

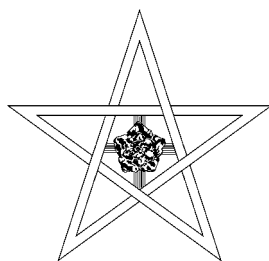
pentagram

Lectorium Rosicrucianum



not what is old, but the universal
kabalah as process of transformation
spinoza and Jewish wisdom
magic realism – the magic of reality
mantao's journey

2015 | NUMBER 3



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The periodical **pentagram** intends to draw the readers' attention to a new era in the development of humanity.

In all times, the pentagram symbolises the reborn human being, the new man. The pentagram also symbolises the universe and its eternal genesis, through which the divine plan is manifested.

A symbol receives its current value when it drives to realisation. The human being who realises the pentagram in his microcosm, his small world, has entered the path of transfiguration. The periodical **pentagram** invites the reader to enter this new era by accomplishing an inner, spiritual revolution.

pentagram

volume 37 2015 number 3

... Travellers, if you go to Paris, Melbourne or Brussels, or any of the modern places of violence on earth, please do pass our greetings to the fallen men there. Give them our best regards and send them your thoughts of love and freedom, wherever they are. Yet, do not enter their rhetoric of having given their lives: their lives have been taken from them! Do not get overwhelmed by their cries of "freedom" and "opinion" – the masses do not know any freedom! They do not even move. They are being moved. Freedom arises when man gets themselves in motion, in their most inner dimension. Wisdom is not born before man gets rid of shame and ignorance. Some time ago we presented a pentagram devoted to hidden gnosis in Sufism, the innermost of Islam. This issue opens new landscapes of light radiating from kabbala coming from Jewish wisdom. He who seeks with desire, shall find, no matter where he was born. And wherever you go, keep this poem in mind, by Al-Ma'arri from around year 1050:

*You cry: "There's no other God than God!"
But your hearts and your souls fear going right.
I swear: your Torah (your law) does not bring the light
If it declares wine as permitted.
Protect yourselves against the lightnings in the clouds,
They are the swords, drawn to accomplish the Fate.
They all err – Moslems, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians:
Humanity follows two world-wide sects:
One, men intelligent without religion,
The other, religious without intelligence.*



Cover: *Triple blue water*. A unique combination of the painting by Pikka Blake and the photograph of Kos Evans © CPN-Canon, Kos Evans

the bark of heaven in the egyptian book of the dead

not what is old but what is universal
J. van Rijckenborgh 2

kabbala as a process of transforma- tion

Daniël van Egmond 6

Spinoza and the jewish wisdom 18 the tree of life 27

magical realism – the magic of reality 28

mantao's journey

C.M.Christian 34

the rediscovery of the gnosis III 38

not what is old but **what** is universal

The modern philosophy of the Rosycross can only be called modern in the way by which it is brought forward. The language and the images may be modern but the essence of it is as old as humanity. The modern philosophy of the Rosycross is so classical, so entirely attuned to the true higher wisdom of all times that a person with but one small trace of pre-remembrance will at once recognize this 'modern' philosophy. This is also true for someone in whom his subconsciousness speaks. Even a man or woman with an average intellectual cognizance will, after a small effort, know immediately that the philosophy of the Rosycross rests upon the firm ground of a universal knowledge.

J. van Rijckenborgh

The essence is to realise a truth, to fulfil a task that has invariably been the same through the ages, namely to lead fallen man back to his original fatherland – to point him to the one way, the one truth and the one life in which not a single alteration can be made.

What does change are the times, the manner and the degree in which man has sunk as well as the physical and mental state of humanity to which the universal doctrine has to be adapted in that specific moment in time.

We do not want to relive what is ancient but that which is universal. We do not want to follow the old methods but the universal method in its rational-ethical meaning for this moment in time.

That is how we understand the word of Christ: "All the old has passed, see, the new has come". And seemingly in contradiction with this word:

"Think not that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil them."

That which is eternal and universal reveals itself in accordance with the here-and-now. If a spiritual work that is starting up cannot meet this prerequisite then it will very soon be dead. Every spiritual movement needs to understand the assignment to bring what is universal in the here-and-now.

That is why it may seem strange to you why we should want to draw your attention to the past, more specifically to the bark of heaven from the Egyptian Book of the Dead. By means of a look in that past we attempt to validate its meaning for the actual now and maybe change a possible standstill in your way of life into a true journey Home.

"All the old has passed. See, the new has come". But which new things have come?

Jan van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri are the founders of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross. In this School they have in a variety of ways explained and shown their pupils by their example how the soul may be liberated, often on the basis of original texts from the universal doctrines.



Out of the primeval waters, Noen elevates the bark of Ra (the beetle and the sun disc), manned by seven gods with which creation and time begin. The picture is from the Book of the Dead by Anhai, around 1050 BC.

Source: R.H. Wilkinson – The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt, 2003

When we examine the images in the Egyptian Book of the Dead we see without exception the bark of heaven, also called the solar bark. In one picture we see Osiris taking his place in the solar bark and we observe his seven rays. In another the boat has seven rowers or it has seven oars. In some images Isis is seated next to Osiris and the seven rays come together into the child Horus.

When Xisuthmis, the Chaldean Noah, is saved we see how seven gods join him in his ship of heaven.

When the Chinese Yao embarks we clearly see seven figures accompanying him. And there is also Manu and the seven Rishis that travel with him in his ark. We may also draw your attention to similar stories in the Purana and to the Persian Wendidad, one of the oldest holy books. In the Wendidad, Ahura Mazda orders Yima, his servant: “Build a wara, a fence, and then an argha, an ark, a vessel. Gather within it all original seeds of the male and female nature and grind the earth with your hands. Awaken all uncreated lights to Life”.

It is the same in the story of Noah’s ark. Noah, in his solar boat with which he flees the floods of this earth, gathers within it all the life-essences that are necessary for a truly divine Life. In the Ark of the Covenant, as in the innermost room of the tabernacle in the wilderness, as in the temple of Jerusalem we repeatedly see the same attributes for a true heavenly life. In the New Testament we read about the seven angels and the seven trumpets. The seven angels blow their trumpets one after the other and when the seventh angel’s trumpet has sounded, great voices resound as we read in the Book of Revelations II.

The voices rejoice because all the aspects of the planetary cosmos have once again become at one with the Lord and his Christ. The temple of God in the kingdom of heaven is opened up

and in its centre the pupil beholds the ark, the solar bark, the heavenly vessel that has arrived. Thus it becomes clear to us that the solar bark of Osiris in the Egyptian Book of the Dead is the same vessel as the one seen by the visionary of Patmos and its connotation is invariably the same, too.

In order to exemplify this uniform meaning we take the heavenly boot of Yima from the Wendidad for an example.

First Yima makes a fence, a workplace. In this ‘wara’ he builds an ‘argha’, a new vessel, according to the laws of the universal Life. A wara man is a free mason working with the new hammer and the new word. It is the man who creates a new workplace, the man who distinctly distances himself from the earthly plane of existence, the man who enters the new Life-field in order to build his argha in an enclosure. The argha, the sun vessel, the boat of heaven, they are all mystic indications for the divine man who starts out on his journey toward the original fatherland. In order to set out for this journey and to build this structure a wara is needed, a fence. The pupil will need to distance himself fundamentally and structurally from ordinary life. He has to dissociate from a way of life and a method of life that are obviously wrong for him. He has to grind the earth, that is to abandon the I of this nature and build a new man, a new heavenly bark, within the wara with which he may navigate within the temple of God. In this way we end our journey through the past.

Whichever system of the Divine contact we may investigate, the homecoming journey in the Egyptian Book of the Dead is the same as the one in the Book of Revelations. And when it is said of Jesus’: “Out of Egypt have I called my son”, we shall now understand this phrase much better. This quote signifies the immutable holy and never changing message – the mission – the

path – the truth and the necessary building activity. All the old has passed, the new has come. Yet in which sense do we apply this in the present?

What is old does express itself constantly in a new way, in accordance with time, assignment and specific situation of the human life wave. Once again the ‘hora est’ resounds, in accordance with many immense present-day developments in this cosmos. That is why many apprentice masons prepare themselves to build their wara and their argha. The time for studying symbolic and veiled values has passed. The modern spiritual school points to the seven times seven aspects of the pupil’s microcosm, to its seven life fields. These seven life fields each with its own consciousness-nucleus, these seven Rishis each with their state of life, can be regenerated.

There is a Force and there is a contact point. And we speak of a new Life field and in connection with it of a new higher school of consciousness with the aid of which sevenfold man may erect his wara.

A comprehensive clearly defined philosophy is placed at the pupil’s disposal so that he can fully orientate himself. While he goes this new path a sharp division will, and must, be effected between a man within and one without the wara – within and without the workplace. For, this activity has considerable consequences. The one man stays trapped in ordinary life, the other steps aboard the heaven-bound ship, which means that a total transformation then takes place. This transformation, if it is to succeed, has to take the spiritual, the cosmic and the atmospheric conditions of this era into account.

That is why there is no sense in studying and imitating the old method – the old schools have finished. ‘All the old has passed, see, the new has come’.

That is why we speak of the modern Rosy-

cross, a new philosophy and the new school of consciousness. And, as with the son, these activities have come ‘out of Egypt’, which means that they find their basis in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. They speak and testify of a new era in a universal imperishable Eternity.

‘Called out of Egypt’ has yet another meaning and we would like to draw your attention to it. The word ‘Egypt’ also translate as ‘darkness’ and thus we could also read this well-known fragment from the holy language as: ‘Out of the darkness I have called my son’. This interpretation could have an important lesson for us, for if ever there was a period of darkness it must be our time. For were there ever in world history such moments of total international upheaval and degeneration?

Well, out of this state of darkness the ‘son of God’ is called. Every human being carries the true child of God within his or her microcosmic system. This child is fettered in the midst of a fake humanity and lies. It is bound by night and ignorance. This shackled and bound nucleus is the one that is called by God.

God’s call is not only a voice that touches our consciousness and awakens our pre-remembrance but it is at the same time a very current Force that touches the whole world and the entire humanity within it and as such sets into motion some very radical processes and developments. That is why this call demands from us that we react full-conscious, harmoniously and intelligently to this current divine force. That is why only the contemplation of the past has no significance if we forget the demands of our period.

This force will only work within man when the word “Out of Egypt have I called my son” receives real significance in the here and now and the true free masonry finds industrious builders. ☸

kabbala as process of transformation

In reading the *Zohar*, one tries to penetrate through the words, penetrate through the fixed terms that one has acquired throughout life, in order to allow the text to speak for itself, to allow the text to unveil itself. Thus far, the words of Daniel van Egmond. During a symposium organised by the Rosycross Foundation, Daniel van Egmond conveyed a deepening view on mystical Jewish thinking as it is expressed in the kabbala.

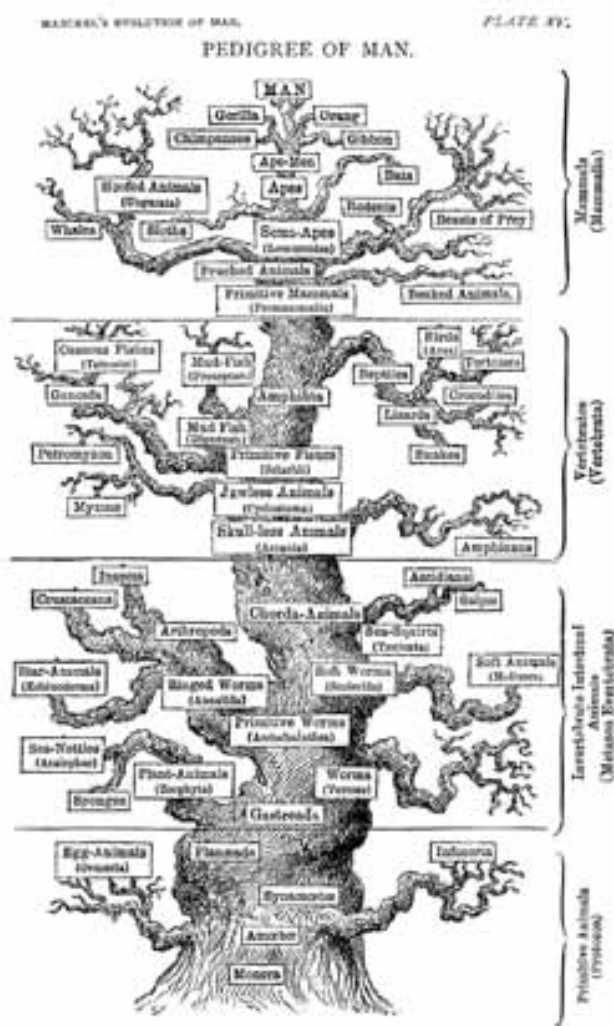
The kabbala, and certainly the Jewish Kabbala or the Christian Kabbala, knows many writings. However, one book is most important for the Kabbala, namely the *Zohar*, the *Sefer Zohar*, the “Book of Enlightenment”. The *Sefer Zohar* is a mystical book; it is said that it was written by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Rabbi Bar Yochai lived in the first century A.D. and was persecuted by the Romans. He experienced all kinds of visions in a grotto where he was hiding with his son. After thirteen years he left the grotto and wrote the *Zohar*. The book was written in Aramaic, the language of that time. In the meantime, we know from academic circles that the book probably originated much later, sometime during the thirteenth century. Nevertheless, it contains many stories, symbols and myths that can probably be traced back to the beginning of the Christian era, possibly even earlier.

The *Zohar* is entirely remarkable. Technically, it is not a book. It can be compared more to a library, consisting of more than 25 treatises. The bulk of the *Zohar* represents a mythical Midrash of the Bible. Midrash means a commentary on the Bible; the word mythical does not require further explanation here. The book is an attempt to unveil a deeper meaning from the books of Genesis, Exodus and a number of fragments of later books within the Bible. During the course of the book – at least in the English translation just published, consisting of twelve sections and containing



DANIEL VAN EGMOND ON MYSTICAL JEWISH THINKING





The living tree or family tree of humanity, from the nature-philosopher Ernst Haeckel (1874)

500 pages – many additional treatises are inserted into the Midrash. And finally, we arrive at the centre of the Zohar.

This centre contains three books. The *Book of the Hidden* consists of approximately twelve to twenty pages in the Aramaic original. The *Great Assembly* and *The Smaller Assembly* are commentaries on the first book and represent the heart of the *Zohar*. And all the other studies in the *Zohar*, the many thousand pages one has to work through, are a sort of preparation in order to arrive finally at the *Book of the Hidden*.

What does one actually do when reading the *Zohar*? It is not to be read like an ordinary book, just as a mystic would not read the Bible like an ordinary book. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, one attempts to penetrate through the words, through the fixed terms that one has acquired throughout life, to allow the text to speak for itself, to allow the text to unveil itself. For, according to the Kabbalists, the *Zohar* is a sacred text, alongside the Bible and the Talmud. In Kabbalistic Judaism, the *Zohar* is the third sacred text. And a sacred text is enlightened by the spirit if one opens oneself for it during the reading, not with one's normal intellect, but with the heart. Because the text is symbolic, it forms the reader, it transforms. And symbols by-pass the conventional intellect. These symbols begin to live within a person to the extent one opens oneself to them. They begin gradually first to transform the personality and then, after some time, the inner being awakens. The Tree of Life is hidden in the first thousand pages of the Midrash commentaries. In all these stories, the Tree of Life is in the centre.

One has to imagine that the first readers of the *Zohar* were unaware of this. They read the stories, often attempted to visualise them, and gradually this Tree of Life started to become alive for them, based on all kinds of symbols that are connected with the different Sephirot. And thus, when they reached the *Book of the Hidden* – a book which at first and even sec-

The Zohar is the third sacred text alongside the Bible and the Talmud

ond sight is completely unfathomable – the Tree of Life was already alive within them.

THE TREE OF LIFE For the Jewish as well as the Christian Kabbalist, the Tree of Life can be closely correlated with a skeleton – it provides structure in a certain way – however, it is incomplete. Something else must happen to this Tree of Life, and it is exactly there in the *Book of the Hidden* where something new happens. Suddenly, the Tree of Life does not occupy the centre anymore; instead it appears that it is blooming, as three or even five people. The Tree of Life is classified in a certain way. The *Book of the Hidden* reveals that the three highest Sephirot, Kether, Chokhmah and Binah are called the Large Face.

Well, ‘face’ in this context does not refer to the face of a human being, but instead to the countenance of a person with whom we can enter into a relationship. The six Sephirot that follow, from Gevurah through Malchut, with the hidden seventh, together form the Small Face. And Malkuth, the last when counted from above, is the daughter or the community, the Ecclesia, one would call it the Holy Spirit in Christian Kabbalistic terms. Now, one can imagine that when Christians read the *Zohar* and the *Book of the Hidden* for the first time, they saw in it the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Christians insured that the *Zohar* was printed, since only a few manuscripts had existed previously. Subsequently the *Book of*

the Hidden and the two commentaries were translated into Latin. For some Jews, this was proof that the *Zohar* was some sort of crypto-Christian scripture. We know only one God, Jehovah or Yahweh, or better expressed Y-H-W-H, because we do not know with which consonant we have to pronounce these four letters.

OVERFLOWING LOVE The *Book of the Hidden* is about the Large Face, it is an expression of the Most High, El Elyon, which is also called Ein Sof in the Kabbala – the Infinite which overflows with what we call love in human terms, the love that can only be given if someone is there to receive it, and this is the Son. However, the Son can only accomplish this if he is directed toward the Most High. And when the Son directs himself toward the Most High, the Most High that surpasses all imagination appears all of a sudden as a person, as the Large Face.

A relationship develops between the Son (the Small Face) and the Large Face, a relationship that exceeds any conventional relationship between people. And then we see how the power and the love, emanating from the Most High and collected by the Son, transform the Son, so to speak, so that this love can continue to stream to the world. And this we call a creation. For the Son, the Small Face in the *Book of the Hidden*, is identical with YHWH, is identical with God, as it is known from classical Judaism. He is the creator – although there are actually seven creators, the Elohim, six and the hidden seventh. YHWH is the hidden centre of the Elohim.

Thus there are seven creative forces; we may call them the seven lower Sephirot, responsible for creation. As we can read in the book of Genesis, this is expressed by the seven days of creation. As a matter of fact, we should speak of six days of creation, since the seventh day was a day of rest (nothing was created).

However, it is important to realise that creation is an act of a relationship to a person. What is expressed in creation carries the image of the Son, of this person. Everything that exists in creation is, in one way or another, a person, in a symbolic way. We can also imagine that creation as discussed here is not yet the creation of the earthly world but a world which – metaphorically speaking – exists behind this world. We know this world as paradise.

ning of the Sephirot Dzeniutha, which means the *Book of the Hidden*, personal relationships – love relationships – are in the centre. God is love and the whole of creation is an expression of this love. And love means: receiving and giving. And so we are told, also in the *Book of the Hidden*, that before the creation of this world, that is before the story that is told in the Book of Genesis, a completely different creation took place – a creation by angels, by

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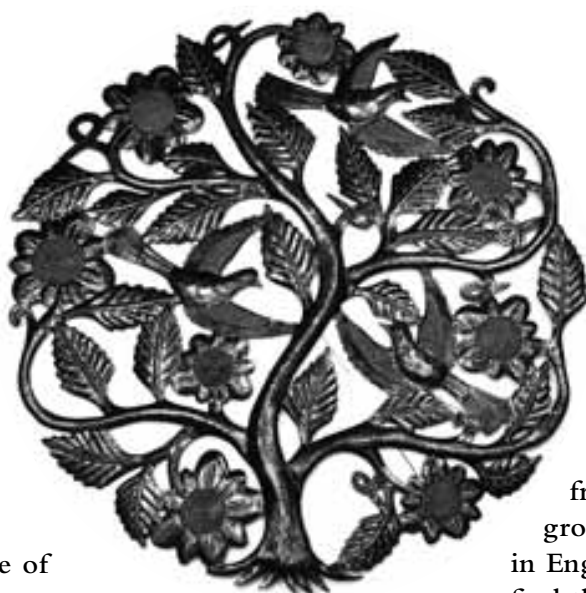
The Most High exceeds everything. However, when the Son receives him, as it were, he appears to the Son as the Large Face, as the Father. And we, as human beings, are unable to reach the Father except through the Son, as stated in a well-known Christian statement. Now we can understand why Christians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were so fascinated by this text.

Nobody comes to the Father but through the Son.

Nobody can experience the Most High unless one unites oneself with the Son in one way or another. In summary, with the begin-

ning of the Sephirot Dzeniutha, which means the *Book of the Hidden*, personal relationships – love relationships – are in the centre. God is love and the whole of creation is an expression of this love. And love means: receiving and giving. And so we are told, also in the *Book of the Hidden*, that before the creation of this world, that is before the story that is told in the Book of Genesis, a completely different creation took place – a creation by angels, by

TURNING AWAY AND RETURNING, FALL AND REDEMPTION In the *Book of the Hidden*, it says that there were angels who at a specific moment wanted only to receive but did not want to give back. That was the time when things went wrong. Due to this self-centred behaviour, the cosmic alliance was shattered and



these angels degenerated into Satan. It was the beginning of all evil.

Here we have an example of misuse of love, of wanting to receive love without sharing it. The Most High saw that the glorious fabric of the first creation, which consisted, above all, of the world of angels, had been torn.

He saw that it was not only one angel but a multitude who no longer practiced the receiving and giving of love. These angels consequently fell into deep darkness.

However, the Most High is love that flows over all and wanted to redeem these angels. It is the creation as it is written in the first book of Moses, Genesis, chapter one, which was for the redemption from evil. When first reading this, we find it to be a very captivating thought: the creation as explained in Genesis was put into manifestation for the purpose of redemption from evil.

Everything in existence contains a part of this work of redemption. The position of the most important fallen angel, Satan, had to be replaced in heaven, and that is why Adam was created. We read about this in Genesis chapter two. Here it is written that Adam – which means humanity, man and woman, androgynously – was created, formed by YHWH Elohim. This means: YHWH as Son – together

with the six other Elohim – now forms Adam from the dust of the ground, as it is described in English. Now in Hebrew we find the word Adamah, which is Adam with an ‘h’ at the end. It describes the feminine Adam, his mother. Adam is formed out of Mother Adamah, and then YHWH Elohim blows the breath of life into Adam.

In Hebrew we find various words that coincide with the story of the Most High as well with the Large Face, the Small Face and the daughter. This story goes as follows: How was the breath blown into Adam? When the Most Holy, blessed be his name, blew the breath of Life into Adam, the breath must be coming from the Most Holy. This breath is of course no physical breath; it is life-power, and this breath, which is part of the Holy, is now named neshamah, which is often translated as ‘soul’. This soul is being regarded as three-fold, more specifically Kether, Chokhmah and Binah, the three highest Sephirot. Afterwards, the breath symbolically leaves the mouth of the Most Holy and goes through all the steps of reality. Then the breath is a kind of wind (ruach), often described as ‘spirit’, sometimes also as ‘soul’. Ruach enters into the nose of Adam, who just had been formed out of red earth, his mother, and thereby Adam begins to breathe. Adam breathes in while the Most

Holy is still breathing out. Adam is completely filled with the holy breath and becomes quiet. The phase is called nefesh, the third soul. In the meantime the Holy One has difficulty breathing and so must inhale so that nefesh, which has come to rest in Adam, now starts to flow out of Adam and again becomes ruach. This ruach penetrates everything and finally returns to the Holy: neshamah. As said before, we are not speaking here about physical breath. This is external to the inner process because we have not yet arrived at the level of the physical world. The important thing in this story is that Adam is connected every moment with the Most Holy, blessed be his name. Every moment! Again, you must recognise that this is a mythical story, and myths deal with the here and now, having nothing to do with space and time or with the past. This breathing process is happening now. Each one of us receives this breath during every moment, and every single moment it makes everyone of us into a living soul.

Here we can once again recognise what this is all about: we have to learn to open ourselves for this breath in order to be able to receive it. But we also have to return this breath, we cannot hold on to it. This is the origin of Adam 'being placed in paradise'. Paradise in the terminology of the four worlds is the world of Yetzirah, the world of symbols, the world of myths. This world has nothing to do with C.G. Jung's collective unconscious be-

cause the world of Yetzirah is much more real and contains much more power of being than the world of our organic sensory experience. All things on this earth that we can perceive with our senses are merely shadows of what is present in the world of Yetzirah.

ARCHETYPES Adam is put into paradise and given the order to name the animals, which means everything that lives. How does Adam do that? He does it by inwardly turning to the Holy One and recognising through contemplation in God's reasoning power the archetypes of everything that lives in paradise. In this way he receives the correct name, which he can then give, meaning that he gives essence to everything that lives. Thus Adam is a bridge between heaven and paradise. Adam not only possesses a paradise-body, he also carries within him the germ of his earthly body. All of the fallen angels are caught within the earthly part of creation. Adam was created primarily as a bridge between heaven and hell, and that is why he has to be connected to the heavens with his light-body and to the hellish spheres with his earthly core.

When we say that Adam has to be a bridge between heaven and earth, it would be better expressed: between heaven and hell. Adam can only do this when he is constantly open for the Holy One, consciously taking in the holy breath, seeing what is present in the

Holy One's reasoning power and sharing this as essence (as name) with all living things. Thanks to Adam, the deformed and fallen angels can reconnect with their heavenly counterparts and are able to be released from hell. You know the continuation of this story: Adam made the same mistake that the fallen angels had made before him. In a certain moment Adam finds the world, in which all of the heavenly symbols are expressed concretely, so overwhelmingly attractive that he wanted to be its owner – maybe not directly, but still with a selfish desire to acquire things for himself, as symbolised by eating the apple. Adam turns away from the Holy One and focuses exclusively on this world. In short, he has received everything from the Holy One, but does not want to give and to share. He wants to keep it all in his possession and to be independent. And exactly at this point, Adam is thrown out of paradise; one can also say that for this reason he left paradise on his own.

The three souls – neshamah, ruach and nefesh – correspond with the three persons that are described in the *Book of the Hidden*: neshamah with the Large Face or the Father, ruach with the Small Face or the Son, and nefesh with the daughter or the Holy Spirit. Ever since we, like Adam, descended from paradise into this physical world, we have lived exclusively out of nefesh. We continue to receive some of the breath of the Holy One because other-

wise we could not exist, but we are no longer open for the Most High nor for the Son. Due to our personality and due to our multitude of 'I's', we are trying primarily to acquire possessions, and to create security – oh, you are familiar with these things!

Through reading the *Zohar* and even studying – not only with our mind but also by allowing the symbols to re-enter our hearts – pre-remembrance awakens within us. It is different to believe that a God exists (this may be a mental activity, due to one's education) and to actually feel that one is called to become Adam again, to wake up from the fascination that this world exercises upon us, to experience the breath again and to live as an Adam, as a bridge between heaven and earth; to put it more strongly yet, to serve as a bridge between heaven and hell in order to be released from evil. We cannot do this by ourselves, not through our personality, but only by receiving the breath of the Holy One. This call, this divine calling, is perceived as being called by one's true name. Just as Adam knew all of the animals by their true name, the Holy One calls every one of us by our true name – not by the name from our baptism, the one given to us by our parents, but a name that is written on a white stone, as told in the Revelation of John.

One can also read in Isaiah 'I have called you by your name'. Each one of us is called again

and again, but few hear the call: many are called, but few are chosen. Through prayer (because praying is breathing and breathing is praying), by receiving the breath, we are again making contact with the Son, with YHWH or in the Christian Kabbalah with YHSHWH, which means Yehoshua, Jesus.

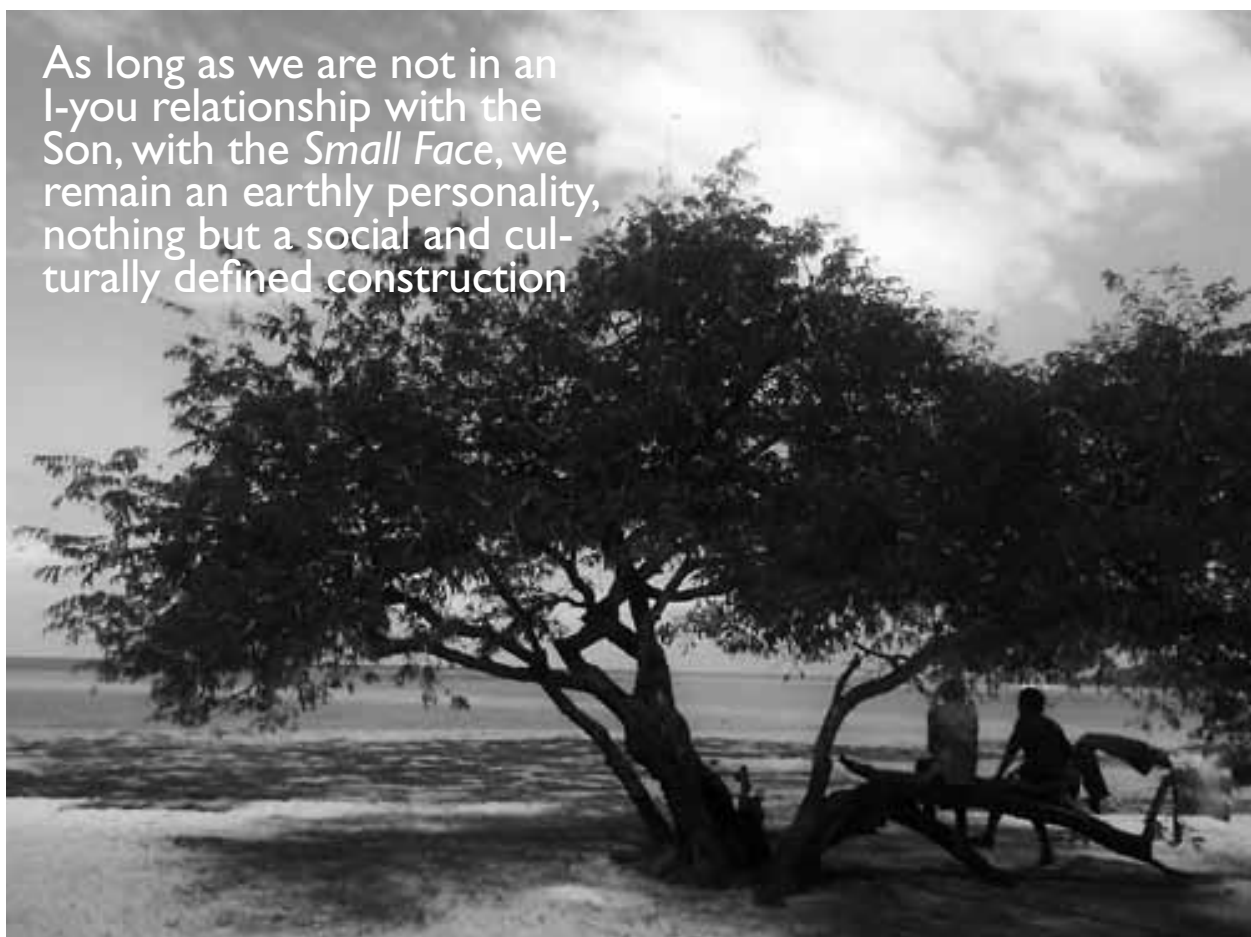
We continue increasing our contact with the Holy One when we allow the breath into us, when we let the symbols affect us and when we pray. Only then will we become a person (instead of being a personality), in the same way that in the *Book of the Hidden*, the Large Face and the Small Face are also persons. Persons are unique entities who are not to be compared with anyone else. However as long as we are not in an I-you relationship with the Son, with the Small Face, we remain an earthly personality, nothing but a social and culturally defined construction. Each one of us has a personality based on cultural and genetic influences and on our education. This personality is an artificial psychological structure. That is quite different than being a person. Only in connection to the Holy One can we be a person.

The Kabbalist (whether Christian or Jewish) realises that the human being is constantly lost in the sensory and psychological world, identifying himself with his thoughts, feelings and impulses of the will. As humans we should learn to not suppress our thoughts,

feelings and impulses but instead relinquish our attachment to them. In this way, a space is created where these impulses can come and go without identifying with them. Since the seventeenth century we have been made to believe that we are the source of our thoughts, feelings and will-impulses. If you were the source of your thoughts, it should be possible to stop your thinking right now – no more noise in your head, complete stillness. Try it! You will see that it is impossible. Thus you are not the source of your thoughts. Thoughts are happening in you due to countless influences, through factors in your environment, through other people, through dead people and maybe also through the fallen angels. Feelings and thoughts arise within us everywhere and at all times. And that makes sense because you must be liberated! But you cannot become liberated when you are constantly identifying with these thoughts.

When we follow these impulses, we become part of the problem. The mission of the Kabbalist is the mission of every single man or woman who follows a religious or mystical path: to learn to be, within oneself, that very space to which impulses can come from thoughts, feelings and the will. This space needs to stay open and welcoming for the Son, for the Holy One, for the breath, in order to transform these impulses. We are not better off because of it – we even become dead tired due to it – but others will benefit.

As long as we are not in an I-you relationship with the Son, with the *Small Face*, we remain an earthly personality, nothing but a social and culturally defined construction

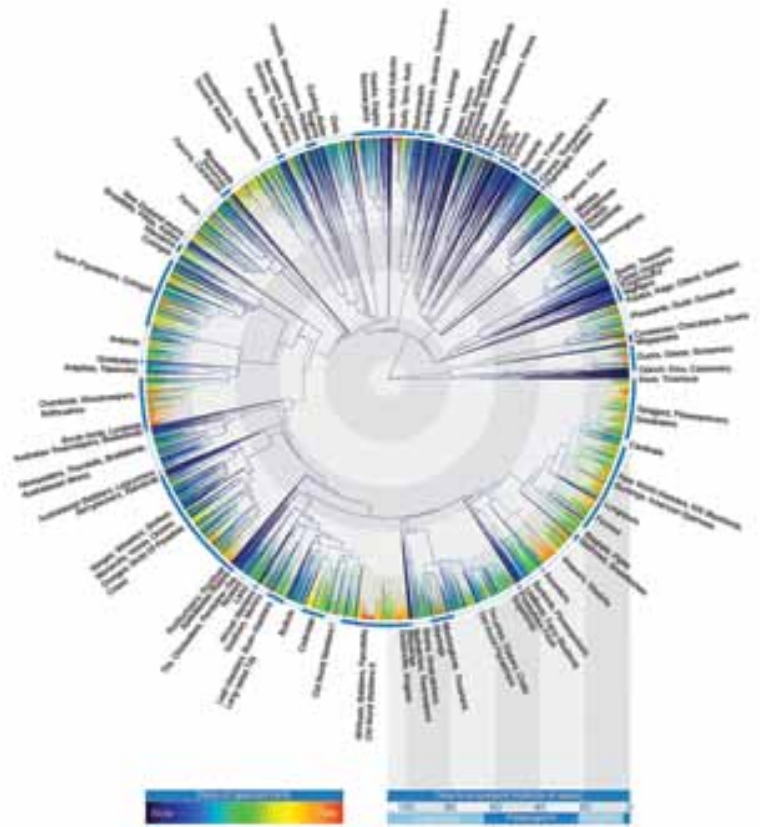


And of course, this way of working also transfigures us, allowing us to change from being a personality to becoming a person. It is important to take on this task, the task for which Adam was created. In short: humanity was created for the redemption from evil.

THE JUST ONES The Kabbalistic path is not about freeing us from this world. Going this path does not mean that we should withdraw from the world, because the world needs bridges between heaven and earth (hell). In almost all cultures and religions, you find a story about the fact that there has to be a certain minimum of Just Ones, Tsadikim, or Poles (Qutb) as the Sufis call them, world axes who serve as bridges between heaven and earth (hell). If there were no 'Just Ones',

creation would be lost. Every human being is called by their name to become such a bridge. How do you do that? The answer is that we need to become enchanted by myths. Or as it is said in the traditional Kabbalistic tradition: by reading the *Zohar*, to let oneself be touched by the symbols, so that the Tree of Life may take shape and so that one finds one's way to the *Book of the Hidden*.

We need to re-discover that there truly is a Large Face and a Small Face and that one can partake in the ecclesia, the community, the daughter. And by having been called by your name and by hearing it, you have received your task, namely to BE SPACE – not only during quiet meditation, but also in daily life. In this way one can be a bridge between heaven and earth. However, there are obsta-



cles! If you notice in a certain moment that you are allowed to be a bridge, then there are always some 'I's who say, 'How well I am doing this, how important I am!' That's when you realise: Now, I am making the same mistake as Adam. The temptations to want to acquire and to possess are great. That is what the great Archangel Lucifer did, that is what Adam did, and we all have this character flaw. To become deeply engaged with the symbols does not mean learning theoretical explanations because that would destroy them. We need to awaken to their symbolic reality. They are a receiving apparatus. Kabbala means: to receive, not so much the receiving of doctrines because there really are no doctrines in the Kabbala, but receiving the breath and the symbols that create a transformation.

That is something completely different. That is about receiving your true name and at the same time transmitting everything that you have received. Everything is shared with the Most Holy, with your neighbour and even

with nature, because Paul says that nature also wants to be liberated. No matter how beautiful nature is, she is always disturbed through time and by people. Everything that exists in nature has its prototype in the world of symbols, in the world of Yetzirah.

Every time you walk by a tree or see a cow in a pasture and you ARE SPACE and are Adam in this moment, then you are connecting the tree or the cow with its archetype. Then you do the same thing that Adam did in paradise: you give the cow or the tree a name, so that they are again connected with their archetypes and can, in this way, be truly holy. Adam has the task of being a bridge between heaven and earth.

It is the task of giving names. One might think that the Kabbala is a typically Jewish tradition. We already spoke of the Christian Kabbala. When making a comparison with other great mystical traditions, we can find similarities as well as great differences (because the Jewish and Christian traditions each

**A modern 'living tree':
diagram of the development
of species of birds from the
starting point**

have their own symbolism). In most cases it is the same kind of path. However, it needs to be emphasised again that the seductions on the path are strong. One temptation is to keep everything for oneself; the other one is to leave this world as soon as possible since it is a valley of tears. In both cases one is not building a bridge between heaven and earth. The notion of leaving the world in order to be elevated in one way or another, never to return, is just as bad as identifying with the earth. Leaving the earth may seem more spiritual, but it is just as egocentric as the materialistic seduction. Rooted both on the earth and also in heaven – that's how Adam builds the bridge so that the two can come together and evil can be redeemed. ☸

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Spinoza and the Jewish Wisdom

Exploration into the universal Jewish Mysticism and its roots of wisdom – its continuation into modern times formed the basis for ‘the steep path’ as Spinoza called it, the acting based on wisdom and reason.

How does a sensible man act and react?

The old wisdom developed into three different systems which formed true paths for the adept at that time, provided he was completely devoted to his studies. It was the system of pure astrosophy, the wisdom of the zodiac and the ten planets (later astrology), the system of the teachings of Tarot (the oldest system), where its pure application using its 22 Meta-Arcana reminds us of the Rota of the Rosicrucians and the teachings of the Tree of Life with its ten Sephiroth (or emanations) and the 22 paths. Jewish Mysticism expresses itself in the kabbala. It is a liberated thinking that has developed into a system. The origins of the kabbala date back much earlier than the proven 13th century. Over the centuries the teachings of the Tree of Life came forth and impacted strongly Judaism between the 16th and the 18th century. It seems controversial to bring Spinoza (1632-1677) in context with Mysticism and even with Jewish Wisdom, since the leader of the synagogue *Ets Haim* in Amsterdam had him banned and cursed.

Yet also this situation is about how a sensible man acts and reacts. The Jewish wisdom speaks about the Tree of Life and the meaning and connections between the ten *Sephiroth*. The *Sephiroth* can be understood as emanations or archetypical ideas. Each of the *Sephiroth* has its own respective place in the Tree of Life and they relate to each other in particular ways and connections. It is the movement from *En Sof* to *Halacha* and *Tikkun*. *En Sof* is

closely related to Spinoza term of *Substance* (we will get back to it later). *Halacha* (an old terminology in Judaism) describes the ‘right path through life’. It can be compared to ‘Tao’ of the old Chinese teachings. *Tikkun* can be understood as the striving for harmony with *En Sof* (Substance). In short: the movement from the ‘Substance’ to ‘the right path through life’ and ‘the striving for harmony with the Substance’.

In another interpretation from the 15th century (by the kabbalist Isaac Luria) *Tikkun* stands for ‘repair’ or ‘restauration’.

The writer Gary Lachman uses this concept in his newest book. There the human being is a sort of manufacturer or restorer of the cosmos and repairs the mistakes God had made during the creation of the universe.

Spinoza’s book ‘*Ethics*’ is sometimes seen as complicated due to his ‘geometrical’ way of creating evidence. Numbers and their magic and relations to each other played a very important part in the 17th century. Éliphas Lévi’s explanations in the ‘*The Inner Mysteries of the Kabbala*’ correspond directly to the thesis brought forward by Spinoza.

“Through the silence of the thinking faculty and peace of the heart, absolute peace can be reached. In its deepest essence the Jewish faith longs for ‘Shalom’, the peace that restores the earth.”

Levy states that the traditional wisdom of the old Hebrews could also be called: ‘arithmetic of the human brain’. It is the algebra of faith.



BENEDICTUS DE SPINOZA .

Cui natura, Deus, rerum cui cognitus ordo,
Hoc Spinosa statu conspiciendus erat.
Expressere viri faciem, sed pingere mentem
Zeuxidis artifices non valuerunt manus.
Illa viget scriptis: illic sublimia tractat:
Hunc quicumque cupis noscere, scripta lege.



All struggles of the soul get solved like in an equation, where the unknown factors are resolved.

Therefore ideas and thoughts take on the clarity and strict accuracy of numbers; the results are infallible for the spirit (although only relative in the realm of human knowledge) and constitute *absolute silence* for the heart.

This is exactly what Spinoza tried to express with his mathematical and philosophical methods in his book '*Ethics*'.

Reason and sense sustain the peace of the heart. Changing circumstances trigger actions according to acquired rational insights. The beginning, the basis is *En Sof*.

The *Sephiroth* are also portrayed as ten layers around the inner core of *En Sof*, the shapeless and unfathomable center of all being.

Illustrations often show this center placed above the *Sephiroth* or they show the center as the inner core that is surrounded by ten layers.

Solomon's Song of Songs (6.11) refers to this:

"I went down to the grove of nut trees,
to look at the new growth in the valley,
to see if the vines had budded
or the pomegranates were in bloom."

The going 'down to the grove of nut trees' is a Kabbalistic expression indicating the reflection on the 'nothing in all of it'.

Shakespeare's Hamlet says:

'O God! I could be bounded in a nutshell,
and count myself a king of infinite space...'

En Sof could be described as infinite or as 'what has no beginning and no end', as the last and ultimate reality, as the absolute nothing. Knowing God is not possible. It corresponds to the unknowable name of God that is revealed to Moses.

Remarkable are the parallels between the term *En Sof* and the insights of Master Eckhart (non-Jewish mysticism).

An unknown kabbalist (around the year 1300) said: "Know that the *En Sof*, the Un-knowable is neither mentioned by the prophets nor by the hagiographers, nor in the words of the Sages of Talmud. Only the masters of worship (the mystics) received a faint hint about it." Therefore *En Sof* is the hidden God of kabbalists.

A Dutch scholar once said about the *Sephiroth*: "The things of creation are arranged in the *Sephiroth* in a way that the intuition of the mystics can understand them as categories of thinking."

Another source brings the two *Sephiroth* *Jessod* and *Shechina* in context with Spinoza's two attributes: *thought* and *extension*.

Maybe Spinoza tries to grasp the connection between *Jessod* and *Malchut* (or *Shechina*), between *thought* and *extension*.

He does it as a mystic rationalist, as a rational mystic who is aware of *En Sof*, the divine Substance.



The Tree of Knowledge corresponds to seven Sephiroth, the lower aspects of the Tree of Life; by Valentin Weigel (1698), inspired by Jacob Boehme

Spinoza distinguishes three steps of knowledge: first, creating knowledge from impressions and perceptions; secondly, knowledge and understanding as a result of perception and the reflecting on it; thirdly – knowledge that originates from intuition or the spiritual love to God: *amor dei intellectualis*.

These three steps show clearly how Spinoza's thinking is influenced by the kabbala. What is the connection of knowledge with the Sephiroth?

In the Zohar we can read that the knowledge, represented by the Tree of Knowledge, car-

ries duality within itself. This does not apply to the three higher Sephiroth: *Kether* (crown), *Bina* (intelligence, insight) and *Chochma* (wisdom).

The non-duality in Spinoza's work has probably to do with the Tree of Life, i.e. the three higher Sephiroth and especially the *En Sof*. The young Baruch Spinoza attended the Ets-Haim-School from age 5 to 15, as all children of the Portuguese-Israeli community in Amsterdam did in this time. He received a thorough education in Jewish wisdom and science. After leaving the school in 1647 he stayed in contact with his former teachers by conversation and even private lessons.

Ets haim means 'Tree of Life'.

In Spinoza's understanding the *En Sof*, the 'center of everything that exist' can be recognized by the human being in two of its attributes: *Thought* and *Extension*. They are very similar to the two Sephiroth: *Jessod* and *Shechina*.

These two manifestations or attributes could be understood as emanations from the one unity, from the center of all things, from Infinity.

So we can see in this reflection about *Thought* and *Extension* that there is something that holds the connecting thread between *Yesod* and *Shechina* (also *Malkhut*). The three higher Sephiroth are different, but they have also a vertical connection to *Yesod* and *Shechina*. This is expressed by Spinoza in the relation to the



Stained glass window in a subway station in Almaty (former Alma Ata in Kazakhstan)

highest and third form of knowledge, the divine Intuition and the *Shechina* (or *Malkhut*) being the basis for it.

It is remarkable that Spinoza does not rule out a dwelling place of God. Quite on the contrary: he dared to suggest this in his correspondence (about the problem of evil) to Willem Blijenbergh (1632-1696) and made the connection to the effects of the law of Love. Spinoza was a seeker that yearned for wisdom. He described how he longed to be part of the unassailable wisdom of his soul, "He who understands, is free."

HASIDISM Hasidism comprises teachings that are based on the Jewish kabbala. Many con-

firm that the right inner feeling plays a part in it: the Hasidism is in your heart. Many see in the openness of the heart the central importance, as it can also be found in Taoist thinking and the 20th-century philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Since Hasidism is also seen as a philosophical system, it is important to examine what the western philosophy has done with the still relevant elements of the kabbala and their relation to divine nature. For example *En Sof* is understood as the substance or the hidden God or Infinity. We already mentioned that there are parallels between *En Sof* and Master Eckhart's (13th century) insights about the hiddenness of God. Less known is that a 'modern' philoso-



He who understands, is free

seen as an expression of deepest divine wisdom, without purpose outside of itself, only within oneself. The hidden Godhead manifests in the kabbalists deepest knowledge, in his intuition in ten aspects.

YESOD AND SHECHINA According to the kabbala for the earthly human being in his fallen state are two of the *Sephiroth* directly recognizable, *Yesod*, the basis of all acting forces and *Shechina*, the ‘abode of God’. The kabbala calls these two *Sephiroth* also ‘Tree of Life’ and ‘Tree of Knowledge’. Therefore it is not surprising why Spinoza’s father enrolled his son Baruch at a young age already at the school ‘Ets Haim’ (Tree of Life). The school focused on education and knowledge in the widest sense. It is worthwhile noting that Spinoza’s ancestors were displaced Portuguese Jews that settled in the early 17th century in Amsterdam. This group drew on the abundance of insight and wisdom of Iberia and the influences of Arabic culture of past centuries.

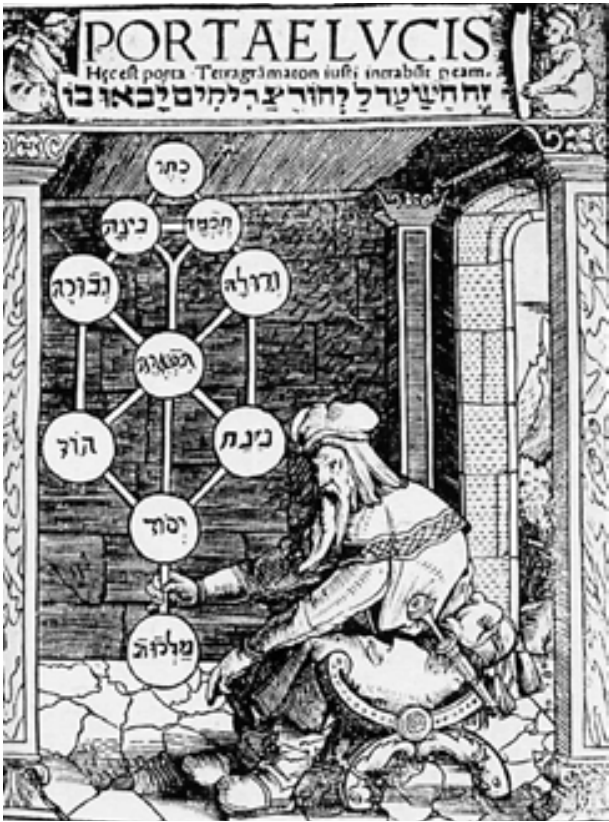
pher like Spinoza describes the same hidden God with the word ‘*Substance*’ which contains all the attributes of *En Sof*, namely, the Original that which is in itself the absolute infinite being, the universe, the source of all wisdom. The concept of *Substance*, of which Spinoza speaks, is a precise and literal description of the term *En Sof*. And this *Substance*, the hidden godhead only stands in relation to himself. But *the Hidden* makes himself known by the *Sephiroth* or ‘attributes’ says Spinoza. In all *Sephiroth* and therefore by all attributes does the hidden God express himself. By the way, the words *Chiffre* and *Cipher* originate from the singular word for *Sephiroth*: *Sephira*. *Cipher* also means *numeral* or *zero*. It can be

THOUGHT AND EXTENSION *En Sof* (Spinoza calls it the *Substance*) manifests itself to the world in the two attributes *Yesod* and *Shechina*. In his works Spinoza uses the terms of *Thought* and *Extension* for it (*res cogitans* und *res extensa*). In this way he translated the mystic teachings of the kabbala into a newer form of thoughts and philosophy: the *Ratio* of the 17th century. *Ratio* can be seen in context with the lonely, isolated I. In Spinoza’s

understanding of the kabbala, the isolated I is confined in *res cogitans*, the Thought. Spinoza tries to find a way to break through this confinement by disputing that *cogitatio* and *extension* are substances. They are attributes, or *Sephiroth* of the hidden God.

WISDOM OF THE HEART Spinoza tried with his work to transform the technical approach of western culture with its hunger for power into a mystic approach that would lead back to the origin of the hidden God. He tried to free society of his time from their strive for power. What makes Spinoza's reasoning so original? There is only one answer. Spinoza's reasoning is a matter of the heart. Spinoza's term *ratio* is the *wisdom of the heart* that expresses itself in *intuitio*, the highest knowledge. Intuition is in this sense the love for God because it recognizes God as the beginning of all things. This is an insight that corresponds with the statement of later years. 'Hasidism is in your heart.' For the Hasidism it is literally an ecstasy that leads him with every good deed on earth into the heaven of inner joy.

SOBERNESS AND CHOKHMAH Spinoza dares to state very rationally: God does not follow a goal. If God had a goal, he would not be the Absolute. Humans have goals and try to realize them. They then project them unto God. Spinoza's concept of reason does not come from the isolated ego but from his heart. His heart holds memories of his ancestors with a



On the front page of *Portae Lucis* (Riccius 1516) a hand holds the connection between Yesod and Shechina (or Malkhut). Spinoza speaks of Thought and Expansion. The three higher Sephiroth are different though, but they still know a vertical connection with Yesod and Shechina. This shows the relation of the highest and third form of knowledge of Spinoza, the divine Intuition. Its basis is Malkhut or Shechina.

Spinoza's term *ratio* is the wisdom of the heart that manifests itself in *intuitio*, the highest knowledge

clear connection to the wisdom of the Bible. *Chokhmah*, the wisdom is clearly a divine attribute. In the book of proverbs it says: “*The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.*” (Proverbs 8:22,23). The wisdom of God exists before creation. This divine wisdom is conveyed to the human heart. Psalm 90:12 says: “*Teach us to number our days, so that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*”

HIDDEN AND YET PRESENT So we can learn and know that God was before us and that God is hidden, but not absent. Even if God is hidden, it is still possible to have a relationship with Him by experiencing and immersing in *En Sof*. It is a matter of deep trust. The relationship with the hidden God can be so strong that it holds the possibility of an open and unconcealed contact to God, the ‘walking with God’.

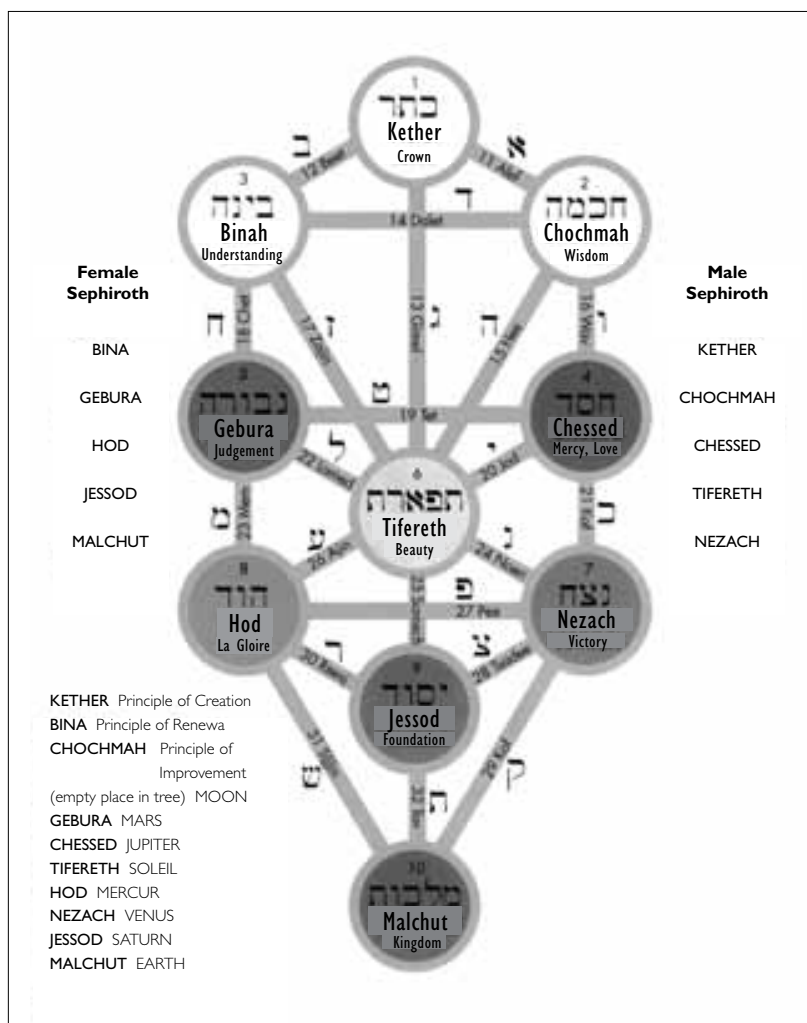
This seems to be rather impossible in our time. Society has no true understanding for the essential that ‘moves the world’. Travellers who came in contact with the deep sources of eastern divine wisdom, experienced that they could not use the word ‘God’ in western society without diminishing the absolute-ness of His Being. Through the deep inner experience of God in the eastern wisdom, it becomes more apparent how widespread the very limited and ‘old fashioned’ image of god still exists in the western world. Spinoza

already in his times tried to raise awareness to the damaging effect of these limited projections. Nevertheless, a change in trend is becoming apparent in our times. Spinoza’s concept of God is brought back into focus by influential thinkers.

THE HIDDEN RELATIONSHIP IS AN ENCOUNTER

Mystics and hermetic philosophers teach that by experiencing and being immersed in *En Sof*, a hidden relationship with God is becoming possible. When Spinoza speaks about God, he means an inner encounter with Him. For this encounter the consciousness has to be able to understand and perceive *En Sof*; especially the perception of the One that is absolute and infinite, who carries the All within Itself and is hidden for the worldly consciousness. Catharose de Petri, one of the two Grandmasters of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum expressed it this way:

“...He who searches for unity and therefore encounters God, will decipher all the numbers. In an indestructible force will he immerse in God and go from power to power. He will not fail on the path...” This means that when the candidate in deep connection with *En Sof* begins to search for God and commits to a hidden inner contact with God, he will gradually receive all the attributes that are part of the ‘divine’ human being: the ‘deciphering of all numbers’, of the *Sephiroth*. And enlightened like this, he will live from power to power in God. In this way Spinoza



teaches that mystic enlightenment goes together with the enlightenment of logic and reason (the *wisdom of the heart*), like the Hasidism of the heart goes together with the kabbala. The kabbala states that the hidden God who is everything within himself is nevertheless connected with his creation in his deepest being. Therefore the creation does have divine attributes.

TIKKUN AND THE DIVINE INTUITION With *intuition dei* (this is how Spinoza calls the highest knowledge) the wise sees appearance of Dividedness through the sham. For Spinoza and the kabbalist is not only knowledge but a mode of life as well. It is *tikkun*, the striving for harmony with *En Sof*. In Spinoza's work

we can find *tikkun* as *amor dei intellectualis*. Standing in the *intuitio*, the Sage strives for the perfect Harmony with the Substance (*En Sof*) and by this deciphers and solves the numbers. In this context has to be understood the strict geometrical concept of *Ethics*. Logic that is inspired by higher reason and wisdom connects itself with the structure of emotions ('agitations') and solves these in Love, in *amor dei intellectualis*. The human measure and the divine measure become visible in their pure, original connection so that the hidden can unfold. ✪

1. G. Scholem, *Ma'arechen ha eluath*, Mantua 1558 and the Jewish Mysticism, Zürich 1957.
2. After Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (1772 – 1810), (great-grandson of Baal Schem Tov.)

the tree of life

Kabbala means “to receive” or “revelation”. The kabbala contains the spiritual teachings of the Jewish tradition, symbolically reproduced in the tree of life and its ten lights or sephirot. This ancient wisdom was passed on to Abraham and orally handed down through the centuries. In the thirteenth century it was written down in the Sefer Zohar. The ten sephirot are joined together by twenty-two “paths”.

These connections correspond with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet that is considered to be an exalted, godly formula of creation. Each letter has a numeric value, a colour and a symbolic value. The three mother-letters Alef, Mem and Sjiem are the foundation of all Creation, but the other letters also have far-reaching meanings.

Genesis 2 tells of two trees, two life principles: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. From the latter man should not eat, that is connect himself to, be nourished by or live of. Because he ate the forbidden fruit man was banished from paradise. From the harmonious development in the divine “unity”, Adam arrived in the polar opposites of the duality.

The ten sephirot form together a picture of the tree of life. The three circles on the left form the masculine sephirot, and the three circles with feminine qualities are on the right. The four circles in the middle bring the masculine and feminine qualities into harmony, which is the goal in life of every Adam, every person. The six-pointed Star of David or the Seal of Salomon reflect this harmony.

The striving earthly triangle is directed upwards, further to the formula “as above”, and “from above” the divine fullness pours itself into “that which is below”.

The meaning of the ten lights is deep and rich and words hardly do it justice. None of the ten sephirot stands alone, and together they form a unity that connects the four worlds.

The four worlds are:
the world of concealment
the world of creation
the world of formation
the world of completion.

The small world of the true man is a unity in itself and is rooted in these four worlds as microcosms, completely corresponding to the macrocosms, or Adam Kadmon.

The ten sephirot are:

*keter or crown
chochmah or wisdom
bina or insight
chesed or love
din or judgment
tif'eret or beauty
hod or glory
netzach or victory
yesod or foundation
malchoet or kingship*

These ten sephirot are connected by the 22 lines (paths). Each path has a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The paths represent intelligence – the renewing intelligence, the imaginative intelligence, the triumphing intelligence, the uniting intelligence and the regulating intelligence. ☸

magical realism

This article will not entertain the reader with the differences between white, black or grey magic - even though previous magical experience can certainly help - but will certainly make a case for a magical-realistic mode of life.

The point of departure is the conviction that our behaviour is always magical, or in other words, that it determines our reality. The author tries to place clearly before the consciousness of the reader how in a realistic mode of life you can still live magically, so that you can break through the frontier once and for all. Possible earlier experiences situated at the 'limit' (at the boundaries) will be precious, perhaps even indispensable for a good comprehension.

Every human being is surrounded by a microcosm, and that implies that all the aspects of the large cosmos are found in their own system, their own small cosmos. As a microcosmic being, we belong to two realities. Our consciousness oscillates between the two poles and it is not easy to get through the wall that divides the two realities. We no longer know the way.

The microcosm represents the old city - one of the two realities. The kernel of the microcosm, the spirit-spark atom, awakens in our human heart an undefined memory. We feel it as a troubling desire mixed with inquietude, as the desire for a different reality.

The condition of the microcosm - inhabited in each lifetime by different mortals in order to

be maintained in the reality here below - causes the other reality to be able to speak in us only as a graphic memory of a marvellous and elusive world.

This memory does not refer to an ancient happiness, nor to an earlier relationship, nor even to the previous occupants of the microcosmic compartment, although everything that has already been lived has been coded and preserved. These many and varied treasures of the attic exercise a certain fascination on us. Perhaps you recall your childhood and the attractions of the attic in your grandparents' house. A small weak lamp and a rare beam of sunlight revealed the boxes, the furniture, the fabrics, various objects...a magical world for a child who soon will be carried into another reality, into the clouds. This journey of passionate discoveries is similar to the one which we can undertake in the bosom of our own microcosm.

While it can appear troubling - are we really this traveller? Journeys into ourselves are a form both of realistic and also of magical action. They allow us to discover the elements of a possible long-ago past that may still actively determine our existence even in the present. These are the threads of our destiny that bind us. They permit the discovery of the construction of our prison. This interesting quest sheds light on what it is that prevents our soul from crossing the frontier, the frontier of the world that she has, in fact, never left.

The soul perceives a call to return coming

the magic of reality

This article is not intended to speak of a literary genre, even though, under one or another aspect, the magical realism of certain novels is perfectly suited to interpret different levels of consciousness. Literary experience in the matter can be an aid but is not indispensable in order to understand what follows. Literature does not present itself in every life, but each life is both a reality and a magical miracle.



'Silo', by Peter Vlot

from her world. We find that in *The Song of the Pearl*: the soul receives a letter, carried by an eagle. This letter is addressed to her by her father-mother of the country that she had left one day. She notices that the words written in the letter correspond to those that she carries in her heart.

This invitation received by the soul is the same one found in *The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross*:

“On an evening before Easter I was sitting at my table and after I had communed with my Creator, as I was accustomed to do, in humble prayer and meditation on many great mysteries which the Father of the Light in his majesty had shown me abundantly, I desire to prepare, together with my beloved Paschal Lamb, a pure, unleavened wafer in my heart. All of a sudden such a terrific wind sprang up that I could not think but that the mountain in which my little cottage was hewn would be blown asunder by this great violence. Since this did not surprise me as neither did similar tricks of the devil, I took heart and persisted in meditation until someone tapped me on the back, which I was not expecting. I was so terrified that I hardly dared turn round but kept my cheerfulness as far as human weakness permits in such circumstances.

However, as someone repeatedly tugged at my coat I turned around and saw a magnificent female figure whose azure garment was gracefully strewn with golden stars, just like the

heavens. In her right hand she held a trumpet of pure gold with a name engraved on it which I could read but as yet was forbidden to reveal. In her left hand she held a thick sheaf of letters written in various languages which she had to deliver in many countries (...) As soon as I had turned round she looked among her letters and at last took out a small one which she put on the table reverently, after which she left without saying a word. (...) The letter appeared to be so heavy that, if it had been made of pure gold, it could hardly have been heavier. When I looked at it attentively I found it sealed with a small seal in which, very delicately, a cross was engraved with the inscription: *In hoc signo + vinces* (In this sign you will conquer.) (...) Thus I carefully opened the letter. It contained the following poem, written with golden letters on a blue field:

*“This is the day, this is the day,
the day of the Royal Wedding.
Art thou thereto by birth inclined
and unto joy by God designed?
Then thou may’st to the mountain wend
on which three stately temples stand
and there observe the wonder.*

*Keep to the aim!
In light remain!
Unless thou bathe most carefully
the wedding will do harm to thee.
Woe to him who in sin delays,
he will be found too light in weights.”*

A magical act is a fascinating proof which modifies our reality

Underneath was written: 'Bride and Bridegroom'."

This story is about an invitation, an invitation to attend a Royal Wedding. It is at the same time an invitation to get moving, to start the journey, to climb the mountain. The dress code for this royal wedding is also indicated: to be pure, washed of all sins.

From the story, it appears that the condition for being invited maintaining a relationship and an intimate dialogue with 'the Father of Light'. And something completely new must be accomplished in the heart of the invitee by virtue of accomplished action: 'a pure unleavened bread'.

Moreover realism is required: "Be vigilant, examine yourself." Be awake in order to see what one is within, to see who one is. What we observe must be put to the test; confronted with the requirement of a 'bath of purity', we must be washed of all sins. It is a magical act to be able to accomplish this task sincerely, a fascinating proof which modifies our reality.

What really happens? In the story of the *Song of the Pearl*, we have seen the eagle coming from the country of the father-mother carrying the letter which, in the heart of the son, arouses a mirroring effect, a recognition. That signifies that the external Light, which invites us, can be recognised as also being the interior Light, in the space of the heart. The language

of the element of light in us resonates with the vibrations of the other reality of consciousness, that of the field of light all around us. This resonating effect is communicated to our consciousness in the form of an aspiration, of an inquietude, of a nostalgia. As the transmission of power increases, this resonance will be able to break the shell that sits between the Light within and the Light without.

For the time being, there is only agitation which, in our desire to understand, we pursue on earth, in the human world, across the network of our relationships. Until we know in our blood, until it is etched into our blood, that the fascinating country of our pre-remembrance is located nowhere on this globe. That the beautiful and mysterious woman - perhaps living only in our memory as a lock of golden hair that, when we yearn for it, vanishes among the grey raincoats - that image is not part of everyday humanity which inhabits the earth.

Thus the unbridled and impassioned seeking lets go of its anchor and, in the present, begins an inner journey, a descent into ourselves which is conducted by the soul. It seems as if everything happens by chance, that, like one of the characters of Gustav Meyrink, we discover an old manuscript in a niche of the ancient house of the master.

We start a reading of the past of the previous inhabitants of our house. Thus, reading in past

You gradually draw your life-thread from out of the fabric, to weave it in again in a much freer fashion

history, we capture the circumstances and the atmosphere of predecessors of a distant past: strong and emotion-laden memories in which we could drown, or haunted by predecessors who staring at us and inviting us to a masquerade ball.

There is a possibility to see through the masquerade. Outside is the Light, and inside is the Light. Between the two stands the actual pre-occupied twofold thinking, to which we have chained our consciousness. Light is necessary in order to perceive this: Light from outside, Light from inside, so that finally the consciousness is going to be able to express itself again. We are touched, our coats are repeatedly tugged, until we turn around and see that we have been invited. Or better yet, brighter still: our soul receives the letter so that it can turn around and return to the Father-Mother, return to whence she once, long ago, departed.

The consciousness experiences that special longing that wells up out of the touched spirit-spark in the heart. The consciousness speaks, sings of the longing for the other land, for God, for the Light, for enlightenment, for happiness, beauty, wisdom and truth.

When the consciousness makes that wish its own, keeps it as its own, then the soul becomes and remains as a young adolescent in love, always seeking the castle where he once upon a time saw his well-beloved in a dazzling celebration.

If the consciousness recognizes that the long-

ing is a longing of the soul, then a completely new possibility arises. A new objective clarity breaks free. One becomes a realistic magician, prepared to bring their respiration field to rest and clarity. Then the Light, less broken, radiates through more intensely and the stream of constructive energy is no longer interrupted.

In this possibility lies the other magic, gnostic magic: the inner being as an untarnished mirror, clearly reflecting the new workings of the consciousness for everything and everyone.

The great sages have depicted humanity as a unity, as an accumulation of spherical volumes, balls, such as a large blackberry or a raspberry - a fruit of all small globes, or 'spheres', as the Greek word sphere actually means.

Our individual sphere is surrounded by a shell which can be broken open by allowing in the resonance of the Light, insofar as our individual sphere or globe becomes entirely transparent. But also the earth, or perhaps it is better to say the community, is surrounded by a shell, or a ring-no-further. And in one way or another humanity is the earth and the earth is humanity.

When all the 'spheres' or human globes will have become transparent sources of light, then the earth will resemble a sun!

The invitation of which we speak concerns ascending a path - a path where the first stage approaches us, bearing the Light for the sake of our own heart. A subsequent stage can consist of receiving possible explanations through and in a spiritual school. It approaches you

specifically, in person, in everyday life, along with all the other people that we encounter, in conflict or complaint. When you are ready for magical realism, when you are thus ready to see the agitation in the Light from your heart, then each encounter brings an invitation. And then an actual 'yes' changes something in your being, you can then see that, through a life bobbing up and down and driven by fate, you are not in absolute unity. You are then going to see that there is a red thread that runs through the successive situations in your life. To follow the thread, to follow your red thread, is a retrograde movement. You gradually draw your life-thread from out of the fabric, to weave it in again in a much freer fashion. It is logical that along the way you shape a strong interaction with the fabric from all the other life-threads of the people with whom you stand in relationship. Each binding between two persons does indeed have a starting point in the other person - and also in yourself. Whoever can resolve the knot within oneself, can resolve experiences, so that there is no more binding, no compulsive interaction that intrudes as a lack of room to maneuver. No power balance, no desperate love-binding, no compelling feelings of maternal care, no despair for more farewells. Well, a small piece of freedom. Nothing is more magical than giving up a piece of the self. ☸

AN ALTERNATIVE GLOSSARY

Invitation: an extended hand, a request, a prayer; the possibility to set in motion or to advance.

Realism: reality - the real world - there is no objective reality! - realism as a way of life - existence in the world - realistic magic - awareness, consciousness of the boundaries.

Magic: attractive, engaging, fascinating, enchanting - realistic magic, a magical act, a magical effect.

Gnostic magic: conscious magical acts, to maximum liberating effects for others.

Magical realism: literature that sets up a transition between two or more realities or dimensions, with an effect that is magical, fascinating, enchanting.

Modifications of observation and consciousness.

Crossing a frontier in consciousness or in observed reality, with an eventual interaction between the two. Examples: the historian researching/seeking the past; or a man whose wife has passed to the other side and who risks escaping him, as long as he himself does not cross the border; or even a man who succeeds in crossing this border and who thus finds the object of his seeking.

Jungian psychology: there is a connection between Jungian psychology and magical realism: the soul (she) leads, entices the personality (he) to an adventure on the other side of the frontier, from which he will return changed once and for all: fulfilled by a deep longing for the real world on the other side of the frontier, but often powerless to go there once again.

mantao's journey

C.M. CHRISTIAN*

Where do you come from?

On an early morning, when the countryside was still covered in its cloak of dew as a bride in veils, and myriad pearls reverberated the sun, my father, king Man, and myself, his son Mantao walked through the garden. We were so delighted by the fragrance and the beauty of the flowers that woke up quietly.

Where in the middle of the garden a sliver shining source sprang, there we stood a while listening to the jubilant song of the birds in an old tree. So mighty old was this tree that nobody knew how old it was. Already from the start of the primordial beginning it stood there in its full power, according to the legend. We dwelt near the tree. In deep reflection I was contemplating a riddle and said: "Dear father, tell me, what is time?" But Man, my father, remained quiet. I did not give up and asked another time "Please tell me, I beg you, oh my father, what is time?"

And again my father remained silent, as if he wished that I had never asked that question. But it did not leave me alone, so I asked in childish persistence for the third time: "Not knowing torments me, father. Is it a secret, tell me. I have to know it: what is time?"

A shadow appeared on his forehead - which he swept away. Then he friendly raised his hand and pointed to the old tree.

"If you persevere and really want to know, son, go first to the top of that tree and get me the most beautiful fruit."

Cheerfully, full of zeal I walked to the stem

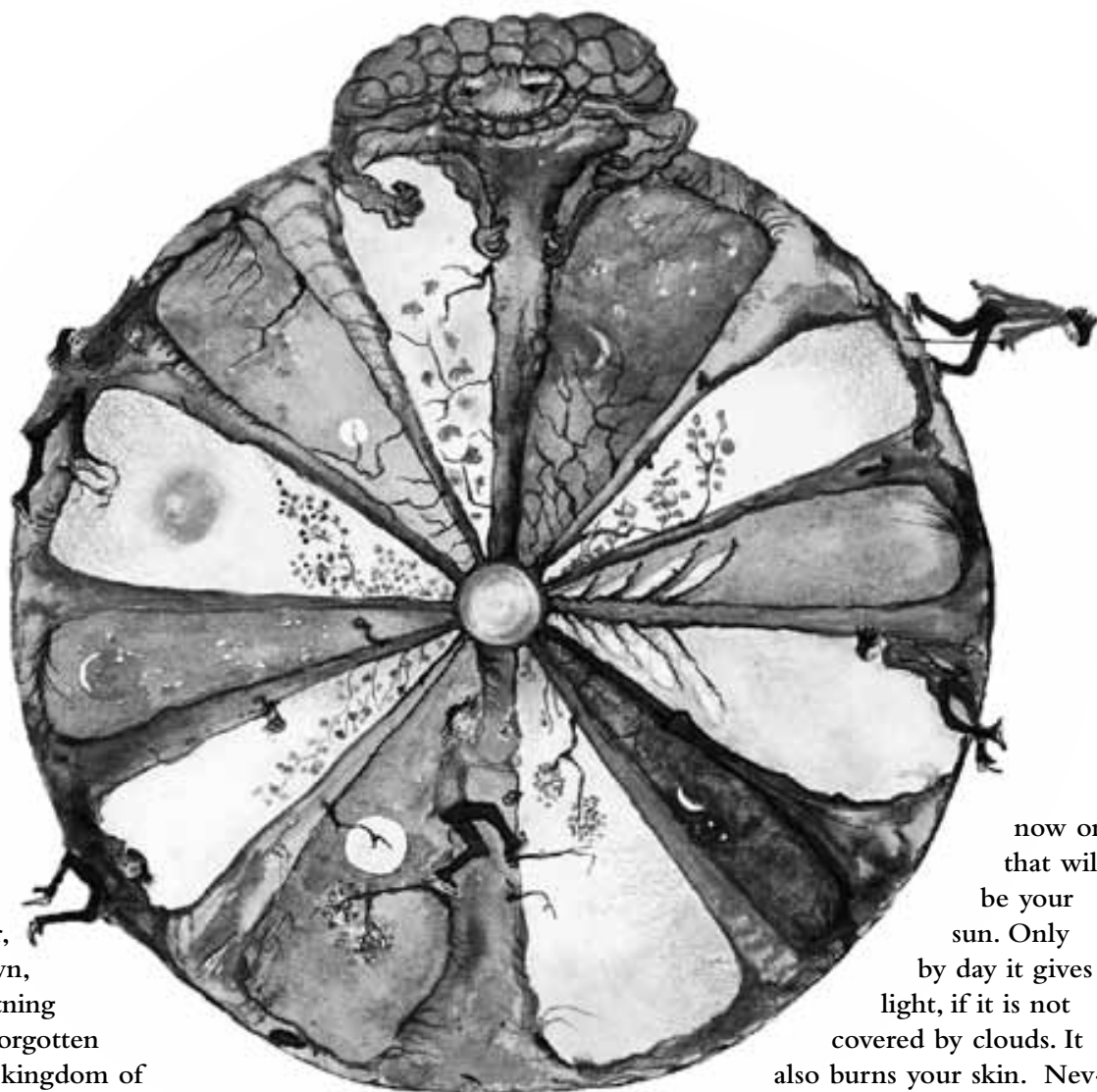
- how magnificent it was! - and started immediately to climb till I was surrounded by the foliage.

What silence around! I felt wrapped by mystery and wonders hovered around me. The birds stopped singing, the leaves whispered no more, from the branches golden pearls dropped and in their twigs hung their silence.

So I climbed through the thick leafage, higher and higher - a white pigeon followed me cooing softly- till I found at the top the most delicious fruit. Its scent was lovely; it looked like a golden full ripe apple, unimaginably beautiful. I was so amazed that I did not dare to reach out to it. Suddenly I heard above my head a lisping. I looked up and saw a winding snake.

"Take my advice, so it said, before you bring that fruit to your father, bite into it first! Then you will know what you always wanted to know." I listened fascinated and said, "Oh no, first I will bring it to my father". "Oh, the snake replied, in this divine fruit the secret is hidden. Time! He will not give it to you. So if you want to know it, bite into it!" My heart shivered. A strong desire took over me that I have never felt before. I reached out for the fruit - I can still hear the cooing dove complaining - held it in my trembling hand and ... bit into it. Oh woe! It felt out of my hand, rolled away from me and as if struck by lightning, I lost my balance and tumbled down, as if I felt through the well in an abyss ...

When I woke up, everything was hard and dark around me. The light was gone. Disappeared was



the entire splendor, the crown, the lightning gown. Forgotten was the kingdom of father-mother-son. Closed was my solar eye and everything around me was cold as the night. On hands and feet I crawled from stone to stone, from bush to bush. Suddenly I heard a voice: "Look who is here, a new guest in our realm!" "Where am I?" I asked, while I was afraid as an animal, I crawled in the dust. A giant turtle came out of his cave and spoke to me: "You are in the realm of the ruler with the two heads. He rules with 'yes' and 'no', with Ah! and Oh!' Come on boy, just follow me, then I will show you the way on the journey through the world." Obediently I followed the turtle through the dust and he explained a lot of things to me: "Raise your head! Do you see that lamp? From

now on that will be your sun. Only by day it gives light, if it is not covered by clouds. It also burns your skin. Nevertheless, it is the mirror of the solar sun and gives earthlings their power for a while and grants them the light in their eyes. That is why you should be grateful, since without it you would be lost. And see, during the night, there above a small silver droplet lights the world: the moon. She binds you in the web of dreams, spun out of colorful threads of the senses, so that your desires never end in woe and joy. And there in the quiet beauty, in the gown of the queen of the night you see all those blinking jewels that are the stars. They pull you with their cold hands on their treads up and down in the world around, close by and far away, so that at your wish – perhaps – they show you the meaning of the world."

*.... here I stood as a sovereign among rulers and grand dames, ah!
... there I had to abandon all my possessions and flee from a
burning city, oh!*

Many more things she showed me, that old turtle, wise guard in the realm of the ruler with the double head. I followed her trail up and down, from day to night, from night to day, so that I learned to walk in a circular walkway of the world-clock.

One day she had enough of showing everything. She left me alone and crawled back in her cave, so that I had to find my own way. From now on I dwelt around alone. But soon I found out that I was secretly followed. Two strange companions danced around me, mocking and teasing, insulting and flattering. They played their game with me and sighed oh! and laughed ah!

It seemed that they wanted to seize me. They ruled with long rods each with a mirror, one with oh! and the other with ah! They kept them before me. "Look here! Look there! And oh! and ah!" so they lured me. And I gave up and let them catch me. With all my senses I hung in these mirrors of oh! and ah!

When I looked into one, I saw myself lying in a cradle with my mother, and children playing in the sunshine with butterflies in a meadow full of flowers – ah!

When I looked into the other one, there were obscure boys around me, that beat me with their sticks in the dark night until they had killed me, and I heard my own death cry – oh!

Here I was at the source, where lovely girls filled their jars and laughingly attracted me to drink with them – ah!

Then again I was among weary, grey old men that limped with their sticks, helplessly and

anguished. Deserted and miserable they dragged themselves to the grave – oh!

Here I stood as a sovereign among rulers and grand dames, in magnificent halls, getting drunk on fame and wealth and power, like a fine wine – ah!

There I knelt with crippled and crying beggars, plagued by poverty, gnawed by leprosy, on the marble steps of palaces of the rich – oh!

Here I lived together with a good woman and cheerful group of boys and girls, yes, what a blessing and peaceful happiness of a family life – ah!

There I had to give up all my possessions and flee through the gates of the burning city with complaining women and crying children, facing the enemy – oh!

Here I was a scholar among scholars and honored science and gathered wisdom, glory and all there was to know – ah!

There I lay in the quagmire of passions, where lust gave food to vice, addiction to sin and fear of punishment and the evil: suffering, sickness and death – oh!

Here I was fascinated by the wonders of the creator and their manifold splendor, of the game of the elements and of insatiable will to live – ah!

There came to meet me the impotence of the creatures, distress, decay, rot, destruction and the inevitable death – oh!

Here I found the art and the beautiful works, conceived by the genius of human head, ingeniously made by human hands, expressions of all

populations and their flourishing cultures – ah!
 There hell opened the ground of the anger, the
 work of the falsehood, the world of lies, the
 realm of greed, the power of delusion – oh!
 Here I found the trace of first green of spring,
 of faith, hope and love – ah!
 There the cold stared at me, the naked envy,
 hypocrisy, hate, injustice, cruelty, tyranny and
 slavery – oh!
 How long did I dwell without purpose in the
 wheel of the world-clock with ah! and oh! I do
 not remember. How many times I was moving
 in the spokes, up, down, from the cradle to the
 grave, from the grave to the cradle, up, down in
 a frenzied cycle, I do not remember. The only
 thing I know for sure: that I was captured in
 the mirror game of the twin-power of the ruler
 with the two heads. Everything that I experi-
 enced of lust and sorrow, it was always an
 illusion, a delusion in the mirror, that came and
 went away, to conceive me again with delusion.
 They came and went again ...
 Then, one day, I had enough of it all; enough of
 the illusion, enough of the pulling up and down
 in the wheel of the world-clock, enough of the
 interplay with ah! and oh! with yes and no, with
 birth and death ... I wanted to free myself from
 this twin-power. And then it happened ...
 In the middle of the night of inner distress the
 stars raised up high above me, brighter than
 ever. Then I knelt. From the bottom of my heart
 a flame rose up, a burning desire. And a voice
 spoke to me, very quiet and gentle: “Have you
 forgotten me, the ‘other-one’ in you, the father-

mother-son, our shining kingdom? Have you
 then completely forgotten the light gown, the
 crown, the source and the old tree, the pure
 radiance in the unlimited space...?”

When I heard that, I wept bitterly. And shed-
 ding my tears in total despair, I felt on my
 back, but suddenly I felt a gentle push. I turned
 around. It was a little donkey, with faithful eyes,
 a clear forehead and a flower in its mouth. He
 laid it before me and spoke: “Let me help you,
 brother-of-man, on your journey home.”

“Home? So you know that I am a stranger in
 this world?” I spoke surprised.

“You are a stranger here and you want to return
 to the kingdom of your father. But do you also
 know why you are here?”

“I do not know,” I confessed softly.

The donkey put his ears flat: “You have lost a
 wonderful thing. That you have to find first,
 before you return to your father.”

“Some call it the stone of wisdom, others pearl,
 and still others call it the golden fruit of heaven.”

“Oh, let us search for this treasure!” I exclaimed
 in my heart-distress.

“All right, let us go!” it spoke. And in the same
 hour we turned on to the east and passed
 through a small gate in a high wall, in open
 countryside. So we left, the donkey and I. ♀

To be continued

*The story Mantao's Journey is a prose version of the book
Die Reise des Mantao's. Ein Perlenlied der Gegenwart,
 by C.M. Cristian, Drp-Rosenkreuz Verlag, 1994

the rediscovery of the Gnosis (III)

On November 6, 2013, a lecture was held at Pentagonum Bookstore in Haarlem, the Netherlands, on the occasion of the appearance of *Echoes from the Gnosis*, with the title: *Why George R.S. Mead may be called the first modern gnostic*. This lecture - which reflects the history of the Gnosis – will appear in several episodes. This is the third episode.

It is only by the discovery of the Nag Hammadi that the vision on the Gnostics that we received, until then largely by the words through the spokesmen of their opponents, is radically adjusted.

In this the figure of Carl Gustav Jung was of decisive primordial importance. Jung meant a lot for the spreading of the Gnostic ideas. It was him that invited Gilles Quispel to come to speak on the Eranos conference at Ascona and gave him the opportunity to acquire the Codex Jung, in which the Gospel of the Truth was preserved. One can have reservations about how Jung approached and treated gnosis. He has not always fitted it with respect for the specificity, in his description of the collective-unconscious and the archetypes that are produced by them. This aside, Jung came with the idea of the unconscious when a psychotic patient told him about a dream, the description of which he just had literally read in a book of Dieterich about a Mithra ritual. This is also mentioned in *Visions, dreams and rituals*, in which Mead speaks about a tube – that is a phallus in the dream of the patient – that comes out of the sun and from which, when it moves, wind starts to blow.

Back to Quispel, he was the first academic who dared to speak about a 'world religion' in connection with the 'Gnosis'.

By the way, the title that put his name definitely on the chart of the research of the Gnosis reads was *Gnosis as World Religion (Gnosis als Weltreligion)* in 1955. Even though Quispel

as a scientist knew the Gnostic tradition thoroughly and with an open and bold vision, it is probably too short a turn to call him an authentic Gnostic. With his interpretation of self-knowledge in the beginning he was close to the interpretation of Jung and it is only as an emeritus and by his contacts with the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica that he dared to speak more freely. Although Quispel dated the origins of the Gospel of Thomas quite early, at some places even before the four canonical Gospels, he called it prudently 'proto-gnostic'. According to him, Thomas goes back to the Aramaic Gospel of the Hebrews that supposedly contains the true words of Jesus and therefore is close to the historic Jesus. That does not matter much for a real Gnostic – since the Gnosis claims that there stands nothing and nobody between deity and man. There is no question about Quispel's own 'feel of Gnosis', as show his latest studies, about Valentinus and the Gospel of Thomas published by In de Pelikaan.

That the Gnostic thinking forms a world religion, like Quispel was able to show, was nothing else than what George Mead, already so many years before was convinced of. How is it then possible that his work remained under the radar of the researchers for so long?

For no other reason than that – as we already said before – he was not an academic who had to maintain high a scientific reputation. He was not a theologian that had to adhere to the Church doctrine, but above all, he was the first



GEORGE STOWE MEAD,
THE FIRST MODERN GNOSTIC

that combined his free research with his very own spiritual search. Not only by name, but in the depth of his heart he wanted to be a theosophist, one that loves the divine wisdom. He was affiliated with the Theosophical Society that was at the time the only institution that strived for real spiritual live. Not understandable by someone like Müller, the already mentioned translator of *The Sacred Books of the East*, that someone would waste his talents by getting acquainted by people like Mrs. Blavatsky, who was looked at with suspicion in respectable circles. George Mead was on the contrary a close collaborator of HPB, as she was called, and till her death he remained her secretary. And yes, for him it all started with Helena Blavatsky. She freed the way for him, also because he dared to associate with her, despite her reputation. According to the intellectual world of that time, she was a controversial figure, even a downright imposter and mythomaniac.

Yet one did not know how to deal with the fact that she devoted ample attention to the wisdom of the antique mysteries in her monumental *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and with her convincing clues that it stood much further than our world understanding. With that she caused the greatest revolution in the spiritual development in Europe and worldwide; right against the growing materialism and Darwinism that was an exponent of that, as well as the dogmatism of the church. Diametrically against that she posed: the Gnosis in all its expression that

is to say the story of the conquered, a story that was still continuing. Let us state it in her own words: "Were the Gnostics exterminated, the Gnosis based on the secret doctrine of all knowledge, remains forever! The Gnosis of traditional knowledge was never without its representatives whatever time or land!" Without the figure of Blavatsky the rehabilitation of the all old Gnosticism would not have been thinkable. Although maybe she considered the Theosophical Society too easily as the one and only Gnostic heritage, she was able to unravel the esoteric teachings that are veiled under all religions and she was also the person who brought it from oblivion to the attention of a broad audience. Whether she may be called a full blood Gnostic - we dare to doubt.

Blavatsky, also called the sphinx was not well known in reality, as GRS testifies, 'no one knew her really'. In fact she was surely also a medium, that was not only her strong point, but at the same time her weakness. It was not always that she was aware of the background from where her 'secret' knowledge came from. Nowadays we would call it channeled messages, but according to her own words, it was given by mahatma, master or initiated. To a certain extent it is clear that they were still of western origin, more in particular from circles of adepts that had also inspired the classical Rosicrucians.

Like the Theosophical Society formed in the beginning along the lines of the lodges of the freemasons, also the thinking of the western

esotericism formed the real backbone of her work (at least that is the view of professor Hanegraaff). However, when Mead became a member of the society in 1887, there was already a noticeable shift in the direction of eastern wisdom, in particular to Hinduism and Buddhism.

Insiders maintain that for that reason the Western adepts have left the Society and that she became under the influence of Tibetan masters of which Morya and Koet Hoemi are mentioned. Indeed, we see shortly afterwards, in 1878-79, that HPB together with colonel Olcott move the headquarters to Adyar in India. Beside several unsavory things that happened there, it would compromise her seriously, making her the subject of a judicial investigation by a commission of inquiry, headed by certain Hodgson, the PRS, The Psychical Research Society.

She decided to withdraw as a head of the Theosophical Society, and although much later she was acquitted of those charges, the damage was already done. Moreover, soon afterwards, the difficulties arose in the English section. That stood under guidance of Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, together the authors of the beautiful *The Perfect Way; or The Finding of Christ*. A book, in which for the first time the Hermetic-Christian path of initiation was described brilliantly, and where the Hermetic, i.e. the Egyptian basis of Christianity, was remarkably pointed out. It is precisely for this reason that the theosophy did not do enough justice

to this path, they left together. It is more or less for the same reason that the Irish poet W.B. Yeats chose for the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn - a group in which the still undervalued Arthur E. Waite was active, although soon derailed, when figures like Aleister Crowley came into leading positions. Meanwhile, the Theosophical Society had fallen prey to a severe struggle for power. This ignited definitely when HPB died prematurely, not long after the release of *The Secret Doctrine*. The new President was appointed in the person of rather recently joined Annie Besant and not, as expected, William Q. Judge. Moreover, she also took the esoteric school under her wing, with a clear concentration of power as a result. In particular, when the attention of Besant in India got especially politically oriented, there was every indication that the Theosophical Society had to give up its dream of a true inner schooling. That was certainly the case after Bishop Leadbeater joined and a strange superficial ritualism and ceremonialism infiltrated and he soon made all kinds of escapades, including the creation of the Old Catholic Church in Australia, not to mention all the rest. We also know the developments around the 'discovery' of the young Krishnamurti as the coming Maitreya. The Order of the Star was established around him, and he was also the central figure at the famous Star Camps in the Dutch Ommen ☸

To be continued

we are the recreators

We gather
Passionately
The honey of what is visible
To save it in the great golden hive
Of the Invisible

WE ARE THE BEES
OF THE INVISIBLE

These are the opening lines of the letter that the poet Rainer Maria Rilke writes to his translator Hulewicz. He tries to explain to him what *The Duino Elegies* are about, a poetic project on which he worked for more than ten years in the castle of Duino, some kilometres north of the Italian city of Trieste. In a storm in the year 1912 he heard a voice calling out “Wer, wenn ich schreie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel Ordnungen?” which translates into:

Who, when I cry out, hears me from the angels’ realm?

Who, when I call, can hear my voice in my extremity?

Who, when I shouted and was heard, heard me through Him?

And why should it be me to clarify the elegy?

Because so far above me soars that hymn.

During the evenings he writes his first elegy, then a second and parts of a third and a tenth. In 1915 he composes a fourth elegy but not much later the war breaks out, deeply scarring Rilke and he is then unable to write any more.

This lasts until 1922 when he retreats in a tower and after waiting for some considerable time the next elegies are created. The ten year period of the composition of the elegies has cost him so much in effort that he dies not long after.

Many pages have since been devoted to the explanation and the deciphering of *The Duino Elegies*. Many a literary scholar has delved deeply in



The angel from the Elegies is that kind of being in which the transformation of that which is visible into what is invisible that we undertake, is already realised



Twenty kilometres, North-West from the city of Trieste, crowning on the rocks protruding above the Adriatic Sea, emerges the 14th-century Duino Castle. A charming garden with terraces offers unexpectedly stunning views, with 200 steps leading directly into the sea

Rilke's sentences to bring their meaning to the surface. They have reasoned that the explanation could be found deep within his language but nowhere do these explanations touch the essence of his thoughts.

Nor are these elegies to be captured through their construction, for Rilke has his verses dance outside of the conventions of metre and rhyme. They escape this straightjacket of form and thus transcend every analysis. Although they possess a poetic eloquence and are written in a lustrous language they are definitely no mysterious verses gathered from a personal poetic universe. In

the letter to his translator Rainer Maria Rilke describes his own verses in crystal clear, simple language and thus hones his own material and this is part of the reason why it remains so scintillating and current until this time. It is a wake up call for humanity to take up its true allotted task and to recreate objects, life itself and ultimately itself.

The elegies remind us of the task to effect a transformation, a process that the poet defines as both intimate and lasting. In this manner Rilke places the new consciousness that then arises in an old and archetypal tradition. He specifi-

cally warns against a catholic interpretation of the concepts of death and angels that he uses. He writes:

"The true form of life extends through both regions, the blood of the largest circulation pulses through both: there is neither a this-world nor an other-world, but only the great unity, in which the 'angels,' those beings, who surpass us, are at home.

We, people of the here and now are at no moment satisfied in this time encapsulated world but neither need we be fastened to it. Always we go to those who were before, to our origin and to those who apparently come after us.

Impermanence plunges us into the depth of all Being. And so all forms of the present are not to be taken and bound in time, but held in a larger context of meaning in which we participate. I don't mean this in a Christian sense (from which I ever more passionately distance myself) but in a sheer earthly, deep earthly, sacred earthly consciousness: that what we see here and now is to bring us into a wider - indeed, the very widest - dimension. Not in an afterlife whose shadow darkens the earth, but in a whole that is the whole.

Nature, the things we move among and which we use, are provisional and perishable, but they are, for as long as we are here, our possession and our friends, sharers in our trouble and our happiness, just as they were once the confidants of our ancestors. Therefore it is crucial not only that we don't corrupt and degrade what constitutes the here and now, but precisely because of this provisionality it shares with us, that these appearances and objects be com-

prehended by us in a most fervent understanding and are transformed. Transformed? Yes, for our task is to stamp this provisional, perishing earth into ourselves so deeply, so painfully and passionately, that its being may rise again, "invisibly," in us.

In that period Rilke built up a relationship with the sculptor Rodin who taught him to look, to really look at the objects around him. This real looking had to be undertaken with care and concentration to decipher the mystery, the reality behind the objects. He composed a number of 'thing-poems' and in these fathomed the essence of the inanimate things around him. He did not reject the world; he tried to leaven it with care and by looking in this special way to make an inner print of it.

In the elegies he introduces angels but he warns in his letters that the term must be understood in the right way:

"The angel from the Elegies is that kind of being in which the transformation of that which is visible into what is invisible that we undertake, is already realised. The angel is the being that guarantees that we see in the invisible a higher degree of reality. That is why it is so frightening for us because we, so happy to create and recreate, are so attached to the visible realm."

The elegies are thus reflections of the continuous transformation of our beloved visible and tangible realities into the invisible and sensitive vibrations of our nature, adding steadily new frequencies to the climbing vibrations of



Rainer Maria Rilke, born in Prague in 1875 had already made a name for himself as a poet with his volumes *Das Stundenbuch* (The Book of Hours) and *Das Buch der Bilder* (The Book of Images), when he astounded the literary world and gained world fame with the publishing of his two volumes *Neue Gedichte* (New Poems) in 1907 and 1908. In these were gathered some of his best work from his period in Paris. Rilke was deeply impressed by the sculptor Auguste Rodin whose private secretary he became for a period of time. Rodin taught him how to truly look, he later stated. This way of looking demanded an intense concentration to catch the mystery 'behind the illusory reality'. In this way he totally immersed himself in a subject, whether an object, an animal, or a mythical or allegorical figure, until this subject emanated an intense life and spoke to him with a truly new voice. The *New Poems* of Rilke may look complicated because of their compact expressiveness, but they are never hermetic like the great work from his last period. Later and riper work like his *Duineser Elegies* (1912-1923) and the scintillating *Sonette for Orpheus* illustrate Rilke's transcendental vision on the inexpressible which he gives voice in a musical hermetic language. Rilke dies December 1926 from leukaemia in a sanatorium in Val-Mont. Some days later he is buried, according to his wishes, in the cemetery of Raron.

Source: <http://www.kunstbus.nl/literair/rainer+maria+rilke.html>

the universe. The question is: are we really able to understand these verses and discover their true meaning? Can we really observe what surrounds us and truly look with heart and soul and so are able to recreate it? To embrace all that is and thus to internalize it? To hear its heartbeat and to feel it beat in both worlds and so to unite them?

*Let us look anew
Let all that is without
Become within again
Let us listen
To the heartbeat
That resounds.*

What does Rilke mean with 'truly looking'? How can this kind of seeing lead us to a spiritual life? It will be obvious that Rilke does not mean our usual sensory awareness but rather points to looking-as-a-process. When we look as an observer we place ourselves in a duality. But if we just 'are' and do not consciously observe we enter a unity. All that is around us constitutes a part of us, but as long as we preserve the duality we can never enter the unity. In our material world only man is able to unite the two 'worlds', the divine and the earthly, by transforming his consciousness, his way of looking. Then he becomes conscious of the ever-present unity. If we can make this 'inner photo' and unite the two poles we may become the spiritual man.

Then we are truly the recreators. ☸

The Words of the Angel

*You are no closer to God than any of us;
we all live far and wide.
But it's wonderful how your hands
have been sanctified.
They don't find a match in other women's,
so brilliant from beneath their sleeves:
I am the day, I am the dew,
but you are tree.*

*I am rather tired now, my journey was long,
forgive that I forgot
that he, who sat in gilded garb
like in a ray of light,
sends news to you, you quiet one
(this room here startled me).
Look: I am the beginning one,
but you are tree.*

*I spread my wings apart
and become oddly broad;
now your little house is flooded
with my coat.
And still, you are so all alone
as never before, me you hardly see;
because I am just breath in woods,
but you are tree.*

*All the angels are worried now,
letting go of each other's hands:
never before was there such a longing,
so uncertain and immense.
Perhaps it will come about soon
and you will grasp it as if in a dream.
Blessings to you, my soul perceives
you are ready and ripe to receive.
You are a great and lofty gate
and about to open up.
You are my song's most beloved ear.
I feel there disappears and seeps
into you my word.*

*That's how I came and completed
your dream among a thousand and one.
And with blinding eyes God looked at me ...*

But you are tree.

**Rainer Maria Rilke, Die Worte des Engels.
From Das Buch der Bilder, Berlin 1902**

It is remarkable, how reality can be the best source of spiritual metaphors. A ship that hoists its sail according to the winds, sails completely its own course, while for long times, it has nothing else than the position of the sun to determine its direction, or the splendour of the star-strewn Milky Way in order not to lose its direction, the ship nevertheless finds, seemingly lost on immense plains of water, its direction and its harbour.

In this way, the boat-shaped *argha* of the mysteries clears a course across the academic sea, to a harbour of spiritual achieving. This ark is the feminine bearing power, symbolised by the moon. The spiritual sun is the course-determining power, and aboard, all bearers of the flame of the heavenly human being, keep the ship on its pre-plotted course.