used for many purposes. In order to delve further into the spiritual symbolism of castles, it can be helpful to connect their different functions to the characteristics of the chakra system of the personality-soul, as follows.

7. Crown chakra: temple and oratorio
6. Third eye chakra: drawing office and observatory
5. Throat chakra: studio and concert room
4. Heart chakra: conference room and auditory
3. Solar plexus chakra: workshop and laboratory
2. Sacral chakra: dining room and theatre
1. Root chakra: fortress and home

From this follows a variety of activities that can take place in a castle: celebrating, praising, praying, designing, observing, creating, music making, connecting, exchanging, making, eating, playing, defending and living. These emotions are of course applicable to daily life but are also important for the spiritual path.

## **Game of cards and chess**

If we want to get an overall impression of the residents of a fortress or castle, we only have to take a look at the game of cards, or at the game of chess. We discover kings, queens, warriors (jacks and pawns), jesters (jokers), priests (bishops) and horses with riders. All of these are content of the collective unconscious, which Carl Gustav Jung called archetypes and which, together with many others, are also active in the personality-soul and the soul.<sup>40</sup>

On the spiritual path the pupil of the soul obtains a more extensive and higher consciousness. This becomes possible if king-I, the personality, relinquishes its power to the soul king - if the fake priest makes room for the priest of the soul and if the joker of the personality subordinates his jokes and pranks to the salient truths that the court jester of the soul proclaims, fearless and openly, to the court.

In the Old Testament fortresses and castles are associated with God and the soul, on several occasions.

- God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my saviour; you save me from violence. (2 Samuel 22:3)
- The work is great, for the palace will not be for man but for the Lord God. (1 Chronicles 29:1)
- The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. (Psalm 18:2-3)

## **Teresa of Ávila**

The Spanish mystic Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582) probably was not only inspired by her personal mystical experiences, when writing her famous scripture 'The interior castle' or 'The Mansion of the Soul', but also by the bible texts quoted above.<sup>41</sup> In that book the Carmelite nun wrote, among other things, the following:

*'Consider the soul as resembling a castle, formed of a single diamond or a very transparent crystal, and containing many rooms, just as in heaven there are many mansions.*

*What, do you imagine, must that dwelling be in which a King so mighty, so wise, and so pure, containing in Himself all good, can delight to rest? Nothing can be compared to the great beauty and capabilities of a soul; however keen our intellect may be, they are as unable to comprehend them as they are unable to comprehend God.*

*Let us imagine that there are many rooms in this castle of which some are above, some below, others at the side, in the centre. In the very midst of them all, is the principal chamber in which God and the soul hold their most secret intercourse. Think over this comparison very carefully; God grant it may enlighten you about the different kinds of graces. Now let us discover how to enter it.*

*This appears incongruous: It is clear that the soul does not need to enter the castle for she is the castle herself. One might as well tell someone to go into a room he is already in! There are, however, very different ways of being in this castle; many souls find themselves in the courtyard of the building where the sentinels stand, not caring to enter farther, nor to know who dwells in that most delightful place, what is in it and what rooms it contains.*

*I was recently told by a great scholar that souls without prayer are like palsied and lame bodies, having hands and feet they cannot use. Just so, there are souls so infirm and accustomed to think of nothing but earthly matters, that there seems no cure for them. It appears impossible for them to retire inside themselves.*

*Now let us turn back to our castle with its many mansions. You must not think of a suite of rooms placed in succession, but direct your eyes on the centre place, the middle court where the King resides. This principal chamber is surrounded by many others. However large, magnificent, and spacious you imagine this castle to be, you cannot exaggerate it; the capacity and qualities of the soul are beyond all our understanding, and the sun within this palace lights up every part of it.'*

The sun in the centre of the castle that Teresa mentions is the spirit-spark in the heart of the microcosm. For her, the castle represents above all: repentance, introspection, contemplation and prayer. These are essential, according to her, and she is not unique in this respect. These aspects were the key issues in a spiritual movement within the medieval catholic church that began by the end of the fourteenth century in the Netherlands, with Geert Grote (1340-1384) (Grotius in the Latin variant of the name), in Deventer, known as the *Modern Devotion*.

In this reform movement within the church and society, the clergy and laity aspired to practical wisdom of life and personal life sanctification. This movement can be viewed as a reaction to the malpractices among the clergy and the church leadership at that time. Geert Grote founded the first communes of the Sisters of the Common Life. Within these Christian groups, members jointly followed an inner path and endeavoured for youth education and improvement of the living conditions of the population.

### **Thomas à Kempis**

The Modern Devotion has become famous worldwide by the book '*De Imitatione Christi*' (The imitation of Christ), which was written by the Dutch canon, copier and mystic Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471), and about which people say that – after the Bible – it is the best-read printed matter in the world. It was written for religious orders, but the practical instructions in the book were also appreciated outside the monastery walls. If the castle is used as a symbol of the soul, then the following two quotes from '*The imitation of Christ*' match well.

*'Keep constantly in mind the saying, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. Strive to withdraw your heart from the love of visible things and turn yourself to that which is invisible."*(1:5)



*'Within your cell you will discover what you will only too often lose abroad. The cell that you dwell in then becomes a delight, but when ill kept it breeds weariness of spirit. If in the beginning of your religious life you have dwelt in it and kept it well, it will later become a dear friend and a welcome comfort. In silence and quietness, the devout soul makes progress and learns the hidden mysteries of the scriptures. For God with his holy angels will draw near to him who withdraws himself from his friends and acquaintances. (20:5-6)'*

Thomas à Kempis continuously emphasises the great significance of silence, rest, contemplation and prayer. This advice is reminiscent of the school of Pythagoras, where the pupils in his Mystery School had to be silent during the first five years. Such a rule goes rather far for 21st century man, but we can surely take the call for regular repentance on board, in our current hectic and secular society, in which countless physical and virtual incentives are poured out over us. If you regularly retire in your inner castle, a wholesome effect will be the result.

An interesting aspect of the movement of the Modern Devotion is its respect for the written word. Geert Grote held that reading and rereading inspiring texts should be daily sustenance for every dedicated person. At that time, books were still handwritten and often extremely beautifully hand-copied. These manuscripts started to play an important role within the communities of the modern devotees, in two ways.

In the first place the book was central in what was called colation. That was an organised circle conversation, as a spiritual nourishment. In circles of 'the common life' the starting point of this conversation was usually a bible text. The conversation in such a discussion circle was about the question how this text could positively contribute to the construction of the individual as well as the community. Secondly, there was the so-called rapiarium. This was a personal notebook, in which people wrote

down what had moved them, to think it over again and again. The conversations one had with others, in the circle conversations for example, sometimes provided a single phrase or argumentation that one wished to come back to. It could also happen that during the prescribed daily reading of the Scriptures, the reader encountered a passage that shed a new light on a situation, like a stone touching quiet water. Such a passage was also laid down in one's rapiarium. Geert Grote thought that writing was the best way of learning.

Nowadays conversation circles and the rapiarium still are very effective instruments for awareness and renewal. Postmodern rapiaria are found on social media. On facebook, instagram and pinterest, for instance, the wisdoms, aphorisms, quotes and one-liners pop up everywhere, all the time. Internet and social media offer tremendous opportunities to stimulate people towards internalisation, but it is crucial to understand that inner growth does not take place online, but offline, in the silence and the rest of one's own inner being.

### **Dangers of digital media**

From clinical practice and all kinds of scientific studies, we know that digital media have a strong addictive effect and are dangerous for our body in the long term (stress, insomnia and overweight) and most of all for our power of thought. In this respect the term digital dementia is sometimes used. Excessive use of digital media promotes an insatiable hunger for trivial pieces of information, dissipating attention and making it impossible to think thoroughly and be alert.

When we are online, we often forget what is happening around us. We are then fascinated by the images on the screen, and there is hardly any awareness of other things around and within us. The real world disappears into the background, while we are processing the flood of symbols and incentives that come from our

devices. The interactivity of the internet strengthens this effect.

Neural connections in the brains of people who are very often on the internet and send many online messages, degenerate because they are not charged in a challenging way anymore. Stress destroys the brain cells and newly made brain cells do not survive, because they are not used.

A range of psychological studies has shown that people demonstrate much more attention, a stronger memory and an improved cognition, after spending some time in a rural environment. Their consciousness becomes calmer and sharper. On the internet there is no peaceful place where concentration, meditation and reflection can perform their miraculous wholesome activity. There, we only find the endless hypnotising bustle of the shopping street.<sup>42</sup>

### **Meister Eckhart**

Especially in this time where everything goes so fast, you can greatly benefit when you regularly withdraw in your inner castle.

The famous mystic Meister Eckhart (1260-1320) also compares the soul with a castle. With some mystics we see a flight from earthly life and an unquenchable desire for divine bliss.

The mysticism of Meister Eckhart is, on the other hand, very grounded, because he thinks that a tall building should have a solid foundation. The right attitude towards life, according to him, is not a focus at 'the world beyond', but an inner orientation on the here-and-now in everyday life. Meister Eckhart advises us to love life with all its revelations, and always and everywhere to see the good in everything and strive towards it.

He wrote: *'In the midst of things, man must embrace God and let his heart get used to him as a steady presence in his mind and in his will. Reflect on how you regard God when you are in your inner room: hold fast to the same state of mind and carry it with you in the crowd and in unrest and inequality. In your labour have a tranquil mind and equal faith and equal love for your God. Assuredly, if you live*

*tranquil-minded in this way, no man can hinder you from having God ever present within you.'*

An example of such an attitude towards life and its results, is given in his parable of the scholar who, for a long time, unsuccessfully searched for someone who could show him the way to God, until, one night, an inner voice encouraged him to go to the church. There he would find someone at the front door who had knowledge of the way to consummation.

*"The scholar went there and found, to his surprise, a barefoot man in shabby clothes. He nevertheless greeted the poor man, in compliance with the inner indication, and said:*

*"God may give you a good morning!"*

*The poor man answered gently: "I never had a bad morning yet."*

*"God may give you happiness!"*

*"I was never unhappy."*

*The scholar then asked: "Please explain, I don't understand."*

*And the poor man answered gently: "With pleasure. You wished me a good morning. I have never known a bad morning. For when I am hungry, I praise God; if I am cold, or it rains or snows, I praise God, and that is why I never had a bad morning. You wished for me that God would give me happiness. I never had misfortune, as I live with God and I know: what He does, is best; and what God gives me or disposes for me, be it joy or sorrow, I gratefully accept it from God as the very best; and therefore, I never knew misfortune. Finally, you wished that God would bless me. I have never been unblessed, for I desire nothing else than to be in God's will and I have surrendered my will so completely, that what God wants, I want too."*

*The scholar then asked: "Where do you come from?"*

*"From God."*

*"And where did you find God?"*

*'He was there when I left all creatures.'*

*The scholar was delighted because he started to fathom some of the truth, and exclaimed: "What kind of man are you?"*

*"I am a king."*

*"Where is your kingdom, then?"*

*"In my soul; as I can control my inner and outer senses in such a way, that all my desires and powers are subservient to the soul. And this kingdom is greater than any other kingdom on earth."*

*"And what has led you to this perfection?"*

*"My being-silent, my inner balance, my total focus on God and my unification with God. This is how I found God and thus have I eternal peace in God."*

## **Reconnecting**

Religion means 're-connection' and has, in the view of Meister Eckhart, nothing to do with theological dogmas. According to him, religion is not a supposition, but an absolute knowledge, not a one-time historical revelation, but the eternal self-revelation of the divine in man and in the whole of creation, which in principle may be experienced by everyone. The way to the cosmic consciousness on which Eckhart leads us, has ten steps, ten consecutive stages of ripening of the soul, which are clearly discussed in the book 'Meister Eckhart's way to cosmic consciousness - a breviary of practical mysticism', by Karl Otto Schmidt. The stages correspond with the ten sefirot of the tree of life of the Kabbalah (see image 14). They merge, one into the next, almost unnoticeable, and are clearly recognisable as steps on the path, thanks to the indications of Meister Eckhart.

The first four steps relate to the personality-soul and successively cover: attitude to life, internalisation, concentration and reflection. In the next three steps – contemplation, surrender and enlightenment – the soul plays a significant role as well. The spirit-soul is particularly active on the three highest steps, in the form of vision, unification and all-immediacy.

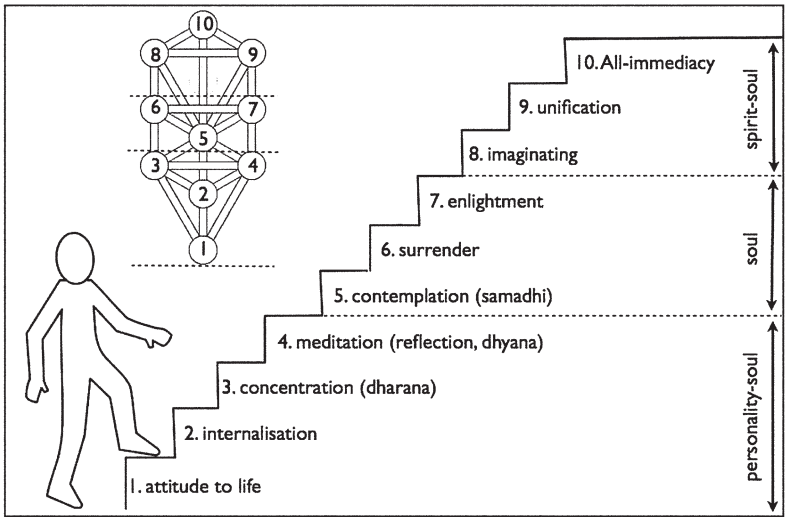


image 14: ten steps to cosmic consciousness based on the writings of master Eckhart

Faiths are thought out by man and are about forms that were created in time and are subject to rigidity. Genuine religion refers to the continuous activity of the indwelling deity. It is always refreshingly new and there is no end to it. Faiths shroud and conceal the truth, but religion is still the core. And this core, this inner castle in the centre, is what only matters.





*If you possess true knowledge, o soul,  
you will understand that you are akin to your Creator;  
and thence you will experience true joy.*

Admonition of the soul – Hermetic text



CHAPTER 15

**THE SOUL AS A CREATOR**

ESSAY 6

**I**t is written about man that he was created in God's image. God is the creator. Thus, it follows that man is a creator too. He is called to cooperate in the implementation of the divine creation plan. Such a true way of creating is, however, only possible if the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul form a dynamic trinity. That situation will be reached at the sixth creation day, which is described in Genesis 1.

We, as humanity, are not yet at that point. We are not yet able to create out of nothing, but we are able to make new forms out of existing elements. In a strict sense that is not creation, but formation. As a personality-soul we have not been created but formed. In verse 7 of Genesis 2, we read on this subject: *'Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.'*

The issue is not God here, or the Elohim, as in Genesis 1, but the Lord God, or YHVH, the name that may not be said, but in spite of this is pronounced as Yahweh or Jehovah. This deity is therefore at a lower level than the Elohim because of his smaller operating range, which is nevertheless incredibly huge.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), one of the most important artists of the Italian renaissance, has splendidly portrayed the formation of man on the basis of the bible verse mentioned, on a world-famous and impressive fresco in the Sistine Chapel in Rome.<sup>44</sup>

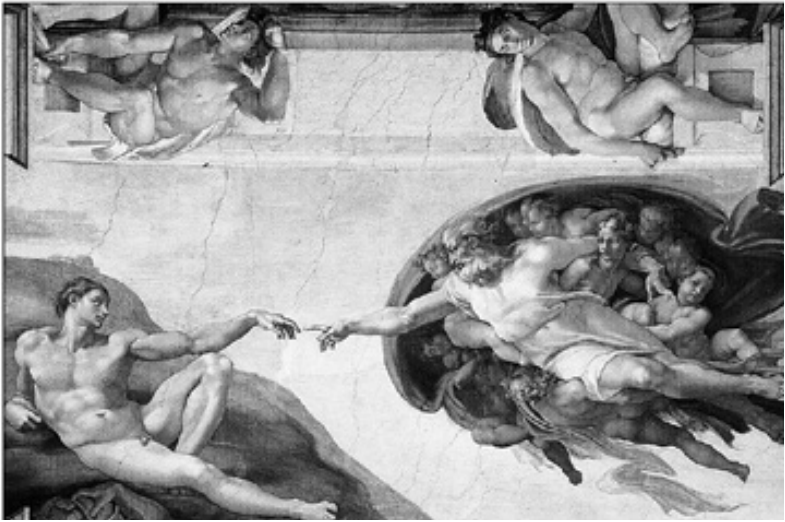


image 15: 'The creation of Adam,' fresco by Michelangelo Buonarroti in the Sixtine chapel in Rome

## Adam

On this fresco Adam lies in his original nudeness on the black soil of paradise. He has a powerful body and has a look of expectation in his eyes which have just opened after the sleep of unconsciousness. Adam is inspired by the touch and the breath of YHVH, from his abode in heaven and who is carried by the strong wind of ruach Elohim (see image 15). Pure majesty radiates from his forehead and in the folds of his robe angels float, manifestations of the spiritual hierarchies that are involved in the implementation of the divine creation plan.

Although in this mural Adam is represented as a man with a physical body, in fact he has as yet no material body in this situation and is still an androgynous living being; masculine as well as feminine. The separation of the sexes has thus not yet taken place and Adam, in this situation, only has the disposal of subtle bodies. Adam and his wife Eve only receive a material body, indicated as coats of animal skin, when after the fall they are banned from

paradise and the entrance to the paradise and the tree of life is guarded by an angel with a flaming sword (Genesis 3). This fresco on the creation of Adam enables us to connect in a totally different way with the creation myth – the text of which is in Genesis 2 – and thereby also with the world of the soul, the world of the concrete archetypes.

This masterpiece of Michelangelo, in which God is represented as an old man with a long beard, is nowadays regarded by many people as a great artistic achievement, but at the same time as a very naïve image. It is, however, the question whether it is naivety that we see here. The image of the old man with the beard is after all, just one of the many ways in which the Sacred One may be experienced. We must not worship such an image, of course – it would be an idol in that case – but it can certainly evoke a warm feeling that makes us receptive for the world of the soul, that is expressed in the true, the good and the beautiful. We can also see the fresco as an expression of the fact that we can reach out for the helping hand that is offered from the divine world. God does not forsake the work of his hands (Psalm 138:8).

### **Artists**

Artists can bring beauty to our awareness. There are many forms of art, like sculpture, architecture, dance, music, poetry, prose and painting. In some works of art, the influence from the world of the soul can be experienced. That is expressed in the following seven quotes from artists.

- The job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery. (Francis Bacon)
- Art can make us aware of the unspeakable. (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)
- Art is looking at the world in a state of grace. (Hermann Hesse)
- After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music. (Aldous Huxley)

- Because of the contact between soul and art, they influence and perfect each other. (Wassily Kandinsky)
- The significance of visual arts is in particular in their power to remind the soul of its origin. (Michelangelo Buonarroti)
- Where the spirit does not guide the hands, there is no art. (Leonardo da Vinci)

The reformation, mainly set in motion by Martin Luther when he nailed a placard with 95 theses on the door of the castle church of Wittenberg, led to an aversion within Protestantism against religious scenes. Particularly as a result of actions by the followers of John Calvin, this degenerated into the so-called iconoclasm with its mass destruction of sculptures and paintings in Catholic churches.

Certain arguments against religious visual arts of the protestants at that time were certainly solid, but by rejecting almost all religious visual arts, the baby was thrown out with the bath water. From an imageless and very abstract conception of God it is difficult to be receptive for the Sacred in a kind of spiritual love relationship. Belief will freeze in this way, because it is uninspired, and hence one cannot be a living channel for the flow of divine grace in this world.

Around the year 1600 more and more people found that the reformation had failed. What initially began with a discussion on the abuses within the church, quickly degenerated into polarisation, religious strife, acts of violence and a belief that was based on the dead letter. From this arose the desire for a genuine reformation of man and mankind that was expressed in e.g. the impulse of the Rosicrucians who came into the open in the seventeenth century in various European countries and which can be regarded as a renewed synthesis of the natural sciences, original Christianity and the Hermetic-Kabbalistic tradition.

Thinking in symbols and images was held in high regard with the

Rosicrucians of the seventeenth century. Their three manifests are rich in symbols, and the many written reactions that subsequently appeared, contained profound symbolic illustrations, in accordance with the following sentences from the first chapter of *'Admonition of the soul'* by Hermes Trismegistus.<sup>45</sup>

*'If the maker is not directly visible, we can come nearer to him by means of his works. In the same way we may reflect on the creator of the All by his works, and the works of fate. Know that all forms and images that you see with your physical eyes in the world of the things that come and go, are merely resemblances of the ideas that actually possess unchangeable and imperishable life.'*

### **Science, religion and art**

In her standard work *'The Rosicrucian Enlightenment'* Frances Yates describes how the impulse of the Rosycross in the seventeenth century formed an important pivot point between the renaissance and the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century.<sup>46</sup> At that time, science, religion and art still formed, much more than today, a unity. Much of the misery in the world is a result of the fact that unity is a long way off now and that is what made Albert Einstein say: *'Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.'*

A person in whom science, art and religion form a unity, we could call a universal man. This notion clearly came forward in the Italian renaissance under the name *uomo universale* or *homo universalis*. Most of the time it refers to a person who develops all his or her talents and skills in harmony with each other.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) is the classic example of such a universal man. This genius was an architect, an inventor, an engineer, a philosopher, a physicist, a chemist, an anatomist, a sculptor, a writer, a painter and a composer. It is he who drew the picture of the Vitruvius man with his arms and legs spread in a circle and in a square (see image 2 for a styled version). This microcosmic man not only undergoes influences from the macrocosm that

affect him, but also consciously creates the desired development on earth.

The philosopher Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) from the early Italian renaissance, was of the opinion that it is not the earth that must be worked, but rather the soul. That becomes possible if man acknowledges himself as a conscious, autonomous creative entity. From this perspective we can regard the renaissance as a specific period in history, as a symbol for the renaissance or rebirth that can take place in ourselves: reawakening the powers from the microcosmic that it possessed in antiquity, from before the fall. They will again come at the disposal of the spiritually striving man who focuses on the royal art of building.

Within the academy that Ficino had founded copying Plato's school in Greek antiquity, the universal man was not so much regarded as a being that should gather as much knowledge as possible, or develop all his talents, but more like a personality in whom the new soul could burn like a spiritual sun on behalf of everything and everyone.

The classical Rosicrucians mention three persons in their manifest they considered universal men in the above-mentioned sense, viz. Paracelsus, Christian Rosenkreutz and Hermes Trismegistus. Paracelsus was a historic figure who was regarded as a shining example by the classical Rosicrucians, because he was willing to give up old and rigid theories, to think for himself and do research by consulting his own inner knowledge out of a profound trust in God. He regarded God as the great physician.

Christian Rosenkreutz is a mystery name of a high human individuality who has worked in several of his incarnations for the spiritual development of mankind. According to Rudolf Steiner, Christian Rosenkreutz is the leader of esoteric Christianity, who has been incarnated for instance in the master builder Hiram Abiff who built the temple of Jerusalem by order of king Solomon, and as Lazarus who was raised from the dead by Jesus.

Hermes Trismegistus is a mystery figure, often viewed as a synthesis of the Egyptian god Thoth, who has brought the art of writing to humanity and thus also wisdom, and the Greek god Hermes, the messenger of the gods.<sup>47</sup> He is the personification of the Hermetic tradition as it appeared in especially the alchemical text *Tabula Smaragdina* and the series of scriptures that are collectively known as the '*Corpus Hermeticum*' and which have been translated from Greek into Latin by Marsilio Ficino.

In the first manifest of the Rosicrucians, the *Fama Fraternitatis* R.C. from 1614, they refer to the book T in the hands of Christian Rosenkreutz, about which the Rosicrucians write that – after the Bible – it is their greatest treasure, and which obviously cannot be subjected to the judgement of the world. The book T would refer to Theos (God), Testamentum (Testament) or Thoth. Yet it could refer to the Hermetic scriptures as well, but maybe also to the tarot. The tarot too, is a very well-known form revelation that has by some been attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.

Based on the enigmatic and cryptic scripture 'The alchemical wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz', we can also regard Christian Rosenkreutz as the prototype of a man who imitates Christ and endeavours to become a Hermes Trismegistus, a thrice great messenger of the gods. Thrice great then refers to the renewed synthesis of spirit-soul, soul and personality-soul, and also to the three aspects knowledge, love and action and the three archetypes king, priest and magician.

### **King, priest and magician**

The three wise men from the East that went to Judea to worship the new-born Jesus, can be regarded as a king, a priest and a magician that have to become active within the new man. These are archetypes that we can also find in the 22 large arcana of the Hermetic tarot, as arcanum 4, arcanum 5 and arcanum 1 respectively. Image 16 shows the ruler (arcanum 4) and the hierophant

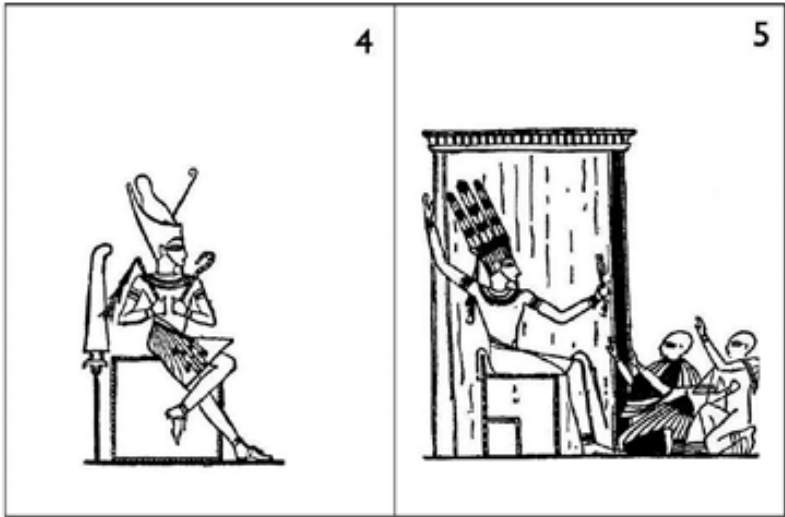


image 16: the ruler (4) and the hierophant (5) from the hermetic tarot

(arcanum 5). The fool (arcanum 0) and the magician are depicted in image 17. The word *arcana* is the plural of the Latin *arcanum*, which can be translated as ‘mystery’, ‘secret’ and ‘hidden to the masses’. The world-famous card deck with the name tarot has an exalted origin in the Hermetic-Christian tradition but has been misused for divination and card games.

Many thousands of versions have been made since of the tarot card deck which almost all consist of 78 pictures. That is why they say: every fool has his own deck. There are indications that the original tarot consisted of only 22 pictures, which are now known as the major arcana, and that the other 56 pictures – the minor arcana – were later added by Kabbalists. It is said that initially the tarot was not about cards, but about images in temples of the Egyptian mystery schools. Part of these temples consisted of a gallery the roof of which was supported by 22 columns: eleven on the left side and eleven on the right side. On every column a mysterious image had been painted, full of symbolism.



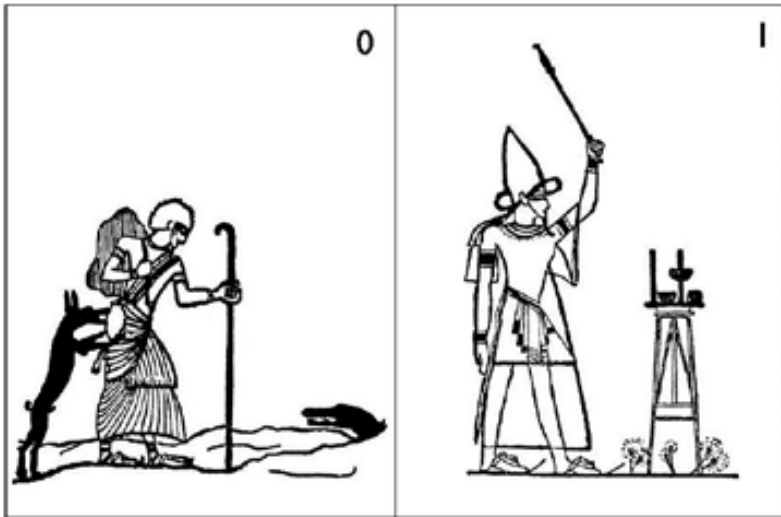


image 17: the fool (0) and the magician (1) from the hermetic tarot

### Hermetic tarot

An important aspect of the mystery path of pupils in an initiation school in ancient Egypt was that they were to reflect thoroughly on those 22 images, as this enabled them to obtain inner knowledge. In the book *'Egyptian mysteries – initiation in the esoteric tarot'* (1931) by the author Woldemar von Uxkull has a high priest say to a new pupil in the mysteries:

*"These images contain, in a symbolic form, all that we know. Everything that the gods wanted to reveal, everything that we, as mankind, can comprehend, is present in these images. These images, which we call the book Thoth, who is also the god of wisdom, tell us about the essence of the deity that we serve, about the world and its origin and about the way mankind must follow.*

*Hence, they teach us about the laws to which art, society, science, and indeed the whole universe are subjected. They contain endlessly more than you can imagine at the moment. However, I shall hand you the key to read the book. In future you will spend many hours here, to obtain insight and knowledge from these symbols. I shall also tell you*

*more, in good time, about the relationship between those paintings.'*

If the Egyptian temples and the 22 images mentioned really existed cannot be verified anymore because they have been destroyed. The story goes that priests, because of threatening persecutions, copied the images in a small format and took them with them when they fled. The copies are said to have come into the hands of the nonunderstanding, who used them for divination and gambling games. The high Hermetic wisdom that is hidden in the tarot was hereby downgraded and deformed and the tarot – quite understandably – received a bad name. Over many centuries all kinds of movements have left their marks on it. In spite of all the mutilations and distortions that have taken place, it is still possible today to delve into the gnostic treasure of the 22 images of the Hermetic tarot. Together these images can be seen as the inner structure on which foundation the damaged human microcosm can be reinstated and vivified.

### **Heavenly gifts**

In arcanum 1 of the Hermetic tarot, also called the magician, man as a creator is strikingly depicted. The number 1 symbolises the living connection between heaven and earth. The word magician comes from the Persian *magu*, which refers to someone who has received heavenly gifts (*maga*).

The magician of the first arcanum represents the renewed man, who consciously, and in surrender to the heavenly light, can work with the four attributes that stand on the altar table in front of him, and which the fool of arcanum 0 still has in the bag on his back, which are: the coin, the sword, the cup and the staff.

At a cosmic level the coin symbolises the sensory perceptible world, in which activity takes place, as well as trade (Assiah), the sword the astral world of the concrete archetypes (Yetzirah), the cup the world of the abstract archetypes (Briah), and the staff the manifested spiritual world (Atziluth).

At the level of man, the microcosm, the coin symbolises the body, the sword the personality-soul, the cup the soul and the staff the spirit-soul.

In several respects the image of the magician is opposed to the one of the fool (see image 17). The earth on the fool card is uneven and bumpy, on the one with the magician it is smooth and even. The fool is surrounded by poverty and aridity, the magician with wealth and blooming flowers. The fool moves about laboriously and is threatened by dangers, but the magician knows he is being protected and radiates a concentrated calmness.

The magician is a creator: he commands in heaven and creates on earth for the benefit of his fellow men. This is partly possible because he possesses a renewed and transparent soul garment, a renewed serpent fire (symbolised by the staff in his hand and an opened and developed crown chakra (symbolised by the pointed cap). The lemniscate, a horizontal 8, the symbol of eternity, that can be recognised in the cap, refers to the connection with infinity and eternity.

The man or woman of arcanum 1 is a living connection between the spatio-temporal world and eternity, because body, personality-soul, soul and spirit-soul are connected to each other as a result of a recreation process that has been brought about in him or her by the heavenly light. What can you do when you recognise the king, the priest and the magician in yourself and wish to have them grow within you, in order to serve the creation? In paragraph 13 of *'The confession of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood'* we read on this subject: <sup>48</sup>

*'What think you, mortals, and how seem you affected now that you have heard that we sincerely proclaim Christ, condemn the pope, adhere to the true philosophy, live a righteous life, and invite – indeed we call and entreat – many (to whom the same light of God likewise appears) to join us in harmonious co-operation? Do you not think,*

*after examining your gifts, after having pondered on the insight you possess in the Holy Scripture, and after having seen how imperfect and contradictory are all arts, that with us you must at least begin to consider their restoration? That you must offer your hands to God, who does the work, and should devote yourself to the demands of this age?*

*For reward, the sum of all the good things that nature has dispersed over all parts of the earth shall be brought together to you, as in the centre of the sun and moon. Then you will be able to banish from the world everything that obscures human understanding and hinders the working thereof, as well as everything eccentric and not congruent with the circle.'*





*The seven and the three which are one are called the ten sephiroth,  
the ten emanations of the heavenly light in man.  
As long as dialectical mankind exists,  
these seven, three and ten aspects  
of the divine magical life  
have been written  
and spoken of.*

Catharose de Petri

## THE SOUL AS A SEVENFOLD BEING

When someone hears or reads for the first time that the inner structure of everything is sevenfold, there is often surprise and the question is posed: ‘Why seven?’ In fact, there is no correct answer to this question, because the septenary is inherent to creation. What we can do, is mention several facts that make sevenfold structures plausible.

- White light that is broken by a prism or breaks through water into a spectrum of seven colours of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.
- The musical scale of western music consists of eight tones, the last of which is a repetition of the first on a higher octave: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do.
- If you have seven equal circles, for instance in the form of coins, you can place them against each other in a flower pattern, in such a way that the centre coin touches all the other six.
- A human head contains seven openings and in the head there are seven brain cavities.
- Our solar system consists, according to astrology, of seven classical planets that correspond with seven classical metals: Sun (gold), Mercury (quicksilver), Venus (copper), Moon (silver), Mars (iron), Jupiter (tin) and Saturn (lead). The planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto have only been discovered later and are classified under the so-called mystery planets.
- In the holy scriptures from diverse cultures, among which the Bible, the number seven plays a key role.

- Abstract symbolism systems like the tree of life from the Kabbalah and the enneagram, are based on the septenary.

Helena Blavatsky mentions in her standard work *'The Secret Doctrine'* from 1888 in broad strokes the doctrine of the seven rays.<sup>10</sup> Later on, Alice Bailey extensively elaborated on this doctrine in a treatise on the seven rays in five volumes.<sup>49</sup> The seven rays are seven powers that emanate from the universal spirit field, from God, and each of them is sevenfold by nature. The seven times seven rays are interrelated. Catharose de Petri called these seven rays the absolute life, the absolute love, the absolute intelligence, the absolute harmony, the absolute wisdom, the absolute dedication and the absolute act of liberation. Based on the age-old knowledge that seven is a sacred number, all kinds of septenaries have been invented in the course of history. In the Middle Ages, for example, the seven deadly or capital sins were known (pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and sloth), the seven virtues (prudence, justice, moderation, courage, faith, hope and love) as well as the seven liberal arts (grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy).

The book *'The Kybalion: Hermetic Philosophy'*, which was issued in English in 1912, under the pseudonym 'The three initiates', describes seven principles that govern the universe.<sup>50</sup> Deepak Chopra wrote the popular book *'The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success'* in 1994.<sup>51</sup> Stephen Covey is the author of the management classic, issued in 1989, *'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People'*.<sup>52</sup>

Max Heindel (1865-1919), who founded the Rosicrucian Fellowship in Oceanside in California in 1909, described in his standard work *'The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception'* from 1909, that there are seven cosmic planes and that humanity has now for a very long time been living on the seventh cosmic plane.<sup>12</sup> According to him, this has not always been the case. Man originates from the sixth cosmic plane and is called to return to the sixth cosmic plane after



countless experiences in many incarnations in the seventh cosmic plane. That is possible if he allows all seven aspects of his essence to develop. This way back can be accelerated by following the path of initiation.

This representation of things was very functional more than a hundred years ago, and in compliance with what was taught in, for example, theosophy and anthroposophy. In this way people were encouraged to work on their own development. This put an end to, for instance, the ecclesiastical dogma that Jesus solved everything for us through his death on the cross. Moreover, this approach made people aware of the fact that the sensory perceptible world is only a minor part of the realities that can be experienced, and that the many non-perceptible realities can be intellectually understood to a large extent.

### **Wider perspective of truth**

Heindel acknowledged that his approach was necessarily restricted. In his preface with the title ‘To those who understand’ he writes, among other things: *‘It will never be so that the last word about the world mystery is laid down in a book. The author of this work therefore does not offer much more than the very first principles of the Rosicrucian teachings.*

*The brotherhood of the Rosycross possesses the farthest-reaching and most logical conception of the world mystery, which the author has become acquainted with during his years-long study of the subject. In so far as he can ascertain their teachings are in compliance with the facts as he knows them.*

*He is firmly convinced that “The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception” will not by far be the last word on this subject and that, as we advance, an ever-wider perspective of truth will open itself to us and clarify many things that we are now still seeing ‘through a mirror, in riddles’.*

There are many similarities between the sevenfold classification of man within the tree of life of the Kabballah, the anthroposophy

and theosophy. These are represented in the table below, which is by and large right but not totally, because not all systems line up with each other exactly.

<b>tree of life</b>	<b>anthroposophy</b>	<b>theosophy</b>
7. Chesed	spirit-man	atma
6. Geburah	life-spirit	buddhi
5. Tiphareth	spirit-self	higher manas
4. Netzach	I, or thinking ability	lower manas
3. Hod	astral body	kama
2. Yesod	ethereal body	linga sarira
1. Malkuth	physical body	sthula sarira

The 'I' or self-consciousness, that is associated with concrete thought, takes a centre position and fulfils a key role in the development of man, as on the basis of that power of thought the astral body, which is associated with desires, can be spiritualised into the life-spirit, which is associated with intuition. And the powers that are active in the physical body can – through the self-consciousness – be spiritualised into the spirit man, who is associated with divine inspiration.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) and Max Heindel distinguish within the 'I' or the concrete power of thought yet three more aspects of the soul that have been developed in sequence: the sentient soul, the intellectual soul and the consciousness soul. It is important to realise that these three 'souls' and the spirit aspects of the levels 5, 6 and 7, are all part of the personality-soul.

### **The seven dwarfs and Tom Thumb**

This sevenfold image of man is actually very logical after studying contemplating it for some time. All seven aspects of the personality-soul are only partly developed. That is expressed, for instance, in the seven little dwarfs in the fairy tale of Snow White, who

have to work in the dark mines, symbol of the material world, and are very happy when Snow White, symbol of the soul, comes to live with them. And Tom Thumb too, and his six brothers who are sent into the forest by their parents, symbol of the world of the multitude and of matter, can be regarded as the seven aspects of the personality-soul that can grow when the influence of the false ego, the giant, is neutralised.

Rudolf Steiner describes in his book *'An Outline of Esoteric Science'* from 1909 a visualisation exercise that ends with the meditating person imagining a black cross with seven red roses around the centre.<sup>11</sup> The black cross is a symbol for the negated lower element of the instincts and the passions. The seven red roses, according to Steiner, are a symbol for the refined, purified passions and instincts. We can also consider them as the renewed major chakras which Steiner calls lotus flowers.

Max Heindel chose as the emblem for his Rosicrucian Fellowship a white cross against a light-blue background in front of a five-pointed star that is composed of 63 visible golden rays. There is a white rose at the intersection of the cross and seven red roses assembled around it. The blue background symbolises God the father and the golden five-pointed star (pentagram) stands for Christ, who can be born in the student in the mysteries, and also for the resurrection body or the golden wedding robe. The white rose stands for the purified heart centre and also for the purified throat centre with which the creative word can be spoken. The red roses refer to a purification of the desire nature at the cross of the material reality.

The extensive work that Steiner and Heindel have undertaken to lead people to spiritual awareness, clearly shows that they were inspired by the spiritual force of Christian Rosenkreutz.<sup>53</sup> From a certain moment on, Rudolf Steiner, for the rest of his life, wore a chain with the symbol of the Rosycross on it: a small cross in a circle with around the intersection at the front seven rubies, set

in roses, and at the back the initials of the threefold motto of the classical Rosicrucians as mentioned in the Fama Fraternitatis R.C. from 1614:

- EDN: Ex Deo Nascimur –  
*From God we are born*
- ICM: In Christo Morimur –  
*In Christ we die*
- PSSR: Per Spiritum Sanctum Reviviscimus –  
*Through the holy spirit we are reborn*

Steiner has also used this profound mantra of the Rosicrucians in the so-called ‘Foundation stone meditation’ which he introduced during a Christmas conference in 1923, in Dornach (Switzerland). And also in the Rosicrucian manifest, the Fama Fraternitatis, four fundamental principles or axioms are mentioned, which are known as the higher foundation for the construction of the physical body, the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul.<sup>4</sup>

- PHYSICAL BODY: Nequaquam vacuum:  
*There is no empty space*
- PERSONALITY-SOUL: Legis jugum:  
*The yoke of the law*
- SOUL: Libertas evangelii:  
*Liberty through the gospel*
- SPIRIT-SOUL: Dei gloria intacta:  
*God’s glory is unassailable*

These for maxims offer us a wider perspective than what comes forward from the writings of Steiner and Heindel. Steiner and Heindel primarily focused on the development of the sevenfold personality-soul, as the people of their time were able to understand this. Now humanity is ripe to call the soul into being and – on the basis of this soul’s development – vivify the spirit-soul out of the spirit-spark.

### **Three seven-circles**

J. van Rijckenborgh (1896-1968), one of the founders of the School of the Rosycross in Haarlem, The Netherlands, foresaw this and unfolded his vision on the subject in his book *‘The Christian Initiation Mystery – Dei Gloria Intacta’*, that was issued in Dutch in 1946.<sup>54</sup> In this book he describes the three seven-circles that man must pass through to be reborn as to the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul. For J. van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri (1902-1990) the spirit-soul was the core of their work and that is why they chose the golden rosycross as the symbol for their work: a golden Latin cross, with a golden rose at the intersection. The golden rose refers to the fully opened miraculous golden flower at the third-eye chakra and the golden cross is the symbol of, among others, the transfigured personality-soul, transfigured by the spirit-soul, forming a living connection between heaven and earth.

The symbol of the golden rosycross has been affixed in the temples of the School of the Rosycross but it is not used in public communications. For this another symbol is used: a circle with a centre point which encompasses an erect equilateral triangle and a square. We can recognise the structure of the tree of life in it. The three higher sephiroth are symbolised by the point in the centre and the seven lower sephiroth by the triangle and the square together.

On the central panel of the so-called Kabbalistic Lehrtafel from Bad Teinach in the Black Forest in southern Germany, the symbol

of circle, triangle and square can be recognised in the tree of life at the position that is indicated as Daath. Daath is a mysterious position in the tree of life, not an actual sephira, but it can establish a connection between the higher three and the lower seven sephiroth.

The Kabbalistic Lehrtafel from Bad Teinach is a triptych that was painted in 1663 by Johann Friedrich Gruber (1620-1681) for the fiftieth birthday of princess Antonia von Württemberg (1613-1679). She was a learned woman who was part of a small circle of ministers who constructed a world system, or compendium from the teachings of Christianity, mysticism, Kabbalah and the Hebrew tradition. Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), the author of the anonymously published manifests of the Rosicrucians, gave advice with respect to the creation of the Kabbalistic Lehrtafel. Jan van Rijckenborgh was not familiar with the Kabbalistic Lehrtafel, but nevertheless also arrived at the symbol of circle, triangle and square as mentioned above.

According to J. van Rijckenborgh it is not necessary to fully develop the personality-soul before one can be nourished by the forces of the sixth cosmic plane. Man in whom the spirit-soul comes to life on the basis of an active spirit-spark, will directly establish contact with his or her divine origin in this current life.

The book *'The Christian Initiation Mystery'* of J. van Rijckenborgh is a masterly, though also very veiled writing that is based on an astrosophic interpretation of the letters that John wrote on the island of Patmos to the seven churches of Asia, as recorded in the bible book of the Revelation of John. In the book *'The Christian initiation mystery'* we read:<sup>54</sup>

*"The structural process of death and rebirth, defined as the mystery of initiation, presents three times seven or twenty-one aspects. We refer to them as the three seven-circles. Each of these circles has again seven aspects, comprises seven faculties and places the pupil in seven*

*different fields of work. In each of these circles a seven-branched candlestick burns for the pupil, seven fiery principles are handed to him, standing before him as seven angels bearing witness to seven churches. The word 'church' we must interpret in the language of the mysteries as a higher field of work for entities who have been prepared for it, and the suggestions, the powers and the potentialities coming after that higher field of work are now brought within the reach of those who yearn for the spirit, who have prepared themselves to advance through fundamental change and persevering endeavour in the right direction.*

*That direction of the higher sphere of activity which is planted in the pupil by the holy spirit as an angel, must now bring about a certain regenerative process. That process of development can only commence and unfold successfully, provided the pupil sees the candlesticks from his own conscious, unfettered life, comprehends these flaming angels and, with the help of their luminous teachings and powers, tackles his own lower being which must be nullified in its very inception, in order to raise the heavenly being in glory within him. That is why the pupil must write the 'letters' to the seven churches [...]*

*In the first seven-circle the pupil is saved as regards nature; in the second seven-circle a scintillating life becomes his; in the third seven-circle he returns to the divine order - to the Father's house.'*

Meanwhile it has been more than seven decades since these words were written. Mankind has progressed, and pioneers are now ripe to comprehend a more accurate concept of the required renewal process which may now be realised in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. This concept is based on the universal structure of the tree of life of the Kabbalah. As indicated previously, the personality-soul has the structure of a tree of life, of which the highest three aspects are not yet manifest. The body, the soul and the spirit-soul too, can be imagined as a tree of life, in accordance with the Hermetic principle 'as above, so below'.

## Seven dimensions

Within the seventh cosmic plane we can distinguish seven dimensions. The first four are generally associated with the sensory perceptible world and the physical body: length, width, height and time. The other three dimensions encompass and at the same time rise beyond them: the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul. Enumerated in a list they are:

7. spirit-soul
6. soul
5. personality-soul
4. time
3. height
2. width
1. length

In the symbolism of various mystery traditions, we recognise the dimensions of the physical body, the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul. Let us, for example, take a look at arcanum 7 of the Hermetic tarot. That is the triumphal chariot in which the Egyptian god Osiris is transported with great speed towards his aim. This is reminiscent of the throne-like vehicle or merkabah in the vision that the Jewish prophet Ezekiel describes in the first chapter of the bible book with the same name. This throne-like vehicle is the light vehicle with which the journey into heaven to the throne of God, can be undertaken.

The Kabbalistic tradition has derived from so-called merkabah mysticism that was practiced within Judaism in the period from 538 BC to 70 AD. The merkabah tradition was based on an esoteric doctrine that was again mainly based on Genesis 1 and Ezekiel 1, in which the mystic had to pass through seven heavens to be able to see the throne-like vehicle of God.

In Ezekiel 1 and also in the Revelations of John four winged



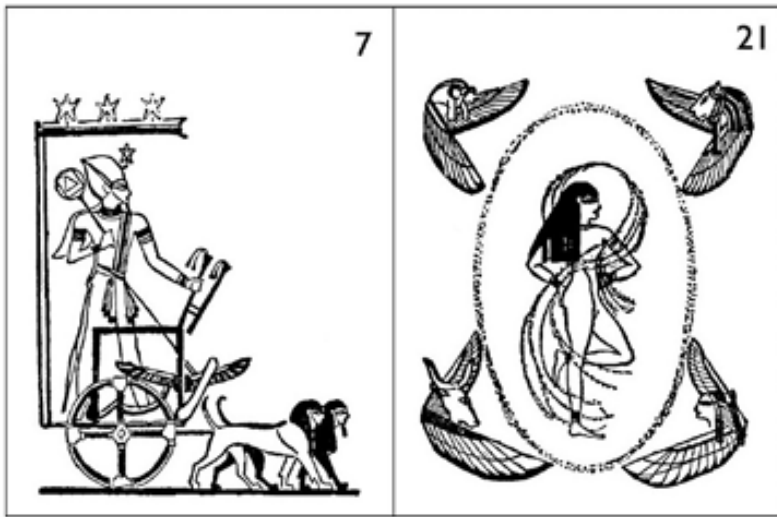


image 18: the chariot (7) and all in all (21, the universe) from the hermetic tarot

mystery animals are mentioned, with consecutively the face of a bull, a lion, a man and an eagle. We may regard those as symbols for the physical body, the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul respectively. All these dimensions reveal themselves as a sevenfold, but are, in line with the tree of life, tenfold. In the Hermetic tarot the four mystery animals can also be found on arcanum 21, all in all. (see image 18).

Image 19 may well be the most important image in this book, because much can be gleaned from it. Various mysteries are amalgamated in this image, because it quite clearly demonstrates how levels of diverse dimensions overlap, thus making spirit-soul development possible. The four trees of life merge into each other and together form a connecting path between the sensory perceptible world of the seventh cosmic plane into the sixth cosmic plane.

The figure, composed of four trees of life, is also known as the Jacob's ladder or the ladder to heaven. Man himself is called to be such a ladder to heaven. Patriarch Jacob experienced this connection between heaven and earth in a dream, at the house of Bethel,


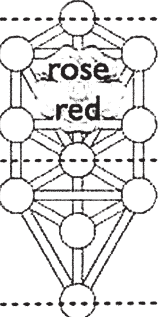
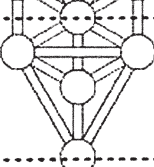
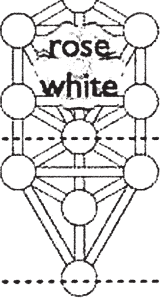

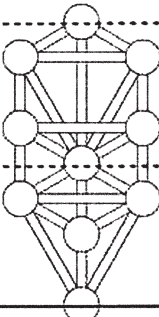
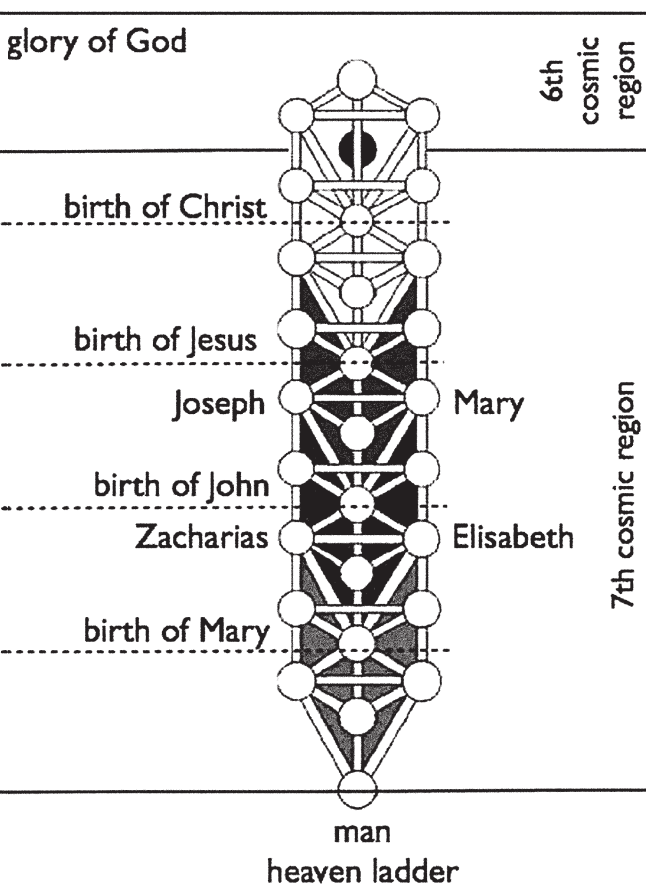
nowhere a vacuum	the yoke of the law	the liberty of the gospel	the whole
			
	spades swords lion		
diamonds pentacles bull			clubs wands eagle
		hearts cups man	
physical body	personality- soul	soul	spirit-soul

image 19: man as a tree of life and a heaven ladder

which means: house of God. In Genesis 28 we read in this respect: *'And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.'*

It requires quite some thought to attain a deeper understanding of image 19. There were and are Kabbalists who daily meditate on the four trees of life and their relationships. André Peters describes in his Dutch book *'Kabbalah, a Contribution to a New Psychology'*,



that in earlier times Kabbalists who travelled elsewhere liked to take a picture of the tree of life with them for their meditations.

In the time period when these were drawn and coloured by hand on parchment rolls, it was not easy to go on a journey with these four trees of life. In order to transport the four trees of life in a small format, they took them with them in the form of a deck of cards, which could then be used to lay out the trees of life on the floor or

a table. And this is how, according to Peters, the minor arcana of the tarot and the card game came into being.

This consists of:

- 10 cards with coins or diamonds for the tree of life of the world of Assiah, the world of action and experience, which corresponds with the physical body;
- 10 cards with swords or spades for the tree of life of the world of Yetzirah, the world of astral experience of the concrete archetypes, which corresponds with the personality-soul;
- 10 cards with cups or hearts for the tree of life of the world of Briah, the world of mental experience and the abstract archetypes, which corresponds with the soul;
- 10 cards with rods or clubs for the tree of life of the world of Atziluth, the world of spiritual experience which corresponds with the spirit-soul.

These forty cards together form the way that man can go to transform into a spirit-soul man, a temple of the spirit. They can be associated with the 40 years that the people of Israel needed to reach the promised land from their slavery in Egypt, through the desert.

The hidden sephira Daath, which strictly spoken is not a sephira, becomes active in a tree of life when the tree of life of the next higher dimension is vivified. We can see that in image 16, where Daath of the personality-soul is at the same level as Yesod of the soul. That means, among other things, that the soul can become active in the personality-soul when it opens itself to the archetypes in the pure astral world of the soul. Daath is also associated with the planet Saturn, the gate of Saturn and the awakened spirit-spark that may manifest itself in various dimensions: as the white rose of the personality-soul, the red rose of the soul and the miraculous golden flower of the spirit-soul.

We conclude this essay with a passage of the book 'Seven Voices Speak' by Catharose de Petri.<sup>55</sup>

*'In the holy language the tenfold preparation to which every pupil of the modern spiritual school is subjected during the development of the living body and the group, is compared with the ten-stringed instrument with which the righteous sing their hymns. The seven and the three which are one are called the ten sephiroth, the ten emanations of the heavenly light in man. As long as dialectical mankind exists, these seven, three and ten aspects of the divine magical life have been written and spoken about. So it is certainly nothing new, or the latest novelty about which we are speaking. We only wish to have you reflect on these ancient things and values of the divine life, so that you will come to know your own calling and your own values better than ever before. And as you know, one has to possess knowledge of these things before one can put them into practice.'*



*The nature of the soul is like glass, transparent.  
But if one of the two sides of the glass is covered, it becomes  
a mirror. He who wishes to acquire inner knowledge,  
must cover the outside of his soul to see the spirit,  
instead of the outside world.*

Hazrat Inayat Khan

**THE SOUL AS A MIRROR**

Are you looking for someone who can give you long-lasting happiness? Look into the mirror! Our culture suggests that happiness can only be found in things and people outside ourselves. If you believe this, you will certainly end up disappointed, as sustainable happiness can only be found within you, in the soul that is connected with the spirit. The active spirit-soul is the prince on the white horse who can offer you the only possible sustainable happiness.

Naturally we, with a physical body and a personality-soul, need the outside world, with the four nature kingdoms as we know them – mineral, plant, animal and human – not only for the maintenance of our physical body, but in particular for the benefit of our personality-soul. Contact with our fellow men is essential for our growth and for our well-being as a human individual. Through interaction with the congeneric persons around us and while gaining all sorts of experience in the world, we acquire knowledge, we develop skills and get to know ourselves. Our fellow men and the creation too, are like a mirror to us. Our soul can also be seen as a mirror.

In the adventure novel *'Tarzan of the Apes'*, from 1912, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, and in its many film adaptations, the famous jungle hero Tarzan gradually develops from a human animal into a gentleman. In reality this would not be feasible, because a human child that is nursed by a mammal like an ape or a wolf and able to keep itself alive afterwards, cannot grow up as a normal personality. Such a person will start behaving like an animal and fall behind in the psycho-social, linguistic and cognitive development, and in

this he can never catch up again. This is clear from the hundred or so cases of so-called wolf children or wild children that have been reported in the past hundred years.<sup>56</sup>

Man, by nature, tends to imitate his fellow human beings. Learning often begins with imitation, with copycat behaviour or mirror behaviour. The brain even appears to be especially made for this.

Halfway the nineties researchers of the university of Parma found through their trial tests with monkeys that certain areas of our brain are not only activated by our own actions, but also by observing actions of others. If a researcher, for instance, stuck out her tongue to a baby monkey, certain neurons in her brain which are similar to the neurons in the researchers' brain lit up, causing the monkey baby to stick out its tongue as well. As these specific neurons ensure that the behaviour of a human being or an animal is reflected by another human being or animal, they are therefore called mirror neurons.

### **Mirror neurons**

The activity of mirror neurons also shows why people can be so fascinated watching sports competitions and movies, for example. The spectators empathise with the players, because they are experiencing more or less the same thoughts and feelings, as the players do. We owe our power to connect with others, our empathy, to these mirror neurons.<sup>57</sup> They also enable us to practice certain actions internally. You can, for instance, become a better archer if you often visualise the various movements for archery. Mirror neurons not only light up because of physical vision, but also by visualisation. When we see violent and saddening images, this will evoke painful emotions for us, through our mirror neurons. Yet many people watch violent films and an incessant flow of images of sadness, fear and misery enters millions of living rooms through news media. An important reason for this, is that



there are major astral and ethereal force activities, which extract life energies from mankind – partly through the media – to keep themselves alive. In the gospel of the Pistis Sophia these are called archons and eons.

People who aspire to a spirit-soul development, had better not open themselves for all this astral activity, as they will be less receptive to divine forces that can renew their whole being in a gnostic sense. After all, everything on which we focus our attention, our energy, will grow. It is therefore no wonder that you will feel depressive, powerless and forlorn when you are constantly focused on pain, sadness and suffering and cannot do anything about.

How is it possible that so many people are so fascinated by images, feelings and thoughts that are associated with pain, sadness and suffering? According to Eckhart Tolle one of the most important reasons is that almost everyone carries an accumulation of old pain with him in his energy field. Tolle speaks, in this respect, of the pain body that has come into existence because negative emotions from the past have not been fully faced, accepted and let go of. In his book 'A New Earth', he writes on this subject:<sup>58</sup>

*'The pain body is a semiautonomous energy form that lives within the energy field of most human beings - an entity made up of emotional energy. It has its own primitive intelligence, not unlike a cunning animal, and its intelligence is directed primarily at survival. Like all lifeforms, it periodically needs to feed – to take in new energy – and the food it requires to replenish itself consists of energy that is compatible with its own, which is to say the energy that vibrates at a similar frequency. Any emotionally painful experience can be used as food by the pain body. That is why it thrives on negative thinking as well as drama in relationships. The pain body is in fact an addiction to unhappiness.'*

The beginning of our liberation from the pain body lies first and foremost in the realisation that you have a pain body. Subsequent-

ly and more important: it is fully in your power to remain alert enough to spot the pain body in yourself as a heavy flow of negative emotions when it becomes active. If this is recognised, it cannot impersonate you anymore, cannot live through you and so renew itself.

You can become free of your identification with your pain body by awareness, as described in chapter 1. If you do not identify with it, the pain body cannot exercise any power anymore over your thinking and will not be able to feed on your thoughts. The pain body, in most cases, will not dissolve immediately, but when you break its connection with your thinking, the pain body will gradually lose its energy. That will also lead to changes in the brain: certain neural connections will become weaker or disappear, while new connections come to life and are strengthened.

### **Are we our brain?**

Seen from a neurological standpoint, learning is making and strengthening new connections between brain cells, allowing certain thoughts, feelings and actions to emerge. Every human being is unique and has a personal past. The brain of a person is therefore very individual by nature and reflects the person concerned. Some even go so far as to identify entirely with their brain. The Dutch brain researcher Dick Swaab, for instance, wrote the popular scientific book *'We are Our Brain'*.<sup>59</sup> This title expresses a materialistic world view, which Swaab fully endorses.

For the time being, most scientists support the view that says that the human consciousness is the result of brain activity. From the spiritual point of view, it is exactly the opposite: consciousness is the basis of all manifestation and all brain activity is therefore triggered by consciousness.

This point of view is fully in compliance with research into near-death experiences by the Dutch cardiologist Pim van Lommel.<sup>60</sup> Studies on near-death experiences show that a clear consciousness

is definitely possible while the heart has stopped and no brain activity can be measured any more. Hence, it is a misunderstanding to think that consciousness is localised in the brain. Rather, brains facilitate our consciousness.

If we are alert, we may sometimes experience in our daily life, that our consciousness is not limited to within our skull but stretches far out in time and space. Many people recognise, for instance, the phenomenon that is known as telephone telepathy. Just when you were thinking about someone, the telephone rings and you are directly in contact with the person you were thinking about. Sometimes, in a flash, you can get an impression of a situation that shortly or longer afterwards becomes real. The British biologist Rupert Sheldrake researched this kind of phenomena and concluded that these are common occurrences. He also found, using cameras, that pets like dogs and cats often know beforehand when their boss will come home, without being able to know this through their senses.<sup>61</sup>

The above-mentioned extraordinary phenomena were already known by initiates in ancient India, who used the term akasha in this respect. This means the cosmic ether, the bearer of all life and sound, permeating the entire space. The past, the present and according to some the future too, are being stored in akasha, in one mighty and all-embracing synchronisation.

Lynne McTaggart wrote in her book *'The Field – The Quest for the Secret Force in the Universe'*, that the so-called zero-point field of physicists – which is associated with minuscule vibrations at quantum level, may be this akasha field. She presents a plausible scientific theory that clarifies all these phenomena, from the functioning of our DNA to communication between cells and from homeopathy to extrasensory experiences.<sup>62</sup>

### **The palace of the mirrors**

Man is called a microcosm, that is: a small world, because the

universe reflects itself within him. Reflection phenomena take place in all dimensions and at all levels of the universe. The moon reflects the light of the sun. The eyes of man reflect his mental and physical condition. With telephone telepathy a thought about a friend reflects itself in the consciousness of the person concerned. Sufi poets named the world of thought Aina Khana, which means the palace of the mirrors.

The way in which we experience the world reflects our inner state. We do not see the world as it is, but as we are. If we are happy, we experience the outside world in quite a different way than when we are sad.

The great Persian poet Nezami tells a story in his manuscript *'The Treasury of Mysteries'* in which Jesus and his disciples are walking in an alley and find a dead dog in a state of dissolution. The disciples are disgusted, they only see an ugly cadaver and emphasize the stench. Jesus, however, only looks at the beauty in the carcass: he sees the white teeth and praises them. The moral of the story is that we must not judge too early and that underneath all apparent ugliness often something beautiful is hidden. The challenge is to always discover this beauty again and again in everything and to experience it, because this is how the soul can reveal itself in the world.

If we experience beauty, peace and joy, we reflect these. Inayat Khan (1882-1927), the most important advocate of Sufism in the West, wrote:<sup>63</sup> *'A man whose heart is reflecting joy, wherever he goes will make other people happy. The sorrowful, the troubled ones, the disappointed, those heartbroken, they will all begin to feel life; food will be given to their souls, because this person reflects joy.'*

### **Water crystals**

Our state of mind reflects itself in our body and in our direct environment. The Japanese researcher Masaru Emoto made the phenomenon of energetic reflection visible to us in a surprising way, by

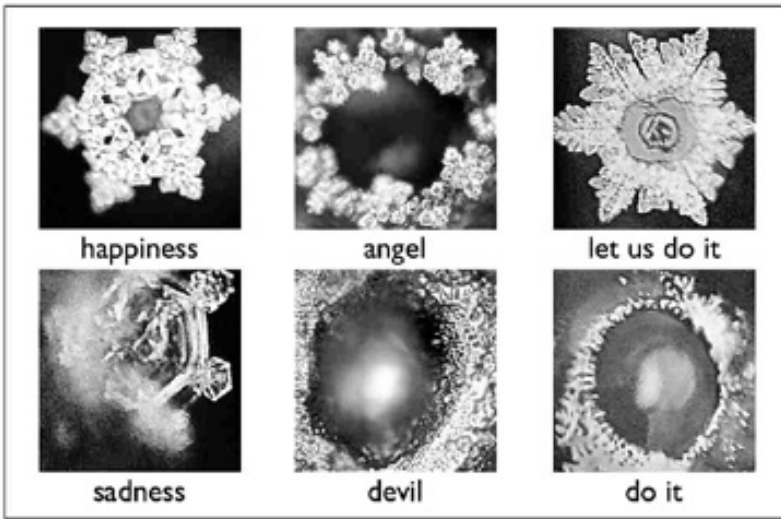


image 20: water crystals that originated in cooled down water that is exposed to certain words and intentions

research into water crystals. He froze water samples that had first been exposed to negative or positive words, thoughts, emotions or different kinds of music. Afterwards he took photographs of little water crystals in the melt water through a microscope. Image 20 shows six of such photographs.

Masaru Emoto established that the positively influenced water samples give beautiful and perfectly formed crystals, whereas negative words, thoughts and emotions result in ugly, malformed clots.<sup>64</sup> Water that had been exposed to music by Bach provided magnificent, clear and symmetrical water crystals, whereas in water that had been exposed to heavy metal music a dull amorphous clotting took place.

If we let the results of Masaru Emoto's experiments get through to us, we hold the key to achieve great changes, on a personal as well as a collective and a global level. The studies of Masaru Emoto can be seen as a strong indication that the quality of our thoughts and feelings determines the quality of life.

In his book *'Metaphysics'*, Inayat Khan compares the soul of man with a clear, transparent glass plate. When one of the two sides of the glass is covered, it becomes a mirror. The external experiences reflect themselves in the soul, when the inside is covered. He who wants to gain inner knowledge, will have to cover the outside of his soul, in order to see the spirit instead of the external world.<sup>65</sup> That is possible, if he withdraws within himself, into his inner castle.

People are in different stages of development. This means, among other things, that not everyone is suited yet to reflect the spiritual light. The following zen story illustrates this.

*'One day Huai-jang watched his pupil Ma-tsu, deeply sunk in meditation. He asked him what he aimed to gain with his meditation exercises.*

*Ma-tsu answered immediately: "I want to become a buddha."*

*Huai-jang said nothing but quietly picks up a roof tile and starts to scrape it against a rock.*

*Ma-tsu could no longer control his curiosity and asks: "Why are you scraping that roof tile against the rock?"*

*Huai-jang answers: "I polish it into a mirror."*

*Ma-tsu asks: "But how can you make a mirror by scraping a roof tile against a rock?"*

*Huai-jang answers: "How can you become enlightened by sitting in mediation?"*

### **Taking responsibility**

The circumstances that you experience around you are constantly a reflection of your inner life. If therefore, you wish to change your outer circumstances you must adapt your inner life. If you realise this, you can no longer take a victim role and will always take responsibility for what you experience. You always have a choice, and by making more and more conscious choices and following them up, you grow as a human being.

The way in which a person develops, is strongly determined by his innate qualities (nature) and by the environment in which he is nourished (nurture). Since the rise of the study of genetics, most scientists have been assuming that the genes that we possess determine our state of being and our behaviour. Studies by the cell biologist Bruce Lipton prove, however, that DNA-blueprints that are transferred at birth are not set in stone. Our genes are not decisive for our behaviour for, as studies show, genes are turned on and off by external factors. Genes do not determine our fate, but are triggered by our observations, feelings, thoughts and convictions. Lipton proved that our convictions, whether true or not, positive or negative, influence the activity at a genetic level and can even change our genetic code.<sup>66</sup> This means that we can create healthy opinions and convictions for ourselves and hence live a meaningful and valuable life.

On the gnostic path the aim is to become a person who is inspired by the soul, to vertically receive the spirit – in a symbolic sense – and radiate it horizontally. By nature, man is mainly focused on his body and his personality-soul. That is certainly necessary because an individualised personality-soul must develop in relationship with others. That is why the I-focused human being always asks: ‘Mirror, mirror on the wall, who’s the fairest of them all?’ We need affirmation in order to grow and if all is well, we get this from our conscience and our environment, from our mirrors therefore.

If, however, the soul is awakened, the relationships will shift. To the question who is the fairest of them all, the mirror answers that the questioner is beautiful, but that Snow White, symbol for the soul, is a thousand times more beautiful than the one asking the question. It is then time to redirect the focus from the personality-soul to the true soul. If that does not happen, it will eventually mean the end of the personality-soul.

In 1903 the English painter John William Waterhouse (1840-1917) made a lovely painting depicting the ancient Greek myth of



image 21: 'Echo and Narcissus', painting by John William Waterhouse

Echo and Narcissus, which expresses a comparable idea (see image 21). In a beautiful nature landscape, a handsome young man lies flat on his belly in order to get a clear look into the crystal-clear water of a pond. He is totally fascinated by the reflection of his own face in the water and pays no attention at all to Echo, the beautiful nymph who sits beside him and is madly in love with him. According to the myth of Ovid, Narcissus could not make the effort anymore to look away from the water. He did not think to eat and drink anymore, or to rest, and became totally immersed in his reflected appearance in the water. He tried to speak with it but did not get an answer. He began to cry, but his tears disturbed the image. Narcissus began to decay: he lost his colour, his life energy and his beauty that had once been so enchanting for the nymph Echo. In the end Narcissus languished and the only thing that was left from him was a flower, yellow on the inside and surrounded with white leaves.

The term narcissism is derived from his name, Narcissus. With this psychological concept a form of behaviour is meant in which



someone is entirely self-absorbed, with hardly any consideration for others. Narcissists usually have an unconscious low sense of self-esteem and compensate this by falsely considering themselves as better and more important than others.

In a symbolic sense we can regard Narcissus as the original spirit-soul, which has to learn to know itself by its reflection, the personality-soul. The spirit-soul forgets itself completely, because it identifies with the reflection, resulting in a lack of attention for the soul, for Echo. The only thing that remains of Narcissus is the narcissus flower as a bud. If this flower bud, or rose of the heart unfolds in the light of the spiritual sun, a new creation will sprout from it. The infringed microcosm will then be healed, thus enabling the spiritual sun to purely reflect again.



*There will be thinkers, poets and builders, people who  
are called from all branches of science, art and religion.  
And refreshed at the one source of Original Wisdom,  
as brothers and sisters linked to each other in one chain,  
they will set to work for the majestic unfolding of their talents.*

J. van Rijckenborgh

## CHAPTER 18

# THE SOUL AS A WORLD WORKER

## ESSAY 9

**I**n more and more deserts on earth electricity power plants are being built that generate a large amount of electricity by means of thermal solar energy. In one set-up hundreds of flat movable mirrors are mounted on the ground. They reflect the sunlight into a so-called sun tower in the centre of the plant. There is a large kettle in the top of the tower in which steam is produced. With this steam, electricity is generated through a steam turbine and a generator which can be beneficially used at a large distance (see image 22). With this type of sustainable energy, power is developed by aligning many mirrors and pointing them at the same target: the focal point in the centre. Similarly, a group of spiritually aspiring people, working together in a harmonious way, develops an enormous power source that contributes to spiritual awareness and renewal on a global scale.

Everyone in whom the spirit-spark in the centre of the microcosm is awakened, reflects the light of the spiritual sun. In those who, from an authentic spiritual tradition, tune in to the spiritual sun, the tree of life will grow and there will be a time that it will bear fruit so that other people can be nourished by it. Then the soul will become active in ever more people, as a clear, flaming fire that will provide the strength to undertake the inner journey. If the pilgrims on the path of renewal of spirit, soul and body will regularly withdraw into their inner castle, they will be able – in a unique way – to live so spiritually creative that their lives will contribute to the implementation of the divine creation plan. The septenary of new powers will brighten their dull and dim inner

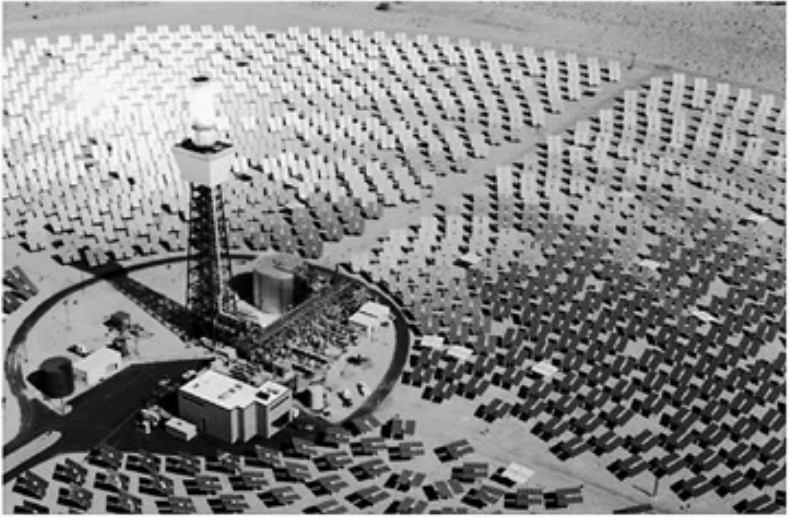


image 22: many well-tuned solar mirrors bundling an enormous power that becomes effective at big distances

mirror, enabling them to perform their sacred work for world and mankind in group unity with the light of the spiritual sun.

The question may arise: would not it be better to go the spiritual path on my own? Is not all that I need for my inner journey generally available? Is not it better to – in a symbolic sense – place a solar panel on the roof of my house so that I will be self-supporting, and not dependent on others?

Such questions exemplify your initiative and your autonomy. They show that you have developed into a conscious individual and that the involution of the microcosm that you live in, has been completed successfully. Thanks to the help of creative hierarchies, after a long development process over many centuries, an integrated personality has developed which can relatively quickly turn into an autonomous person, inspired by the spirit, able to be servient to everything and everyone.

## Collectivity and individuality

In the sensory perceptible world, it is not possible that a mirror of a large solar energy plant in the desert could at the same time be a solar panel on your house. In the world of the soul this is indeed possible – in a symbolic sense. More than that, it is urgently needed. Everything suggests that collectivity and individuality are both needed and that the one cannot do without the other. You can be both: the mirror in the large solar energy plant as well as the solar panel on your house.

The miracle of the cosmos has been created and is maintained from moment to moment by the activity of countless autonomous angels, intelligently and harmoniously working together at many levels. And this can also be said about the miracle of the microcosm: man too, was able to develop by virtue of the unselfish cooperation between hosts of angels. The human society has been created by and maintained from moment to moment by the activity of many autonomous people, working together at all kinds of levels and receiving guidance from above for this. This cooperation among people does alas not always happen intelligently and harmoniously, but it is certain that the ideal will become reality in the distant future as a result of a sacred inspiration in people.

Now the days will come that the visionaries foresaw in the ether. The flaming triangle of ideality, vitality and reality is erected and prophesy will now prove what has long been said under a veil. The classical Rosicrucians knew this and they therefore began their first manifesto from the year 1614 with the following words, which are still highly topical in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>4</sup>

*‘Seeing that the only wise and merciful God in these latter days has poured out his mercy and goodness over mankind so richly that we thereby attain more and more to the perfect knowledge of his son and of nature, we may justly boast of the happy time wherein he has not only made us discover that half of the world which was heretofore unknown and hidden, but also made manifest unto us many won-*

*derful and never heretofore seen works and creatures of nature, and moreover has raised highly enlightened men of noble spirit who have partly restored the degenerate and imperfect arts, so that ultimately man might understand his own nobility and worth, and why he is called microcosm, and how far his knowledge of nature extends.*

*However, the careless world is but little pleased herewith, and slander, derision and mockery continually increase. Among the learned, too, pride and ambition arise so great that it will prevent them from agreeing together to collect a *librum naturae*, or perfect method of all arts, out of everything that God in this our age has so richly bestowed upon us, but, on the contrary, will oppose and quarrel with each other.'*

### **The internet**

Today science, religion and art have developed to unprecedented heights, but they are reaching their limits. The inner knowledge of the Christ power, that was made available for mankind through Jesus, has been revealed to a rapidly increasing number of spiritual seekers. More and more people are beginning to realise that they are a temporary manifestation within an immortal microcosm, in which enlightenment and spiritual wealth may gradually be developed. Knowledge of the mysteries, in earlier days meticulously hidden within mystery schools, is now within the reach of every developed human being with access to the internet.

Apart from all the negative aspects entailed by the internet, as pointed out in chapter 14, we may at the same time regard this as a fantastic instrument to clarify to people how true lasting happiness may be attained; how they can become enlightened by the spiritual sun that encompasses everything and everyone and is simultaneously present in everything and everyone.

Jan Amos Komensky, from Moravia, in today's Czech Republic, better known under his Latin name J.A. Comenius (1592-1670), foresaw in 1641 already the arrival of such a universal medium,

in which everyone would be able to find all that is needed for experiencing ‘bliss’, as he called it.

We can justifiably call Comenius a universal man, or uomo universale. The flaming triangle of knowledge, love and action illuminated his whole life, which was far from easy and comfortable. Comenius was a theologian and conceived a theological-philosophical system with the objective to improve the world by educating man to a free being, able to take his own decisions and capable of voluntarily choosing for the good. He renewed pedagogy, introduced resource-based teaching and wrote several textbooks. He furthermore engaged in, among other things, cartography, music and medicine.<sup>67</sup> In his book ‘*Via Lucis*’ (The Way of Light) – which Comenius finished in 1642 in London but was only published in 1668 when he was living in Amsterdam – he described, amongst others, seven ways knowledge was acquired through the times. In the course of history, these seven ways of the intellectual light have been developing one after the other in the given sequence.

1. personal perception
2. conversation
3. public meetings
4. writing
5. book printing
6. seafaring over the seven seas
7. everyone-everything-everywhere

### **Everyone-everything-everywhere**

The seventh way of the intellectual light, which Comenius named everyone-everything-everywhere, was not yet there in his time and strongly resembles the internet as we now know it. In ‘*Via Lucis*’ he wrote the following on this subject:

*‘And so we wait, along the way of the ages until now, and after having traveled these six ways of the light, now the seventh. And because we have come here along an ascending road, the next is also a higher*

stage. This purports - how can it be different now with all the traffic through the ages because of the art of printing and between the peoples by their seafaring - from all light sources that have been undiscovered to date, that one great light arises to the general use of humanity. That, in fact, all that was hereto individually and for one's own good, considered, sought, found and revealed by God and taken possession of in our, or in another century by this or that people, culture, family home,- that this is now given to the whole world in its fulness.

And what earlier only individuals gifted with a sharper mind could fathom, later all will be able to contain, when the Mysteries of those things are unveiled and brought to the light of day, and that understanding them will not be as difficult as it is was before, but easy, effortless and enjoyable, because of the common harmony that will all be shown in everything, to everyone, everywhere. In one word, we are entering a grand road of light along which mortals, everyone, everywhere will see everything that is necessary for their bliss. Between the seven stages of the light of the mind runs a beautiful upward path, because each of the later stages does not erase the preceding stage, but encompasses and empowers it. As when the use of language began, this has not dulled your own perception but rather has opened the opportunity to invite more people to its use. And likewise, the meetings of the congregation discussing and considering subjects separately does not undermine things but rather enrich them. The invention of writing has not inhibited the three preceding stages but rather has promoted them, and the art of printing has not hindered the use of the pen, but has led to a larger scope of influence, as likewise the voyages of discovery have made them known to more people.'

Might the internet not just be the book of nature that is mentioned in the preface of the Fama Fraternitatis? The worldwide web is a repository of almost everything that mankind has produced, from the very worst to the noblest of things. So, this digital reflection of mankind is certainly about nature in the broadest sense of the



world, but as it concerns a repository of countless visions, which are often in conflict with each other, it cannot serve as a guideline for all arts. It is, however, possible that such guidelines are studied via the internet. It is perfectly possible nowadays to hold meetings via the internet. That is very useful, as all kinds of costs and hassle with regard to traveling and material facilities can be prevented in this way. Yet it is important to realise that there is much more power in meeting physically, in particular if spiritual-religious meetings in a temple are concerned, because the group body will thus bring about a greater outpouring of force in that case.

### **Worldview and view on mankind**

What might the Fama Fraternitatis mean by a ‘book of nature’? The classical Rosicrucians kept silent on this subject. Apparently, those who understand can find this out for themselves. It is certainly not unreasonable to call the Fama itself a book of nature, because this scripture can be considered as a compendium, a summary of the universe. All in all, a book of nature is a creation that expresses a view on world and humanity and facilitates the experience of a connection with the world of the soul. For instance, ‘*The divine comedy*’ of Dante Alighieri, ‘*The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*’ of Max Heindel and ‘*The Christian initiation mystery*’ of Jan van Rijckenborgh. And also, of course, the classical scriptures like the Avesta, the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, the Dhammapada, the Quran, the Tao Te Ching and the Upanishads. The classical Rosicrucians wrote in their manifesto *Confessio Fraternitatis* from 1615:

*“Those are closest to us and the most like unto us who make the Bible the guiding principle of their lives, the centre of their striving for knowledge, and who treat it as a compendium and summary of the whole world. [...] Since the beginning of the world man has not been given a greater, more admirable or more beneficial work than the Holy Bible. Blessed is he who possesses it; more blessed he who reads it,*

*most blessed is he who becomes thoroughly acquainted with it; while he is most like unto God who understands it as well as obeys it.*

A book of nature can also be a construction that has clearly been inspired by the world of the soul. Think of the impressive pyramids in Egypt and the medieval cathedrals, which are rich in universal symbolism, and are reflecting cosmic laws in their dimensions, proportions and structures. Some master builders of the cathedrals were initiates and possessed extensive esoteric knowledge.

Certain paintings, among which ‘The garden of earthly delights’ by Hieronymus Bosch and the Kabbalistic Lehrtafel of Johann Friedrich Gruber, can also be considered books of nature. And what about musical masterpieces like *Die Zauberflöte* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *The Messiah* by Georg Friedrich Händel and profound works of Johann Sebastian Bach?

Bach once said that the ultimate goal of all music should be to praise God and sooth the soul. Studies by the musician Kees van Houten show that in certain compositions the name Bach is transformed into the name Christian Rosencreutz and that a Rosicrucian motto can be discovered in them as well: ‘*While living, I made this compendium of the universe my tomb*’. Comenius was very familiar indeed with the manifestos of the Rosicrucians in southern Germany, in which Christian Rosenkreutz is the central figure. He even corresponded with the author, Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654), on a potential cooperation to jointly spread the philosophy further in the world. The once so passionate circle of friends of Tübingen however, of which Andreae was a member, had fallen apart, partly as a result of the Thirty Years’ War. Due to all kinds of setbacks, Andreae did no longer have the vitality and resilience to further cooperate with the plans of Comenius.

Scholars have sometimes called the book *Via Lucis* the Fama of Comenius, because it is an attempt to reformation, in its deepest essence identical to the one of the Rosicrucians. Comenius dedi-

cated his book *Via Lucis*, which can – like the *Fama* – quite rightly be called a book of nature, to the Royal Society, an association of great scholars in England. We could say that Comenius had taken over the torch of inspiration from the Rosicrucians and carried it through Western-Europe.

Comenius was a minister and later a bishop at the Moravian Unity of Brethren. The members of this tightly-knit and sturdy religious community cooperated harmoniously, based on Christian ideals in accordance with the tradition of the Bohemian reformer John Hus (1370-1415). Hus (Czech for goose) was burned for heresy in 1415, in Prague, and on the stake where he was being executed, he shouted out: *‘They will roast a goose now but a swan will rise from its ashes.’* Later on, people remembered these words of Hus and they believed that they referred to Martin Luther. That is how the swan became the symbol of Luther and the Lutheran church.

### **Geese in V-formation**

A flock of geese, by the way, is a splendid symbol for cooperation. In 1972 Robert McNeish wrote a famous text about this, which is still often used in courses on leadership and cooperation. Why the goose is regarded as a symbol for the soul has already been extensively explained in chapter 13 (essay 4). In autumn wild geese jointly travel to warmer areas, to spend the winter there. In the same way a spiritual group travels in the direction of the world of the soul. They are working on themselves, while maintaining their inspiration by exchanges within the group.

Geese fly in a V-formation because every goose that flaps its wings thus creates an uplift for the birds that follow. By flying in a V-formation, the group only uses 72% of the energy that would be needed if the geese would fly on their own. Analogously, people who jointly go in a certain direction in group unity, will reach their goal earlier and easier, as they can use each other’s driving force. When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and

resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it. If we have as much awareness as these geese, we stay in formation with those headed where we want to go. We accept help and in turn help others. The leading goose in the V-formation has the hardest job, of course, as it has to overcome most of the air resistance. If the front goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position. If we translate this towards the cooperation between people, we can say that it is advisable to alternate difficult tasks and share the leadership. Just like geese, people are interdependent of each other's unique knowledge, skills, gifts and talents.

The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. From that observation we can learn that we have to take care that our honking is stimulating others and that we appreciate and encourage others to reach their full potential.

Teamwork pays off, and even more so where authentic spirituality is concerned. We all know the force of cooperation, but do we also understand the deeper background of it? There is synergy of course, the whole is more than the sum of the parts:  $1 + 1 = 3$ .

There is synchronicity, which comes into play particularly when people are passionately working on a project or an activity. All that is needed will then appear at exactly the right moment, without having organised things in detail beforehand. Independent events will then coincide in a meaningful way, without an identifiable causal connection. It is said that the word team has been composed of the first letters of four words: together everybody achieves miracles. Most of the time this does not refer to spectacular phenomena, but to the spontaneous occurrence of a desired event that can hardly be attributed to coincidence. We could relate it to the saying: *'Coincidence is a small miracle that God wishes to perform anonymously.'* But what are miracles, then? The first chapter of *'A course in miracles'* contains a few statements that are more than worth thinking over:<sup>68</sup>

- Miracles as such do not matter. The only thing that matters is their source, which is far beyond evaluation. That is to say: miracles as such are not the most important, as the only real value is in the source that miracles come from. That source is so great and special, that no human being can determine its value.
- Miracles occur naturally as expressions of love. The real miracle is the love that inspires them. In this sense everything that comes from love is a miracle. Whenever love is given, miracles arise. The basis of the miracle is love and love is the only true miracle.
- All miracles mean life, and God is the giver of life. His voice will direct you very specifically. You will be told all you need to know. This means: all the miracles that occur serve the objective to maintain life and God is the one who gave life. His voice will guide you in a very special way and you will be told everything you have to know.
- Miracles are habits and should be involuntary. They should not be under conscious control. Consciously selected miracles can be misguided. This means: love causes miracles and that is why love should be a habit. You should give love without being conscious of it. You need not think about love, for if you think first before giving your love, your ego might step in.
- Miracles are natural. When they do not occur, something has gone wrong. This means: miracles should occur naturally.
- Miracles are everyone's right, but purification is necessary first. This means: you can only give and receive a miracle when your heart is pure.
- Miracles are healing because they fill a lack of something; they are performed by those who temporarily have more, for those who temporarily have less. This means: miracles have a healing effect because they provide what is missing. They are performed by people who temporarily have more love for those who temporarily experience less love.

We can go even further here than the course in miracles and make a remark about the source. The miracles in question indeed originate from God, but this does not mean the Highest of All, as it is impossible to know and experience him. Muslims are quite right in saying that it is not possible to get into a personal relationship with Allah, because he is exalted above all. Yet, we can make contact with the divine world, as human beings and experience the divine. That is possible by virtue of forces and entities that can be considered as concrete manifestations of holiness and can act as intermediaries. If miracles occur, we owe it to such an activity.

If people in a team work together from pure intentions, their soul forces will work together too. And if a group of spiritually aspiring people jointly go an authentic spiritual way, a new inspired life field will be created for that group, which will increase in power as the group progresses. In this respect the term living body has been used.

In the last centuries we have seen much dissension between all kinds of religious and spiritual groups. Now many churches stand empty and organizations are shrinking or disappearing. The need for cooperation in the field of religion and spirituality is felt more and more. There are all kinds of initiatives to instigate a new zeal.

Moreover, the interest for the mysteries of the soul is growing, because experience teaches us that it is not possible anymore to stick to outdated assumptions, convictions and paradigms from earlier centuries. J. van Rijckenborgh foresaw this development. In chapter 2 of his book *'The Call of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross'*, he wrote the following: <sup>4</sup>

*'The gleam of a new reality appears among the ruins of what will soon be the past. A new possibility is approaching. On the destroyed hope and annihilated self-assurance of the intellectual public, a new longing will soon be established. Mockery, laughter and slander will soon disappear from their faces and at last they will listen to the esoterics.'*

*Then the sons of the prophets will speak to you of the omnipresent divine wisdom, which is nearer than hands and feet. They will tell you how this wisdom is obtained. They will urge you on to a new way of life, a blood-renewing way of life, born of the love power of Jesus Christ.*

*Then you will discover that a pure white flower will begin to reveal itself in your being - the mystic lily, the lotus of the Eastern seers. This is the entering of the holy halls of abstract thought, where the wisdom of God, the universal knowledge, can be absorbed in the form of force. It is a walking in the light, as He is in the light.*

*In this way an immeasurable divine knowledge, a divine philosophy, unfolds before the pupil, the philosophy of magical knowledge. On this basis, at this gate of eternity, all those who are called to a new intellectuality, all lovers of true wisdom, will be united. At this gate to eternity there will be thinkers, poets and builders, people who are called from all branches of science, art and religion. And refreshed at the one source of Original Wisdom, as brothers and sisters linked to each other in one chain, they will set to work for the majestic unfolding of their talents.*

*In the light of God, their talents will blossom like roses and hand in hand they will write through their luminous deeds, the *Librum Naturae*, the great Book of Nature, as a truth which will span eternities. Everything untrue is doomed to death; everything born out of the eternal solar heart of the Father is called to life.'*







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