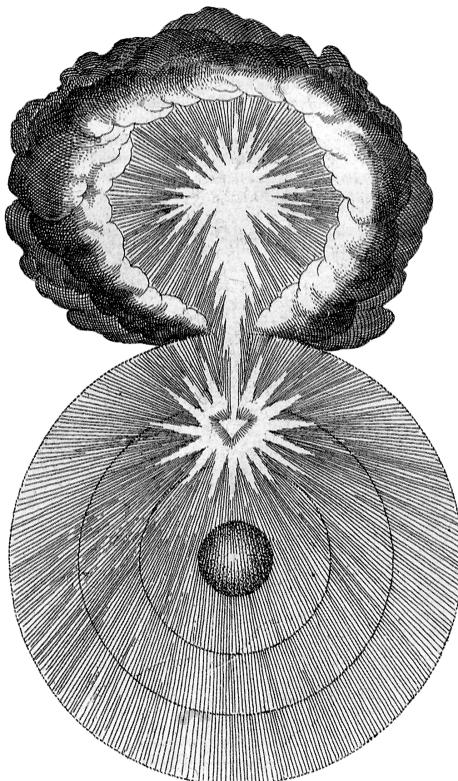


PENTAGRAM

THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF GOOD AND EVIL

Whoever is striving after the higher life revealed in the Spiritual School often struggles to understand the fundamental causes of good and evil.



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THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF GOOD AND EVIL

Whoever is striving after the higher life revealed in the Spiritual School often struggles to understand the fundamental causes of good and evil. Yet a true understanding is needed if we want to advance on the path of sanctification. Therefore the pupil must constantly work on this problem in order not to hinder his own development.

The philosophy of the Rosycross gives us extensive information that can help us to release ourselves from the spider web of delusion and to correctly orient our-

selves. We feel that a psychological moment has arrived, at which the attention of the pupils should be especially focused on the mystery of good and evil.

Most of you will be able to form a more or less clear image of the various strata of our planetary cosmos and of the fact that our lives do not develop in the highest stratum – the highest heat sphere – but in the lower dialectical stratum. Although we used to dwell and work in the Divine order or highest heat sphere, we have fallen into the dialectical stratum due to an incident in our development.

BOTH NATURE FORCES ARE SUPREMELY POWERFUL

The signature of this dialectical stratum is defined by two great nature forces or laws that are each other's mirror image. They are inversely polarised and do not form a unity. These two nature forces cause attraction and repulsion, light and darkness, heat and cold, satiation and exhaustion, development and decay, in short: life and death. All these phenomena occur in the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms. If we could observe the surrounding world from our dialectical stratum, with our three-dimensional powers of observation, we would see that both nature forces reign supremely powerfully there.

RAISED ABOVE THE LAW

What we need to see and contemplate though, is the fact that these nature laws and forces are currently of a completely different type and effect than they were previously, when we and our fellow sufferers arrived in this stratum. To understand this a simple example will suffice. When we live in harmony with certain laws, when our life follows the line demanded by these laws, we are not in the least hindered by these laws. On the contrary, they are a moral support to us, a psychological anchor. Yes, there will even come a moment when we are no longer aware of the presence of the law. Our life has been raised *above* the law, on the basis of harmony *with* the law, and goes on from strength to strength.

NO MORE WAR!

However, when we fight against this law resistance arises, followed by friction, and then by heat. That heat turns into anger, anger into fire, into explosion, into punishment. The fear of experiencing that punishment in turn causes us to react. But in this reaction we are not true, not completely true, not completely sincere. This reaction is, to put it mildly, superficial.

When Jewish law says: '*For I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation,*' then this law is completely just, logical. The human being, sometimes all too eager to do evil, has to be restrained from doing evil in order to turn to good, by stating it, or warning against it, in this way. By the fear of faith he is led to good. But that is a superficial good that doesn't correspond to the quality of the person.

Driven by much experience, humanity will later say '*no more war*'. That decision, if it can be upheld, will then be enforced, by punishment, blood, murder and hunger. And your turning to good, to the humane, is imposed and hence highly superficial.

GATEWAYS TO TRUE NEW LIFE

These examples can show us what the philosophy of the Rosycross teaches us. Both forces in the dialectical stratum could initially not be called good or evil. The effects of the twin laws as we know them now were then unknown to humanity. Good and evil weren't envisaged in the dialectical stratum. One

The vertical and horizontal streams meet and merge. St. Pellegrino, Italy.
Photo Pentagram.

force of nature facilitated a certain development, the other one undid it. Not by random maliciousness, but because the dissolving force was a transforming force. The result of the growth of one force was transformed and dissolved by the other force, in order for the first one to achieve an even greater and more perfect manifestation. Death and night were thus gateways to true new life. In this way both laws fulfilled a certain evolutionary process. The descent from the Divine order, due to incidental necessity, nonetheless brought humanity into a Paradise from which it could spiral up to greater good, to the lost Father's house. The law of dissolution and transformation was just as good, as clear and harmonious as the law of assimilation and growth.

PERFECT PASSAGE TO THE LIGHT

For those who retained the memory of the lost Father's house this situation might have created an intense feeling of homesickness, because they could not remain in the static order. Yet, this dialectical order was still the perfect passage to the Light. It was in itself already a manifestation of the Light.

The current dialectical order, however, is an awesome drama and an intense disruption. The twin laws of the dialectical stratum no longer fulfil an evolutionary process but a process of decline. They create disorder. The world order in which we now live is according to all Holy Scriptures '*completely and fully fallen into evil*'. There is no longer a passage to the Light. No matter which law you apply.

This evil of counternature is so complete, that the passage to the Light can only be unlocked by divine intervention. That is why the testimony of Jesus Christ: '*I am the way, and the truth, and the life*' is so scientifically and completely true.

The twin laws of our stratum are disturbed, and they rage and punish according to the state of being of humanity. The law of assimilation and growth is a reaction to evil and the angry ravagings of evil. In this reaction the human being flees from that which he himself has released. He wants to be good from fear of evil. He tries to be good and experiments with goodness projects because of the fatal consequences of his errors. And every day the words of Genesis '*For in the day that you eat of it you shall die*' are shown to be all too true. Violation of the systematic co-operation between the two main forces of nature of this stratum makes these laws turn to vengeance and punishment. One law works, to human understanding, as good, the other as evil. And the fact that good and evil are each others mirror image, fruits of one tree, proves to us that good-as-to-nature will not liberate us from this distress.

DOING GOOD DOES NOT LIBERATE THE HUMAN BEING FROM EVIL

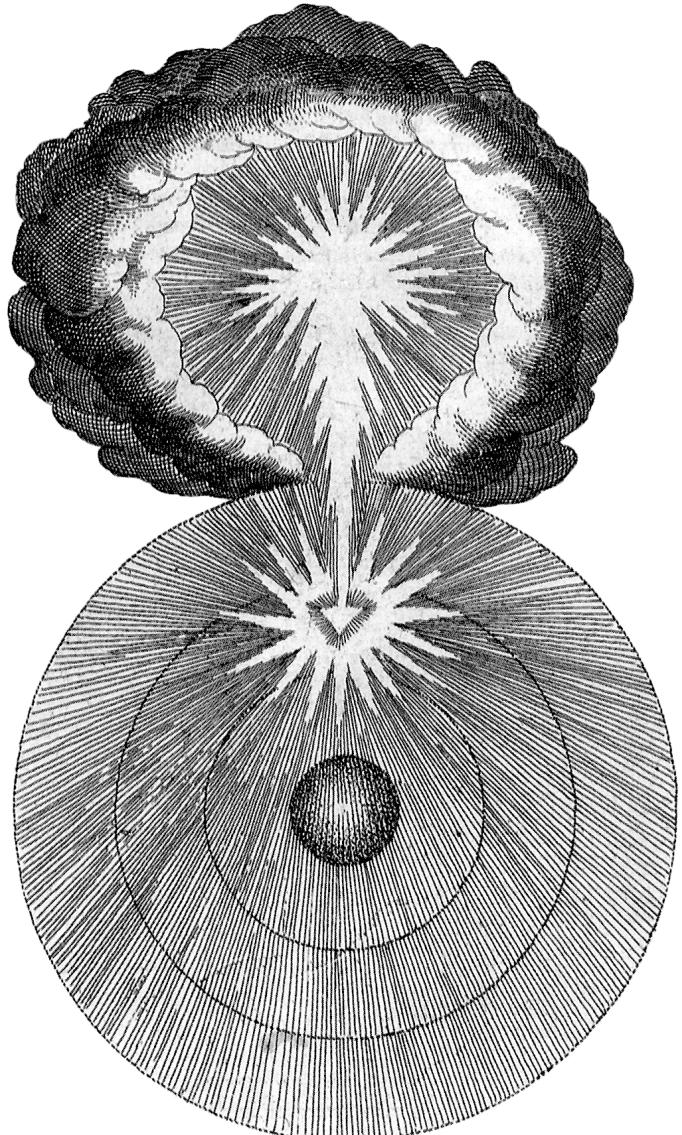
And here some are faced with a confusing problem. Is there no other road then? For we can be either good, or evil. Or seen clearly, honestly: primarily good or primarily evil? Because while doing good we can never be completely free from evil. The reverse also holds true.

Is there then another road, another

force of nature, with which I can make an attempt? Is there a higher good than good?

Yes, that other road, that other force of nature, that higher good exists. The philosophy of the Rosycross shows the presence of this law, as do all the Holy Scriptures, and as those who live by them testify. This higher good does not originate from the twin laws of the dialectical stratum. It is succinctly indicated by the word 'completeness'.

This completeness, this path of completeness, has been brought to us by the Christ Hierarchy. By following this path, by grasping this strength, we can overcome the good of nature, break evil and thus denature the old consequences of the forbidden fruit that has become such a disaster for us. By the force of completeness that is in Christ we can return to our old state of the sinless dialectical stratum and once again this life field will become a gateway to the new higher life in the Father.



THE COMPLETENESS IS LIKE WATER

If you can familiarise yourself with this idea, you will understand what Lao Tzu meant by the words: '*If a person tries to perfect the kingdom by means of action, I perceive that he does not succeed. The kingdom is a spiritual thing that cannot be conquered by action. If one works on it, it will be spoiled. If one tries to grasp it, it will be lost. A spiritual kingdom can only be truly conquered by being free from aims and activities. The sage does not love as humans do, the completeness is like water. Water benefits all creatures and does not fight. It dwells in places that men reject. That is why the*

sage approximates Tao. He wants to live in a low place. His heart is as deep as an abyss. In charity he cherishes love. In speaking he cherishes the truth, in governing the order, in working he is accomplished, he acts at the right time. He does not fight, so that there is no guilt in him.' (Paraphrased from: Tao Te Ching, ch. 5, 8, 29)

If you can grasp anything of this idea, you will understand the Sermon on the Mount when it testifies: '*But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.'*

Creation
according to
Robert Fludd.
Philosophia sacra,
Frankfurt, 1626

All these statements serve to point out to us the force of completeness that is in Christ and that leads us to the path, to Tao. When we strive for good as a reaction to evil, we develop an activity which will once again create an opposite reaction. That is why we have to break free of this activity. For through absence of activity, spiritually considered, we shall escape from action and reaction and we shall come to the correct action. Understand this in the spirit!

THAT IS WHY HE APPROXIMATES TAO

Just as the water benefits all creatures and does not fight, so does the human being who lives in completeness radiate this supreme good. Not because it is good, not out of hatred of evil, but because he cannot do otherwise. He does not fight for or because of it, but he *is* and *lives* from this supreme good. He does not ask if it is good. Is it recognised as good? Does it create a barrier against evil? He does not fight, he *IS*. And that is why he approximates Tao. He is not modest because the law dictates so, but because of his being, his nature. The left hand, as to its essence, does not know what the right hand is doing. A spiritual kingdom is only truly conquered when you are free from aims and activity. Free from authority!

And yet, according to his being taken up into completeness he does not mind

living in low places. He is humble. His heart loves the abyss, he submerges in the all-wisdom. In charity he cherishes love. He supports the broken and oppressed and raises them up. He speaks the truth, he testifies of the Path – Tao. In rule he creates order. He strives, in service of the hierarchy, after founding a nucleus of the Universal Static Brotherhood. In his works he is accomplished. He strives after efficient action. In his actions he chooses the right time; he activates at psychological moments. He does not fight. Not even against evil. But neither does he fight with dialectical good. He keeps his distance and yet is in the middle of it. With both feet he is firmly planted in reality.

And thus, so completely *in* the world but not *of* the world, there is no guilt in him. That is to say, he rises above the wheel of nature and the dialectical stratum thus becomes a wide gateway to eternity for him.

Let him who can hear, hear!

J van Rijckenborgh.

This address was previously published in the periodical *Nieuwe Religieuze Oriëntering* (New Religious Orientation), 1947.

QUESTION AND ANSWER



In a group discussion during the Christmas conference 2003 at the Renova conference centre, young pupils from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, England, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Poland and Russia spoke with members of the Spiritual Directorate. Throughout this issue of Pentagram you will find a number of the questions discussed.

We are told that we should be ‘passive’, that we should not react. Sometimes I find this very hard to understand. Sometimes I can react very emotionally to matters that are explained in a service.

You lead an active life as to your personality: you have contacts with other young people, trips to conferences and working weeks abroad, sports, hobbies, your studies and work. The soul is playing a passive role during all of that. You could also turn it around: the soul can begin to play an active role, while the personality learns to undergo that process passively. In the meantime you should not forget, however, that a very intelligent attitude is required, because the personality of the human being of the crowd usually also leads a passive life. It is controlled and manipulated by political, religious and economic powers. Develop the courage to bid farewell to them first. Then your I will withdraw, will become passive and

the soul will step to the fore, will become active. That is why ‘passive’ may not be the correct word in this context: you certainly will have to act, and react to what happens within you. But you should not try to unravel and explain everything you hear and read with your I. Let it penetrate, let it do its work, and then act. The word ‘passive’ means undergoing something. If you participate in something passively, you undergo that event without partaking of it actively.

Your second question is of course very personal. You also said that your feelings had something to do with nostalgia. And you are still so young! That nostalgia may perhaps be translated by ‘longing for the origin’. The tears you then sometimes shed, may be the tears of joyous recognition, because your soul is moved by the call from the origin, the power of the Gnosis that reaches out to the soul in its imprisonment.

CULTURE, A BEAUTIFUL DISEASE



Ten miniatures



Our cultural achievements are highly praised. We see teachers of (art) history and classical languages bow respectfully before the gods and the works of culture. Culture seems to be as indispensable for us as the washing machine and central heating. Have you ever reflected on what life would be like without it? Without technology, without the sacrosanct television, without videos or DVDs, without the pharmaceutical industry, without cars, without aeroplanes, rockets, and atomic bombs, without movies, without supermarkets, without supertankers that break up, what would remain of our life? What? What is the real substance of our lives? Are we not busy, day after day, with our gadgets, putting in order our collected cultural trash? Do we ever ask ourselves what purpose this serves? Life becomes uselessly complicated and expensive due to things that are not necessary, as the ancient Eastern wisdom says. What then is really necessary?



Religion is also culture. Is not the civilisation of a country created by institu-

tions that are involved in the prevailing religion? There are hardly any traces of ancient settlements without vestiges of religious activity. Religion means to reconnect, to connect ourselves again to God, to what we call *It*, God. Who or what is God? The Most High, Light without shadow, Love without hate, Perfection, Happiness, Joy, Eternal Youth and Health? Or is it something that we cannot name at all? And what are human beings? Recollections of God?

World literature speaks of a soul-spark, a faintly glowing principle that is also called the spirit-spark. According to these writers, the only task of the human being is to arouse this spark to a fiercely burning flame. Has this task already been fulfilled? Can we say that human beings are the image of God? Have we already become truly divine, thanks to the efforts of millions of priests and theologians, and to the thousands of cultural monuments that have been erected? Humanity of this century still goes about wrapped in fig leaves and animal hides to cover his nudity! He



hardly hesitates to bash in his fellow creature's brains, albeit with advanced weapons. The axe of primitive man is now enveloped in veils of splendid culture and religion.

Must man really have to go through life naked, exposed to higher values that try to deliver him from his tragic course? We do not like to ask ourselves this question. We deny that reality and prefer to delude ourselves with culture. We ultimately flee from life itself, from this day, this hour, this second. From living life at this moment. Admittedly, if we follow true masters, there proves to be only one religion. Only one. All the rest is convention, habit, distraction, even culture. Worshipping gods! In Christian cultures, one also learns to pray to images of saints, portraits of the dead and other relics. Is this not superstition, to which all those lesser deities from daily life are easily added? Movie and TV stars, the giants of sports and music?



And now the words resound: *Here is my secret. It is very simple. One can only truly see it with the heart. The essence is invisible to the eye. What the eyes see is culture. Where is the essence that the eyes cannot perceive?*



Because people no longer know this secret, they observe with their senses. Do they find anything that is imperishable? Anything that is eternal? Is there anything but death and dissolution? Delusion that tries to lead the seeker after truth astray? Is that all life is? Is a human being only born for this? A desire that he cannot explain gnaws at his heart. It causes him to sail the seas, causes him to search for the summits behind the clouds, causes him to chase after beauty, happiness and eternal life. And when he can go no further, he makes a culture out of all of this, a culture of excavations, of inventing and thinking, of arguments and theologizing. All of them escape routes to run away from reality.



Group of bronze statues in
Aachen, Germany.
Photo Pentagram.

Still, we do not know what we are seeking. We still do not suspect it. We cannot find the one thing essential. Nowhere! Unless we stop chasing phantoms. How often have individuals and whole populations perished in this eternal, unfulfilled quest? Sisyphus, Tantalus. How many times must this still happen? Why can't we find that moment when we would be able to say: stay awhile, you are so beautiful.



We can become wise through experience. Whoever has often burned his fingers in the flame of apparent beauty, of painful suffering, can stop for a moment and forget the old gods of culture. But can he also put up with his nakedness? Without tinsel and varnish? He definitely feels that there must be something else. Is that what is said to lie hidden in the human heart? Is it true that each one must learn to unlock that secret in the heart for himself? Where are the gates to this labyrinth? The thread of Ariadne can only be found when we stand still, with proud head bowed, for the first time listening to the magnificent song of Eternity-in-the-human-being. Do you not know that you are a temple of God?



True art is independent from culture. It originates from an instant in the living present, availing itself of only one cultural period, as a carpenter chooses a rough piece of wood to make something out of it.



I dreamed of an animal with two legs. It was only a skeleton with a skull, The whole thing was carefully covered with dust on dust. Its well-cared for mask was like a neon sign in the street. A light shone from behind the dark eye sockets and a voice spoke: 'Come, follow me. Beauty, wealth, eternal life

and power over people will be your share.' And I looked at the crowd, which rejoiced and shouted in joy, and everyone chased the mask. I no longer know what happened then. I could not follow them, my feet refused to carry me any longer. Everyone ran and ran while I lay helpless on the ground. With horror I saw how the animal tore off its mask and devoured the people, who could no longer escape from its power. An impotent distress, dried-out remains and burning ruins remained from what once was such a flourishing culture. Only a few succeeded in finding the gate of the labyrinth and following the path toward the light. They had become part of the light and left a shining trail behind in the rubble.



People want certainty. As a result there is culture with internet, remedies, gasoline, diesel, bankcards, technology and an enormous amount of food. Guided by wrong ideas, people are imprisoned in this culture. They remain outside the flowering garden of original life and enter the lethal poisoned desert where fear and terror reign. People proudly call this tumour 'culture'.



When the false gods are unmasked, and the superstition of culture burned, then the secret is revealed. It is very simple: one can only see purely with a cleansed heart. The essence of life remains hidden to the eye. Every culture still contains something of this secret, for example in legends, in myths, in works of art. But sometimes also in absurd fantasies that make people reflect. Hidden treasures that remind us of the God within. Recollections that must propel us to inner life.

FROM RAVEN TO PHOENIX

The process of human renewal

*When desperation dwells close to the heart,
the soul becomes sour.*

*Shame and beauty dwell,
where a man's fearless courage
is spotted like the magpie's plumage.
Yet, as long as he still partakes of both,
of heaven and hell,
he may enjoy in hope.*

*The companion who is not steadfast
is coloured black and almost like the darkness,
whereas the other, faithful and steadfast,
holds on to the white.*

*This secret, of subtle nature, is high,
the dull human being cannot
comprehend it.*

Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parcival*, l.1-17

With these first lines of *Parcival*, Wolfram von Eschenbach refers to the mysterious nature of this epic. The use of a magpie with its black and white feathers as a symbol of the human soul belongs to mediaeval thinking. Many examples can be found in the poetry and the paintings of that time. But also later mystery animals were used to indicate influences and states of development of the soul. For example, in alchemy animals serve to symbolise processes in retorts and the corresponding processes of the soul. The black mass of unformed prima materia is illu-

strated by a black toad that is chained to a white eagle, symbol of the light that is linked to the darkness in order to realise the salvation from darkness. And the green lion, the red lion and the multicoloured peacock's fan served to reflect chemical reactions of elements and metals representing the soul on its way to liberation.

As the animal kingdom came into being as a manifestation of astral forces, released by humanity during its development, certain ways of human behaviour can easily be compared to the appearance and behaviour of animals. In this way nature holds up a mirror of our own soul life before us. As symbols of archetypal forces they can profoundly affect the human consciousness, and that is why they have been applied in the mysteries since time immemorial.

The different species of birds have a special place among the mystery animals. Apart from the known birds there are also mythical creatures composed of different animals. Thus the griffin is a combination of an eagle and a lion. As birds can soar up in their element air and land on earth again, they are regarded as symbols of the link between heaven and earth. Is the human soul not a similar bird which in moments of spiritual concentration can rise up from coarse matter into more tenuous spheres? The light or dark feathers of the different species of birds indicate their place in the kingdom of light or of darkness. Multifaceted nature

sometimes gives rise to confusion. The black and white feathers of the magpie symbolise a split soul.

THE FIVE MYSTERY BIRDS

In alchemical writings we often encounter a certain hierarchy of mystery birds. A picture in the old manual *Musaeum Hermeticum Reformatum et Amplificatum* (Herman van Sande, Frankfurt, 1677) which contains Rosicrucian and alchemical influences, shows in the middle a circle, the upper half of which displays the heavenly hierarchy and the zodiac. In its lower half five mystery birds are standing side by side. These five birds symbolise the stages of spiritual development. They are the raven (sometimes also the magpie), the swan, the basilisk, the pelican and the phoenix. The same mystery birds are also mentioned in *The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross*, explained by J van Rijckenborgh. The second page of this book shows a drawing by the painter Johfra titled *The Mysteries of the Rosycross*, in which the same five birds are portrayed. Each of them has been placed at one corner of a pentagram, and when drawing the five sides of the pentagram as one line, the five birds appear in the order mentioned above. These five mystery birds symbolise the fivefold soul path of the alchemical transformation from lead into gold. That is the path from raven to the firebird phoenix, the path on which the soul is liberated from matter.

We should keep in mind that these stages of development of the soul overlap. For instance, the raven can still be present after the phoenix has already risen up. After all, coarse matter can still darken the consciousness until the physical garment has been shed at death.

The truth of these ancient symbols has not lost any of its power over the centuries. Even nowadays the path of liberation can still be described as the path of the mystery birds. The Russian poet Alexander Nitzberg let himself be inspired by the beauty of the old symbolic language. He used the illustrations from the *Musaeum Hermeticum* as a source of inspiration for a cycle of poems that together with corresponding Bible quotations formed the basis for the cantata: *Christ, the heavenly Phoenix* by H A Stamm. These poems have been chosen as our point of departure.

THE RAVEN

*In the depth of all nights,
when no light burned for me,
when darkness weakened me,
I lay banished as in the grave.*

*Like a raven with black feathers
the emptiness was around me.
And I experienced the transience
of everything earthly.*

*They brought me tendrils of vine,
and they brought me the bread,
and I perceived the new life
germinating upwards from the death.*

*The new life was shining secretly
through the darkness.
I turned myself towards the morning,
and from afar I saw HIM.*

The raven's black plumage is remarkable. Black is something special. We do not know whether or not black has to be regarded as a colour, and it has not yet been examined how human beings perceive black optically. Black means something secret, such as the 'black Osiris', the hidden inner spirit. Black



absorbs the light. That applies from within to without and the other way around. On the one hand it means that the inner soul light is still imprisoned and on the other that the seeking human being distances himself from the ordinary light of nature. The raven as a black bird marks the beginning of the spiritual path. In alchemy it symbolises the nigredo phase, the phase of blackening in which the alchemist dies in the retort. Metaphorically: the phase in which the personality perishes in the endura. It is not accidental that Christian Rosycross leaves the raven behind in the preparatory stage. The raven falls within the scope of Saturn, the metal of which is lead. In alchemy the planets and the metals related to them are indicated by the same pictogram, because the metals

on earth are manifestations of planetary forces and each planet is in turn a manifestation of a force in the solar system. As organs of the solar cosmos the planets fulfil certain functions in the solar body. In this context we should not think of the physical celestial bodies but rather of their subtle influences which were called 'astral' by ancient *astroscopy* (from *astra* = star). According to this wisdom the sun (spirit, gold) and the moon (soul, silver) also belong to the seven planets. The three exterior planets Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, the mystery planets, have an extraordinary position. They control and dynamise the processes of spiritual transformation. The earth with its metal antimony is not taken into account.

The planetary spheres of the solar

The raven and the eagle. *Atalanta Fugiens*, Michael Maier, Oppenheim, 1618.

system have an effect on our earth; they fulfil a function with respect to the kingdoms of nature, particularly the human one. How they work depends on the orientation of the human being who is experiencing them. Hence they often work in an earth-binding way, but whoever enters the path of soul development, experiences their power in a liberating sense.

The earthly lead is formed under the planetary influence of Saturn and is controlled by it. It is said that the atoms of lead are ‘polarised’ by Saturn. Saturn has two aspects. On the one hand it is the sower that builds the form by crystallisation. Especially the gross-material part of the human body, the skeleton, is created under the influence of Saturn. One the other hand we see Saturn as the grim reaper with the scythe who breaks what he has built, when crystallisation has advanced too far. Dying and death are also subjected to his rule. Hence it is not astonishing that Greek mythology says that Chronos, the Greek name of Saturn, ‘devours his children’.

The raven, the bird related to Saturn, is thus first of all the expression of the unenlightened, isolated I-consciousness, and of being deeply submerged in matter, forsaken by God. But when a human being becomes aware of this isolation and loneliness, when he becomes aware of living separated from the light, this is already the beginning of the great transformation.

This insight develops through a touch of the light. The darkness is unable to experience itself except as darkness. Hence it is said: ‘Insight is the open gate’, it is the gate of Saturn. For only if the seeker can accept the painful insight that he is literally living in a ‘spiritual night’, can he also accept the consequences and give up

the earthly consciousness on the path of the endura. That is the reason why mythology emphasises in many places the positive aspect of the raven, his high intelligence. And that is why in alchemical emblems the raven is frequently portrayed with a white head.

From this positive point of view, the raven therefore represents a higher level of human development. It is also the symbol of a self-chosen loneliness, an aversion to the external sensory world and of being newly focused on the initially still dark inner world. Does not every seeker experience that the influence of Saturn causes pessimism from time to time, a feeling of heaviness that threatens to paralyse him and which has

to be removed by conscious concentration? Over and again the crystallising effect of Saturn must be neutralised. It is not without reason that the cross, the symbol of the body or the earth, is standing above the semicircle, the symbol of the soul, in the Saturn pictogram. The soul that is influenced by Saturn 'takes up its cross'.

Gradually the Johannine human being, the hermit on the isle of Patmos, develops at the beginning of the path. He is willing to make the paths straight for his Lord and to wear the black garment of the hermit. The black garment refers to the soul that gradually becomes impenetrable for the light of the dialectical world. The candidate on the path of the mysteries does not force himself into any kind of self-isolation. Just because his essential longing is focused on the light, he is led there by the Christ power. That is the great and essential difference from all occult striving, and can be applied to all processes of true spiritual development.

THE SWAN

*Shining white is my plumage.
The clear stream below me
reflects my whiteness and shows
that everything in me is in rest.*

*From the soul songs are rising
through the throat up to heaven.
My wings I lay down
since I cannot do anything but sing:*

*I submerge in the notes,
and my body becomes sound.
Listening, the All will crown
my clear swan song.*

Through self-knowledge the character is



gradually purified and the respiration field is cleansed. Alchemically speaking: the crystal white appears, the second phase of the process. The cleansed respiration field is also called the white rose or the rose of John. It is like a clear lake in which the spiritual sunlight is reflected ever better. On this clear lake the swan can rest. The swan is the symbol of the new soul, born of the surrender to the original light. Its garment is of white linen, it is also called the Jupiter garment. The planetary sphere now active is that of Jupiter, the brightest star on the evening sky. The metal related to Jupiter is tin, which, after being polished, brightly reflects the light. In the pictogram of Jupiter the half moon is placed on the left arm of the cross. The influence of Jupiter gives a human being an optimistic view, he is jovial (from *jovi-Jupiter*).

The neck of the swan is long, and its head rises high above the body. The consciousness dominates matter. The new, actually quite joyful state, however, carries with it the danger that the striving person becomes bogged down in the rash idea of already having made

The eagle and the
toad chained
together.
*Viridarium
chymicum, D
Stolcius von
Stolzenberg.
Frankfurt, 1624.*



spiritual progress. That is what the swan shows us, too. Another danger of this new state is arrogance, and also getting attached to the beautiful appearances the I is very much inclined to. But if he wants to reach the next level, the candidate has to sing his swan song: the song of the endura.

It must be noted that there are also other animal symbols for this second phase of the alchemical process: the white dove or the white eagle that fights the dragon.

THE BASILISK

*Yet out of the deep darkness
the brood of the serpents came
and covered me with bites,
sharp bites that penetrated
my inner being, until I bled.*

*Their teeth were sharp and hard,
and by looking at them
my soul was paralysed with fear.*

Photo Pentagram.

*'Why did you lead us out of Egypt,
to let us die in the desert?'*

*Then the Lord spoke:
'Build a serpent of iron
and set it up as a sign.
And every one who is bitten, when he
sees it,
shall live.'*

*From the cross in the desert
life called me,
and the blood of life
flowed through my veins.*

*And a voice called:
"This is my beloved son,
whom I have glorified for your salvation!"
Then the serpents disappeared.*

The forces binding us to earth and nature are tenacious and persistent. In the basilisk these energies are combined. The basilisk is the serpent-dragon which

is able to kill just by looking. Often its cock head wears a crown. It is said to have been hatched from a failed egg by serpents, toads or even by dung. This metaphor refers to the irrational, silly and annoying aspects in human beings that have to disappear. In this context the cock is not the herald of a new morning, but the pugnacious animal with the scarlet comb, a symbol of the intellect that is controlled by animal instincts. The basilisk is also described as the little king, a vivid image of the royal illusion of the I that tries to keep the awakening soul under its thumb.

Without wings the basilisk is considered a serpent, with wings it belongs to the mystery birds. The planet Mars is said to be related to the basilisk. Mars polarises iron and thus brings warmth into the human blood. Thanks to this polarisation we are able to convert our will into action. As human action and aggression are closely linked, Mars is also the god of war enjoying violence and bloodshed.

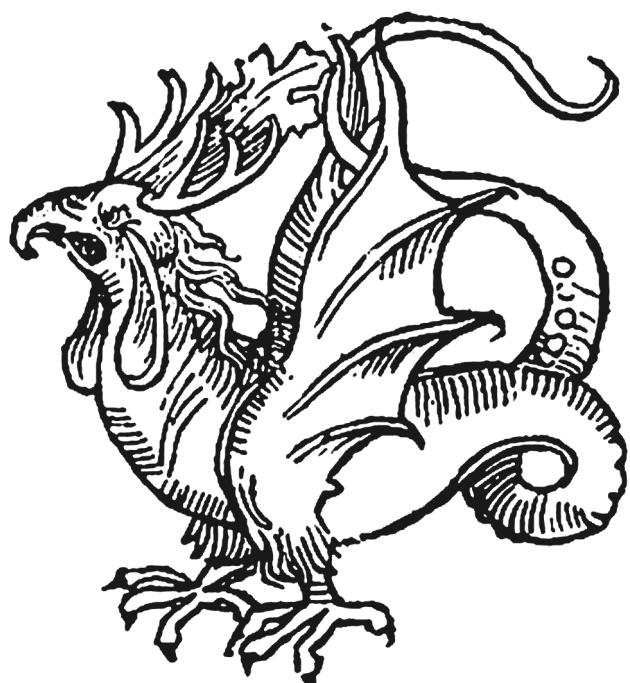
The spiritually striving human being experiences the age-old, pelvic consciousness focused on earthly life as a disturbing factor, not only because of the sexual power living in it, but above all because the pelvic centre is the seat of the lower will with the solar plexus as its ‘brain’. From there the human being resists with irrational suggestions, doubts and lack of faith. When the Israelites wandered through the desert with Moses they began to grumble: ‘*Why did you lead us out of Egypt, to let us die in the desert?*’

Whoever enters the path of soul renewal has to pass through this phase. This purifying fire can be experienced almost physically, as the bite of a snake, at the moment that old habits crop up again. That is why the Lord tells Moses

to erect an iron serpent and that everyone who was bitten by a serpent should look at it, should focus on that sign to stay alive. That process is represented by the serpent on the cross, the ‘serpens mercurialis’ of the alchemists. This erect serpent is the opposite of the creeping reptiles; the purified raised consciousness is the opposite of the lower consciousness that is focused on earthly matters. For this reason the lower will must be overcome by self-surrender, so that it can no longer react to the temptations of the human lower self. According to the alchemists, a mirror should be held up to the basilisk, so that its mortal look reflects on itself. The mirror symbolises self-knowledge, the neutral observation of the powers flowing out of one’s own self or coming from others. Whenever there is inner turmoil and the blood begins to boil, we should let it cool down as it were and not be tempted in any way.

Sometimes the basilisk is shown together with a peacock, the killer of the serpent. With its magnificently

Basilisk.



coloured peacock's fan, the cauda pavonis, it can change negative powers into a sun-like substance. The 'eyes' in the peacock's fan symbolise the wisdom which was generated due to the conflict with our own negative karma, the basilisk. This symbol can also be explained in a different way. Is the peacock not also a symbol of vanity, of boasting of one's own splendour and glory? This twofold explanation is probably connected with the remark in some alchemical works that the alchemical process has failed when the peacock's fan appears. If the candidate is still unable to reject the suggestions of his adversary and basks in the glow of his imagined progress, he confuses the transfiguristic path with the occult path of I-culture. For that reason the motive always determines the result of the process: does the peacock's fan of the boasting I appear or does the extended display of colour show the 'arc of promise', the glory of the Gnostic living body?

THE PELICAN

*Brilliant white is my plumage.
Above me the heavenly light is shining,
reflecting my whiteness,
and its ray pierces my heart.*

*With the red blood
flowing out of my heart
I feed my seven young.
My wings give them shelter.*

*Under this dome of life
the blood that they drink
and the flesh that they eat
change into life and spirit.*

When the attacks of the basilisk are lived

and suffered through, the candidate can enter the true priestly state of life. The powers of the new soul are now free and they are consciously sacrificed in a sevenfold way in service to one's fellow human beings. That is the symbol of the pelican that feeds its seven young with its own heart blood. That pure priestly work is the task of the true Rosicrucian. For this reason the Scottish Freemasonry speaks of a Rosycross degree. The 'knights of the Rosycross' are also called 'knights of the pelican'.

Venus is the planet influencing this priestly work of charity. The symbol of this planet is a pictogram consisting of a cross with a circle above it. This expresses that the divine love is raised above matter. By practising the charity just described the candidate colours the rose on his cross of life red until it shines reddish like the Venus metal copper. In a mediaeval 'bestiarium', a writing concerning existing and invented animals and their attributes, we read the following text: '*Pie Pelicane, Jesu domine*' (O, pelican full of goodness, Lord Jesus). This refers to the fact that the pelican does not eat more than it needs to maintain itself. This attribute refers to self-control and to the harmonious energy household which is necessary in this stage of the path.

In a broader sense, the pelican symbolises the living body of a bona fide spiritual school which offers an overarching power field, represented by the extended wings. Under them the seven young can be found. Some myths say that the pelican kills its young and revivifies them by its heart's blood after three days. This may mean that the power field kills what is transient in order to wake up from it that which is new, eternal; that it kills what has to

You seeker of truth, stand still and try to remember.
 Forget, if only for ten minutes a day,
 that time makes you rush.
 Look at yourself and your fellow human beings,
 and see your way of acting.
 Try to trace the motivation of all orthodoxy
 and test the result against the reality around you.
 Never forget that the Wise One is serene
 and search for its origin.
 Kill your pride which is ridiculous in the eyes of God.
 Eradicate your ambition that will require you
 to hurt your brother.
 Let nothing be easy for you except the sacrifice.
 Be diligent but with reason.
 Avoid doing, saying or seeking useless things
 and stifle them, every minute of every day.
 Do not do or say anything ill-considered,
 so that you will not create the cause of new worries.
 Remember that the strongest is always the one
 who overcomes himself.
 When pain overwhelms you, calm yourself,
 do not flee into dullness or lies,
 but consider your experiences in the light
 of their manifold significance.
 Understand that woe is a purifying fire
 which cauterises and cleanses wounds.
 Do allow yourself to desire this purification fervently.
 For not until you are reborn in this fire as a Phoenix,
 you will become familiar with it.
 Live in the Eternal Present!

decline in order to enable the development of the new.

THE PHOENIX

*My wings are of gold,
 upwards I rise from the grave.
 All debts have been annulled,
 I have forgiven them.*

*Jesus Christ, the heavenly phoenix,
 receives me in His kingdom,
 the kingdom of the eternal king
 which is the resurrection.*

If the priestly task is executed faithfully and with perseverance, the victory over all lower life will follow inevitably. That is why the pelican is often connected with the phoenix, the mythical bird symbolising the resurrection, or rather: the symbol of transfiguration, the ‘second resurrection’! The planet Mercury and the metal mercury belong to this phase of the process.

The candidate celebrates the first resurrection by the rebirth of the soul. That is the phase of the swan. This lays the foundation for transfiguration. In the second resurrection the ‘divine mercury’ has achieved such intensity in the renewed nerve ether that above the head of the candidate a fiery blaze, the Pentecostal fire, begins to burn. In this stage, the victory over death has become a fact. Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians: ‘*Then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.*’ The Word, the divine energy, has already been linked with the candidate long ago. It was written in his heart. But now, by the intervention of the power of Mercury, a crisis point is passed and the Word fills soul and body. The Spirit of God has



been linked with the upwardly striving human being. The Pentecostal fire surrounds his head as a fiery crown. The head of the phoenix is then adorned with a royal plumage. Often the phoenix is also represented with two heads to indicate that the human being is androgynous; that male and female in him have now been reunited.

Like the tail of a comet the radiation of the Spirit-Soul fills the respiration field of the candidate and colours it golden. At the same time everything still unholy is consumed. Gold is the metal of the sun, a synthesis of seven metals among which silver (Moon) as the symbol of the soul light is also counted. The seven metals are combined into a whole by mercury.

In this new combination the gluten factor, the unholy constellation of metals in the blood that make it a good conductor for karmic powers, has completely disappeared.

The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross describes how Christian Rosycross became upset by the beauty of the phoenix. The neck shines golden-yellow (thyroid chakra) and the body and the wings glow purple. In the symbolism of the Rosicrucians these images refer to the Grail in the heart of the candidate and to the violet king-priestly

mantle that envelops the pilgrim at the end of his journey.

There is an old print of the burning nest of the phoenix which shows that the branches form a pentagram, the mighty symbol of rebirth. Also the letters I.N.R.I. on the cross of Golgotha refer to the phoenix: *Igne Natura Renovatur Integra*, which means: through the fire nature is entirely renewed.

Thus the path on which the human being is liberated from his ties to the nature of death is in alchemy symbolised by mystery animals: from the raven to the phoenix. In the terminology of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosy-cross this means the path of purification and inner experience that leads through the desert of earthly life to a state in which service to one's fellow human beings is the central issue.

What is the exact size of a microcosm?

It depends. We can say that an average microcosm has a diameter of 18 meters. Hence, all of us are sitting here in each other's microcosm and influence each other. To the extent that the development of the soul in a microcosm progresses, that microcosm is cleansed and restored and its radiation field will expand. When Universal Wisdom says that the earth is embedded in the vital body of the Christ, you can imagine that the 'microcosm' of the Christ is enormous. It is actually a cosmos, or rather an aspect of the cosmos.

THE ALL IS CONCENTRIC

A dialogue

Two people, already well on their way on the path, rest at the bank of a river during their journey around a world full of confusion and errors. They have left behind all their illusions and delusional ideas as well as the cage of their old patterns of thinking. They have bravely burned the hypocrisy fed by lies in the fire of unmasking. They have left the ‘gingerbread house’, the sham paradise of deception and have taken along only the precious pearl of experience.

It is night and a fresh north wind is blowing. The stars are mirrored in the water. The travellers know that it is necessary to cross this water to reach the house of their father. But how can this be done? Full of trust, they look up at the starry sky and listen to the silence. ‘The wind, the wind, the heavenly child...’ It seems as if those words resound almost inaudibly through the quiet of the evening. The girl breathes slowly. To her, the wind is the secret of the Great Breath that moves the All. She senses the depth of the heart in which the ineffable pulsates. It is overwhelming. Then she says: ‘The All is concentric; I have always sensed that. It is true.’

‘Why do you think that?’ he asks. ‘During the day I see the sun in the sky and in the night, the Milky Way. I do not see a concentric All.’

She: ‘You could see it this way: Everything visible in the world originates from the invisible inner. And the inner originates from the innermost. The outer universe has an inner nucleus, you see. That is why it is concentric.’

The young man nods. ‘Although science with its “Big Bang theory” also claims something like that, I cannot grasp it with my intellect.’

‘Yes, but science is referring to something else; can’t you feel that? The centre of the All is in you and in me. All beings have this same nucleus. And because everything arises from this nucleus and also returns to this origin, everything is concentrically connected with this nucleus. Do you understand what I mean?’

Although the young man recognises that his girlfriend grasps things intuitively, he cannot refrain from contradicting her. ‘No, you cannot say it that way, I think, for people understand a centre as something geographic, something that has to do with space and time. Such a centre cannot be found in the All. Therefore, you can only see “the heart of the universe” – if that is what you mean – as a spiritual principle, as an omnipresent spiritual energy, but not as a fixed geographical centre.’

The girl notices that they speak at cross-purposes. ‘Good,’ she says, ‘you are right. I know what you mean... Let’s first agree on the concept “spiritual principle” as the centre of the All. If the spiritual principle, the Spirit, is omnipresent, it

The unity of
microcosm and
macrocosm.

has to be present in all its creatures, or does it?

The young man smiles. He knows that she is right, but he still wants to vex her a little more: *'But the Spirit cannot be proven scientifically! It is only assumed that it exists. It is a hypothesis...'*

She: *'Come on! You are only talking for talk's sake! After all, we've left all illusions and deception behind us! Haven't we freed ourselves from fixed ideas and burned sham truth? We have bidden farewell to the imitation paradise and the counterfeit freedom. And how could we do this? Because the Spirit, the wind, the wind, the heavenly child, has led us here. How can you then say that the Spirit is a hypothesis?'*

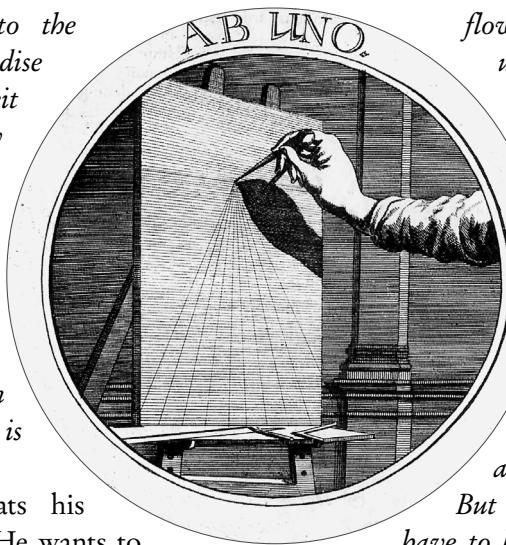
He lightly pats his girlfriend's hand. He wants to hear an exact definition from her, not concepts that people might interpret wrongly. He knows only too well that the eternal Spirit is the Eternal Cause, the foundation of the All. But he would very much like that others also discover it, that they also recognise within themselves the spiritual origin of the All as the 'absolute'. He says: *'We both know that the Spirit in us and in the All is the alpha and the omega. We experience it as an invisible force, as energy of love and of wisdom, which calls, accompanies and*

guides. But you have to explain by pure concepts your intuitive statement that the All is concentric, if you want people to understand you. Perhaps we can agree on the term "original information" instead of Spirit or Logos. Science has discovered that behind the perceptible All there must be a field containing the original information of the whole of creation. And behind that field there must be a static field, an absolute vacuum, from which energies flow into the perceptible universe in the form of a spiral and then return to their origin. Those energies convey the information according to which the universe is manifested. And...'

'That sounds like a fantastic discovery. But why does it always have to be expressed in such a difficult way? Already in the Gospel of John we read: "In the beginning was the Word." And now science turns this into: "In the beginning was the original information..."'

'That is a quantum leap towards the truth,' the young man persists unperturbed. *'But whether you label that discovery and store it in a drawer or whether you are going to live according to that original information, is still the question.'*

The girl takes out a pearl and regards



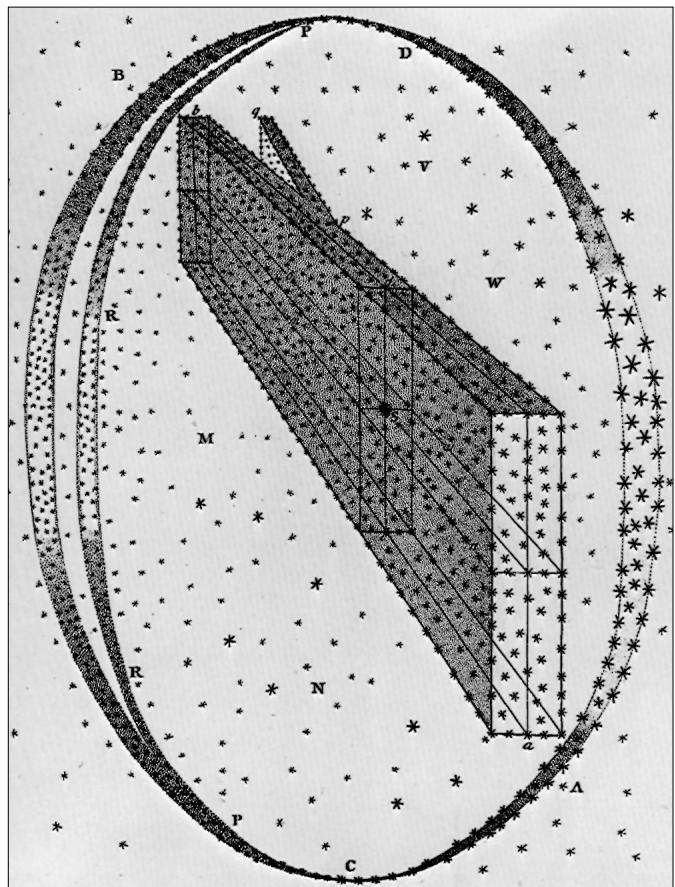
how wonderfully this small world has been formed. And while she is looking at it, she believes she recognises something of that ‘original information’, something of what the eternal Spirit wants to communicate to its creature. *If human beings could experience this “original information”, this Spirit, as love, wisdom and freedom with their hearts and understand it with their heads, then this message would have to determine what they do and don’t do. Or would it?* She looks at her friend. *That is only possible, if they first learn to distinguish the false information, the lies, from the original information, the truth.*

‘Haven’t we ourselves experienced it that way?’ he answers.

She nods: *‘Yes, first all illusion and deception and much more in the world has to be unmasked and dissolved in yourself.’*

The young man reaches for the pearl. *‘Much courage and discernment is needed for this,’ he says. ‘You have to long for the one truth. You know how human beings are imprisoned in their sham paradise, how they are tempted, fattened, suffocated and devoured. I believe that only the brave who long for the truth can see through and overcome the world of delusion.’*

As he hands back the pearl, the young man says: *‘Human beings need to be touched in their hearts by the wind, the wind, the heavenly child. Then it is no longer essential how we regard everything, whether we think that the All is concentric or not, for then you yourself*



have become the centre that is connected with the centre of the All.’

The girl turns the pearl in her hand and closes her eyes. She withdraws into her innermost self and sees how the unlimited All unfolds like a glorious rose of light. Movement rules in all spheres, solar systems, stars and elements, yes, in all cells and atoms. The creative Spirit stimulates them to consciousness. She sees herself as a microcosm that is connected and in communication with the macrocosm. Both dissolve in each other concentrically.

‘The Spirit is expressed in all creatures, in you, in me, in all beings... The centre of life is everywhere. But the human being has been created in such a way that the Spirit can directly flow into his heart and be experienced consciously in his head.’

The Milky Way
according to
Herschel.
Observations
tending to
investigate the
Construction of the
Heavens. London,
1784.

'Do you mean that only human beings have a soul that can receive the Spirit?'

'Yes, but that soul can only receive the Spirit, if it is purified and clean. The soul must be renewed.' The girl remembers her vision. *'And when the soul is prepared to totally surrender to that great miracle...'*

Silently they look at the water in which the stars are mirrored. Their philosophical thoughts make way for the deep longing for their original home.

The wind, the wind, the heavenly child...

And thus the two friends cross the wide stream of space and time. They return to the original realm of the eternal Spirit, to the fatherland of the soul. And the precious pearls of their experiences are the treasure of light that they bring home with them.

What is the reason that you do not want to go to a conference and can think of all kinds of reasons why you shouldn't go and yet you go?

See yourself as a dual being. On the one hand you are the person we see here, a human being of flesh and blood, while on the other you carry the nucleus of the original human life field within you. That nucleus is encapsulated by your everyday life of learning, studying, working, taking care of your daily bread, your partner, your family, your hobbies and recreation and so on. But that nucleus *does* work. In other words, that nucleus responds to the call of the Gnosis, of the Brotherhood that is going through the world and activates you to start looking for the source of that call. And if now, for example, a conference is forthcoming and you have registered for it, it may happen that suddenly all kinds of larger and smaller matters crop up that are of course absolutely necessary, but yet have the intention of keeping you away from that conference. Then your I invents all kinds of tricks in order not to have to go. For you have already understood long ago that such a conference is not held to nourish, flatter and polish your I, but to nourish and further develop the growing soul in your microcosm. Those two often oppose each other. In other words, when the I presents itself, the soul withdraws, while when the I withdraws, the soul can develop. What matters in the period humanity has entered is that development of the soul. That is why the call of the Gnosis becomes ever stronger, but the I also increasingly protests. It is up to you, in your own life, to decide what has preference. Hence, weigh all possible obstacles carefully and you will discover that very little remains that could be a real obstacle. But always keep the goal of such a conference in mind – we are speaking of renewal conferences, because we are dealing with a total renewal of your whole being – and then you will see that those problems will also be solved elegantly, sometimes in a miraculous way.

WASHING GOLD

...and so I sit here for hours on the bank of an ancient river somewhere in a valley in the South of Sweden and wash gold, day in day out...

The small granules hidden in the gravel on the bank almost wholly consist of 24-carat gold. Scientists believe that they must have been formed about 4 to 5 billion years ago, at the time of the creation of the earth. Originally they were enclosed in rocks, but water eroded the stone and the gold granules were flushed out. They were deposited on quiet places along the banks. And there they lie with their golden shine as on the first day, as if a few billion years did not matter.

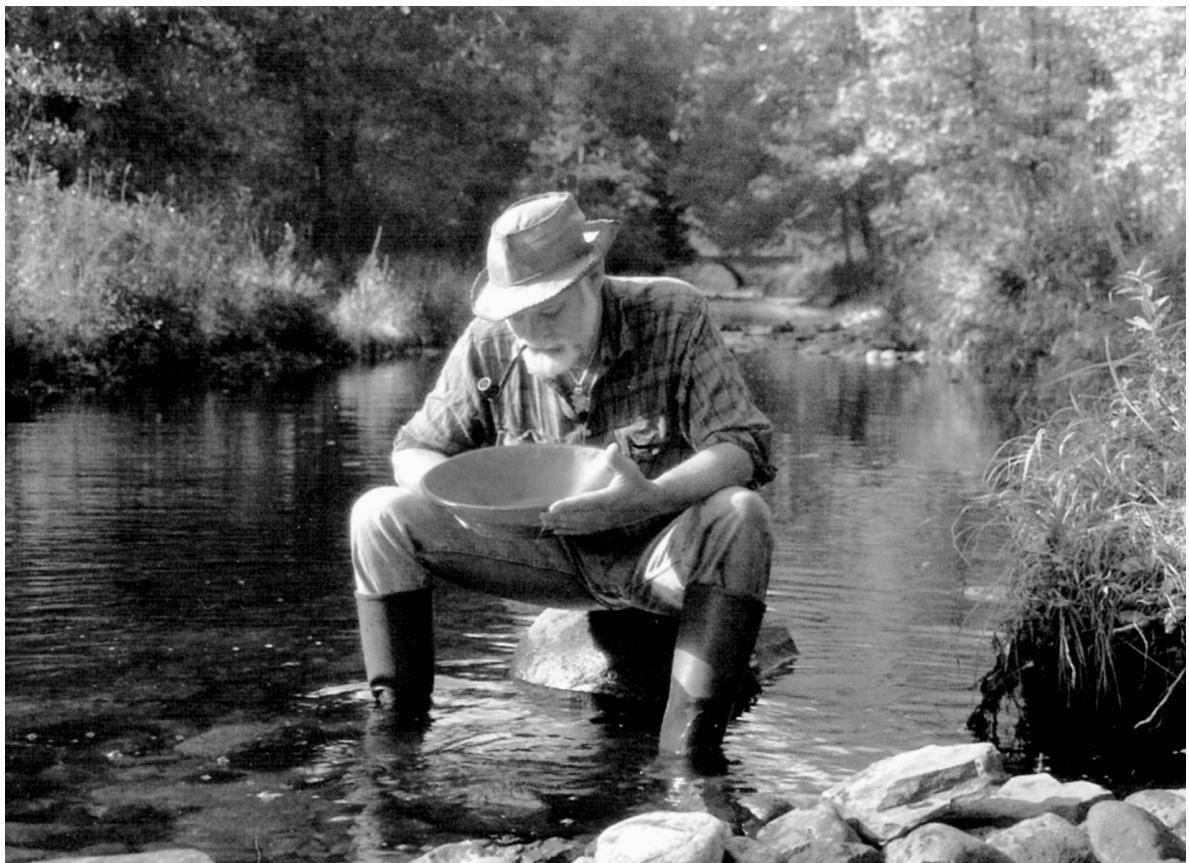
My hands almost automatically move the dark-blue pan to and fro. I reflect how I came to this place. I made inquiries here and there and got hints about places where others had already been successful. I bought books and equipment for gold digging. I didn't need much: a small chair, rubber boots, a scoop, a pan and a flask for storing my treasures.

To me, gold washing seemed very symbolic. I perceived how much it corresponded to the path of the seeker for truth. My pan is dark-blue – blue and gold were also the colours of the Pharaohs. On the inner edge of the pan there are five stepped protrusions to hold back the gold in the pan. The pan is only about half-full. This makes it easier to remove big stones. Too much dead

weight only makes the search last longer. The pan half-full of mud is then dipped into the river and moved to and fro, so that sand, small stones and minerals are turned over by the flowing water. Because gold has a higher density than gravel and sand, the gold granules quickly sink to the bottom of the pan. The lighter particles – fine sand, clay and humus – remain suspended until they too are flushed away by the water. Initially, the content of the pan is still cloudy. That is logical because when pure and impure substances are to be separated, the impure will continue to cloud and make the pure invisible for still some time

As soon as the water becomes clear and the gold granules have gathered on the bottom of the pan, the coarse sand and the heavy gravel must be flushed away without losing the gold. The pan must be tilted a bit and moved up and down. The flowing water flushes the gravel and sand over the edge of the pan. By their weight the gold granules will be caught behind the five protrusions of the pan.

When the bottom of the pan is visible it becomes exciting! The pan is lifted out of the water and emptied with small tilting movements. The joy is great, when in that last remnant of water small, glistening particles move over the bottom. I carefully take them out of the pan and put them into the flask filled with water. The quick movements of such sparkling particles are suspect! Is it



real gold? Or is it pyrite or cat's gold, also called fool's gold?

What should be done now? If it is real gold, this can be established later. If it is not real gold, it can still be discarded later on. Hence, everything which sparkles is put into the flask, taking no chances. After all, real or not real are so similar, that they are hard to distinguish.

In the meantime I have realised that at this stage one seldom sees real gold, because it can still be hidden in the sand on the bottom of the pan. That is why one has to continue washing until the end. The intermediate results are uncertain. Yet, we would like to know whether any results have been attained. It is always possible to overlook something or even lose it.

Again the pan is dipped into the river and moved gently back and forth in a tilted position. The suspense mounts.

The gravel and sand are separated much too slowly, but then finally it is ready. The bottom of the pan is covered with only a thin film of yellow and black (ferroferriferous) sand. More water flows out until only very little remains. The rest of the sand lies there like a small isle. A tiny flip of the hand produces a small wave which flushes out the last sand. And there, where until just a moment ago the sand was, now a few yellowish particles are visible. Pyrite or real gold? No, not pyrite because that does not roll to and fro, but remains in one place due to its weight. Now it can be clearly recognised. Gold! My efforts have been rewarded. I take the gold granules from the pan and with a gentle tinkling sound, let them drop into the flask.

One evening, an older, more experienced gold digger addressed me. I told him about my experiences, doubts and

On the bottom of the sieve gold is glittering.

expectations, about my efforts to do everything right and not to lose any gold. He looked at me slightly puzzled and said: *'Because I am sure, that there is gold here and I have learned to distinguish between real and not real gold, I am no longer bothered by such problems. I just simply wash the pans, and then I have the gold.'* Then he asked me to show him my yield of that day. Not without pride I poured the content of my flask into the pan with a bit of the remaining water. A small, golden sparkling pile was formed. *'Not bad,'* he said and with a practised hand swished the water over the bottom of the pan. Suddenly my little pile was only half as big and the rest swam in the pan. *'This remaining pile is the yield of real gold,'* he said and put it back into my flask. *'The remainder which washed away only consisted of yellow gravel, not real gold and other worthless rubble.'* To prove it, he rubbed with his finger over a pyrite platelet on the bottom of the pan. A yellow stripe became visible and the *'platelet of not real gold'* had dis-



peared. It had been rubbed away. This can never happen with real gold

...and so I sit here on the bank of an ancient river in a valley and wash gold, for hours and days... In fact, this is nothing unusual. Anyone could do it, and yet, it is something very special!

Is there a model that can show us how to live?

We speak of 'the new mode of life' to help you on your way. The new mode of life is meant to make you conscious of the choices you make. On the basis of that new mode of life a new, living standard that can serve as your guideline will ultimately develop. It is a standard of life that is never rigid and that continues to renew itself to the extent that the soul is liberated. Once the soul has been liberated to the extent that it can be linked with the divine Spirit, the Spirit of God has become its direct guide. Then it no longer needs imposed standards and values, because it is allowed to draw directly from the Spirit. The final goal of that process may perhaps be still far away, but together we are on our way to reach that point. You can imagine that – once that point has been reached – there will be completely renewed human beings, literally new as to spirit, soul and body, and that the world will also look differently then.

THE DUAL HISTORY OF HUMANITY

Reflection in
stagnant water
demonstrates the
principle of 'as
above, so below'.
Mora, Sweden.
Photo Pentagram.

Everyone has to make choices and decisions. When doing so a person is confronted with the ethics of his doings and dealings. What standard or norm does he apply? And who determines what those standards and norms look like? These questions not only concern authorities and scientists. In western culture great tension has gradually developed between reason and morality. Everyone knows the ensuing uncertainty and knows the conflicting ideas influencing us. Everyone is confronted with them. Everyone is seeking.

task in Creation. That is why Hermes says in the eighth book of the *Corpus Hermeticum*: 'God would not really be if He were not invisible, for all that is visible has been brought into being, has once been made manifest. However, what cannot be perceived exists in all eternity; it has no need to manifest itself. It is eternal and makes all other things manifest. It makes all things manifest without itself being brought forth; it does not show itself in any perceptible form, but gives perceptible form to all things.[...] So God exists in a manifested state and in an unknowable state in which He is forever invisible.¹ [...] Thus the imperceptible deity can be known in and through His creation.'²

In the Tabula Smaragdina this is summarised as follows by the often misunderstood words: 'As above, so below.' This idea is the actual motive behind the quest for Knowledge. The sensory or objective world is analysed down to the finest details and the farthest corners, it is examined, explored and, as is sometimes said, 'put on the dissecting table' in order to fathom and discover the causes of its existence and activities. Francis Bacon (1561-1626), one of the founders of empirical science, expressed it as follows: 'Science should torture the secrets of nature from it and make it subservient to humanity.' The laws of nature that we currently know and the forces to which these laws apply, have been discovered during the tireless search for the essence of human being, nature and creator.

Signature of the
invisible world.
An electron is
kept in balance by
an anti-electron or positron,
comparable to
matter and anti-
matter, universe
and anti-universe.
According to the
discovery by Carl
Anderson, 1932.

When hermetic philosophy speaks about Creation, this refers to the seven-fold manifestation of the Logos. Creation, Hermes Trismegistus states, is manifested in seven fields of creation or manifestation, seven cosmic planes that form the entire all-encompassing space. This seven-fold cosmos is surrounded by and is embedded in God's mysteries or the unknowable Deity.

In a conversation between Hermes and his son Tat, Hermes teaches Tat about Creation. Tat is the human being who is seeking God and who is going to fathom the miracle of the soul. Hermes is the primordial wisdom that teaches how the sevenfold manifestation of the Logos, Creation, should be understood. This is essential for human beings, because they must learn to understand their place and



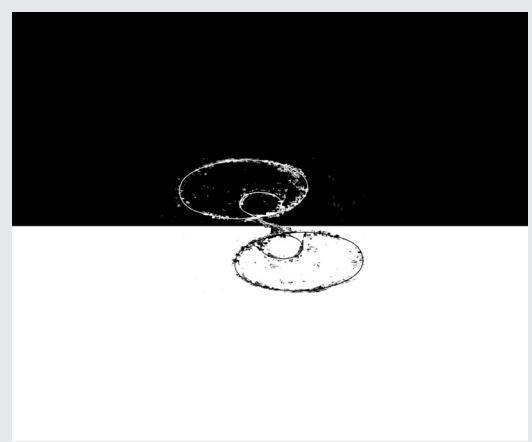
Tat is the Son of Hermes. He is the human being who is wholeheartedly devoted to the Father and listens to Him. The Primordial Wisdom of Hermes cannot be encompassed and fathomed by the mind, by a good intellect and with good will.

Due to the spiritual organ of perception in the heart, the human being can understand Hermes' wisdom: '*The One-without-birth becomes visible through and in everything, and especially to those to whom He wishes to manifest Himself.*'³

Thinking in the hermetic sense of the word is not a mental activity of the intellectual human being; neither is it the activity of the heart, which is called emotional intelligence. In the 14th book of the *Corpus Hermeticum* Tat asks Hermes about the rebirth and the vow of silence:

'In your general discourse, Father, you were enigmatic and vague when you talked about the divine nature. You did not reveal that nature to

me, saying that no one can be saved unless he has been reborn. But when, after your talk with me, I made myself your suppliant during our descent from the mountain, and inquired about the doctrine of rebirth so that I might come to know it – as this is the only part of the doctrine that is unknown to me – you promised to convey it to me as soon as I had disengaged myself from the world.'



Entrance to the
temple of Hathor,
Dendera, Egypt.
Water colour by
David Roberts.
Egypt & Nubia,
1838-1839.

Every human being has to make choices all the time and accept their consequences. The processes, results, applications and consequences related to the acquired knowledge confront him with the question: how far am I allowed and able to go in order to obtain and apply that knowledge? Where are the limits? Are there actually limits? For example, where is the limit with respect to abortion? Where with regard to organ donation and transplantation? Where with respect to factory farming? What are the consequences for man and animal? For the environment? For life on earth?

Time and again it is shown that the infinitely long search for the first cause

of creation and for the essence of one's own identity, has not yet brought humanity much further... But what are we really seeking? What knowledge do we seek to enlarge our insight? And have our discoveries and achievements made us more complete or happier? Have we become more mature? Or individuals living truly consciously?

Every day many wonder why life is as it is. They are seeking the roots of their misfortune and dissatisfaction and are consulting many authorities. They go back in history, dig for their descent, analyse their blood ties and properties. Thus they struggle, while they are hanging in a web of would-be knowledge, dogmas, clever remarks and

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

Wisdom is sometimes considered as a state of the consciousness, in which insight speaks as the sum of many experiences in life. Whoever is wise, it is said, can put things in perspective. He does not immediately react to good and bad rumours, he defers his judgement for careful consideration and has the ability to be objective with regard to events and people. That is why wisdom is sometimes related to age; those who have been allowed to retire from being employed, can perhaps consider the events in and around them with mature insight.

But that is not what Hermes thinks! Otherwise there would already be quite a few Her-

metics walking around in the world and young people would only have to be a bit patient before hermetic wisdom would become their share. No! Hermes emphatically states that true wisdom is *not* bound to age, living conditions, character and talent or social status.

True hermetic wisdom is described by Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (2:6-13):

'Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.'

'But, as it is written: What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. [...] And we impart this in words not'



taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit.'

The condition to attain this sublime wisdom '*that fathoms and knows the Divine depths*', is rebirth, Hermes says. He speaks of the birth of the Only Good in the human being.

'Who is it that brings about this rebirth?' Tat asks. 'The Son of God, the Man who is one and indivisible, according to God's Will.' 'What is this Only Good?' 'It is the new thinking faculty; it is,' Hermes says, 'the Wisdom that thinks in the Silence.'

'Whoever has shared in the birth from God through His compassion, has left sensory perception behind; he knows himself, he knows that he has been formed from the spiritual Power, and he experiences joy in his heart.'

Hermes speaks this word, this Arch-Gnosis, in the heart of the human being who is inwardly silent. This does not refer to the forced silence, behind which the sensual human being is standing who is seeking experience and

pleasure, or to the silence of forced obedience. It is the silence of the clear and alert mind that knows what the world of the senses cannot offer and does not know. The world offers diversity, change, a rising and falling flow of opposites, of sham knowledge, in which the soul will ultimately drown. 'You should understand Hermes' intentions well; for he does not address humanity in general, but his son Tat. That is: the introduced, to a certain extent initiated seeker, who has discovered the essence, the Truth, of the soul; who has found the miracle of the soul, and begins to understand what it is all about. [...] Hermes finds it hard to imagine that a serious seeker, who is introduced into the Gnosis, continues to approach the posed problem from the wrong angle, from the outside.'

J van Rijckendorph

rituals that are all part of the duality in which all of humanity has been caught. They become self-conscious beings whose lives are determined by impulses of a not-understood past they have not dealt with. That kind of individuality (literally meaning in-divisible) only has one certainty: death. The French existentialist Albert Camus (1913-1960) called that certainty ‘the greatest injustice’.

Some thinkers consider the human being to be a rational and pragmatic, but emotionally malnourished being that is seeking God. For God is fashionable again. ‘*He has become*,’ we could read in a newspaper, ‘*a gap in the market*,’ a tailor-made consumable that must dispel the spiritual and emotional void and malnutrition. And we can cautiously draw the conclusion that in the love-hate relationship between reason and religion reason has the upper hand. The results of that leave deep marks.

HIGH HUMAN DESCENT

In addition, there is the history of those in whose being the secret of freedom, of the universal order and beauty of truth and goodness is radiating

as a fiercely burning fire. Guided by this inner image they explored and explore a shining path through the desert of opposites and rigid ideas. They do not lean on articles of faith, theorems and causality. They propagate tolerance, obedience, peace, brotherhood and love. But as long as human beings do not know themselves yet, they cannot understand those values from within. Then they cannot yet be tolerant and their brother’s keepers. For then they still obey the laws of fear and self-preservation and they are still not familiar with the Love of Christ.

The history of such visionary minds is one of rebellion, struggle and revolt. Not so much against authorities or a social order, but rather against oppression and the slavish submissiveness resulting from it. Those revolutionaries pointed – and still point! – above all to the high human descent and to our indestructible inner treasure: the secret of the Soul.

¹ J van Rijckenborgh, *Egyptian Arch-Gnosis*, part 2, p.187. Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1987.

² id., pp.203-204.

³ id., p.188.

⁴ J van Rijckenborgh, *Egyptian Arch-Gnosis*, part 4, pp.142-143. Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1994.

When I am sitting in the temple, everything is clear and I am very enthusiastic to do what has to be done. But once outside it starts fading and after two days I have completely lost it. How do I get it back?

In the temple you open your heart for everything offered to you. But outside the temple ordinary life takes its course again, and before you are aware of it you are completely wrapped up in your everyday affairs again. That is why it is important to keep that open heart as long as possible. You can achieve that by testing the value of your desires and thoughts and by constantly cleansing your heart, spiritually speaking. In that way it is easier to remain linked with the Gnosis which is omnipresent to support and carry you. We sometimes speak of ‘directedness’. That means, being focused on your true goal in life and on the process of renewal necessary to reach that goal. You are standing right in the middle of that process. Concentrate on it and you will discover that you will then find, hear, read, receive everything you need to be able to continue.

THE HUMAN BEING IS NOT YET READY

Gnostics, philosophers and thinkers of all times have thought about the quest for happiness. Modern psychology would describe this quest as an indefinable search for a life without pain and sorrow. However, when we observe ourselves and our environment, we notice that this state has not yet been reached.

According to Darwin's theory of evolution this search once began with the longing of an amoeba in the primordial waters for an ideal living environment, in which the characteristics of this little creature could be best maintained. It is thought that via a development towards increasingly complex organisms and an ever more ingenious society, humanity came into existence. Even now the human being is still affected by that longing for this ideal environment.

Currently, in the 21st century, the human being has more and higher demands than simply a pleasant climate and a roof over his head. Firstly his position must be protected and his social securities guaranteed. Furthermore, his senses, his feelings and his thinking must be sufficiently stimulated to cease – if only for a moment – that restless seeking for happiness.

The human being is a miracle. While he can see himself as a thinking being, as a unity, he has unfortunately not yet reached that state. His type determines

his activities. He wants to satisfy his every need to ensure his continued existence. If he does not get the right food on time, he cannot perform. If there is no interaction with his fellows, he will languish. If he cannot get new impressions, his consciousness is extinguished. If he cannot get the minimum required exercise, his muscular system atrophies. Should he not breathe every second, he would soon die. What is the purpose of all of this? In spite of his ceaseless efforts to stay alive, the end comes unavoidably and his composite form disintegrates into the elementary parts from which it had been constructed.

MERELY SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST?

This life has many dubious aspects. Large problems develop because all of humanity is looking for happiness at the same time. Every day we are confronted with small and large conflicts and with insensitivity concerning the problems of our fellow creatures, who are seeking the same happiness and perhaps form a threat to others in that way. It appears that virtually all of us show the same reactions under the same circumstances.

This conclusion is worrying. Is survival of the fittest after all the only thing that counts? Although Darwin's theory of evolution is impressive as an explanation, it is sadly lacking as a practical philosophy of life and too limited for those seeking the spiritual foundation of life. That is why it is not surpris-

The cleared path
to the future.
Photo Pentagram.



ing that there are two groups: the creationists, who maintain that God has created the world and who adapt scientific biology to the story of creation, and the realists, who accept evolutionary science as being correct. The biologist Gould claims that the world hangs together on the basis of coincidence and that the human being has come into existence by accident. According to him,

evolution is a sliding scale on which the strongest progresses a little step at a time. Hence every moral system must be based on a human construct, and higher impulses are inconceivable. In short: he claims that nothing exists outside the physical world. On the other hand, the scholar Simon Conway Morris sees creation as a wholly guided process: '*If the Earth could do it all over again,*

after 35 billion years a form of intelligent human life would develop again. That is inevitable. In my view,' he continues, 'the world is a much stranger place than we in fact realise. I find it important to preserve my sense of wonder in this matter.

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS ACHIEVED THAT?

Thus, at the end of a long chain, the human phenomenon is supposed to have occurred as a purely biological phenomenon! But where then does this endless search for happiness come from? Would there after all be a life that is entirely, completely and unconditionally happy? Do you, dear reader, know any human being who has achieved that? Certainly, everybody knows someone who has achieved a certain balance, for example in a happy relationship, or in a job.

Yet, sober reality shows that lasting happiness does not yet exist. Furthermore, we could say that there is nobody who does not long and strive for happiness. Some say that they would be satisfied with only a little bit of happiness. For example when it concerns their relationship, family, friends, children or grandchildren. 'Be realistic! Count your blessings!' But with others the dire lack continues to gnaw. They experience homesickness, a longing for a life that seems unattainable, invisible, unapproachable, untouchable. And while ordinary life continues day after day, perhaps in a single exceptional moment, only the disquieting question remains: 'What am I living for?

In 'De Kluizenaar' (The Hermit) (Ploegsma, 1933, pp. 26-30) E Pauli writes: 'There are people, and they have always been there, who only exist as independent beings, and there are others who have learned to become one of many, one with the whole of humanity. The former ones are not wrong. One thing has to be learned first, before another can be learned. Instinctively, thinking, feeling, choosing and acting are concentrated first of all in our own I, and many stop at that point, and never make any progress.

But for those who do not limit their horizon in this way, but rather widen it to a greater or lesser degree, this certainly means sacrifice and suffering, embracing the woes of the world as their own grief, an unceasing and never-ending battle against that which is wrong, not only for himself, but for everyone. There has been one who was able to widen his horizon as no one else could, and did he not become Man of Sorrows exactly because of that? [...] We must presume a relationship between that which we see and that which we suffer. Could heroism exist without deadly danger? Just look at its more modest, but not lesser brother patience. Can patience mature in any other way than through prolonged suffering?

Who knows what the human being as individual, and as generation, needs to acquire in the way of spiritual property before he becomes that which he shall and must become? And who knows by which means he shall obtain this?

THIS VISION RESTS ON UNIVERSAL WISDOM

Does a more important question than this one exist? In the Egyptian temples of initiation the question was asked: 'Man, who are you?' Where do you come from? Where are you going? Are these not questions with which the Creator tries to reach his creatures? Or is it not at least an invitation to investigate one's own life?

It is believed that the earth is 4.7 billion years old and still has another 3



to 4 billion years to go. In that case, according to the theory of evolution, humanity would still have a long development ahead of it. But also from another point of view we can say that the human being is not yet ready. This view rests on universal wisdom and maintains that the human being is subject to continuous change. Creation continuously changes, and hence also the times, the conditions of life, creatures, and the human being change. As long as there is life, there is progress, change. On the one hand towards degeneration and decline, but on the other hand also towards regeneration and fundamental life renewal. Because true evolution means growth of the inner consciousness. Creation generates the world, and the world generates the human being with his questions, limitations, bloodthirstiness and narrow-mindedness. And also the human being with an enormous capacity for inner renewal.

Are the properties required for this inner renewal already known? Unfortunately the great world stage cannot inform us about them. We should rather direct our vision inward. The human species follows a laborious path through the external circumstances of planet earth, with much sorrow, much strife, and much injustice. But the True Man directs his search inward. Not within one single, special human being like the Buddha, or the Christ, but within every human being.

MUSIC TO STRENGTHEN THE SOUL

Everyday life develops in the environment in which we have been placed. But becoming conscious of the universal aspect in the human being – his spiritual development – should come from within. Within the inner self, the ancient sages teach us, lies the true field of development.

That is where Arjuna searches for the wisdom of Khrishna, to guide him in battle. That is where the Gnostics find the Sophia, the wisdom; there the Buddha finds enlightenment, there the Christ situates his Kingdom of Heaven.

It is said that only in our present time the depth of Bach's Saint Matthew Passion can really be experienced. Bach's mathematical precision, his order and the pure beauty of his melodies reach beyond a musical aim. Bach's music serves to strengthen some important elements in the human soul, such as freedom, liberation from sin and limitation. But also harmony and a better understanding of God's magnificent Creation, in which everything has its place and its sound. All these sounds blend in unity.

When we try to penetrate into our innermost being, we will encounter these elements. Wisdom does not come naturally to the human being. Understanding primordial wisdom requires that the human being has an instrument at his disposal that is attuned to this. If we want to learn something about our inner being, we should have at least the beginnings of an inner life at our disposal. With the development of that inner life, wisdom increases also.

The inner life meant here is linked to the very first principles of development. To reach a higher spiral the lower one must be left behind. This basis also applies to the human being. To obtain inner life, we need to take leave of outward appearances; of all external, experimental knowledge.

VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TASK

A forerunner of the classical Rosicrucians, Johannes Arndt (1555-1621) wrote:

'Whoever could see such a soul, saw the most beautiful creature, and saw the Divine Light radiate in it, because it is

united with God, and it is divine, not of nature, but of Grace.

Whoever wants to develop this soul on his own, with all its latent properties, is confronted with a virtually impossible task. At present we can hardly isolate ourselves from others, nor get away from all the stimulation and influences of daily life. That is why a Spiritual School comes to the fore at such a moment.

The basis for such a mystery school was laid in the Netherlands in 1924, for the purpose of carrying out the new world work of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross. This school developed into what is now known as the Lectorium Rosicrucianum, the International Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross. This is the culmination of the efforts of so many who were able to row upstream on that universal river, towards the source, at the moment that it presented itself in their time. Within this community the outlines of the consciously living soul human being are becoming visible. Hence we can state that a bonafide Spiritual School must be a result of evolution, just as uncondition-

ally as any other expression of creation. We paraphrase Conway Morris: '*If the earth could do it all over again, a Spiritual School would nevertheless come into existence again.*' As the answer to the long search for happiness.

And the mighty appeal from the beginning of the Christian era still stands:

'I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.' (Romans 8:18-19)

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How can I tell my friends what occupies me? Some of them are seeking just as I do, but yet I cannot tell them what attracts me in the Rosycross.

Of course you can only tell what is living within you. Learned wisdom is of no use to you or to your friend. You discover fast enough if someone really wants to know something about the School and the teachings or if he is only curious. I started my career as a text writer in an advertising agency. My boss and I had a lot of time to talk with each other and I had loads of questions about the how and why of life. All kinds of things I had found I could discuss with him. One day he said: 'If that's the way you are thinking, you should have a look at the Rosicrucians.' But he didn't swamp me with quotes and dogmatic statements. He only gave me the answers that stimulated and focused my seeking.

At a certain moment I followed his advice. I looked up the address of the centre, went there and rang the bell. The door was opened by my boss!

THE WOLF AS MYSTERY ANIMAL

In human imagination the wolf is usually depicted as an evil animal. As it attacks livestock and – some people claim – also human beings, it meets with little sympathy. Expressions from the Bible like ‘the wolf in sheep’s clothing’ are interpreted literally and are used to justify the hunting and killing of this animal.

But the image of the wolf can perhaps also help us unmask our cultural prejudices. Could the wolf not be the reflection of the fear that controls our innermost being, the fear that we do not want to accept and therefore suppress? It is a well-known psychological phenomenon that we project our own impotence onto others. If, for example, the political and economic situation in a country is unfa-

voritable, people look for a scapegoat to bear the blame for the insoluble problems. In this respect, we can use the image of the ‘bad wolf’ to obscure the evil and bad traits in our own being.

Behavioural research has shown that the wolf’s basic instinct is fleeing rather than attacking. Wolves avoid contact with humans, are cautious and fearful. Moreover, a strong impulse to wander about and hunt is typical for the wolf and stems from his compelling need for food. Just like we humans? Being a predator and feeding on carrion, the wolf is associated with death. He confronts human beings with the border between life and death.

In the Germanic languages, ‘wolf’ means swallower of the light. The *Edda*, the old-Icelandic epic of the gods, tells of the twilight of the gods when wolves gained power. Odin, the supreme god in the Germanic pantheon, is swallowed by the Fenris-wolf (literally ‘he who binds’). But Fenris is a child of Loki, the god of lies, the Germanic Lucifer. The other Germanic gods are forced to come to an agreement with Loki to save their own lives. Otherwise their turn would also come. The name Loki also means the blazing flame or glow. It is a symbol of the fire of the lower – strayed – world.

Odin, too, possessed two wolves: Geri, the Greedy, and Freki, the Glutton. They act among other things as servants and messengers of the supreme god. The Greek god Apollo also had a wolf as messenger. His name is Lykaios, which refers to the Greek word for ‘light’. Hence Lykaios is the light bearer.

Most animals prefer to stay away from humans. As long as they are not attacked, they will not attack either, unless they are driven by hunger or have been wounded by human beings. It is quite natural that animals defend their territory against intruders by howling, hissing and roaring thus warning their enemies to stay away. A human trait, one might say. However, this warning behaviour is not necessarily a sign of aggression. The urge of conquering or possessing, which is typically human, is very unusual for most species. They follow their instincts which urge them not to take more than they need to survive. Human beings, however, are driven by their desires that are controlled by their rational faculties. They kill and ravage without any sense of measure. For this reason, human beings are regarded as the most dangerous animals on earth.



In early Byzantine icons Christophorus is sometimes depicted with the head of a dog or a wolf.

It seems that the wolf confronts a human being with something within him that makes him recoil and flee from the mystery of being human. For example, human beings are confronted with the latter aspect in the wolf mysteries which are represented on excavated objects in Etruria. Etruscan urns show scenes that give an idea of these mysteries and their rites of initiation. A man with a wolf's head is drawn out of a well and frightens the bystanders by his appearance. A priest pours holy water on him from a Patera or sacrificial chalice. By this 'baptism', the man with the

wolf's head is linked with the Divine, while the bystanders throw stones at the initiation candidate. Here, the wolf's head can be regarded as a symbol of a still inanimate form or figure that can be vivified by contact with the Creator. Then he is no longer the embodiment of evil but a mere image of it, like the luciferic human being is an image of the evil that lives inside him.

The myth of Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, can be seen as a reference to the downward path humanity has entered. It all starts with fraternal strife. The younger brother, hungry for power, dethrones the older one, the king. Next he has the successor to the throne murdered and forces Rhea Silvia,

Hades adorned
with a wolf cap.
Tomba del Lorco,
360-330 BC,
Tarquinii, Italy.

The Edda is a compilation of old-Icelandic myths and legends. The book consists of the Snorra Edda and the Saemundar Edda with approximately 30 Germanic mythological and epic poems which sing of the creation and destruction of the cosmos. Both works have been copied several times; determining the date of the originals is quite hard.

the daughter of the king, to become a priestess so that she cannot give birth to a new successor to the throne. Then the gods intervene. Mars unites with Rhea Silvia and she delivers the twins Romulus and Remus. Their adversary puts the babies in a wicker basket on the river Tiber. The basket is caught by the roots of the Ficus Ruminalis, a huge fig tree, before it can reach the sea.

Near the tree at the foot of the Palatine, a she-wolf has her den. She finds the twins and feeds both boys. One day, the shepherd Faustulus discovers the children and takes them up in his family. His wife, who is called Lupa, the she-wolf, becomes the step-mother of the boys. Once the children have become adults, they throw the usurper from the throne and make their grandfather king again. Then they found two cities: Romulus' city is set on the Palatine, while Remus' place is located on the Aventine.

Then a new fraternal strife develops. Romulus, the younger one, kills his brother Remus in anger as the latter laughingly jumps over the wall of Romulus' city. Remus, whose name means 'rudder', a reference to Saturn, symbolises the holy aspect of man that has died in him and only lives on in the mysteries. Romulus is the image of the earthly personality, while Remus is his Divine twin soul.

THE SHE-WOLF AS SYMBOL OF MARS

The she-wolf that took care of Romulus and Remus is also seen as a symbol of Mars, usually known as the god of war. The word *mar* means to shine and blind as well as to procreate and die. As a noun it is related to the Latin word *mors* meaning death. For the Germanic peoples, Mar is an evil spirit that causes nightmares. In Buddhist legends, Mara tried to seduce prince Siddhartha. The Hebrew word 'marah' means bitter, salty. During the wanderings through the desert, Moses changes the bitter water from the well of Marah into drinking water.

The fact that Mar (Mars, Marah) can be transformed and redeemed is shown in the Bible. In the Book of Ruth, we read of Naomi, the sweet one, who feels deserted by God, because death destroyed all her family ties. That is why she called herself Marah, the bitter one. Marah's daughter-in-law Ruth (friendship with God) became the progenitress of the house of David. Marah, when translated into Latin, becomes Maria. Maria is the symbol of the unsullied sea that the alchemists called *prima materia*, from which the new life should come forth. In other words, the bitter must be transformed into the pure. Hence two states can be distinguished: the Divine original substance and the creatures that strayed from it, symbolised by Remus and Romulus.

VESTA AND THE WOLF

The mother of Romulus and Remus is a Vestal virgin or priestess of the goddess Vesta who kept the sacred fire burning. She was the holy goddess of Rome. She represented a mere idea, since she was not worshipped by statues

or myths. Vesta is a contraction of the word Venusta, an epithet of Venus, related to *vestis*, vestment. The vestment coincides with the vessel in which the holy flame is burning.

The hall of a Roman house was called *vestibulum*, where outer garments were taken off before entering the house. The mosaic floor of the most famous Pompeian vestibulum shows a black dog and the inscription ‘Cave canem’ (Beware of the dog). Mediaeval artists depicted the gaping maw of hell as the jaws of a wolf. Some church portals were embellished with representations of man-eating demons that resembled wolves.

After Jesus died on the cross, he descended into hell to liberate humanity from the earthly garments that covered them. Fulfilling the mysteries is sometimes considered as the changing of garments or figure. The Cathars called

this process the *endura*: the weakening of the system of earthly forces that were gradually replaced by a system of Divine force lines. Or, as the teachings of the Modern Rosycross state: the old personality is replaced by a new one, the garment of the immortal soul. The earthly personality is made with the help of earthly fire processes, the Divine stems from the Divine fire. That is why the wolf as the symbol of the earthly personality is related to the processes of death. The grey coat of the wolf symbolises the grey earthly garment that finally has to be given up in order to be able to receive the shining garment of the new life.



I am a student and also work to pay for my studies. But certain aspects of my work and my studies I am absolutely not interested in. What should I do about them? I find that very difficult and just can't pretend. Could you give me advice?

You have been placed in this world in order to gain experiences, experiences caused by the opposites in life. In that way your consciousness is formed and your I is formed. Those experiences ultimately lead your I to the limits of its possibilities and make you understand that there is another, higher life, the life of the renewed soul. Gaining experiences in everyday life means encountering pleasant and unpleasant things. The former are no problem and everyone is absolutely welcome to them. But the latter are just as important! You need both in order to achieve inner maturity. Hence consider your daily life without aversion as much as possible. Do what you have to do – often to help others – but do not resist life. Make your choices consciously. Ultimately you will obtain a place in society and earn your living in the way that suits you. Preferably a place that offers sufficient room to be able to follow your spiritual aspirations. Hence use the possibilities offered to you. Do not reject daily life, but consider it as a part of the training school you have to pass through in order to be able to take the next step in your development – the liberation of the soul.

FROM DISPOSABLE TO ETERNAL HUMAN BEING

Does dissatisfaction with certain things give us the feeling that something completely different should lie at the foundation of life? Do we suspect a secret that does not easily reveal its key? Or are we merely some sort of 'disposable human being' in a 'consumer society'? After all, in spite of the human rights laws, we can only come to the conclusion that human life counts for little or nothing at all.

Everywhere meetings and discussions take place about changes and improvements and the way things should and could be. But world peace still seems far away and people die in battles daily, the beginning and end of which they could not fathom. All this is happening around

us. But as long as it does not touch us personally, we try to keep things quiet and cosy at hearth and home. Because, as long as we succeed in that and everything runs smoothly, we have the feeling that we could continue like that forever. Then death seems to be still far away. We adorn life with trifles and continue in a carefree fashion. Until something happens that upsets the apple cart. This can lead to reflection. It can raise the question: 'why is this happening to me?'

People are often courageous and vigorous. They show a strong urge for survival and adapt themselves to the inevitable. Yet, there is a fair chance that, after a traumatic experience, someone begins to search for the reason of his existence. Who is he, really? What is he made of? What is the purpose of life? It looks like a secret formula. The question is, however, whether the need for a solution is real, or does the search merely turn into a hobby? In that case the 'seeker' would basically accept the 'not knowing'.

SAILING SMOOTHLY THROUGH LIFE

The earth is meant to be a school, a training school. From childhood on, certain skills must be learned to grow into adulthood and to be able to bear responsibilities. Many become very competent in using social skills and thus sail smoothly through life without many problems. But, sooner or later, everyone comes to a halt, in the form of a confron-





tation with the fragility and finiteness of existence. That can become a turning point. That can confront a human being with a limit and stimulate him to finally break through all limitations and to solve his vital questions.

Everyone has abilities at his disposal that enable him to think, feel and act. Sometimes these abilities lead to remarkable achievements, but the motives can also be such that they result in great misery. Science, religion and the arts show plenty of excesses in this respect. The history of the sorcerer's apprentice, who experiments with secret formulae beyond his control, in fact applies to everyone, regardless of his position in society. These experiments unleash uncontrollable situations. And everyone responsible for this will try to save his skin. Fortunately, at the crucial moment, the sorcerer returns and turns the tide. Everything returns to normal and the sorcerer's apprentice is let off with a good dressing down.

He did not really have any bad intentions; he merely wanted to find out what he could do. And how far he could go... but he did not foresee the consequences of his actions. After all, it was only an experiment!

LEARNING TO CONTROL THE ELEMENTS

Both fairytales and ancient wisdom speak about controlling earth, air, water and fire. This concerns not so much the earth, the air, the fire and the water with which science is occupied, but rather four states of energy. These states correspond to thinking, feeling, willing and acting, whereby air signifies thinking, water signifies feeling, fire signifies willing and earth signifies acting.

When we ask ourselves to what extent these faculties have profited us, we can state that thinking – the ability that places the human being above the animal – has yet to unveil the secret of life. It is also evident that all sincere

Left: Norfolk, England. Photo Pentagram.
Above: Disposable human being or eternal human being? Photo Pentagram.

feelings of sympathy and support for the suffering fellow human being only leave behind a feeling of powerlessness, as nothing seems to be adequate. The will is present to achieve something, to make good arrangements and to create order, but it often fails, because agreements are broken. Hence action often remains without fruitful results. The cause lies in the four elements, which we still cannot control, because the human being is still incomplete.

There is a growing tendency to let go of the idea of the disposable human being, to examine his true value and to emphasise the eternal value of his being. The nucleus of the human being is living and eternal and brings the human being to the point where he will have to listen! How can he respond in the correct way?

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND WITHIN THE HUMAN BEING

Whoever asks sincerely and from an inner longing where that which is imperishable may be found, can in a flash receive an impression that encourages him to continue the search. Within himself! For the answer is that close: it lies hidden in the heart. The heart is the source of life, the pulsating origin of breathing life. Hidden within this source 'the conscience' resides: that of which the human being was once conscious, but has since forgotten. The Rosicrucians call this nucleus 'the rose of the heart'. Whoever allows this rose the opportunity to blossom forth, will receive insight.

By sincere longing for higher knowledge, contact is made with the nucleus. That is the beginning of a path on which true life unfolds. That life will be fully manifested through sincere longing and an unquenchable thirst. By the intense questioning and attention

focused on that rose of the heart, it will open up and spread its light.

That this does not come automatically, but is the result of a long path of experiences, seems logical. Yet, many people gradually arrive at the conclusion that they have underestimated this path. However, when all is well, the four faculties mentioned above will gradually change and new possibilities will arise. The elements are transformed in preparation of the purpose of transfiguration. They are no longer focused on earthly goals, but reach further to higher, liberating knowledge, to pure Gnostic life. The courage and boldness of fire, the perseverance and drive of earth, the flexibility and intelligence of air, need to be acquired first in order to be able to discover the soul, the subtle inner domain. The latter represents the sensitive water aspect. The transmutation of this aspect brings about changes in the emotional life, frees it from personal preferences and makes room for unconditional affection for all creatures.

When ultimately the crucial question is asked: 'Reveal to me your secrets', then, as it were, the stone has been cast into the water. The rippling circles vibrate through the whole being. That sound, that original sound, will at first sound like soft whispering, but then swell to a mighty call, which merges with the universal source of all life.

This is a kind of life completely different from that of the small and limited individual. Here the human being is absorbed in the process of transfiguration, liberating him and lifting him up from matter. This is a life that progresses step by step towards understanding. This ultimately gives life a deeper meaning, demonstrating its purpose ever more clearly.