



EXPLORATION

Rosycross and Gnosis

An Inner Exploration



LECTORIUM ROSICRUCIANUM

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE GOLDEN ROSYCROSS

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Introduction 1

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Each one of the eight “exploration” sessions entitled “Rosycross and Gnosis” is preceded by an introduction. These introductory pages are not intended as a compendium of the subject of the exploration but rather as a help for preparation and inspiration.

The introductions and explorations touch upon thoughts and questions arising in all human beings who are looking for the source that can explain their existence. The intention of the explorations “Rosycross and Gnosis” is to enter into conversation about this.

This desire for knowledge or Gnosis can, like a super-earthly current, inspire a person to take the first steps. We are attracted by something still unknown, something unlimited and immeasurable. At the same time, we are inwardly drawn in by it to the hidden depths of our being.

Is there a definite point from which this urge to know, this disquiet, arises? In this way, we can discover inside ourselves a mystery equally grand to the mystery we experience outside ourselves.

But for many, it stops here!

Do you stop here, too? Or do you wish to continue that quest, because you cannot do otherwise, because you are caught by the current of the stream of your deepest desire?

We could say: Gnosis is the source from which this desire originates and also the point toward which it directs itself.

Gnosis, as the source of divine knowledge, is also the ultimate source of western religion and science. Its roots reach as far back as ancient Egypt, and it was written down in the hermetic wisdom, in the writings of Thoth or Hermes.

One of the best-known axioms from Hermes' Emerald Tablet is, “What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is similar to that which is below.” As above, so below. As in the grand, so also in the minute.

If we apply this insight to ourselves, we see that a direct relationship exists between the world and the human being, between God and the human being, between cosmos and microcosm. The large always finds its reflection in the small.

Might we find here the explanation for that stream of desire for true Gnosis, the stream that has stimulated us to begin our journey, that has taken us both far away and deep within ourselves?

This inevitably leads to the questions:

What is going on in the world in which I live?

What do I experience from it within myself?

Is there a development taking place that truly changes me, that leads me beyond my own limitations?

Do I experience a higher impulse within myself, arousing me for something new, for life renewal?

Could this be a higher form of life, a renewal that does not have its source in the external but comes from within?

Could this be a renewal that makes it possible for me to penetrate from outer appearances to inner knowing?

This is the path that Hermes wishes to go with us. His starting point is the appreciation of the tremendous beauty of the cosmos. He wishes us to understand its fundamental laws, thus learning to know the spirit of God and eventually ending up at the source of our own existence.

Hermetic philosophy places humanity in the heart of God's creation. Hermes declares that "great is the miracle of the human being" having the ability to achieve the ultimate. In this spirit, we not only come to understand the universe but also learn to know God, Gnosis, and ourselves.

We know very directly from within that we are not just a mortal body that lives and dies. We are also an immortal soul that may even be a god as everything came into existence from this sublime source of creation. This is described in a mysterious vision which we can read about in Book One of the Corpus Hermeticum. There was an explosion of light and energy that slowly cooled down and turned into the black womb of the universe, in which suns and planets and finally also we were born.

This birth, like any birth, was accompanied by pain. Hermes recounts an indescribable groaning, a raw cry of pain, coming from the turbulent depth.

Children are born with a cry of pain from the loss of familiar surroundings of the womb that has to be left behind. And in order to grow up, they must also leave behind the warm parental nest, the care and comfort and understanding of their parents.

And do we not face another moment of birth right now within ourselves, at the edge of the unknown? Isn't that where this super-earthly current is leading us: to the rebirth of the spiritual being within?

Where do we find the "Word" that creates order in our chaos, the order which allows the inner being to arise?

Initially we find it by searching for that teaching in which Gnosis illuminates the words, words that bear witness to that very Gnosis, the knowledge essential to come to inner renewal.

And then we can proceed from ignorance to illumination of knowledge within, as a guide that shows the way.

From our chaos of still not understanding, we look for the Gnosis, for the source of knowledge from which new and clear insight may arise — insight about ourselves and our present opportunities in this life in which we fully take part.

What is happening in me, in us; what kind of development are we facing?

These questions are what we wish to explore during our up-coming gatherings.

Rosycross and Gnosis

The Meaning of Existence

What is the meaning of our life?

During these sessions, we want to try to find an answer to this question.

We can't look for the answer just in facts or historical knowledge. We will have to explore unknown areas, both within ourselves and also outside ourselves. Books and texts alone are not sufficient. And that is why we call these gatherings explorations, explorations during which our inner, spiritual development is open for discussion, for instance, by taking the time to look within ourselves in order to see what really moves us.

We can start an investigation together, via the philosophy of the Rosycross, in open communication.

That is why several basic subjects are offered for discussion.

The subjects for the eight gatherings are:

1. The connection between Rosycross and Gnosis
2. The twofold human being
3. The inner call and the task of the human being
4. Human being and microcosm
5. The opened heart
6. The new thinking
7. Realization in the here and now
8. The path of transfiguration

The Meaning of Existence

What is Gnosis?

In one dictionary, Gnosis is explained as the “intuitive apprehension of spiritual truths.” It can also be described as living knowledge of the heart that unveils the mystery of human existence.

Gnosis awakens the heart in the same way that sunlight unfolds a blossom from a bud. The deeper knowledge that lies encapsulated in the heart will be unveiled. One can experience this as an inner recognition, a certain knowing about something that cannot be named.

In Gnostic writings, it is therefore said that Gnosis is a power or a light that does not emanate from the nature that is well-known to us, but from divine love. This light is constantly active in the world and makes itself known to those who are susceptible to it.

The concept Gnosis can be found in many historical and philosophical movements that try to explain its symbols and characteristics. However a true understanding of Gnosis comes only from experiencing it as an ever-present spiritual power that is active both within us and also within the cosmos — a power that may lead us toward our true destination. Isn't reaching that destination the goal of every journey, including our journey through life? To be able to recognize our destination, we first have to know what that is. We must also know ourselves.

“Know yourself” was engraved into the front portal of the temple in Delphi thousands of years ago. In the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus says, “Whoever knows everything but does not know himself, lacks everything.” The Egyptian wisdom language speaks of self-knowledge that is equal to the knowledge of God. “O Asclepius,” the legendary Hermes Trismegistus called out, “great is the miracle of the human being!”

- : *I am not just a mortal body that lives and dies.*
- : *I am also an immortal soul who can even become a god*
- : *when I am reborn from that deep source of Gnosis.*

What is that great miracle?

Knowledge of our very complex and varied human life, or admiration for it, is not the issue here. Until this very day, life remains a mystery for us. That is why these words indicate something that allows people to rise above themselves. It is a capacity or a special characteristic that is hidden deep inside human beings.

If we obtain consciousness of this powerful, exceptional capacity within us and wish to bring it out into the light, then we should immerse ourselves deeply into our own being, right to the very nucleus. This nucleus is known by many different names: a rose, a spark, an atom, a grain of seed, or a lotus blossom. In Gnostic teachings and in the teachings of the Rosycross, this nucleus is often known as the spirit-spark. It is

a spark of the perfect divine light, the light of the spirit, the light of the Father of all lights, of which Gnosis is an aspect. Guided by this light, human beings can learn to know their deepest inner self and begin to understand their true destination. From the small divine nucleus within, the spiritual human being can be reborn.

In the Gospel of Thomas, self-knowledge and its result are summarized as follows:

*When you know yourselves,
then you will be known,
and you will know that you are the sons
of the living Father*



- : *Gnosis is the knowledge necessary to come to an inner renewal,*
- : *to come from ignorance to the enlightened state of an inner, self-obtained capacity*
- : *of knowledge, as a guide that shows the way.*
- : *From our chaos of still not understanding, we look for Gnosis, for the source*
- : *from which new and clear insight may arise.*

It is a hidden wisdom that we are by origin “sons of the living Father” according to the Gospel of Thomas and “children of God” according to the Gospel of John. Returning to that origin, not in theory but in reality, is the characteristic mystery of Gnostic Christianity as it came forth from the hermetic tradition. Gnostic schools of all ages have placed this inner re-creative process before their pupils.

The School of the Golden Rosycross stands in this tradition. The founders of this school, Jan van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, provided and explained many authentic Gnostic texts — including the manifestos of the classical Rosicrucians of the 17th century, the Christian initiation mysteries, the work of the Chinese wisdom teacher Lao Tzu, and the Egyptian writings of Hermes Trismegistus — in their conferences and books. Their explanations make the texts accessible and comprehensible to the consciousness of modern-day humanity, providing a source of wisdom that can be helpful during the search for the meaning of life. Most importantly they not only brought to the world the teachings that lead to inner renewal but also presented the method to realize this process, adapting it to modern humanity.

Rosycross

Rosycross and Gnosis belong to each other. The rose and the cross are symbols for those who are directed toward their ultimate destination, the return to their divine origin. The horizontal refers to the current conditions of life in this world, which we know so very well. The vertical refers to the influx of Gnostic light that places the divine plan before us and makes it dynamic. Where horizontal and vertical meet, the rose unfolds itself as a symbol of the spirit-spark in the heart. It is from this spirit-spark that a call from the original life field may resound.

Those who react positively to this call start directing their inner being to the vertical stream, creating the possibility of bringing the rose to full bloom, thus realizing their true destination.

If the rose, the spirit-spark, awakens, we experience this as an inner nostalgia. Then a longing, a desire, goes out for Gnosis, impelled by the approaching light. The realization of this desire demands cooperation. Each person will want to adapt their life to what they now experience from within as “true,” true in the sense of the aforementioned “miracle.”

This realization is a very personal process. There can never and may never be any compulsion as no one can determine for someone else how to go this path. An individual can find and recognize the truth only in their own being. Each will go this path at their own rate, in their own time, and with their own possibilities.

This is a path of discovery. If we learn to know ourselves, we learn to know the All, starting with the greatness and coherence of all life. We will also be astonished by our own process of growth and the harmonic possibilities encapsulated in the human system.

The symbol of the rose and the cross contains the original meaning of the word religion: to reconnect.

The soul is reconnected to the divine power, the liberating power that is “not of this world.”

- : *Originally Gnosis was the sum of ultimate wisdom,*
- : *the collective compilation of all knowledge that pointed directly toward the*
- : *original, divine life. Thus was—and is—the divine wisdom brought to man,*
- : *and the path is shown to those who wish to return to the original Fatherland.*
- : (J. van Rijckenborgh)