

Introduction 2

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“Do not seek outside of yourself that which is within.”

Our life is a gift; it is given to us. We cannot comprehend what life, in its essence, really is. As a fire, it burns inside of us, and we feel this fire incessantly within. Love, respect, and the warmth of life provide us with the joy of life. However this fire will one day be extinguished and we will lose our life; this is the cause of our fear of existence.

We often, and perhaps too easily, use the words “my life,” but in the end we cannot grasp the true essence of life. We have little control over the things that life brings us. Tomorrow death could be upon us and rarely is one prepared for that. This uncertainty is difficult for us.

We are living in a life-threatening environment that impedes our growth. The dual nature of our existence is clearly visible in the paradox of life and death. The certainty that we need is the certainty of life. We simply cannot imagine not being alive. Death is not a reality for us unless it approaches us very closely, for example through illness. Are we hiding then from this uncertainty regarding death because we do not know or cannot examine what remains after the disappearance of our physical state?

In our self-exploration, we cannot avoid our physical state. The processes in our body determine who we are as a result of various materials and hormones, and of electrical impulses and light flashes in our brain. Because we can influence both our outer appearance as well as our inner being, we think that we firmly control our life. You determine who you are; you determine your own reality.

Changing your life, altering your life, is not only an often heard wish but also the subject of various scientific studies. We find examples of this attitude on every level of life. For instance, the body is trained and subjected to dieting; surgeons shape and rebuild it; and for every physical and physiological discomfort, magazines give solutions in step-by-step plans.

In many ways, our inner terrain has already been explored. Our unconscious life has more or less been revealed, with or without the help of a therapist. Within or without, is it not true that for us not many secrets remain?

Do not make the mistake of using the physical eyes to look at your inner being. For instance, when we look with our physical eyes at the world, we cannot find God anywhere. “How can the eye see itself?” the mystic says. When we look with inner or spiritual understanding, suddenly God is everywhere.

How do we learn to see life in its most hidden order of patterns? Nowadays, popular opinion claims that we are a product of natural laws. Therefore we only see the consequences of those laws. Hermes would not contradict this, but then he would ask, “Who has ordained these laws?”



SECOND EXPLORATION

Rosycross and Gnosis

Time and Eternity

‘Of all creatures of nature only man is twofold’, says Pymander. There exists in the human system the seed of immortality, the spirit-spark, also indicated as the Rose of the heart, and there is the mortal human being, the natural figure. One cannot find another creature with a similar, twofold nature.*

In this way the fall of the original sons of God has created the strange situation that the seed of the Spirit is differentiated in myriads of mortal entities, which may cause them, as children of God, to grow into a multitude no one can count. [...] But if this blessing is indeed to take shape, then a strong intervention is essential; a great deal must then happen. However, we also find, as a tremendous potentiality, that out of a fall, out of sin and guilt, such a blessing can come about as a proof that the Spirit, that Love, is always victorious.

Whoever reaches insight concerning the nature of his nature-born being is enabled to free himself from his twofold state and to return to his original divinity.’

(Jan van Rijckenborgh, The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis, part I, beginning of chapter VIII)

In the universal wisdom teachings, it is said that there are two natural orders or life fields: a material life field, the earthly nature, also called dialectics, which is characterized by opposites and in which everything that comes into existence perishes again; and a divine life field, the divine nature, in which there is unity and eternal development. It is true to say that a divine law rules in both life fields, although the law of dialectics is less elevated than the law of the divine life field, the sublime law. Furthermore, we acknowledge that our domain of life is limited because we are here temporarily.

The earthly nature is the life field that has laws of temporality and continuous opposites.

The other nature is the source of a power that possesses eternal values which are unknowable and thus not explicable in words. However when we do want to describe it, we use words such as love, light, and power.

The two nature orders are completely separated from each other, not by place or time, but through a difference in vibration, a difference so vast that it simply cannot be bridged.



The Egyptian mysteries refer to this duality by means of the image of the Sphinx.

The duality of our existence is never more clearly visible than in the paradox of life and death.

The starting point of all universal wisdom teachings, including those of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross, is that the human being belongs to both natures: the divine nature, the divine life field; and the earthly, material nature, the dialectic life field. Pymander said that of all the creatures in nature, only man is twofold. Within the human system, there is the seed of immortality, the spirit-spark, and there is the mortal human creature, the nature-born personality.

We, as mortal nature-born beings, are completely bound to this transitory, earthly nature. But through our spirit-spark, in our deepest inner being, we are connected to the eternal world. For a human being is more than just a body, more than flesh and blood. Each one of us is also part of a larger system, a microcosm** or small world, that is a reflection of the macrocosm. The statement that “God created man in his image” finds its origin here.

The moment can come in one’s life, when within the microcosm - after much has been longed for and desired within this material nature - that the following question becomes more and more urgent:

- What is the true meaning of my life on earth?

The nucleus of the human system—symbolically seen as a rose bud—is connected with the divine origin as a spark of light originating from the grand plan. It has emanated from that origin and needs to regain consciousness of it.

Through an incident in the distant past, the so-called fall, our connection to consciousness of the divine was broken. Our nucleus is latent, as if sleeping, and the ego in its I-centrality, can no longer perceive the divine life. But “God does not forsake the work of His hands!”

Life in this twofold nature is given to us as a training school, intended to help us realize that only the divine life can bring us true happiness. If a person gives up longing and striving on the horizontal plane—i.e. dialectics—then openness is created in the heart and the silence within allows the voice from the other life field to be heard through

the spiritual nucleus: “My kingdom is not of this world.” That voice is a touch of light coming from that other world. Through this touch, we become conscious of the true purpose of being human.

- Where does my longing, my searching, direct itself?”

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If the spiritual nucleus is being ‘agitated’ by the touch of the light of the divine life field, then a new desire awakens. This new desire is an inner activity that manifests itself once our old striving has reached a dead end, once we acknowledge that we do not know how to continue. Then the qualities that bind us to the earthly nature, such as ambition, desire for power, egocentricity, and the like, are looked upon more and more as hindrances on the path of life fulfillment.

We can read about this in the first book, Pyramander, of the Corpus Hermeticum of Hermes Trismegistus. When Hermes became conscious of his vocation, to cooperate in the salvation of the human race, he spoke as follows:

*‘Oh, you nations, you men who are born of the earth and who have given yourselves up to intoxication and slumber and to the ignorance concerning God, become sober and stop wallowing in debauchery, enchanted as you are by an animal sleep.’
On hearing this, they came to me with one accord. And I spoke further: ‘O you earthly born, why have you given yourselves up to death, whereas you have power to participate in immortality? Repent, you who walk in error and who have accepted ignorance as a leader. Liberate yourselves from the dark light and take part in immortality, by taking leave of destruction for ever.
[...] And I sowed in them the words of wisdom and they were fed with the water of immortality.’*

(Corpus Hermeticum, First Book, verses 68, 69, 70)



The characteristics of the physical world are never constant. They constantly battle each other and therefore cannot be united to one another. Therefore, be on your guard, o soul. Turn yourselves away from this illusion; they are the things to which you should avoid connecting yourself.

(Hermes)

Therefore, if the heart constantly 'is not' - that is, if it is free from all earthly aspirations and desires - one can behold the mystery of Tao's spiritual essence. If the heart constantly 'is' - that is, if it is full of desires and earthly aspirations - one can only behold limited, finite forms.

(Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, chapter 1, in The Chinese Gnosis)



*The Spirit of Truth came
and tore us loose from the madness of this world.
He brought us a mirror.
When we look into it, we behold the universe.
He shows us that there are two nature orders:
the order of the Light and the order of darkness.
The order of the Light penetrates the order of darkness.
Nevertheless, the order of darkness has been separated from the order of the Light since the beginning.*

(from A Manichean Psalm-book translated from Mani's Lichtschatz by Christa Siegert, page 51)

NOTES:

*Pymander is the name of the first chapter of the Corpus Hermeticum, a book of wisdom from ancient times that contains a dialogue between Hermes and a mysterious being who calls himself Pymander, that is, shepherd or guide, of humanity. The four parts of The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis by Jan van Rijckenborgh contain a translation and explication of the Corpus Hermeticum.

**The word microcosm refers to the human system in its multiplicity. The structure of the microcosm is the subject of the fourth exploration.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUOTATIONS

When persons no longer find satisfaction in the whirls of the worldly life and when exoteric religion, science, and art no longer have any fascination for them, do not give them any consolation anymore amidst the harassments of their earthly ties, when they reach this point that they are as consumed by an almost desperate longing, an intense nostalgia for true life, that they truly begin to seek with all the power that is within them, then it is certain that they will get in touch with the force field of a mystery school. These persons gain consciousness of an entirely new life reality. A tender ray of light pierces the night of their existence and touches their heart, connects itself to their being, and stimulates their will to reach a still unknown goal.