

PENTAGRAM

M A N I - THE GIFT OF THE LIGHT

‘Mani’s teachings are one with the purpose
and essence of Christianity, as proclaimed
by the Rosicrucians through the ages.

This is why Mani is one of the most important
sources of inspiration of the Rosicrucians.’

J. van Rijckenborgh



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FROM LIGHT TO LIGHT



Man was created so wonderfully that he can ascend from the lowest to the highest, from the crust of our dark earth to the fiery heart of our solar body, Vulcanus, the sun behind the sun. We have received everything necessary for this journey from the father of all things: a complex system that is anchored in this world through its organs and perceives this world with its sensory faculties. These are rightly called tools that help us experience our environment as a mirror.

The young soul experiences and learns by touching, tasting, smelling, hearing and seeing and through instinct, like all other creatures in nature. But at the same time, the human being works on the soul. The soul is formed through the years. Not only the circumstances but also the sculptor's chisel leaves its traces. Next to, and behind all of this, like a light, silent cloud in and around us, something else lives, something intangible.

The human being walks his path of life until his vital forces start waning, the personality dies and the soul is extinguished; until, one day, after a fullness of experience has been gained, a longing breaks through, a yearning for more, for something else, for the 'intangible'.

This vague longing then finds what is like it, what is in harmony with it; it attracts what corresponds to it. An indistinct drive gives birth to faith and the in-

MIKHAIL NAIMY WRITES IN THE
BOOK OF MIRDAD:

*'This is the way to freedom from care
and pain:*

*So think as if your every thought were
to be etched in fire upon the sky for all
and everything to see. For so, in truth,
it is. So speak as if the world entire
were but a single ear intent on hearing
what you say. And so, in truth, it is. So
live as if your God Himself had need of
you His Life to live. And so, in truth,
He does. So wish as if you were the
wish. And so, in truth, you are.'*

Mikhail Naimy, *The Book of Mirdad*,
chapter 9. Watkins, London, 1974.

tangible comes closer: a certain remembrance of the light, of a possible dawn. As a result, new sensory organs are created which can perceive something of this light. We may call this 'intuition', 'the voice of the silence', 'inspiration' or 'the eyes of the heart', or other similar expressions.

However, people who are seeking this light and want to live from it again, may be on their way towards it, but they themselves are certainly not yet of this light. For although the quest is real and gives joy, the part of the human being which is bound to fate, is constantly making itself felt. In this context, the poet speaks of 'the two souls which, alas, are dwelling within our breast.' All our organs are closely connected with our soul, and contribute to ensoulment. This is why this soul must be called the nature soul.

As our natural senses are inadequate to explore and fathom dark matter, human beings continually invent new instruments, which enable them to explore ever further into the infinite universe and ever deeper into matter.

Will we ever find satisfactory answers in this way? Our senses are only simple and naked organs which stimulate our mind to explain and speculate. The unfulfilled longing remains, and can be experienced even more strongly and painfully, if there are no positive experiences. Who does not recognise this? How often is our soul moved by images, sounds or smells? Inevitably our thinking, our psyche and our body, through our hormones, react.

How fast the other aspect, that which is subtly surmised, can be flooded by impetuosity, but also by the heaviness of the blood!

But deep within us, there is always this silent longing, the great homesickness for a pure, true life. Gradually, we learn to value the inner senses, stemming from, and testifying to, the light, higher than the external ones. Eventually, we can no longer bear the tension nor the pain of the persisting contradiction between the homesickness for the light on the one hand and the pressure exercised by the nature soul on the other. And we no longer even want to bear it!

Thus the crisis is being prepared within us. This is done by the human being himself, the light in us does this, because sometimes we work with it and sometimes we don't. This crisis is the moment that you must choose and can proclaim: here is my perfect 'Yes', so that our volatile behaviour is pushed to the background, diminishes and will finally cease to exist. Or it is an equally strong 'No', often resulting in a loss of interest in the activity of the light. Ripeness to go 'the path' is not achieved by doing everything well or by thinking that you are

Lions guard the road to a sanctuary on the isle of Delos. 6th century BC.

doing so. This is an illusion and one of the most serious deceptions of the esoteric world. The only thing that counts is a wholehearted, honest and sincere 'Yes' from within.

Then the ground is prepared for the transmutation of the external senses into a first inner sensory organ. In the light of self-knowledge, in other words, understanding the situation just described, insight is born.

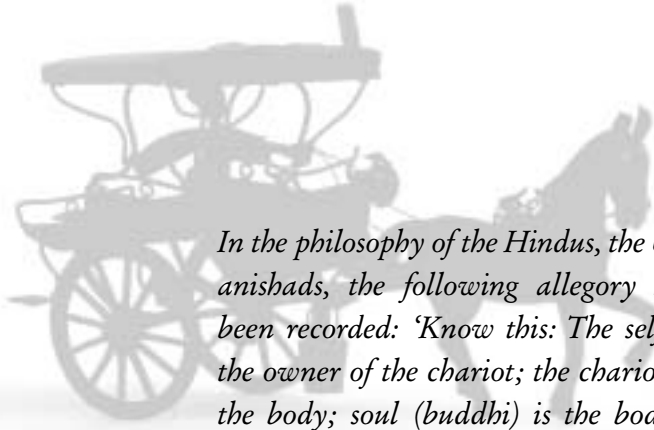
The first result of this insight is gratitude. This gratitude fills the whole being with a joyful, subtle glow; it is the gratefulness for the one life and the knowledge that we are a modest, but important part of it, in whatever way. Both aspects, insight and gratitude, enlighten, for the first time, the many dark spaces of your being. As the process goes on, a new will certainly will be born from it. This strong and pure will enables the human being to

cooperate in the transfiguristic work that the light accomplishes in him. You yourself can't do anything in your inner being. Your task is to absolutely and very intelligently offer your service anytime and anyplace possible.

Consequently, the results become visible. The brighter the goal shines, the more the concentration on it grows and becomes stronger. The pilgrim experiences ever more concretely the reality which he initially only faintly surmised. It is the reality of the new life which has been expressed in the old language of the Christian mysteries as walking in the peace that is not of this world. This is 'walking in the Light'.



THE QUEST FOR THE TRUE SELF



*In the philosophy of the Hindus, the Upanishads, the following allegory has been recorded: 'Know this: The self is the owner of the chariot; the chariot is the body; soul (buddhi) is the body's charioteer; mind the reigns; senses, they say, are the chariot's steeds; their object the tract before them.'*²¹

The quest for this exalted goal, the path, demands great perseverance, however. We are simply unable to focus continuously on it. Our thinking is bound to a biologically determined vital urge, which keeps us imprisoned within the limits of the material world. This leaves its mark on our experience and thus determines our goals.

Our thinking is naturally occupied with transient things. Often, our emotions and affections are like untamed, barely controllable horses which gallop towards the phenomena of this world and link them to our personalities.

In order to control the horses we try to cultivate our instincts. In this way, we acquire ever more subtle powers with which to maintain ourselves in the world of matter. The true self, which is as a light germ lying among the luggage of the chariot, remains untouched by all of these refined expressions of life. As long as we concentrate our lives – and hence our thinking – on matter, our emotions will also remain within the limits of this life field of opposites, and the light germ will be unable to teach us with its impulses.

TRY TO BRING REST INTO CONTEMPLATION

We are unable to escape the cycles of joy and pain through which we are dragged along by our senses, and initially we do not perceive their purpose. There is no goal! The question is not whether we achieve something specific, but rather to become thoroughly aware that we belong to another field of life. From this, a goal may arise! In such a state of mind, we will one day experience that the cohesion suggested by our senses is an illusion. Our volatile longing already implies the delusion and subsequent grief. Delusions are nothing but incorrect impressions of the laws controlling our lives.

Once we give up these impressions and soberly consider and accept all things and conditions, we reach a border. When we then wonder if the suggested external cohesion is true, it is the first step towards the liberation of our matter-directed thinking.

The hidden light nucleus has awakened an as yet unknown feeling in us, an

'The Teachings of the heart' give the following, loving advice:

'The pupil should not mourn about passing distress and deceptions...

Often they can effect a direct destruction in his inner being.. He should always allow the waves of doubt and unrest to wash over him, while continuously holding on to the anchor he has found.'



Shiva dances his fivefold dance of creation, of covering and preserving, of destruction and liberation. Under his feet lies, defeated, Asura, the demon of ignorance. Shiva's dance is the first movement of the universe, which is everlasting; he is at the same time life's rhythm, and the liberation of the spirit in the heart of his servant, his pupil. Bronze sculpture, India.

indefinable longing, a homesickness. If we ignore this feeling, the senses and the mind will lead us down countless wrong trails. In addition, the impulses of this light spark will give us insight into the lost inner life. Whether we will be able to raise our thinking above matter depends on this insight originating from the heart.

A purified heart will lead to the correct insight, as we can read in the Upanishads. With the correct insight, we can finally understand our experiences. In the light of our 'primordial source', we can see that all these experiences have been necessary, but have also been deviations from the path to the true goal. Our past then turns into a breeding ground for the for-

gotten true self, which can now blossom forth like a lotus flower from the mud of a pond.

VISHNU'S ABODE

He who has gained insight and inner purity, and uses them as a charioteer and uses the objective thinking as the reins, will arrive at the highest place, Vishnu's exalted abode. Vishnu is the god of gods, who together with Lakshmi, the goddess of the blooming lotus, rests on the cosmic world serpent.²

Lakshmi symbolises the divine rays of wisdom that raise us above the level of sensory phenomena and want to lead us

out of the chaos of illusions. The Indian myth relates that the god of gods is sleeping and that all events in creation, the birth and death of worlds, is just an endless chain of his dream images. Vishnu and Lakshmi form a unity; together they are the first and sole conscious entity of the universe. Everything in our sham world is, on the other hand, manifold. They are events which have become separated from this unity.³

Often, the old vital energies can still confuse us with their impulses. It will still take some time before the new meaning of life is able to reach us unimpeded. Old patterns of life, which we thought we had left behind, continue to capture our attention. Only when the storm of these ingrained patterns has been stilled by the new, pure energy, can the new vibration change our state of being. The truth will have found an abode within us, but we cannot comprehend this reality with our external senses.

If our longing is concentrated on the true self, the external senses can merge into a single, individual sensory organ. This is the true insight into things. Then our senses can only concentrate on the purpose of life. The excess baggage will be thrown out of the chariot! Finally, the charioteer recognises his own essence. The horses will turn around in order to follow the path shown by the divine rays of wisdom. Of such a human being it is said:

'He does not see, smell or taste; he does not speak, hear, think or distinguish, because there is nothing that would be different from him...

And yet, he sees, because seeing and he are one; and yet he listens, because hearing and he are one...

*And yet, he feels, as feeling and he are one; and yet, he distinguishes, as distinction and he are one.*⁴

This reality is reflected in a purified

personality, which is no longer subjected to the suggested cohesion of the external life. A pure projection of the eternal truth then arises, a radiation that intervenes in our field of life with light and love.

'That is the mystery of existence: there is an approach to life which, if you adopt it, will enable you to create in yourself the conditions necessary for the reality, the One, to be able to project itself through you. [...]

*Then a mighty light will spread through the dark regions of dialectical existence, as a blessing for many.*⁵

Modern sculpture of the parable of the charioteer. In the chariot, the (invisible) self, atman, is sitting; buddhi, insight, is the charioteer; the reins are atman, the thinker; the horses are the senses and what they see forms the road.
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SOURCES:

¹ Katha Upanishad. Fragment from Chapter III. <http://mountainman.com.au/kathaup.html>

² Sergius Golowin, Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell. *Die grosse Mythen der Menschheit* (The great myths of humanity), 1998.

³ Id.

⁴ Schult, Arthur. *Die Weisheit der Veden und Upanishaden* (The wisdom of the Vedas and Upanishads). Berlin, Lorber/Turm Verlag, 1986.

⁵ J van Rijckenborgh, *The Chinese Gnosis*. Haarlem, Rozekruis Pers, 1996, p. 286.



THE PATH HERMES SHOWS

J van Rijckenborgh and the Corpus Hermeticum

During the 1950's, in numerous conferences, the founder of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum, J van Rijckenborgh, dealt with the sixteen books of Hermes which, together with the Perfect Treatise or Aesclepius (Teleios Logos), form the Corpus Hermeticum.

These books, which are the basis of the Hermetic tradition, were absolutely unknown to the general public at the time. It has been to J van Rijckenborgh's merit to have recognised their great, liberating value, and to have explained it to his pupils in a clear, yes, crystal-clear way.

The texts which form the *Corpus Hermeticum* were written, or rather rewritten, by unknown authors in Egypt at the end of the third century AD. They were part of a much more extensive collection of texts ascribed to the mythical figure Hermes Trismegistus, who is said to have lived around 3000 BC. The Greeks called him Hermes Trismegistos, and the Egyptians knew him as the thrice great Thoth.

In fact, these texts stemmed from the same religious and philosophical origin as did Neo-Platonism, the various interpretations of the wisdom of Jesus the Christ, and the different teachings considered to belong to 'Gnosticism'. The count-

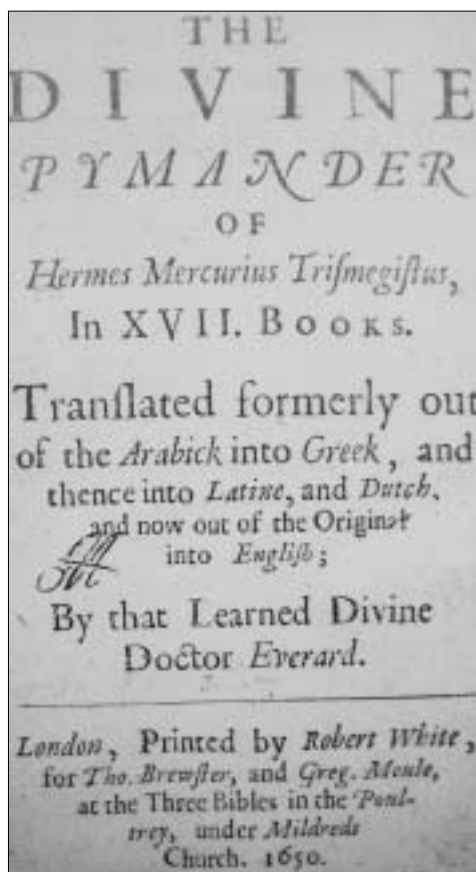


less relationships and the naturalness with which the same topics are constantly treated, show that we can regard this literature as forming a unity. Each document was part of wider themes which occupied the seeking human beings of that time, and tried to give specific answers.

The books, nowadays known as the *Corpus Hermeticum*, were combined into one volume during the Byzantine period (395-1453 AD). In 1460, after a thousand

years of oblivion, Lorenzo de Medici's traders got hold of a copy. Marsilio Ficino, who was the driving force of the recently founded Academy of Florence, was relieved from his work (he was translating works of Plato) and was asked to immediately begin to translate the *Corpus Hermeticum* into Latin. This translation was published in 1463, and was reprinted at least twenty-two times during the following century. Once translated, the book was welcomed as a relief.

The books are subdivided into different groups. The first book (CH I), *Pyman-der*, is the description of a revelation 'of the essential things' experienced by Hermes when Pymander, the spirit-soul, as an expression of the universal spirit, appeared in his inner being. The following eight books (CH II-IX), the '*General treatises*', consist of short dialogues or texts describing a number of fundamental issues of Hermetic philosophy. The next book is '*The key*' (CH X), an abbreviated overview of the '*General treatises*', followed by another four books dealing with the more mystical aspects of Hermes' teachings (CH XI-XIV). These are called: 'The Spirit speaks to Hermes', 'The Spirit which pervades the all', 'The secret sermon on the mount' and 'Hermes' letter to Aesclepius about the nature of the universe'. All of this is concluded by the



'*Aphorisms*', a letter of Aesclepius to King Ammon (CH XVII), which is probably a combination of three fragments from longer writings.

THE PERFECT TREATISE

The *Perfect Treatise* or *Aesclepius*, part of the *Corpus Hermeticum* since 1505, is an older work and became well known via a quite different way during the Renaissance. This document had already been translated into Latin in antiquity, supposedly by Lucius Apuleius Madaurensis (124-170 AD, Madaurus in Numidia, North-Africa), whose most important work is *Metamorphosis* (or *The golden donkey*), of which the eleventh book contains one of the best-preserved descriptions of the Isis worship in the Roman world.

Augustine quotes extensively in his work *The city of God* from the old Latin

Left: Picture of Hermes Trismegistus. Title page of the English edition of the books of Pymander (the *Corpus Hermeticum*), London, 1650.

translation of *Aesclepius*, and during the Middle Ages, copies of it remained in circulation until the Renaissance. Unfortunately, the Greek original was lost, although quotations from it can be found in different ancient sources.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERMETIC WRITINGS IN EUROPEAN CULTURE

The *Corpus Hermeticum* caused a sensation in philosophical thinking and the Scholastic systems of late mediaeval Europe. The Church Fathers, who used long quotations from Hermetic literature to defend their own points of view, were convinced that Hermes Trismegistus was a sage who supposedly lived at the time of Moses. During the Renaissance, it was assumed that the *Corpus* had influenced the Jewish and Greek way of thinking. The Hermetic texts contained, after all, fragments of Jewish and Greek origin. This led to the conclusion that the *Corpus Hermeticum* was the oldest wisdom known to humanity. The Hermetic philosophy was regarded as the original tradition of wisdom and was identified with the *Wisdom of the Egyptians* mentioned and praised in *Exodus*, and in Plato's *Timaeus*. Thus, Hermes' teachings formed a strong argument for those thinkers who tried to break the stranglehold of the Aristotelian Scholastic way of thinking, which suffocated any kind of free *soul* development.

On the one hand, these works were eagerly read by the spiritual establishment, for example by cardinal Patrizzi, who was responsible for a comprehensive new edition in Ferrara in 1593, and specifically expressed the hope that this would replace the Aristotelian theology of Thomas of Aquino in schools and monasteries. On the other hand, a Hermetic like Giordano Bruno could not escape the accusation of being a heretic, and died at the stake in 1600.

Hermes' teachings were also an important instrument in the restoration of *magical thinking* in Europe. For another important collection of books, dealing with astrology, alchemy and magical texts, was also ascribed to Hermes. And it was argued that, if Hermes had been a historical figure and the Church Fathers freely quoted from his writings, and if in addition, it had been shown that the texts were indeed in accordance with the most important dogmas of the church, 'truth' and hence authority could also safely be attributed to the Hermetic teachings.

We know the consequences: the time was not yet ripe for it. We might even say that the sensitivity of fifteenth and sixteenth century people to the inexplicable and the original receptivity to the liberating Hermetic teachings, have ultimately done more bad than good. Thus, it could happen that, due to the radical redefinition of Christianity during the Reformation and the Counter Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, people were burnt at the stake because of a way of thinking which was regarded as the highest form of piety two centuries before.

After the seventeenth century, the Hermetic writings fell into oblivion with regard to the general public. The rationalists of the Enlightenment and the rigid Protestantism dismissed them as 'superstition', and until the middle of the last century, no academic wanted to get his fingers burnt over these 'Neo-Platonic' or 'antichristian falsifications'.

Yet, Hermetism has never been absent. Along the maligned path of alchemy, astrology and magic, Hermes Trismegistus formed, through the ages, a fixed point in the search for a liberating philosophy in the West. Its traces in Jacob Böhme's philosophy and in the traditions of the Rosicrucians and Freemasons were brought to light again by people like H P Blavatsky and G R S Mead.

The Hermetic writings can actually be understood only if we consider them to express experiences with the world of the spirit. These philosophical discourses are signposts to insight into the duality of human existence. In four books, J van Rijckenborgh unlocks the access to this knowledge.

J van Rijckenborgh calls the spiritual perception, the fullness of life and the truth expressed in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Tabula Smaragdina*, 'The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis'. Even though these texts were written at the beginning of our era, during the Hellenistic period, they lead far back into the history of Egypt. For the experiences with a truth that is unchanging, were already recorded in ancient Egypt in such a way that they were to be decisive in the way in which people in Europe later tried to approach *the spirit*.

How should we regard Hermes, then? Hermes Trismegistus is the representative of the knowledge of the divine truth, the insight the Gnosis offers. He was and is the prototype of the human being who, like Hermes (as the messenger of the Gods) or Thoth (the God of writing and the writer of the truth), opens himself for the knowledge of the universal truth of the two worlds: that of the physical human being and that of the spirit. He is the human being who finds and recognises this truth within himself and explains it to the people in the form of a philosophy.

This type of human being can also be called 'thrice great', because he approaches the truth with heart, head and hands, and strives to turn it into religion, science and the arts intended to restore the spirit, Pymander, in the human being. Such a type of human being tries to overcome himself through the power of the

original spirit. He truly becomes a new being and teaches others to walk this path, too. The mediaeval alchemists regarded Hermes Trismegistus as the example of a true alchemist: he who turns the lead of nature into the gold of the spirit.

The *Tabula Smaragdina*, the core of the Hermetic philosophy, contains the key to this oldest alchemical work. This key reads 'as above, so below'. The adage 'as above, so below' must be interpreted as a demand of the human being to bring what is below – nature which has gone its own paths – into harmony with what is higher, the spirit.

The world of nature and of the human being is unordered; it is no longer the image of the harmony and beauty of the spirit. By an alchemical process, during which the old natural consciousness withdraws, the new consciousness, focused on the spirit, can be revived. The *Tabula Smaragdina* describes this process as the effort to separate what is subtle from what is coarse.

THE GREAT QUESTIONS OF LIFE

The seventeen books of the *Corpus Hermeticum* make the knowledge of the truth, Gnosis, flare up by raising vital philosophical questions which have occupied Europe since its beginning. What is the relationship between spirit and nature, between soul and matter? Is it possible for a human being to know God, and how can he do this? What is good, what is evil? Do immortality and redemption exist for the human being, and how can he achieve them?

These questions are dealt with in dialogues between, on the one hand, Pymander and Hermes, and on the other hand Hermes and Tat or Aesclepius. This does not refer to persons, but to spiritual and soul powers in the human being. The human soul that is seeking the spirit,



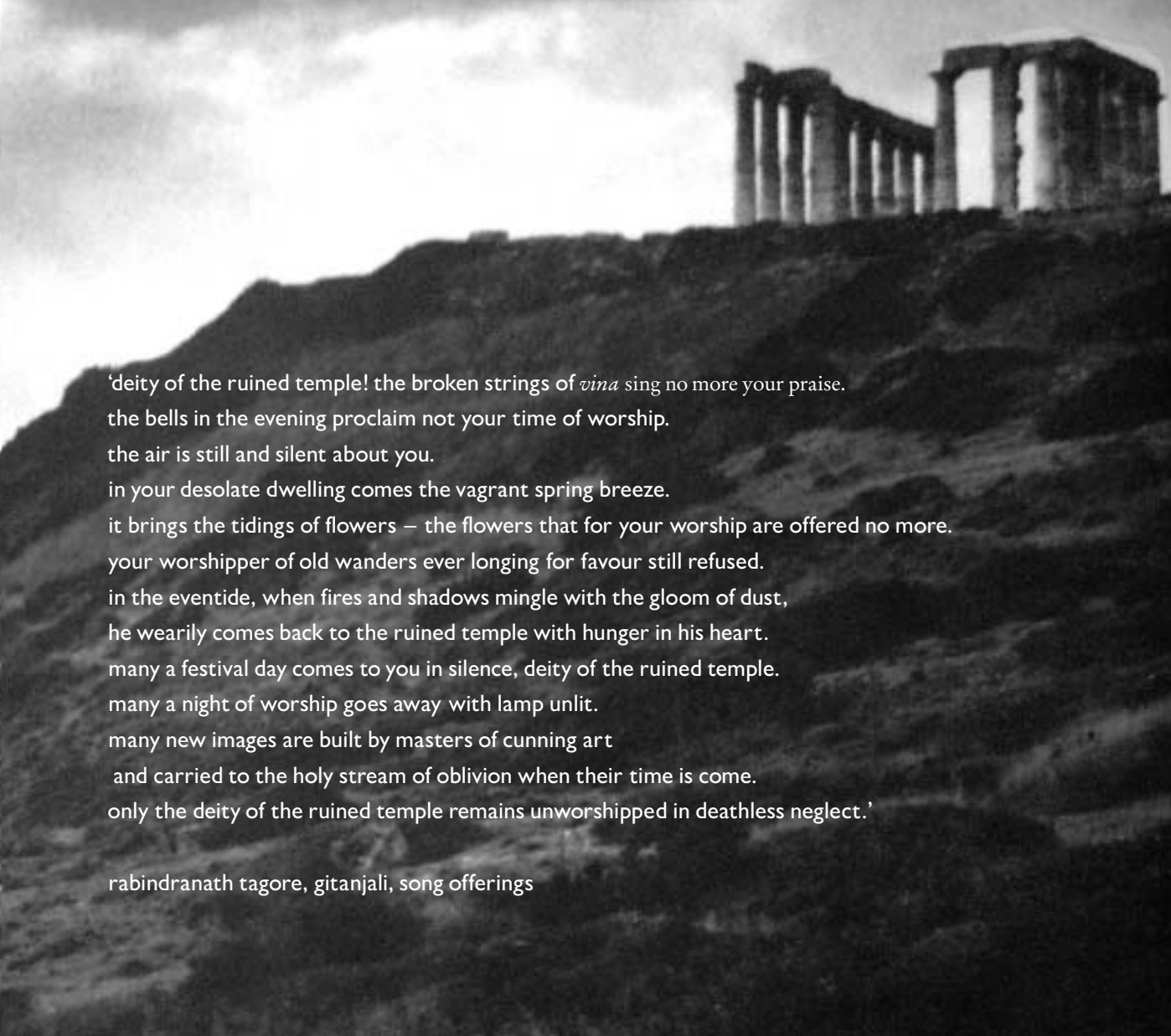
Hermes, meets Pymander, the spirit, and is enlightened by him. The enlightened soul, Hermes, passes this wisdom on to Tat and Aesclepius, the reorienting human will and the reorienting human mind.

THE EGYPTIAN ARCH-GNOSIS

In the first part of *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis and its call in the eternal present*, J van Rijckenborgh explains the fundamental state of the human being, who is bound to transience, whereas eternity is his destiny. This explanation is based on the first two books of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (CH I and II),

On the basis of books 3 through 9 (CH III-IX), the second part outlines the conditions and the phases of the path of liberation. The condition is the human being's insight into his true state, a state in which he, during his current life, does not know God. To undo this separation, a farewell is necessary: to be able to be nourished with the powers of the spirit, there is no other way than to sever the link with the forces of nature. In this way, he removes the cause of death, the 'countermovement', the life opposed to the impulses of the spirit, and he achieves immortality by his unification with the immortal truth.

The author describes the obstacles on



'deity of the ruined temple! the broken strings of *vina* sing no more your praise.
the bells in the evening proclaim not your time of worship.
the air is still and silent about you.
in your desolate dwelling comes the vagrant spring breeze.
it brings the tidings of flowers – the flowers that for your worship are offered no more.
your worshipper of old wanders ever longing for favour still refused.
in the eventide, when fires and shadows mingle with the gloom of dust,
he wearily comes back to the ruined temple with hunger in his heart.
many a festival day comes to you in silence, deity of the ruined temple.
many a night of worship goes away with lamp unlit.
many new images are built by masters of cunning art
and carried to the holy stream of oblivion when their time is come.
only the deity of the ruined temple remains unworshipped in deathless neglect.'

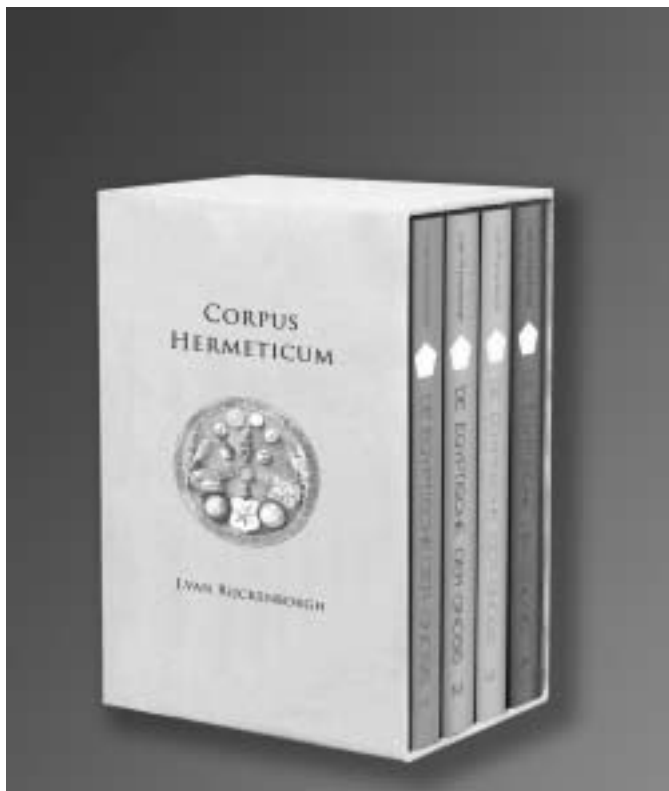
rabindranath tagore, gitanjali, song offerings

this path in part three, on the basis of books 10, 11 and 12 (CH X, XI and XII). They refer among other things to the human being's confusion with regard to good and evil, to the effects of his intellect, attuned to self-interest, which tie him to the fields of politics, society, culture and religion, and finally to the human inclination to use the powers he receives from the world of the spirit for his own needs, and thus to betray the spirit.

Part four contains the books 13 through 17 (CH XIII-XVII) which describe the results of the liberating path. The human heart and thinking are purified by the truth, the Holy Spirit. One conse-

quence of this purification is that the laws of karma lose their compelling influence. A new consciousness and thinking develop with which the human being learns to recognise the truth. Then he no longer creates images of the truth, but lives in accordance with its structure. In his explanations, J van Rijckenborgh uses elements derived from Gnostic thinking, the thinking of Mani and Catharism. He fits closely with the thinking of Paracelsus and Jacob Böhme.

It is not surprising that there are also Hermetic works among the Gnostic Nag Hammadi finds. Both systems had their greatest blossoming during the same per-



iod, and the central issue in both of them was to enable the human being to participate in 'Gnosis' or 'nous'. The difference can be found in the starting point. The Gnosis, for example in the story of the Pistis Sophia, starts from a human point of view, emphasising the limited, always struggling thinking as an obstacle. Hermetism starts *on the basis of* Gnosis or nous, personified by Hermes or Pymander (Poimandres).

In the Nag Hammadi treatise *The discourse about the Eighth and Ninth Sphere*, both developments merge in the seven spheres through which the candidate passes during the last phase of his initiation. The seven planetary spheres are thereby regarded as limitations which have to be overcome by the human being, after which he becomes, in the eighth sphere, a Spirit-Soul human being.

In conclusion, we quote from the fourth part of *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis*: 'So through human heads, human

hearts and human actions, you too can, and will, be touched by the truth, when you prepare yourself for it. The Hierarchy of lies is sending out its radiations and making every effort to mislead. But the Hierarchy of Truth is also sending out its radiations and performing its work, and all who open themselves to it will certainly receive it.

The truth not only comes to you through the spoken and written word. No, the truth is an astral principle which, for a very long time, has been concentrated and made available by human beings, to human beings. [...] History tells of many human king-priests who brought the truth to us in word, deed and power. [...] Time has dimmed the memory of their messages and the enemy has spoiled them to a great extent. [...] But... nevertheless quite useless! Because the truth lives. It is, in all eternity!'

SOURCES:

J van Rijckenborgh, *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis and its call in the eternal present; newly proclaimed and explained from the Tabula Smaragdina and the Corpus Hermeticum of Hermes Trismegistus; parts 1-4*. Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, The Netherlands, 1982-1994.
Rabindranath Tagore, Gitanjali, Song Offerings, verse 88. <http://www.allspirit.co.uk/gitanjali.html>

THE MAN WHO LISTENED TO THE STONE

The following lines from Angelus Silesius' The Heavenly Wanderer (Cherubinischen Wandermann): 'If Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem were born, but not in you, you were yet forlorn', signify a call to be inwardly alert. They describe the grace which befalls a human being when he becomes inwardly aware of the divine.

Yet, grace can never come from one side. The human being always has to exert himself for it. When the grace of the inner Christmas becomes a reality, this special moment has been prepared by a life focused on it. Some people accomplish this preparation without severe conflicts: because they live a rather balanced life, they

can always take the necessary next step.

The lives of other people are characterised by desperate struggling. An example of this is expressed by the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke, who recognised his own process in the struggle of the French painter Paul Cézanne. The not-understood task in an artist's life: 'How can I represent an inner living truth?' and 'How can I express an experience that changes everything?' led Cézanne to anger and despair. Rilke described how Cézanne painted without apparent joy. To him, each of his paintings became an object of fierce conflict. Cézanne did not succeed in capturing on canvas what he wanted to express. None of his works were able to meet his great inner demands. He searched for 'la réalisation', for the realisation, for the reality that ema-

Rainer Maria Rilke, born in Prague on 4 December 1875, exemplarily expressed the attitude of life of modern people and their quest for bearable inner experiences. Between 1899 and 1900, he undertook two trips to Russia where he met with Leo Tolstoy. The 'mystic' Russia made him aware of the essence of his being for the first time. In 1920 he wrote: 'How much do I owe to Russia; it made me the man I am now. It is the inner fatherland of all my instincts; my inner origin lies there.' The poetic result of these journeys were the Stundenbuch (The

Book of Hours) and the Geschichten vom lieben Gott (Stories of Our Dear Lord). Although he later rejected most of these early works because they did not yet absolutely correspond with his innermost beliefs, we can nevertheless find pearls of spiritual knowledge in them, for example the quoted passages from the Stories of Our Dear Lord.

The second period of Rilke's life is characterised by his writings about the apocalyptic appearance of modern times. He was confronted with this in Paris where he worked as Auguste Rodin's secretary be-



nates so intensely from the subject itself that it makes an indelible impression, yes, is, in fact, indestructible.

Rilke describes how Cézanne learned to depict reality ever more objectively without making any value judgement: 'Again and again, you feel how necessary it is to surpass even love. It is, after all, natural that you love the objects when you are making them. But when you show this, you make them less good. You judge them. [...] What you then paint is "this is what I love" instead of "here it is", whereby everyone has to look very closely and find out for himself if I loved it. [...] This use of love in anonymous work, which produces such pure things, has possibly never again been so successfully realised as by the old Cézanne.'

Thus, not judging things resulted in

Rondanini Pietà. Michelangelo (1475-1564) worked for ten years on this sculpture, until six days before his death, but he did not finish the work. The artist tried to find the perfect artistic form for expressing the spiritual values of the Christ in a piece of marble.

tween 1906 and 1907. The well-known line 'Who speaks of victory? To endure is everything', testifies to this. In 1911, he travelled to Egypt, and later that year he moved to Switzerland. This was the result of an invitation to give a lecture in Zurich, although the true reason was his wish to escape from the post-war turmoil. Thus he was able, after a long time, to continue to work on the Duino Elegies. The search for a suitable and affordable house, however, proved to be very difficult. Rilke stayed in Soglio, Locarno and Berg am Irchel. It was not until the summer of

1921 that he found his final abode in the Château de Muzot near Sierre in the Canton Wallis. In 1922, Rilke's Maecenas Werner Reinhart (1884-1951) bought the building and let Rilke live there for free.

At this point, a very productive period began, and in a few weeks time, Rilke completed the Duino Elegies. Not long after, he wrote both parts of his poetry cycle Sonnets to Orpheus (Sonnette an Orpheus). These are considered to be among the best of Rilke's work. Rilke had suffered such severe health problems since 1923, that he had to be admitted into a sanator-

the disappearance of any differentiation between the painter and his paintings. It was Cézanne's aspiration that 'the landscape was painting itself through me and that I am its consciousness.'

Searching for the miracle in what is ordinary led Rilke to a shock of recognition that resulted in a change in the way he wrote poems. He recognised the turning point in Cézanne's painting. Thanks to Cézanne, Rilke felt his own work was confirmed. His poems were called *Neue Gedichte - New Poems* (1907-1908). They were new because Rilke was no longer inspired by his own subjective fantasy.¹

It is a development that is often compared with an unpaved road that leads to the goal. In order to walk this path it must be made passable by removing all protrusions and unevenness. In his legend, Rilke also speaks of the man 'who listened to stones'. This man was Michelangelo, who 'peeled' the raw stone with his hands and cut off everything that concealed and covered the lofty image. It was as if Michelangelo could hear the stone whispering in a soft voice:

*'Michelangelo,' God exclaimed,
'who is in the stone?'*
*Michelangelo was startled,
his hands trembling.*
*Then he answered as gently as he could:
'You, my God, who else.
But I cannot reach You.'*
*At this moment, the Spirit experienced
that He also was in the stone,
and became frightened and anxious.*
*All of heaven was just a stone,
And He was locked inside it,
and hoped for Michelangelo's hands
which would set him free,
and He heard them come closer,
yet still far away.*

And when the sculptor began 'to release God from the stone', he heard a voice asking: 'Michelangelo, who is within you?'

Michelangelo stopped for a moment, cupped his forehead in his hands and said: 'You, my God, who else?'

SOURCES

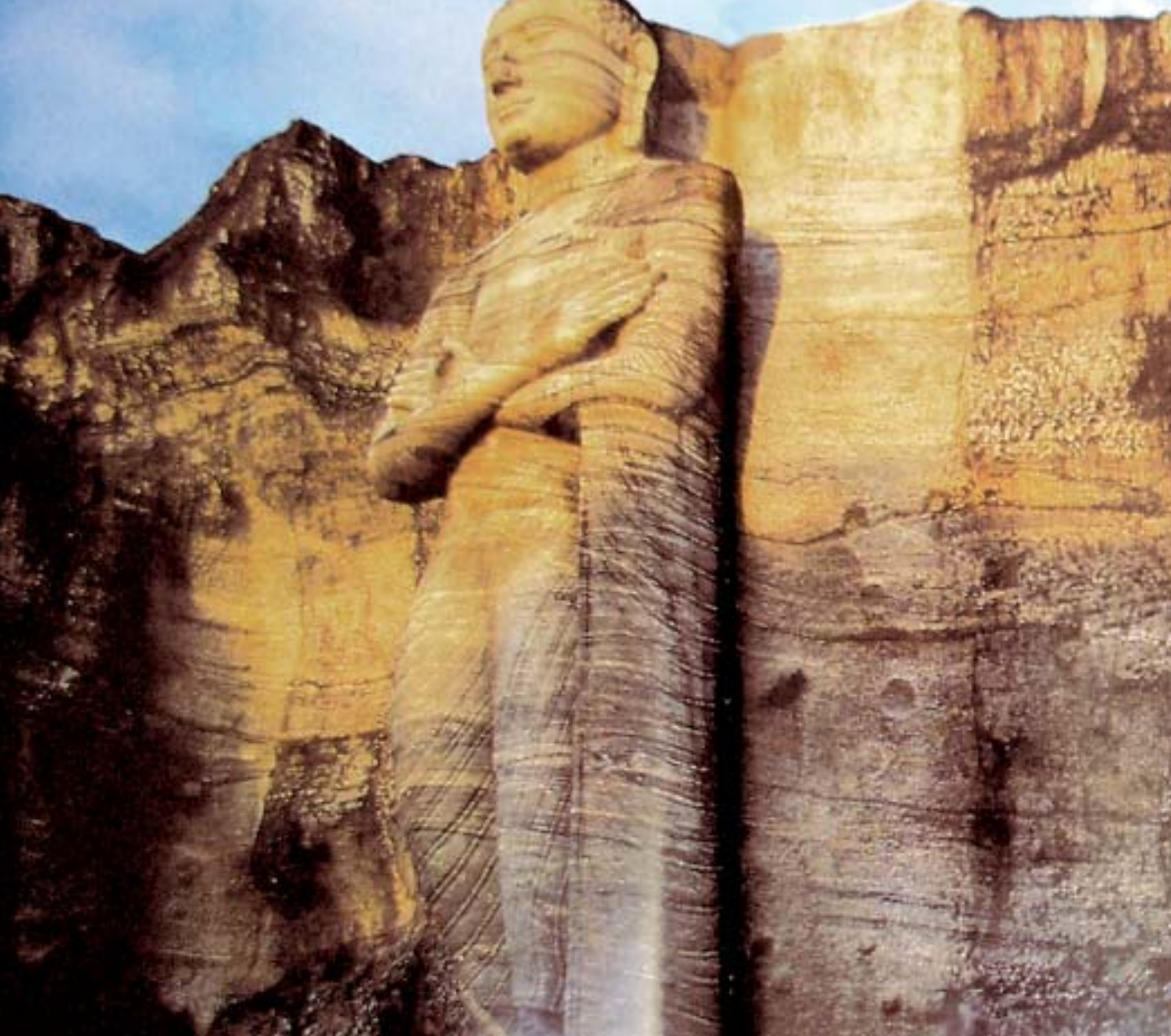
¹ Carine Pulinckx. Maha Kuruna Nieuwsbrief (Newsletter) no. 4, 2004.

ium for quite some time. His long stay in Paris was an attempt to combat his illness by changing the place and the circumstances of his life. During these last years, between 1923 and 1926, he wrote many poems, as well as an extensive collection of lyric works in French, which has not been adequately appreciated to this day.

The Duino Elegies describe, often in mysterious images, a spiritual path. Where does the encounter with the 'angels' lead, the small ego's so terribly great law of life? In the Sonnets to Orpheus, Rilke

introduces the new voices with which he was confronted inwardly.

Rilke's whole life was a struggle to liberate himself from set forms and conventions, from the self-assured I, to a surrender to a greater reality. Apparently, a divine spark was active in him, which wanted to take shape both in his life and in his literary work. Therefore, it was essential for Rilke to 'listen' to the divine sounds in all of existence and to 'praise' the higher being and not just to 'express' his ideas on his own authority.



NATURE HUMAN BEING AND SPIRIT HUMAN BEING

After an address by Z W Leene

In order to understand what wisdom is, it is good to reflect on the natural human being and the spiritual human being. The difference between the natural human being and the spiritual human being is not simple. Many people think that a natural human being keeps to what belongs to the earth, while a spiritual human being is concerned with the superterrestrial, the transcendental. They are possibly mistaken. The law of creation that guides the nature human being is self-maintenance, and this is necessary, if he is to survive.




The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception¹ explains that the basis for self-maintenance stems from prehistoric times, when natural urges determined life. The innocent, guiltless continuation of the product of nature proves to be the foundation of the building of the spiritual world order. The human being can never be blamed for the continuation of the natural urges, because he is part of nature and is

not aware of a spiritual world order.

However, when the human being of this world becomes conscious of a higher purpose of life, the natural drive becomes a burden that has to be removed. This person will then be called as to his true nature, in order to turn every *egocentric* drive into a *theocentric* enthusiasm. This can be described with such an old-fashioned word as ‘conversion’ or ‘repen-

Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka, approx. 1150. Standing and lying Buddha (14.5 m high).



tance.' This is where a large part of humanity falls victim to error. The human being does not want to bid farewell to self-preservation; basically, he does not want to break away from it. And then we see that he begins to build an aggravated, intensified nature drive, which then turns to the supersensory world.

We discover that people are unable to differentiate between a natural human being and a spiritual human being. When a human being is living consciously as to his natural urges, he actually turns against his divine nucleus, and knowledge becomes a curse. The door to wisdom is irrevocably shut. This is characteristic of our time.

We also see that true insight is born in only a few. We are kept busy and a desperate struggle is fought to be happy, to attain sham happiness. The nature-born human being says: Let's eat and drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die! He who seeks other nourishment, but not higher or nobler nourishment, can be satisfied for many years without ever becoming a spiritually oriented human being. He remains a nature human being who, equally naturally, utterly lacks insight. The cries of joy and the rejoicing about knowledge turn into a prelude to his downfall.

How do we attain true insight? Not through occult practices, because in that way we create a distorted image of something that we do not yet possess inwardly and hence do not understand. Thus we develop dangerous and black magical properties. All of this is a pure natural drive from which true wisdom turns away. If you were sensitive and clairvoyant, we might say that you have an extra world of which you do not understand anything!

We are not satisfied by being able to observe another world, and this perception will lead you astray, if you remain a nature human being!

The point is that we possess an intense longing for a new and correct understanding, for a lofty way of thinking. We cannot attain anything through our continuous efforts. Above all, we should understand the things that *are*. We should not reach for things that surpass our ability to comprehend, because in this way we would be put on a sideline. It does not matter whether we reach for occult knowledge or for material satisfaction – it is the same nourishment! This is why we remain hungry because we lack knowledge of the Truth and true Wisdom.

There is, however, a fellowship with God, which means heaven for those people who know and understand it. This fellowship begins after we redirect our longing. Initially, we become acquainted with the spirit of God as a feeling of self-reproach. Then we feel judged during every minute of wrong behaviour or thinking. Here, all bookish knowledge and mystical musing stops. Then we perceive our true, nature-bound self! From this point of view, the spirit of God can become a judgement for the nature human being.

There is a big difference between the striving human being who doesn't want to miss a letter and the truly spiritual human being. To recognise this difference is the condition for gaining insight. The spiritual human being does not strive for supersensory development. It is the disquieted human being who knows that this nature cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, even though this nature is the servant of that which is spiritual. The sincere spiritual fighter knows the spiritual-di-



vine; the spiritual-human is only secondary. Not his own will moves him, but the absolute will. This is why his thinking rises above the limitations of his physical existence. In other words: a truly spiritual human being can never be imprisoned in an opinion which is a cage, because he has *seen* and tasted the Truth! Such a person can never mistake the natural urges for the Divine-spiritual, for then he would be bound to an opinion.

The truly spiritual human being, whom I would like to call the 'converted human being', does not simply follow the precepts of an institution, a group or a church, but rather looks within himself for the impediments that obstruct his insight. He does not begin by exploring some spiritual problem, but rather by reflecting on his own problem. Then he will be able to correct himself. And the more obstructions he discovers, the more he will remove. The more he removes, the more open he becomes for the spiritual-divine impulse. In this way, he will long for insight and obtain insight. This stream of wisdom will constantly become stronger to the extent that he corrects himself. This stream of wisdom which expands his insight, will keep pace with the efforts he devotes to his inner purification. This is not the striving for the most sublime, but the sublimation of the lowest.

He who knows this path, also knows that insight will be his share. Even if he longs for it for a thousand years and forgets the easy path, this inner development, his longing will be in vain! If we go on maintaining the nature human being, this will lead to being bound. If, however, we preserve the spiritual aspect through time, we will become more than victors!

The path of the spiritual human being

leads irrevocably to the Christ, who is the victor and who is called the 'Lord of Wisdom'. He is the driving power that can propel the spiritual human being on the path of experience. No one can satisfy our longing for wisdom, even if he possesses this wisdom within himself. Even if the wisdom were written down, sung and proclaimed with strength and with meekness for another 2000 years, it would still not mean anything but point to the source from which all of us must drink, from the primitive human being to the saint.

When we have realised insight and wisdom within ourselves, we know it, and we feel an urge to share our spiritual joy with others. But let us not forget that there is also an urge of nature, the drive of nature, which is often stronger than the drive of the 'spirit'.

Examine whether the spirit that stimulates us is pure and divine! Examine whether it is reborn of the spirit of Truth! He who is reborn of the spirit is respectful and silent when sanctity enters his life. With a clear mind, in loving surrender and touched by the suffering of the world, the spiritual human being is arising. And all of his natural circumstances, his entire life, reflect this process, which is accomplished within him in the spirit. Words of wisdom will be on his lips, while the joy of his heart irradiates his being.

¹ Max Heindel, *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*. The Rosicrucian Fellowship, Ocean-side, California, USA, 1920.

THE UNITY OF THE PILGRIMS ON THE PATH



It takes about one and a half hours for a group of approximately a thousand people to pass one by one through the narrow entrance of Lombrives, the great church of the Cathars in the Pyrenees. When everyone has arrived in the huge cave, the lights are switched off and people stay in silence and darkness for a while. In the innermost part of this mountain, the silence and darkness are intense. The eyes and ears, which are in constant motion, even when we are asleep, come to rest here in a very special way. It seems as if time has stopped. Past, present and future merge, at the level of the soul. In this merging at the level of the soul, the call of a special sensory organ becomes noticeable.

It is the sensory organ with which we can experience the unity with all who have walked, and will walk, the path of the Gnosis in the past, present and future. Weeks later, in our everyday life, closing our eyes and thinking back is enough. Then there is this unity from Lombrives again, the unity of the pilgrims on the path.

This unity not only exists in the South of France, but everywhere and above everything. It is not bound to any place. It is like a radiant light and a deep darkness, which the seekers do not perceive with their eyes. It is silence and sound. But the seekers do not hear it with their ears, because it vibrates through their whole system. This unity surpasses time and space, now and always!

'Put my eyes out for me: I can see you, close my ears for me: I can hear you, and without feet I can walk to you, and without a mouth I can still implore you. Break my arms off for me, I fasten you with my heart as with a hand, hold my heart from me, and my brain will throb, and if into my brain you throw the flaming brand, thus shall I carry you upon my blood.'

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)

HE, WHO LEADS US TO THE SUMMIT

'Again and again, by countless paths, my goal returns to you; and believes to finally surmise happiness for its lack of peace.

Constantly we seek the one thing that does not affect the multitude:

May one day appear to us, that which leads us to the summit.

One day, we will stand up there, where the earth merges with the sun...

Then the form – the so-called we – may perish,

and we become what we truly are.'

Christian Morgenstern (1871-1914)

SOURCES:

Rainer Maria Rilke, poem 'Lösche mir die Augen aus' from: *Das Buch von der Pilgerschaft*. Translated from German by Samuel Sinner. <http://drsinner.journalspace.com>

Christian Morgenstern, poem 'Er, der uns zum Gipfel führt' from: *Melancholie; Nachlese*. Translation from German, Pentagram.

MANI – THE GIFT OF THE LIGHT

*‘Take up your cross.
Discard the world.
Free yourself from your blood ties.
Subdue the old self.
Build a new self.
Fulfil the holy law.
Make room for the dove with white wings.
Place no serpent next to her.
Rejoice, my beloved.’*

Anyone suspecting a deeper truth behind everything recognises in Mani a messenger who propagated and expressed the divine truth. J van Rijckenborgh, who had already devoted an extensive discourse to Mani’s teachings in 1938, put it this way: ‘Mani’s teachings are one with the purpose and essence of Christianity, as proclaimed by the Rosicrucians through the ages. This is why Mani is one of the most important sources of inspiration for the Rosicrucians.’

In the opening words of the symposium on Mani, held on 7 May 2005 at the Renova conference centre in Bilthoven, a quote was read from one of the previous symposia: ‘We have come here to taste something, to experience something of reality; to inhale the fragrance of the living truth that arises from the one original source. This is not a rational process, not something we can think up. It is always new, sparkling, unexpected.’ Mani, too, speaks of this fragrance in his songs:

*‘I reached the gate to the garden of the living,
the fragrance of the trees flowed towards me.’*

And:
*‘On the banks of the Euphrates a youth was seated
and made music in the fragrance of life
that surrounded him.’*

IT IS THE RADIATION OF THE TRUE LIFE
ITSELF

At an early age, when he was 12 years old, Mani knew himself to be surrounded by this special fragrance. His divine companion, the Paraclete as he calls him, was revealed to him:

‘When my body was completed, this magnificent glorious reflection of myself descended before my countenance, entirely unexpectedly. [...] And thus, through the Paraclete, everything was unveiled to me that was and is to come, and everything the eye sees and the ear hears, and that which thinking thinks. Through him, I became acquainted with everything. He made me see the All, and I became one single body and one single spirit.’

These words contain a promise, a view of another, higher life, a comfort for every human being who knows that there is more, who knows this deep longing, this homesickness that can clearly be heard in Mani’s words. Mani means Pearl of Light. It is the divine seed in the human heart, or as Mani calls it: the highest rose of the father. The Rosicrucians also speak of the rose of the heart that must be liberated from its imprisonment to fully develop



again. 'Kindle your lights', Mani says, 'Let us make haste to undo the chains of the body, so that the new human being who lies in bondage within them is liberated.'

THE GOSPEL OF MANI

The first lecture, *The Gospel of Mani*, was held by J van Oort, co-author of the book *De Keulse Mani-codex* (The Cologne Mani Codex). Among other things, he spoke about Mani's life:

'Mani was born in 216 AD in the neighbourhood of present-day Baghdad. It is not clear whether "Mani" was his real name. The Cologne Mani Codex relates that Mani was raised in a kind of commune, a very orthodox Jewish group, comparable to, for example, the Essenes in Qum Ran on the Dead Sea. They accepted

Jesus as the saviour, sotèr (rescuer). Hence, this concerned a Christian-Jewish community. They adhered to the concept of God as the cause of everything, including evil. Young Mani objected more and more vehemently against this idea. He disengaged himself from this very rigidly orthodox environment, in which external rituals, purifications and ablutions were strictly observed. The Codex shows,' Van Oort continues, 'how Mani's gnosis develops by appealing to the divine self of the human being Mani.'

Mani spoke of his 'heavenly companion', his 'syzygos', his true self, of whom he said: 'I recognised Him and understood that He is my self from whom I once was separated.' Mani's gnostic thinking represents a path which seeks to give insight into the mystery of good and

Persian miniature with pre-eminently universal symbols: the Lightbearer who defeats the dragon or the serpent.

evil, yet reaches further and deeper than simple dualism. Knowledge of God and self-knowledge fully coincide in Mani's teachings. Striking parallels can be found between Mani's teachings, Manichaeism, and Islam, that is to say the Koran. The Koran also contains a strong gnostic element, as do many Jewish and Christian sources. Thus there is a clear correspondence between the syzygos, the divine companion or twin brother of Mani, the Gaibril of Mohammed and the eternal Christ.

'My son, I have been expecting you in all the prophets, that you would come and I would rest in you. For you are my refuge, you are my first-born son who rules unto eternity.' This profound and essential fragment from the gospel of the Hebrews testifies to it. 'Heretic' movements often testify in a startling way to the original, ancient Jewish Christianity, as can also be found in the canonical gospels, and

very clearly in the Gospel of John.

At his baptism in the river Jordan, Jesus becomes the Son of God: He becomes conscious of his calling as the Christ: 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' This inner calling or awakening can also be found in the newly discovered Gospel of Judas: 'And when I (Jesus) was baptized, behold, a cloud of light surrounded me. [...] And I heard a voice out of the cloud of light and it sounded above me: Oh Allogenes (someone of another race, a stranger in this transient world, the spiritual human being, here: Jesus) Oh Allogenes/Jesus, your prayer has been answered and I (the heavenly Christ) have been sent to you.'

At his baptism, Jesus became aware of his true calling: at that moment, the Christ – the eternal image, the immortal syzygos – descended upon him. The eternal Christ descended upon Adam, the prototype, the archetype of the human



Two pages from the Cologne Mani Codex (enlarged, the original measures 3.5 x 4.5 cm), of which the Greek capitals have been written in calligraphy with great care.

being, Mani says, as well as upon later prophets like Seth, Enoch, Noah... But the fullness of the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus!

This is how Mani saw it and he called himself an 'apostle of Jesus Christ'. In the Cologne Codex we can read: 'I, Mani, apostle of Jesus Christ after the will of God, the Father of Truth, from whom I originate, who lives forever in all eternity, as He was before all and will be forever after. Everything that has been made and will be made, exists through His power. From Him I have come. By His will I do exist. Through Him all truth has been revealed to me, and I am from His truth. What He unveiled, I have beheld: the eternal truth. [...] What God revealed to me, I explained to those who longed for the truth.'

Mani follows in the footsteps of Jesus. His gospel must be assimilated inwardly. It implies the encounter with the inner Christ, the true self. Then the human being attains true insight, 'knowledge' or gnosis. Or, as Paul, whose statements Mani shared, remarks: 'It is no longer I (my 'old I', my ego) who live, but Christ who lives in me.' (Galatians 2:20).

Manichaeism extended from the Atlantic in the west to the Pacific in the east, a gnostic-Christian world church with millions of followers. It was an Ecclesia working from, and linked with, the manifestation field of the universal Christ. If it is true that Mohammed is in many respects the last witness of the earliest Christian theology and that Islam has, with regard to the ever returning true prophet, preserved the proto-Christian tradition in which Jesus was the most important of all the prophets, this offers a

wide and hopeful perspective. If the aspect of the universal Christ were understood, many religious ideas would then be combined and many conflicting religious views would be bridged.

THE COLOGNE MANI CODEX AND THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS

After this lecture, which referred to the universal gnostic-Christian foundation of Manichaeism, professor G Quispel took the floor to introduce and present the book *De Keulse Mani-codex* (The Cologne Mani Codex), written by Van Oort and himself. This codex was discovered in Egypt in 1969. The exact place of the discovery is not known. Via antique dealers from Cairo, this ancient manuscript, measuring not more than 3,5 by 4,5 cm – in fact an unsightly 'little lump' (Van Oort) of parchment – was purchased by Cologne university, hence the name *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*. The text was written in Greek capitals, presumably at the end of the fourth century. This smallest known booklet from antiquity, the parchment pages of which were caked together, must have counted approximately 192 pages. The letters are less than one millimetre in size!

The Cologne Mani Codex contains the biography of Mani, who laid the foundations of a gnostic world religion in the third century AD. The first sentence of this small work is: 'Of the development of His body', which may be interpreted as 'The birth and development of a gnostic body', the Manichaean ecclesia. It describes Mani's origin, his youth and his first missionary journeys.

'The future, ladies and gentlemen, is

gnose-coloured.’ With this witty remark, professor Quispel began his short but powerful lecture. After having drawn attention for a moment to *The Gospel of Thomas*, which is in its third edition, and the publication of the two-part *Dictionary of Gnostic and Western Esotericism*, the speaker addressed the subject of Manichaeism. This was not a national religion, like for example Judaism and Hinduism, but a *world religion*, like Buddhism. There is no other religion which is that simple: the spirit saves the soul from matter. It was a Christian Church, without division, existing for a thousand years! But also: a *gnostic* religion – ‘Gnosis as world religion’ – as shown by the *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*. In the human being lives the divine spark that has to be saved in order to ‘heal the wound of the Fall and make God whole again.’ To all gnosis, in Gnosticism, God means *being in motion*. Professor Quispel linked the texts of the Cologne codex to the apocryphal Gospel of Judas, in which Seth Allogenes is also mentioned (Seth, the son of Adam, the prototype of the spiritual human being).

‘It seems as if Seth Allogenes is referred to here. There is a description of how Seth ascends, surrounded by a cloud of light. In the same way, Moses on Mount Sinai ascended into “the darkness” in which God is, according to the Bible. Moses is seen as the initiate and prototype of the mystic who ascends above space and time and *then* experiences God in the night of the senses and the night of the soul.’

This became the major theme of Christian mysticism of a later period: by turning inwardly, the human being rises above willing and thinking, to reach the

One. Quispel shows startling connections, giving insight into the unsuspected depths and roots of our Christian civilisation. He concludes: ‘Is it not remarkable that for us, post-modern humanity, atheism seems a colossal shot in the dark, while the man with the beard does not convince either. Is there really not something that is the origin of everything and gives meaning to our lives?’

THE MANICHAEAN MIRACLE

François Favre is the author of the very extensively documented book on Mani: *Mani – Christ d’Orient, Bouddha d’Occident* (Mani – Christ of the East, Buddha of the West). His contribution to the symposium was clearly presented by Mrs Yde Vries and was entitled *La miracle Manicheën – Het Manichese Wonder*. (The Manichaean Miracle)

A wide panorama unfolds, dramatic *and* inspiring, tragic *and* shining. On the one hand, the inner and esoteric side of Mani’s teachings, his cosmology in which light and darkness, divinity and evil exist completely separated from each other. It is a moving myth of the physical human being, the methods of the powers of darkness, the sacrifice of the light, the alchemy of the light in matter, and the liberation of the light soul, an inner alchemy expressed in symbols, imagery and words.

On the other hand, the spreading of Manichaeism over many countries *and* the resulting heavy persecutions. The enormous vitality of Mani’s church is outstanding; it was a force which, in spite of intense repression, opposition and suppression by the orthodoxy, (Christian, Buddhist and Taoist clerical power



Manichaean brothers; China, approx. 10th century AD.

blocks) developed for a thousand years and managed to fill countless souls with the eternal joyful light of the universal Christ.

What a great past, which is still evident in the present! For the spirit power that shaped Manichaeism as a world church has not been lost and cannot be eradicated!

The image of the light cross rises up before the human being who is sensitive to it; Mani, disciple of Jesus, soter, saviour, light soul, world soul.

THE MIXTURE OF LIGHT AND MATTER

The last lecture of this inspiring day began with the above quoted text from the Cologne Mani Codex: 'I, Mani, Apostle of Jesus Christ [...] And this truth I have revealed to my fellow pilgrims.' The speaker, Mr C Goud, emphasised that all Gnostics draw from one source. But what

is revealed to them in symbols after the rebirth of their soul, they translate into words and images intelligible for the time in which they perform their task and work. The gnostic human being possesses an inner guideline, by means of which the topicality of Mani's teachings can be experienced and recognised.

Characteristic of Gnosticism is the duality in creation, but also the duality of the human being, and the significance of the Christ. In Mani's teachings, this duality is represented by light and matter or darkness, completely separated from each other, although it is noted that matter (hylè) is conscious, has intelligence. The kingdom of the light is represented as the tree of life in Mani's cosmology; the kingdom of darkness as the tree of evil.

Mani also states that light and matter are mixed. Why? The ruler of darkness who cannot find satisfaction within himself, is full of jealousy of the kingdom of

the light and tries with his subjects/demons to cross its border. God, who rules in the kingdom of the light, the 'Father of Greatness', the origin and source of love, does not fight, however, but brings a sacrifice. From Him, the first human being emanates, the 'strong son' who, equipped with five forces, descends into the kingdom of darkness. The five forces represent the light soul or light *vesture* (this has been beautifully expressed in the *Song of the Pearl*). This living soul – the five sons – is swallowed up by the ruler of darkness and his five sons.

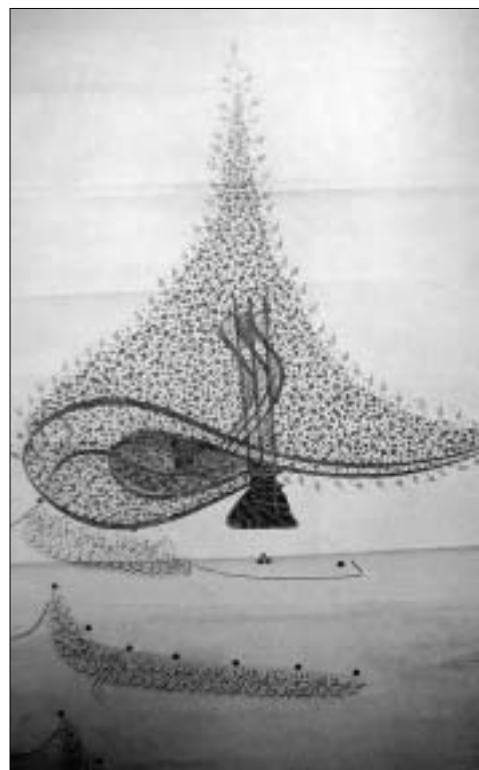
In the Manichaean text we can read that the five sons of the light 'crawl into their intestines', they are caught in the hylè, matter, but... they are not affected by it! From then on there is a light element in the kingdom of darkness, a liberating, healing element. The darkness is affected by the sacrifice of the light, not by fighting or by power.

Mani's cosmology depicts in many gradations the sacrifice and the ultimate salvation of all light elements from the kingdom of darkness. These light elements (divine sparks) are imprisoned in the natural, hyllic human beings. Yet, the human being who has been generated from dark matter, does not have the ability to liberate the light element by means of his own power, and the light soul cannot do this either! The light soul is in fact – overshadowed by dark matter – *ignorant* concerning its divine origin!

Just as the first human being has a five-fold soul, so the hyllic, the physical human being possesses a fivefold soul, developed and formed from the forces of darkness. Similarly the light soul is potentially five-fold, but it finds itself in a 'sleep of death'.

The purpose is to awaken the light soul, to reactivate its five soul aspects, called patience, faith, perfection, love and wisdom by Mani. But they can only unfold by admitting the forces from the kingdom of the light. How can a human being awaken the light soul? Mani puts it this way:

*'What should I do, Lord,
that I would truly live?
Rest your hands,
and clothe yourself in pure truth.
Allow love into your consciousness.
And faith to your mind.
Perfect your thoughts.
Allow permanence to your decisions and
wisdom to your considerations [...]
Thus you shall live, oh soul.'*



The speaker outlines another activity of Jesus as the Sun Radiance: the overshadowing of the teachers and founders of religious movements, as Paraclete, Holy Spirit. In turn, they awaken the light soul in the human being, thereby affirming it in the truth, in the light. But as long as they still find themselves in the material sphere, they are vulnerable and can be affected by the forces of dark matter. Only when the light soul has been fully liberated from matter and has been taken up into the light aeon – a space between the dualistic world and the kingdom of the light – is it free from vice. In a future development, the light aeon will merge with the kingdom of the light. The light soul of the first human being participates in this, it is one of countless perfect light beings.

The light element in the individual human being, linked with the collectivity of light elements, is sometimes called the world soul. Because the sacrifice of the first human being is the sacrifice of the son of the Father of Greatness, the suffering world soul is represented as Jesus on the cross, the cross of light.

To Mani, the Father of Greatness is God. But God and love are one. Mani's teachings are permeated by the sacrifice of love and by the idea that a whole chain of sacrifices must be realised by the human being through the love of the Father of Greatness. For through his love, the Father of Greatness generates the first human being, the Christ. Everything that happens after that: the salvation of the first human being, the creation of the world and all nature kingdoms, can be seen as emanations, flows or *sacrifices* of the Father, and the human being shall accomplish this salvation *by carrying out*

his own sacrifice.

Mani says about his life as an apostle of the light:

*'I have no other sorrow
than only this:
because of those souls
that rejected hope,
and did not inwardly confirm themselves
in the truth!*

*Because of the baneful ending of these
souls,
all apostles and fathers, the true prophets,
who manifest themselves from God,
have sacrificed themselves
in great exertion and terrible need,
to save these souls
from the second death.*

*Not one single apostle
asked for his reward on this earth.
Yet they spent all their time
in pain and suffering,
and took upon themselves
the crucifixion of their body
to save the souls
from the great ruin: so that
they would rise up,
to eternal peace in the new aeon.'*

LITERATURE:

J van Oort, *De Keulse Mani-Codex*. (The Cologne Mani-Codex). Amsterdam, 2005.



ALL THAT IS HEARD BECOMES PART OF INFINITY

It is said that the human ear is shaped like a human embryo facing down; and the shape of the cochlea in the inner ear resembles that of the auricle, repeating the embryonic shape. The ear is the first sensory organ that develops. When the embryo is 0.9 mm long, a few days after conception, it already shows the beginnings of the ears. Four and a half months after conception, the ear is fully developed and remains unchanged throughout life. We can say that the importance of this sensory organ is already shown during our first months. The development of our consciousness begins with it.

The ear is an internal sensory organ. What is heard directly penetrates the inner being. In this respect, it is different from the eyes, where the perceived object remains outside of us. We are 'caught' by what we hear. Via the eardrum, the tones reach the inner space of the ear. There they strike the ossicles and the bony cochlea. In the watery inner part of the ear, there is another cochlea that is membranous. The bony and membranous cochlea are spiral-shaped. A spiral is a curved line that is wound around a fixed point and increasingly recedes from it. All the sounds

that the ear catches are reflected in spiral passages, in endless curvature. The vibrations become higher according to a logarithmic scale and eventually disappear from the material world. All that is heard becomes part of infinity.

The audible and inaudible continually merge into each other and affect us in the same manner. In each tone, dominants vibrate, higher tones, of which the frequencies are multiples of the frequency of the basic tone. Deep, not yet audible tones thus become part of the audible range, pass through it and disappear into that

which is no longer audible.

Hearing developed because human beings had to survive under primitive circumstances. Over time, it developed into the faculty of listening. This means that sounds only come to life *within us*. Or stated more exactly: We not only hear with our ears, but with our entire body, with every cell. Every cell is struck by the vibrations that come to us, including those not detectable by our ears. Beethoven was deaf but listened in this way. Inwardly he heard more glorious sounds than those outwardly audible.

Both our auditory channels lead to the centre of the head. Everything we hear re-sounds in the soul fluid present there. This passes the impulse on to the consciousness, to either listen to certain sounds or to turn away from them. The ear is a controlling factor for the hearing process that takes place in the body. The ear is the connection between the soul aspects and the world of sounds and noise.

When we listen to a human being, we resonate with him, because we have opened ourselves up to him. We do not just perceive what he says, but also absorb the characteristics of his vibrations. Our own soul fluids are saturated with them and assimilate them. In this way, we listen inwardly, and objectively. Then we understand not only on the level of the mind but also on that of the soul. Then understanding, and possibly compassion, awaken in us for the person to whom we are listening. The power of discernment increases and we do not listen in a judgemental way. However, a selection will take place, for not everything deserves to be lent an ear to! This way of listening is so intense that the distinction between speaking and hearing can be lifted for a few moments so that, without words, an exchange of information takes place.

For the seeking human being, the questioning human being, the senses are receptors of sound, of impressions, of information. For the soul human being the functions are of a more emanating nature: the eyes reflect the power of God working in the human being; and in the way described, the listening ear can be a source of comfort and helping power.

SOURCES:

J van Rijckenborgh, *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis and its call in the eternal present; newly proclaimed and explained from the Tabula Smaragdina and Corpus Hermeticum of Hermes Trismegistus; part 3*. Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, The Netherlands, 1994, pp. 173-174.

Speech is the production and radiation of creative energy, the energy a nature-born human being needs to perform the one work to which he is called. That is why the seeker of God will only speak if it is necessary. And what, then, is listening? It is receiving sensorially that same energy which the other person is discharging by speaking. When you speak and someone else listens, the listener will absorb into himself all the energy you are pouring out by speaking, a process which, generally speaking, is highly suspect. So speaking and listening are extremely delicate matters about which the pupil must be very careful indeed. If one pursues one's pupilship seriously, speaking and listening will be made subordinate to a holy law, which only operates on the plane of the liberated soul being. Any speaking and listening which fall below a certain level, will harm and bind one to the lower nature.

OVERCOMING DECEPTION

From self-consciousness to all-consciousness

The human being can, through the spirit principle, which is connected to the heart, build a bridge of a totally different vibration to the sixth cosmic plane. Through this principle, the energy of the logos can stimulate a new soul power within him, which can make everything divine in the small, human world develop.

By working with these energies, it is possible to create insight. Understanding is formed because you actively investigate, work and observe; because you really try to build *higher* (soul) values into your life. When the human being admits them; if he uses them wherever possible and desirable, a great understanding is formed. You learn to understand the conditions in which you live. You see how you, yourself, are an important factor in difficulties and opportunities, perhaps *the* most important factor. The understanding that is formed is an insight that can grow into a

guiding principle for the rest of your life. And this is why 'insight' is the first step on the path of the liberation of the human being.

FROM THE EXTERNAL TO THE INTERNAL

In the book *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse, the principal character learns to listen to the ten thousand voices of the river in which he hears the voice of the 'other one'. It also tells how Govinda perceives 'the thousandfold being' in the face of Siddhartha. Jacob Boehme perceives an impression of his inner stirrings when he sees a ray of sunlight reflected in a tin cup. By observing external life – he sinks into perceiving that solar glow in his first vision – a sensitivity to the effects of inner reflection awakens in him.

External life contains an endless number of positive and negative experiences. Only after these experiences have been processed – hence when we are *full* of experience – can an inner life be recognised. This is why we can approach our inner life only by way of our external life. Through our experiences in this life we reach the entrance to eternity. The nature to which our senses and observations belong, is undeniably important to our development.

The importance of seeing with our eyes is easily acknowledged. By conscious observation, symbols of the soul's growth can be seen everywhere in nature: plants and flowers blooming, the flapping, almost gliding flight of a bird when it leaves the nest for the first time.

In 'The Chinese Gnosis', J van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri write:

'The way we see is determined by the astral forces we are involved with. The way we hear is determined by the etheric forces attracted by the astral magnetic light.'

The Chinese Gnosis, p.124. Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1996.



This also applies to hearing: how great it is that music gives us an idea of inner harmony, beautiful clarity and liberating wisdom of feeling and thinking which, paradoxically, remind us of the realm of eternity, which is pure silence. One author put it like this:

‘We are in a city in a foreign country, surrounded by unknown sounds, colours and smells. Joyful music resounds everywhere. The first days of spring add to the atmosphere. The music stops. I remain standing, one resounding, vibrating cosmos. Do we resonate with this sound? This thought opens a door through which a deep feeling of loneliness arises and my thoughts come to rest. I am one with the silence. Then I hear an all-piercing sound. Every cell is wide awake, listening. Indescribable, strange, yet familiar. Boundaries disappear.

There is a boundless space, the space of the soul rising above the noise of the world. It is a high vibration, the living essence, the eternal mother-being. What do we approach, what do we hear? Is our life an echo of this calling vibration? We listen, and deep understanding fills us. But soon the old sounds return. Voices from the past, inner and external ones. In this noise, the joy of insight remains: we are encompassed, nourished and will one day be awakened again.

Then we continue our path through the crowd, the thousand sounds. The essence of the vibration of the other kingdom sounds further away. There was a moment that was also eternity and its echo was etched into us. Through this echo we were characterised. We are like an instrument for countless voices that speak of being human. But this one sound will find us again because we are open to its vibration. It is the sound of the silence, the all-piercing sound of eternity.’

Indeed, how extraordinary it is that even our human senses can remind us of eternity, of the realm of eternity, which is only silence. Through such experiences nature always points us to the absolute that surpasses everything. Metaphorically, this can only be ‘seen’ or ‘heard’ with the Spirit-Soul. In the light of the divine spirit all deception disappears.

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