

2017 number 3



pentagram

Lectorium Rosicrucianum

Undertake the study of
the laboratory of the self!

Volume 39 • 2017 number 3

pentagram

The world: ten thousand ways to express the necessity of existence.
The people: looking for ways to live.
The hearts: looking for an opening to find the way.



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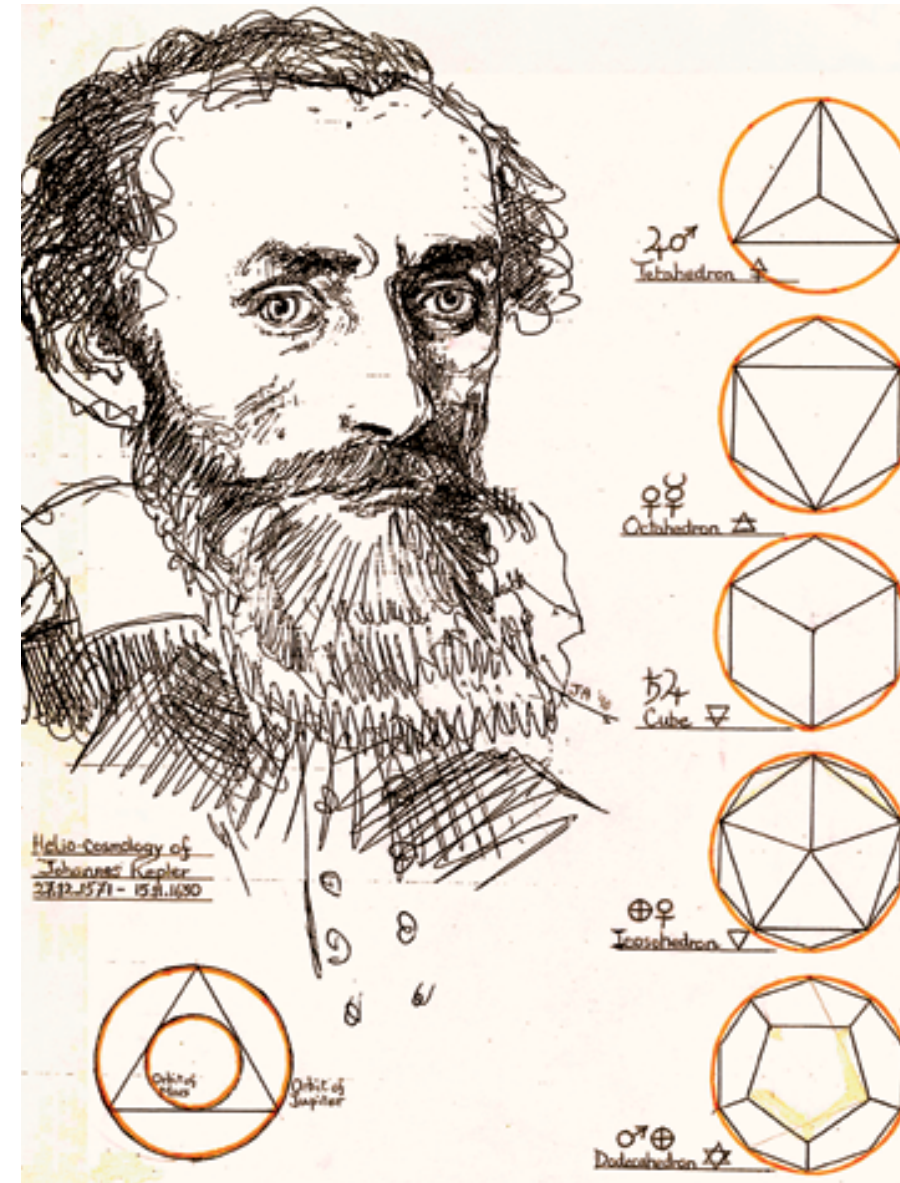
Cover
Abstraction White Rose. Georgia O'Keeffe, 1927
Above
Image from the book *Congo*.
Photographs by Alex Majoli and Paolo Pellegrin.
Aperture, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-1597113250

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World images



In his last writing, the *Timaeus*, Plato explains that, for the Pythagoreans, the five platonic bodies formed the building blocks of the cosmos. He also praises Pythagoras for his mathematical genius as he describes the creation of the world and introduces the beautiful image of the harmony of the spheres. Plato explains that these 5 bodies are related to the elements water, fire, earth, air and aether or 'sky material'.

In 1596, Johannes Kepler published his *Mysterium cosmographicum*, in Tübingen, Germany, at the same university to which the authors of the writings of the Rosicrucian's were also connected. He connects the five platonic bodies with the movements of the planets. In addition he is the first to take the idea of Copernicus – the sun as the center of our universe – scientifically as a starting point.

In *World images* we present creative Brazilian research into the three-dimensional mergers of these bodies, and their possible power of expression on the path of a pupil of the Gnosis.

The language of redemption of the heart

About rebirth and the promise of silence



Tat: In your general discourse, Father, you were enigmatic and vague when you talked about the divine nature. You did not reveal that nature to me, saying that no one can be saved unless he has been reborn. But when, after your talk with me, I made myself your supplicant during our descent from the mountain, and inquired about the doctrine of rebirth so that I might come to know it – as this is the only part of the doctrine that is unknown to me – you promised to convey it to me as soon as I had disengaged myself from the world.

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

Hermes: My son, he is born from the wisdom which thinks in the silence, and from the seed which is the Only Good.

Tat: But then, who sows it Father? All this is utterly incomprehensible to me.

Hermes: the will of God, my son.

Tat: And of what quality is the new one who comes to birth within me, Father? For he will neither participate in my earthly being nor in my intellectual thinking.

Hermes: The reborn one will indeed be different: he will be a god, a son of God, all in all and equipped with all faculties.

Tat: You are talking in riddles, Father, and not like a father speaking to his son.

Hermes: Such things cannot be taught, my son. But God willing, He himself will restore your memory of it.

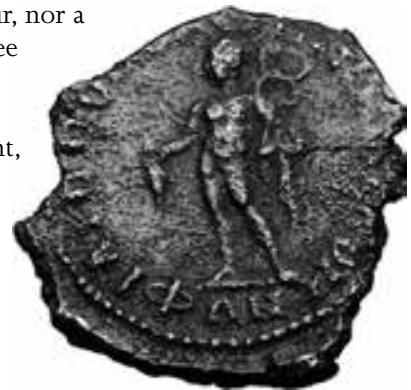
Tat: You are telling me things, Father, which pass my understanding and which perplex me utterly. The only appropriate response I can make is to say: I am a son who is a stranger to his father's house. Do not continue to withhold your wisdom, Father, for I am your legitimate son. Explain in detail in what manner rebirth takes place.

Hermes: What can I say my son? Only this: When I perceived in myself an indefinable vision, brought forth by God's mercy, I went out of myself into an immortal body. Thus I am no longer the one I was before, but have been begotten by the Spirit. Such a thing cannot be taught nor can it be perceived by the physical element through which we make use here. That is why I no longer worry about the composite form that once was mine. I no longer have any colour, nor a sense of feeling, nor of dimension; all this is now foreign to me. At this moment, you see me with your eyes, my son, but what I am you are not able to understand by looking at me with your physical eyes. Indeed, you are not seeing me with those eyes, my son.

Tat: You have put me into a state of considerable confusion and conceptual bewilderment, Father. For now I no longer see myself!

Hermes: May God grant you to go out of yourself like those who dream in their sleep; but then, in your case, without sleeping.

FRAGMENT
FROM 'THE
SECRET
SERMON ON
THE MOUNT'



The heart is actually an organ of unity



In 'The secret sermon on the mount', one of the texts of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Tat asks Hermes for the way and the method of transfiguration.

In his commentary on the above verse, J. van Rijckenborgh explains that *rebirth* is in fact the core problem of the Gnosis. No one can be saved without rebirth. If you actively stand in the process of transformation and transfiguration, you will at some time come to the understanding that there still remains a deep gap between your more or less cultivated state of refinement and the process of rebirth. Or in other words: The Christophorus – the name means: bearer of the Christ – in your being is still not awake enough to carry the Christ-child across the river Lethe, the river of forgetfulness!

Now you can bridge that gap of forgetfulness, and actually do so with a new manner of speech or a new language of the heart. That is why it deserves a recommendation to place the heart always in the centre of our attention. For if the language of redemption is to become effective within us, the heart must undergo an intense process. Material, etheric, astral and mental influences play a role thereby. Material, which explains why in the stressful times we now live in, our arteries sometimes silt up and operations are in the order of the day to be able to continue our life. But that does not only apply to the physical plane. Also on the ethical and etheric level important 'operations' need to take place, in other words, an intense purification needs to take place, before there can be talk of a 'knowledge of the heart' and the receptive open heart can understand 'the new language of the heart'. For the organ of the heart has through all kinds of influences and circumstances, of which we do not always have a grip, in many cases deteriorated into a small etheric refuse pit, wherein with greatest difficulty pure impulses of high vibration are able to penetrate. Yet the heart is in fact an organ of unity, as is explained in another article in this publication (page 26). It possesses, like the brain, a specific cell structure, whereby the cells do not touch each other, but are connected to each other by synapses like tiny gears. Actually, the heart itself is a brain; and our time confronts us once again with the task to learn to think with the heart. Just like the brain the heart is connected with the central nervous system, yes, it even possesses a proprietary nervous system; the heart is a system of perception with its own will and consciousness. Hence the well-chosen expression of professor De Hartog: 'What the heart doesn't want, doesn't enter the head'.

Interesting also is the electro-magnetic activity of the heart. And this tale begins with the unusual way that the heartbeat comes into being. For the cells in the heart spontaneously begin to pulsate in a very early phase of the embryonic development completely by themselves. Organising themselves – *epigenetic* – they suddenly show synchronisation and new characteristics, belonging to the *whole*.

Of these characteristics, which belong to the knowledge of the soul, the School of the Rosycross speaks in a Gnostic language. It wants to extend its help to learn to allow the language of the heart into your personal life, in other words: to let you feel, think, consider, act, will and become silent for the discerning values whereto the heart originally has been called. That language you also find conveyed in numerous texts in the Bible, it sprouts from the ‘knowledge of the heart’; from the true Gnosis that was born out of the necessity of the times. It also is heard in some of the temple songs of the Rosycross, as in:

We come here again to the heart of the cross in golden and radiant lustre: Our heart, o my God, seemed so far from your house, but now there's Your Light we can muster. (Temple song 54)

And a bit further on:

Not we, Lord, but You are the aim of our heart!

As direct as can be! In the cave of the heart, in the deepest inner self the human being becomes conscious of the presence of the Light! Does he hear the words: ‘Recognise the true heart through the open pure mind’? These are texts that repeatedly, as in a flash, direct us to the core of our existence, the cross. He who is able to cross the super-nature with his earthly existence, shall conquer. This is pointedly expressed in the story of Christian Rosycross, who at the eve of the victory (the eve before Easter) receives a letter from the hands of a luminescent angel, a *Light-emitting* virgin, an invitation, on which is written beside the sign of the cross: ‘*in hoc signo vinces*’. ‘In this sign you will conquer’.

A cross of Light! This most beautiful symbol of the crossing of the spiritual world with the nature order and its consequences, alights in flames in the heart. There, through the awakening jewel of the spirit spark atom, a new development manifests itself on the basis of the ultimate longing for Light. That is what we call the process of rebirth.

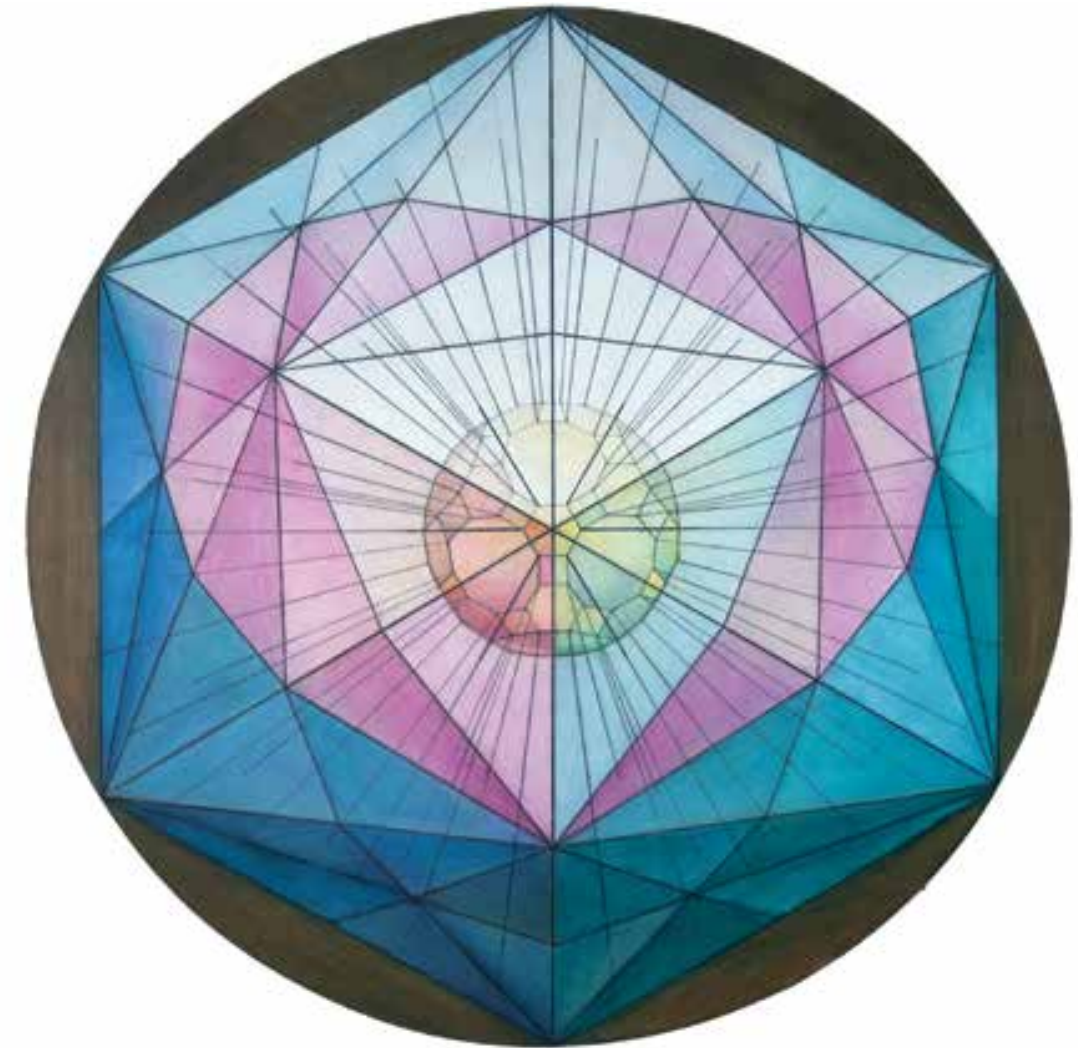
Also in the *Tabula Smaragdina* – ‘The Charter of Alchemy’, as the text is sometimes termed, the deep meaning of the cross is again drawn in a different context and yet it is the same. In the language of the Arabic or Egyptian Gnosis this short text cloaks itself in an alchemical garment:

‘That which is below is equal to that which is above, and that which is above is equal to that which is below, in order that the wonders of the One shall be accomplished. As all things are accomplished out of the One, through *one* mediatorship, so they are all born out of the One.’

It is specifically given to the human being on this crossroad of ways to understand

this. In the heart that is in a purifying process – for this is indeed a process – *everything* comes together. There is the place, the mysterious crossing, from where all lines come that direct and manage our entire system. Out of all impulses from outside and from within, the heart extracts information and knowledge and transforms these into harmonizing reactions, merging all this into consciousness. In this way, a Rosicrucian is born. In a spiritual sense, he attaches the rose of his spiritual being to the cross.

It truly begins in the heart. A pure respiration process, based upon divine ether activity, supplies pure energies to and through his purified blood, and makes the spiritual heavenly sun nucleus more and more visible and active. The language of redemption of the heart forms a new basis for this! And in a lengthy inner process that demands everything from us but that is nevertheless full of glory, the entire vesture of the personality is transformed. And the deepest inner self manages to express itself ever more and more powerfully. ✨



The form that we are, the home of our personality, has the important mission to give the rose the opportunity to express itself completely. Anyone who devotes himself to this will succeed in completing this task in continuous transfiguration. The form is essential in this important process. We can make our physical form the courtyard of the threefold temple. If we go the path of the Gnosis, we become at-One.

*Icosahedral pyramid (envelope)
Icosidodecahedron (truncated)*

‘Come forth into the light of things, let Nature be your teacher’ – William Wordsworth

‘Learn that all shapes are only veils that hide the glory of the divine. Understand that the one life flows through all forms and fulfills it’ – Bhagavad Gita

Fiat Lux – Let there be light

The beginning of the *Book of Genesis*: “Let there be light” – “Fiat lux” – is generally understood in circles that hold the bible in high regard as the beginning of the world. But may we interpret those words for once not as the beginning of creation at the dawn of time, but as a call in the present, – in the Now, – right at this moment?

Let there be light' in our hearts, 'fiat lux' within us. This call incessantly reaches out to us – by day and by night.

'It shall be light', – isn't this what we so intensely yearn and seek for?

It is the quiet inner prayer that accompanies us seekers with all of our steps in this uncertain world. When we see the words 'Let there be light' as the beginning of creation as such, still we may see them also as the birth of the new human being, as the beginning of a new day within us.

In the second letter to the Corinthians we read: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

In this passage the human being of this nature order is described as an earthen vessel. The light is not of him, but it shines in his heart to enlighten him when he allows it. Thus can the Gnosis be born within him. The earthen vessel, the human being, has the potential to become transparent for the Light. This is the task of a pupil of a gnostic mystery school. We have to be aware that a mystery-school is a school of Light. This is a very essential aspect in our daily practise of life, being aware of being a part of a mystery school, a school of the Light. The Light is the first-born, the only begotten son of God.

"Let there be Light" – these are the first words of the creation. Light is the first and the only One that God brought forth into existence out of himself. Everything else of the divine creation came into being from this Light. And from his Light

he will forever create. In our days human beings have difficulties with the term 'God' and thus we look for another description like: the all-manifest spirit-fire, the unfathomable primordial vibration, – invisible and unperceivable; the infinite primordial ground.

Out of this Essence the Light comes into existence. The light radiates from the primordial ground. Even the brightest source of light in our visible universe is only a mere shadow in comparison to the divine Light, although still: all that is perishable is an image of the Eternal.

Hermes Trismegistus says: 'As the above, so is the below.' The below is not identical with the above. It is a parable that sheds some light on it and helps us to understand it. The shadow of a tree is not the tree itself. Our image in a mirror, where left and right sides are reversed, is not our true self. But there is much we can learn from a parable. We can gain a certain insight by reading in the book of nature. The primordial ground brings forth from itself the eternal Light, the son. God manifests himself as Light.

Parables: The spider produces out of herself the thread to weave her web. The snail creates out of herself her house. But as it was said earlier, a parable bears similarities but it is not identical with what it stands for. But it can be a help for our inner imagination and understanding.

The divine Light – the living water.

Consider this parable. We cannot live without water. Our bodies consist of 70% water. Fruits, vegetables, plants, – all consist mainly of water. It is essential for life. For the human being as he was meant to be from the beginning, the divine Light is a life-requirement. From this inner knowledge the silent prayer arises, – a deep wish of the heart: Let there be Light, fiat lux!

The Spiritual School is a Mystery-School, a Light-School, and a School of the Light of Christ. The school belongs to Christ, to nothing or nobody else! We only have to be conscious that the Light of Christ is absolutely essential. The more we are aware of it, the more active the Light becomes within us and within the group. If our awareness is too limited, then the activity of the Light is also diminished. A fish cannot live without water. It would be snapping for air as it lay squirming and twitching in the sand. It yearns for water. Whoever longs for the true life cannot be without the Light. Without the Light a soul is like the squirming fish on land.

The divine Light – the living breath.

Consider this parable:

We speak of the breath of God, the universal life-power that radiates through everything. Our world couldn't exist without the loving breath of God. Without air to breathe our life would soon be over. We speak of the living respiration field of our Spiritual School; our innermost being longs for the holy breath. This is the true reason of our pupilship.

There is a story about a pupil who complains to his master, that he has been searching for God for a long time already, but he still has not found Him. The master takes his pupil for a walk to a river

We can gain a certain insight by reading in the book of nature



Quadratum Nigrum, Fiat Lux. Installation of non-object art in Galerie Sztuki in Warsaw, Poland. The whole object and its description is a reference to Robert Fludd: Mystery. Sanctuary. Darkness. Start. Black square. 'A sic in infinitum'



Christian Gill, Fiat Lux

and invites him there to take a bath with him. Suddenly he presses the head of the pupil under the water. When the pupil emerges again and is gasping for air, the master asks him: “What did you think of when I held you under the water?” The pupil answered: “All I could think of was my desperate need for air.” To which the master replied: “When your desire for God is as great as your need for air when you were almost drowning just now, then you will have found Him.”

And from another perspective: A scholar, who was very faithful to the written law, asked Jesus: “Which is the most important commandment to help us find the true life?” Jesus answered: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself.” This scholar, who is a symbol here for the human being, and who follows every rule to the letter, probably did not expect this answer. He expected a commandment, a law or a clear rule that he could follow whenever it suited him in his life. Jesus’ answer went beyond a mere ‘commandment’. He replaced a commandment or rule with the concept of ‘Love’, even though he still used the word ‘commandment’ because for the scholar it was easier to relate to this terminology. Love cannot be a commandment or a rule. You cannot command anyone to love. Love makes a commandment superfluous. The scholar speaks about a commandment – Jesus speaks about Love. The scholar did not ask for two commandments, but Jesus immediately made the connection to the so-called second commandment: ‘You shall love your neighbour like yourself.’ For the human being of this nature, the earthen vessel, this is a difficult task and

many even say that it is impossible. Wherein lays the main focus? *Love God above everything!* The focus is in the word ‘above’! This is also valid in regards to ourselves and with regard to others. Love God, the divine spirit flame in your heart above everything that you might love about your own personality, the earthen vessel. The kingdom of God is within you and also in your neighbour, – in your fellow human being. Love the divine within your fellow human being, your neighbour, above everything on the personality level. But also on the personality level we can do a lot for our neighbour when we apply the following golden rule: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you* This is like a golden rule for our interaction with other human beings and doesn’t require any extra explanation. It touches our emotions and our mind. It is clear and straightforward: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you* In this article we would like to try to take this further and on a deeper level without neglecting the personal level of this rule.

‘Love God above all and love your neighbours as you love yourself’ How often were these words repeated in the last 2000 years? How often have we heard them already? – Probably so often that we do not ‘hear’ them anymore. Or perhaps you know this situation: On a rainy evening you lie in bed and hear the patter of the rain. After a while you tune it out and don’t hear the sound of the rain anymore and fall asleep. So, will we listen to those who have fallen asleep and do not hear anymore? The ‘Let there be Light’ will not let us fall asleep but demands our undivided attention. This should be our innermost desire – by day and by night. Light is Love, Warmth and Life. Love is Light that gives itself away incessantly.

The ‘Let there be Light’ will not let us fall asleep but demands our undivided attention

The inner silence is the essential contribution the earthen vessel, the human being, can give to the treasure in his heart

As is the below so is the above. Our visible sun is a parable, an image of the divine Love-light.

The sun gives light, warmth and life; all the time, even when it is night for us.

In the same way is the Love Light always with us, even when it feels like 'night' within us. If we would only return to the love for the true Life!

Another parable: We can observe that human beings who have been in tune with each other in love and affection for a long time, sometimes come to look somewhat alike.

They develop an energetic interaction that expresses itself in posture, movement and facial features. Which certainly does not indicate that love is compromised in a couple without resemblance.

Similarly, when we love God above everything, our innermost being will become more and more like Him. This reminds us of the almost unbelievable words of Jesus: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Or the words in Psalm 82: "Indeed I say unto you: 'You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High.'" The key to brotherly love is to see and recognize that our fellow human being, our neighbour is also a child of God. Love cannot be acquired through an exercise, a method or a workshop. Love cannot be cultivated by taking on a certain attitude of life (whether it is a concept from an outside authority or originating from

your own personality) Love is not a role you can play; love for the highest within you, love for the lowest within you. Your fellow human being flourishes when the latent child of God claims its right as the first-born, – the right to fully consciously be one with the Father. This miracle happens in inner Silence. A seed sprouts in the silence and darkness of the earth. The divine word within us can blossom only in inner silence. This inner silence is the essential contribution the earthen vessel, the human being, can give to the treasure in his heart. And so he will be able to hear the voice of God, the voice of the Silence.

How could we listen to the voice of God within us, if the voice of our personality constantly speaks? In Psalm 46 it says: "Be still, and know that I am God"

This "Be still" is addressed to the nature human being. And we certainly know that 'being still' is more than only the absence of talking.

We cannot force anything. If we have the love for God within us, the love for our spiritual primary Force, then we also have laid the foundation for inner silence. Then we will say what needs to be said. Then we will interact with our fellow human beings based on the inner silence. Then there will be no astral tension by our ego behind our words. This already is a great blessing for our fellow human beings, yes, for our surroundings.

The inner silence emerges in your mi-

crocosm. The knowledge, the Gnosis, the 'I am God', the God within, the universal source of being. Gnosis is the absolute and unshakable knowledge within the heart. Inner silence is peace. Love, silence and peace are one. It is not a peace that is a temporary astral or mental truce. Not a peace that you force with your personality.

If you force yourself into silence and peace, then you are like the scholar, like the human being that needs commandments, laws and rules; the human being that lives by laws, either imposed by an outside force or by your own being.

The love for God extends beyond that.

The essence is that the sacred energy of our heart flows to the outside.

Fill the space around you with light, for aren't you members of a mystery school, which is a school of the Light! Love, silence and peace are one. Keep the peace within the heart. Whatever may happen within you, around you or in the world, keep the peace within the heart!

Flashes of world-news follow

one after another, always trying to disturb us.

We certainly do not look away and do not deny and do not try to flee from what is going on around us. But it is important that we, in everything we do and hear, remain in the love for God, the universal source of life. Remain in the love for the kingdom of God within you. "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Catharose de Petri explains in the book 'The Living Word':

'The word of God is a living, vibrating and unassailable reality. When you are able to confess to this unassailable reality, then you understand the letters of the truth.'

'Knowing the letters of the truth' means at the same time 'knowing the process of transfiguration'. Entering into the truth and uniting the truth with all of our heart means the candidate knows the letter of truth and realizes the truth.

From this follows:

Firstly: the knowledge of the letters of the truth

Secondly: the practical manifestation of the truth

Thirdly: the experiencing of the truth.

When you can understand this tri-unity, then you have found again the threefold word.

The blessings of God will then rest upon you and the power of the community with the spirit will be your reward. All the servants of God form God's people on earth. All holy scriptures speak of 'God's people'.

At this point we disregard the question whether or not Jesus the Lord as a servant of the Gnosis was a nature-born human being. The holy scriptures say that he was a high priest of the order of Melchizedek. This would certainly be a state that is ele-

vated far above blood, race and nation.

God's people are therefore a community of servants from all countries of the earth and belong to all races and peoples. This serving brotherhood can be seen as the vanguards of the chain of the Universal Brotherhood of Christ. All of them are occupied with the same task

You will recognize that none of them is trying to establish the Kingdom of God in this nature order. No, they unceasingly direct us to the point of beginning, the living spirit-soul. This is all very realistic because the spark of the eternal spirit lives within us. For this reason many have already differentiated clearly between matter and spirit. Matter is not only coarse matter, it refers to our own being as well. This will bring us to the conclusion that matter is nothing more than the opposite of the spirit. In matter negatively and positively charged molecular forces are prevalent. And because matter is bound to dialectical laws, there is a continuous life that consists of building-up and breaking-down.

In the spirit the positive and negative forces work closely together to form a union. From this union a completely new body can be born.

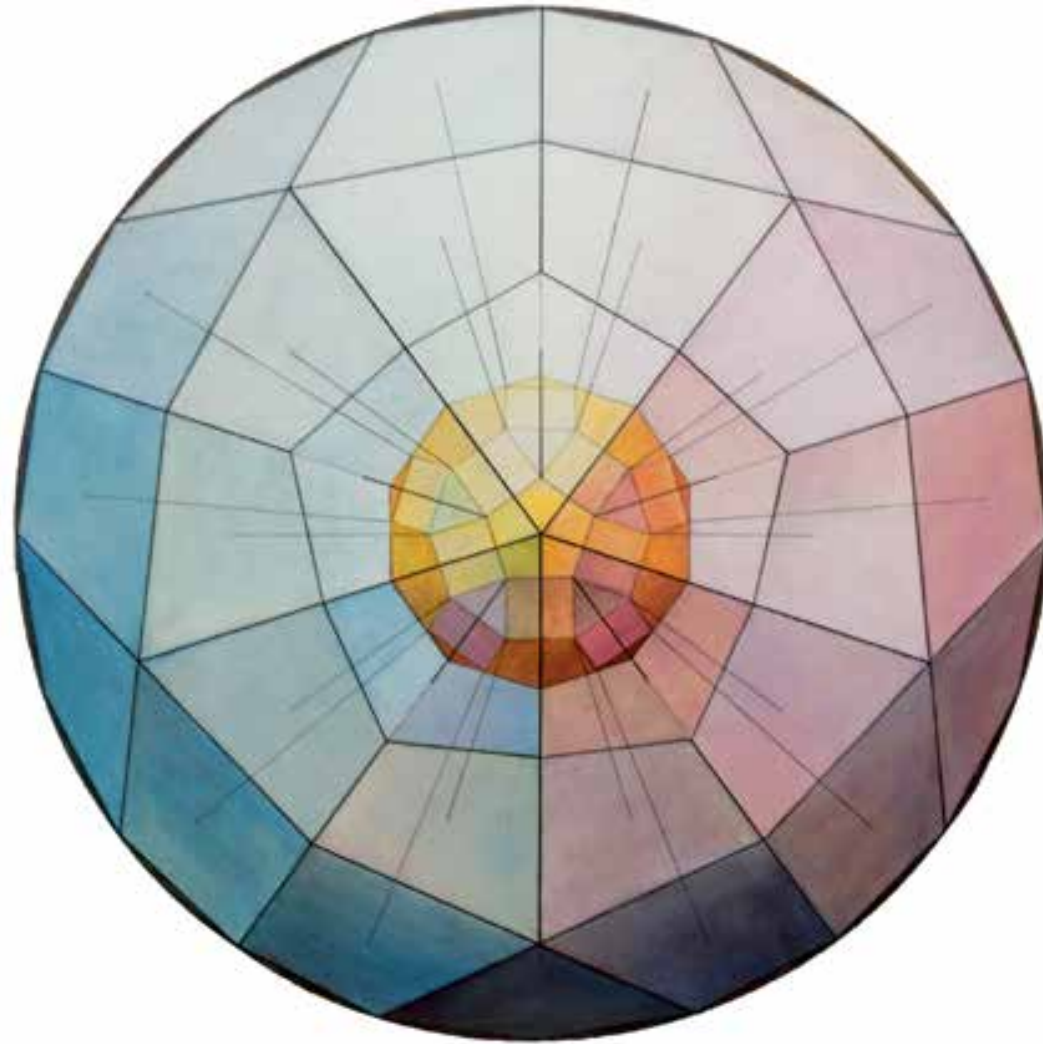
Because the spirit is eternal, there is no breaking-up, only continuous growth. It is a creation that is always in movement.

This is the process that every serious candidate of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross has to take part in. In every pupil lives the spark of the eternal spirit. And in this spark lies hidden the perfect, pure and absolute life, a life without breaking down.

May the 'spark' grow into a blazing fire!
May the seed soon germinate, grow and bear fruit! ☼

Deltahedron 60 faces

World images



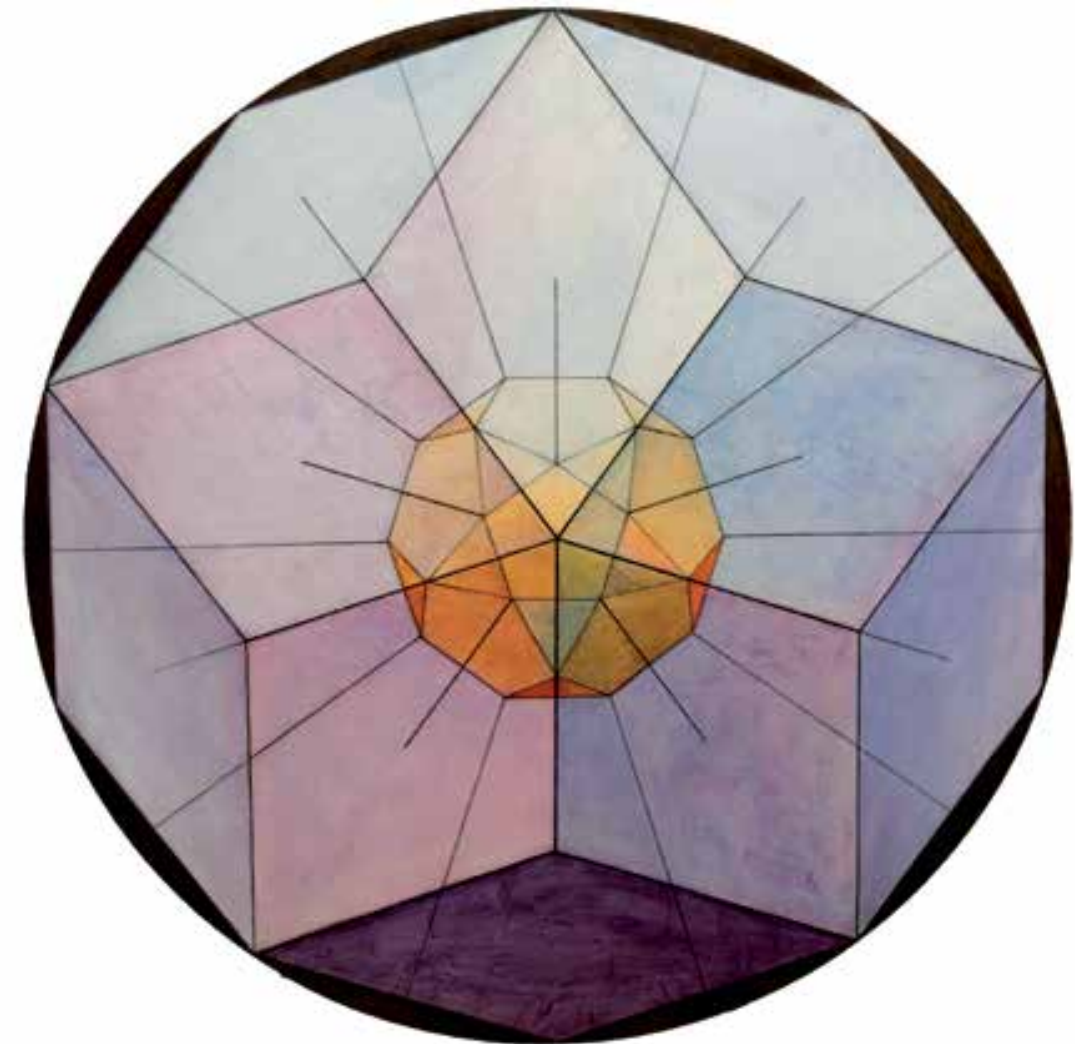
'Is it not the eternal law that the spiritual has its continuity in the physical, and that the spiritual is locked up in a physical space?' The five Platonic bodies: tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, icosahedron and dodecahedron are the geometrically derived formations of the ball or sphere. They are so rich in accurately determined and harmonious qualities that they cannot be surpassed by any other geometric form. These five bodies embody the most essential quantitative analytical forms, because they are the only bodies whose faces, ribs and angles are completely identical. They completely reflect the triangle, square and pentagon. The geometer uses exactly the same mathematical proportions for the construction of these bodies, as nature does in using archetypal energetic rhythms to create her material forms.

Deltahedron 60 faces (envelope)
Rhombicosidodecahedron (core)

'All that is internal shows itself in the outer world. Everything that's outside manifests as structure' - Eckhartshausen

Rhombicosidodecahedron

World images



The Platonic philosophers used the golden ratio as a symbol representing the ideal of divine or universal love. And with this we can wonder at the fact that the creator planted a regenerative seed-field that will elevate the kingdom ruled by death from duality and confusion to the image of divinity.

Rhombo 30 faces (envelope)
Icosidodecahedron (core)

'The body is the densest expression of the spirit, which is its subtle extension. This world, from its densest to its most subtle aspects, consists of substance. This substance is the spirit that becomes a manifest miracle by the beauty of geometry. There are forces and shapes in the stars that resonate in our soul. They fulfill us with the strongest vitality, and belong at the same time to the Deity and the core of our being.'

The laboratory of the self

At the Renova Conference Center in Bilthoven, a Youth and Young Rosicrucian Conference took place during Easter, April 2017, with more than 300 visitors attending. One of the speeches addressed consciousness, Einstein, snowflakes, spirit and the Light of Love.

Let us dwell for a while on one of those moments when you think: I am, I live, right now in this time in this world.. But what actually is living? What am I doing here, now? Sometimes it is said: "Life is Power". You are standing in the midst of it. You undergo that intense feeling of being alive. Probably the sun is shining and everything around you seems to be as usual, and you have no idea why, but there is this sudden awareness of being alive. It is as if you are standing right in the midst of yourself and simultaneously you are everywhere. It is a mighty, invincible feeling that you exist, while at the same time it creates the expectation: what will happen to me in this life? After the obvious recognition of being there, the question may often follow: Why am I here? What am I doing here? That is the mystery of what we call life. It is the experience of "being there" and simultaneously there is the mystery

of "still having to become something." Understanding this might be called the most important task of our lives. And we also see it as our challenge: To use our intelligence and examine what life in this nature – in this world – is teaching us now. We could simply summarize it as "gaining experience" but let us go one step further by considering that we ourselves **are** our experiences.

We are magicians

Imagine ourselves being magicians, alchemists, who have a gigantic workshop at our disposal. Its name is Nature, of course. It is a laboratory in which the most wondrous processes can be studied. In our own little space we record our findings and we validate them in order to draw understanding, truth and reason from them. Questions like: what study you should choose and whether you will have a job or a partner, or a house, will certainly be solved at some time. But let us take up the challenge and question life itself. Life reveals itself in an infinite variety of form and appearance. It takes place in many gradations of density, visible and invisible. We speak of spirit and matter. Or, as one of the texts in the Rosa Mystica states it, it is a creation in which a teeming multitude of myriads of beings, from human to celestial is moving. Vibration is the key to their perception. The slower the vibration the more solid is their shape.

This applies to elements, beings and situations. For instance, thoughts are subtle forms that are transformed or become concrete when they are expressed and become visible. It is logical that there is just as much happening on the invisible plane as on the visible plane. Furthermore, that the relationship between these two planes constitutes our "reality", and that it depends on our consciousness how we experience this reality. Each of us experiences reality differently, always from our own observation. The observing consciousness is situated in or originates from what we call our midst, the inner being through which we exist, the center from which everything arises. The center is like a source, it **is** the source. This idea, the image of a source, may seem abstract but in its simplicity it is the key to great discoveries. It has a profound meaning that we are sitting here in this temple arranged around the fountain in the middle; around a visible source where the water flows without interruption, water as a symbol of life; for life itself comes from a source as well. It is the source that we call God, or It, or The One. Or perhaps easier to understand: Spirit. When you listen to the splashing water, we could say that you hear the language of the source and that therefore life is an expression of the sound of Spirit. Spirit is sometimes called the thought of God. Just as the sun radiates light, likewise God radiates Spirit. There is radiance of divine fire, of the





Light. Spiritual power is the foundation of existence. And man, especially man, is principally a spiritual being. The spirit spark or divine spark is that principle, the indestructible nucleus of a divine thought. What else could man be than spirit, since he is called an image of God?

Einstein

Therefore, do not see yourself as a body but think back to the times past, long before you became a body. Think yourself as spirit, still only a thought ...A free thought; like a droplet or a spark you splashed away and rolled along on top of an infinite shining fiery wave. That one spark from the fire, a glimpse of an idea, a first thought flaring up by being moved. What is a human being? Is he a living consciousness? Are we all small parts of one great consciousness?

This idea was suggested by Einstein who was constantly concerned with the place of man in the world and how he regards the spirit. One of the most remarkable things about Einstein was the way he seemed to live physics. He did not think out his theories, it was the forces that he examined, which moved him. He experienced them. They became almost tangible for him.

He became at one with these forces and knew that if you want to know Spirit, or God, then you have to be equal to them.

Our journey, the journey of the first primordial thought began with the momentum which launched the spark into space, into creation .Right now we are learning to know who we essentially are by becoming it.It is spirit growing in Spirit, man growing in God.It is the process through which an idea becomes reality .Einstein calculated the speed of light, how it rushes through space, but where to? Where does it go?

He discovered that the investigator and the light have a relationship; that individuality and universality are no mutually exclusive properties, but two aspects of the same reality.So if you would be the researcher, then there is a mixture of you and the object of your investigation, between you and light, for instance because you merge with it. Whenever that object is spirit, or The Light, we call this experience “enlightenment.”Let us pick up the thread of our journey Crossing field after field the thought unfolded itself while the contours,the idea of a human being in the making began to take shape.

Originating in the highest plane of spiritual being, he is, you are, now finally born into the material world of slow vibration. Each human being is still a unique miracle; it possesses its own image; it is the carrier of a unique primordial thought. Just think how you can be identified by the code of your DNA, by an iris scan or a fingerprint. There is no one like you; that is what you have to recognize and value.

Knowing that your life – as you are here in this temple – is exactly the life that is meant for you. That your life completely reflects your current state of being.

The formation of a snowflake

Let us take yet another example. There are people who investigate snowflakes. They are small works of art, is what they conclude.

Also snowflakes have the special property that they are all different. Under a microscope you see the crystal formation, which is never exactly the same. A snowflake is created around a so-called freeze core.

This may for example be a speck of smoke, a bacterium, or volcanic ash.

Water molecules attach themselves to this speck while branching out in star-shaped structures. This process is influenced by the way in which the snowflake falls down; it is affected by the atmosphere, the air, it passes through.

You might call this the representation of the experience of a snowflake, the development of an ice crystal.

In this example the subject is the air, but when you think of electromagnetic fields, of vibration fields consisting of energy, of information – fields, like the atmosphere in which the whole cosmos moves – then you can imagine that the moment of your physical birth also shows such a blueprint. That blueprint is what you see when you draw a horoscope. It reflects your relation with the cosmos.

There you are, newly arrived at the station called “world” for your visit to “the earthly life.” And you have been busy unpacking your bags for quite a while.

They appear to contain some strange things, which you do not exactly know how to handle. For the sake of clarity, this is part of life, part of the “study of man.”

Polar star of being

We can determine that man is a spiritual being. He has a form, a natural figure, which is his body. He has a living consciousness because of his soul as well as a mind which allows him to expand throughout the cosmos. His nucleus, or Essence, is made up of spirit; that is why he is able to get to know the Spirit, or God.

The ancient thinker Cicero said: “Without divine

inspiration no one can ever be a truly great man”

But we tell you: without undertaking a study of yourself, of what it means to be a human being, there can never be divine inspiration. It takes courage to be a great human being. And it takes even more courage to face the dizzying heights and the hidden depths of your own self in complete soberness. You will gain that courage, if there is a light that illuminates your study

This light originates because you want to know. Because you want to help. Because you want to investigate the mystery of Love. This light is released within you. It is completely yours, but it is also divine and free. It guides you when you go where you should go, but also when you do **not** go where you should go. You can never force it, and yet it belongs to you and is even closer to you than your I-being

See yourself again

Take a look at yourself. See who you are. See what has become of you. Then, what you see is absolutely twofold.

Firstly, there is the inner light which is your guiding star

It is the polestar of the self, your spiritual birthright and your deepest, true nature. Its energy is the rose-power of the heart and later perhaps the golden radiance of the head sanctuary.

Secondly, there is the force of this earth which flows into your being, seemingly from the outside, yet it belongs to you.

It is a heavy force, and although it is the counterpart of the Polestar, it is not negative. Your soul and body are the point of encounter

The energies are dancing throughout your being, upward and inward from your heart, outward and matter-oriented from your senses. Both energies dance and collide along the spine, and bring

about consciousness

For each center within you processes matter and light

And the extent to which you will learn to use the inner light, determines the measure of your compassion, your love and thus your happiness.

Because without this divine inspiration – the Light of the Polestar – life does not really mean anything. But with that light everything will start to shine!

In this power you should do everything, discovering, engaging.

By consciously offering entrance in your life to spiritual inspiration, Gnosis, or Light-power, something wonderful is going to happen

Your mind – the faculty that records all your experiences and that you use to choose your path – this thinking faculty becomes wider. It reaches further, deeper, until it becomes boundless

It is not limited to the visible world but obtains a new faculty: understanding.

When you start this study – an education that never ends and that will make you intensely happy – when you lift yourself up and seek for knowledge of the essential things, then an answer comes to you as divine inspiration.

Then the golden wings at the top of the Caduceus, the symbol of Mercury, will raise the perfect circle of your consciousness. It shines like the element gold in your blood, in your consciousness, and illuminates your being. Well, because almost all the people have forgotten about this Polestar, and their spiritual birthright, there is the School of the Golden Rosycross, which brings the Light closer to us, so that you will recognize, so that you will remember. That is what it does for you, and does with you.

Again and again it gives you the spiritual inspiration that gives you knowledge from within so that luminous, subtle vi-



brations can leave their traces in you

They constitute the passport that gives you access to the reality from which they come to you. It is as Einstein said: “Knowing Spirit by becoming spirit”

Therefore it is extremely important that you understand and recognize that all this is possible for you! ☼

Focus your heart on the Light, and know It

With our thinking faculty and our brain consciousness we are creators of a world of contradictions and we cannot do otherwise. Our thinking processes do not connect, or very rarely. Therefore, every spiritual development begins in the heart. The heart is the blessed gate through which divine ether energy can flow. Read about the five features that mark this unique organ.

Paul Nash, an important English landscape painter in the early twentieth century, was seized by the magic atmosphere of the coast at Dymchurch, Kent. Paul Nash, *The Shore (The Coast, 1923)*. Leeds Museum and Galleries, Leeds, England

Every spiritual development, as classical wisdom teaches us, begins in the heart. Located in the centre of the human system, the heart connects all parts of the body. Therefore, the heart is the organ of unity. The heart, a great miracle, is the great connector. It is the most powerful muscle of the human body. It does not age like all other muscles do. Remarkably it works autonomously of the rest of the bodies impulses.

The heart can get sick of course, damaged or weakened, but the muscle tissue itself does not age due to its very different cellular structure. And remarkably: the heart knows no cancer! The heart never rests, never sleeps, it never stops, and it beats about 60 times per minute; 100,000 times a day – 40 million times a year and about 3 billion times in an average human life. It pumps the blood through a huge network of blood vessels covering a total length of about 100,000 km. The heart is so powerful that it drives about 7.5 litres of blood per minute through the body with a force that would spurt water 2 meters into the air. Still, if you work it out, this pressure is not sufficient for this 100,000-kilometre-long vascular system.

First, there is the heartbeat.

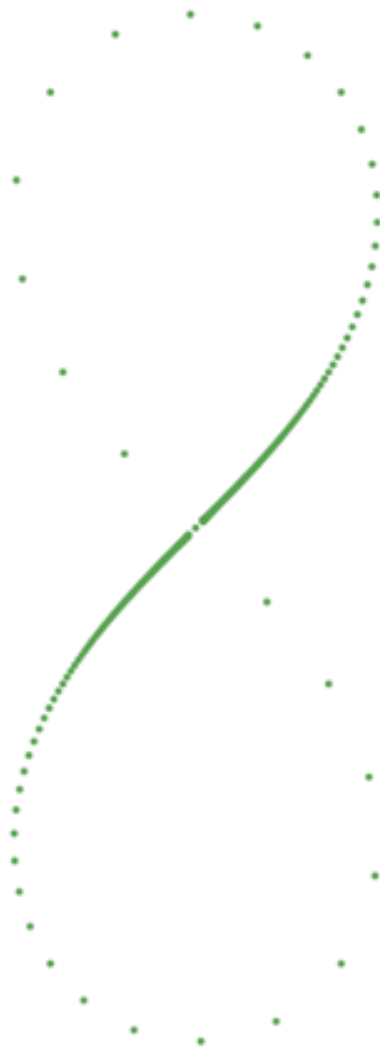
Remarkably, although it seems to be against our intuition, the blood moves by itself before the first heartbeat of the unborn child. Accurate research shows that the blood is already starting to move in regular circulation, swirling in spirals, before the heart is sufficiently developed and can beat. The heartbeat constantly changes. Thus, the heart is not just a pump but it modulates, dynamizes and ensures coherence. In a wonderful and constantly changing rhythm of tension and relaxation, the heart permeates man with energy during a lifetime.

Secondly, the heart is an electromagnetic generator that produces a wide range of electromagnetic frequencies. Our heart is the largest and strongest generator of our body. The EM field can still be measured three meters away from the body. Each body cell – and there are 100 billion – is as it were bathed in the heart's energy. The heart not only emits electromagnetic energy but it is also able to decode information concealed within electromagnetic fields. Thus, the heart is also an *organ of awareness*.

Thirdly, the heart is an endocrine gland that creates and releases various hormones. Five have now been identified, and it is possible that more may be discovered.

Fourthly, the heart is part of the central nervous system (60% of the heart cells are nerve cells) and has direct connections with the brain: the amygdala or thalamus, the hippocampus and the cerebral cortex (respectively responsible for emotions, sensory experiences, and memory – the English say that something can be 'learned by heart'. In fact, the heart is in itself a brain. Blaise Pascal stated it as follows: "... the heart has its reasons that the mind does not know at all!"

Fifthly, the heart is the organ of unity. Our heart feels joy and happiness when it experiences unity and sorrow and hate when it experiences separation and loneliness. As the heart is the organ of unity, so the head is the organ of separation. We all know that the brain consists of two halves, the left and right brain hemisphere. In the brain, all structures are constructed in duplicate except one, not larger than a pea, located in the middle of the brain, the pineal gland. And this is not without meaning: the pineal gland is the touching point for the spirit.



In both brain halves, contradictory and complementary processes are taking place. For example, the left-brain half – the most dominant half in Western people – impels us to act (our tendency to regulate, detail, to fix things), but it also houses the ability to speak and an awareness of time. In astrology, the left brain-hemisphere is influenced by Mars, the planet of strength and battle, wrath and turmoil and the strong right arm. The right brain is responsible for being (we may think here of spatial insight, intelligence, empathy, knowing ones place in the whole); it is influenced by Mercury, the planet of thinking and intelligence. The brain is a polarized whole, showing the 'unity' of two separated centres. They are like brothers: the elders also called the two parts Cain and Abel. In this sense, we can look at the battle between Cain and Abel as the disturbed balance between the two brain halves. There are also other organs in the body – the lungs, the kidneys and the genitals – that were created in pairs, but those organs always have a similar function. However, the human mind

is polarizing, distinguishing, analysing. With our thinking capacity and with our brain consciousness we are creators of a world of contradictions and we cannot do otherwise. Every day we must eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Our thinking does not ever – or very rarely – connect, but it separates. We therefore say that someone can have a sharp mind. Such a sharp mind can be cutting, it can wound. Every spiritual development begins in the heart. The heart is the gateway between the primordial atom and the blood; It is the blessed gate that allows the pure divine ether energy to flow from the primordial atom into the blood.

The core point of the teachings of the Rosicrucians is that right through everything this spiritual seed atom always continues to bathe in the purest divine ethers, as it is one with Divinity. This is where one can experience Christ's pure essence. And because of its high vibrations, it can always purify the blood – if at least man is focused upon it. In other words, our blood, which daily becomes

The lemniscate is depicted as a horizontal figure of eight. In mathematics, it is seen as the symbol of infinity, and in philosophy as the symbol of eternity. The blood flow follows the form of the lemniscate because of the anatomy of heart, especially because of the four heart chambers and the specific sequence of their contractions, and also because of the spiral-shaped heart muscles. The blood is brought in motion in the heart in that lemniscate movement, which allows the purifying powers of the primordial atom to be fully absorbed. The anatomy of the heart – the four chambers form a cross structure in the heart – also makes this extra clear. Another special connection exists between the heart and the lungs. Both the heart and the lungs are subject to a rhythmic movement. The lungs are more focused on the consciousness and the heart more on the superconscious, the transcendental mind. The rhythm of the lungs can be influenced by the consciousness. The ratio between the rhythm of the lungs and the heart is exactly 1: 4 in healthy people. During the time of one breath, the heart beats four times. Between inhalation and exhalation and vice versa there is always a short break, a moment of stillness. This also happens in the heart. Between relaxation and contraction of the heart chambers there is a stop of 1/10 second. During that break, the energy for the next heartbeat is built up. But on a higher level, these pauses are the prerequisite for the heart to perceive. For every form of perception a moment of stillness is necessary.



heavily laden and polluted by many impressions and experiences, can be purified in the heart, be enlightened through Christ's energy. That is why it is said: "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins." In essence, the blood consists of water containing cells, small particles and dissolved substances.

The 10 billion red blood cells averagely pass through the heart 1200 times before they "sacrifice" themselves daily in the spleen, where they give up their core. In the spleen, the released iron is stored – an alchemical working field of about 3800 square meters. Water is the physical expression of the etheric substance. Water is also an information carrier. Water, and consequently also the blood, can therefore absorb and retain the information and the energy of radiations. In this life field the essence of our total state of being is expressed in the blood. Therefore,

the blood is sometimes referred to as a component of the soul. The transfer of information or energy is bound to certain conditions. It is easiest done if the water is in motion. Water naturally moves in waves or spirals. There are seven layers of muscle tissue in the heart wall, which are all spiral-shaped. When contracted, the point of the heart makes a lemniscate (a horizontal figure of eight) movement, a bit like a wringing motion (and also the arteries make rotating movements). The heart is a perceiving and sensory organ for the energies flowing into it. But what does the heart perceive? The blood contains the essence of all organs because every organ informs the blood stream flowing through it about its condition. In the heart, the essence of all parts of the entire organism is bundled into a dominant state of mind. If there is a problem in any organ, this information is trans-

mitted to the blood. The heart notices this and converts this information into a particular mood.

In the *Chinese Gnosis*, J. van Rijckenborgh talks about the heart as the organ in which God speaks in a constant series of images. Lao Tse says: "All images are in the middle." The heart is therefore also called "God's University." Hermes speaks of the eyes of the heart and the heart as "the window to eternity." It is clear: in the heart we can perceive the essence of things. Liberating action requires knowledge, gnosis, intuition. Intuition is the observing of the purified, quiet heart. That

is why with every heartbeat, the mysterious power of silence is born in us. Silence can heal, liberate, and reunite. Meister Eckhart states: *Nothing in all creation is so like God as stillness.*

This silence best "speaks" in a heart that is without self-interest and has pure motives. "Make me self-less and silent," as the Dutch poet Brederode wrote. Because of the constant blood activity of this transformed blood, rising upward from the heart, the three centres, latent until now, can open in the head sanctuary. We follow the course of thinking of J. van Rijckenborgh: "Then, in the heart and in the head the disposition awakens, as Hermes calls the cohesion of heart and head. And then this system experiences an intense rest. One experiences with the senses the immaculate silence of the original nature. Therefore, friends, when you are ennobled hereto through self-neutralisation: Focus your heart on the Light, and know It. When we recognise it,

we see the great and glorious powers of that living Word within us. We see and undergo the light of innumerable powers in the heart, a truly immeasurable world, the Golden Head. And we see how the blazing fire of the lower nature order is encircled, and contained, through great power and thus brought into balance. Thus, we experience how the radiating power of the Gnosis is born within us, and the lower nature is devoured by what we call transfiguration or rebirth. The aura around the heart testifies to this." ✪

Nachiketa and the art of dying



If we were to define one event in which we experience a definite separation, it would have to be the moment of death. When we are confronted with the mystery of death, at once our existence seems unreal. Who am I? Where does this life lead me? Is everything transitory? This is what the boy Nachiketa asks himself in the Upanishads. His search finally leads him to Reality.

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All at once our existence seems unreal when we are confronted with the mystery of death. Can we call a life real that is so much subjected to change? Oh certainly, you experience yourself and your life as real, but these experiences are themselves within a content that is relative. It is an existence in which the fear of death has its basis in a fear that everything we know in this relative existence will cease to be. When we perceive this from a deeper perspective – from our Essential Being, which is non-relative – and realize this relative existence is in fact an illusion, what then is the connection between these two?

Is death something like a demarcation line?

Hermes puts it like this: “In this world there has never been, nor shall there ever be, something that has known death. The Father has willed that the World shall be living as long as it exists. That is why the World must necessarily be God.”

What significance does our dying have, seen from this hermetic perspective? Jan van Rijckenborgh explains: “Life is in all and everything. It is one living ocean of atoms. Thus every body is part of this Life. And all life therefore also possesses a consciousness. And every consciousness possesses a boundless inner divine Force. For an atom is life. And life can only be explained from the primeval Source. Since your bodily existence, your personality, is an assembly of atoms, so necessarily the most fundamental essence of your being must be God. God revealed in the flesh.”

The classical definition of clinical death by Bouchot in 1864 read as: “One is dead when one’s heart is no longer beating.” At present the rule also includes that blood circulation must have stopped for at least five minutes. But because of many new techniques, doctors no longer know anymore precisely when death is definite. Some doc-

Georgia O’Keeffe,
Black Place Green 1949.
© Georgia O’Keeffe Museum/DACS
2016, collection of Jane Lombard

tors tentatively follow the thought that one is dead when one's personality is no longer present and there can no longer be any conscious thought. Therefore they will begin monitoring brain activity directly when one loses consciousness.

But what to think of the situation when the heart is still able to beat autonomously while there is no respiration anymore and there is total brain death, even of the brain-stem? This situation goes beyond a coma and still the system may go on functioning for a week or more. The quandary becomes even more baffling with regard to our genes, as many of these will continue living or can even be brought back to life.

In short: from a biological standpoint it is impossible to define the moment of death and thus the medical world now speaks of a series of mini-death moments. In other words: we die bit by bit. And furthermore, what you regard as the moment of death is also governed by your philosophical or religious views. Actually it is not a one-time occurrence but more a process, and that is why it becomes a pressing question as to the right moment for an organ removal in case of an organ transplant. Moreover, shouldn't we actually also give the deceased anaesthetics or painkillers?

For someone whose focus is on the more esoteric-spiritual side of things it will be no surprise that there is actually a sequence of death moments because our physical, etheric, astral and mental bodies all have different compositions.

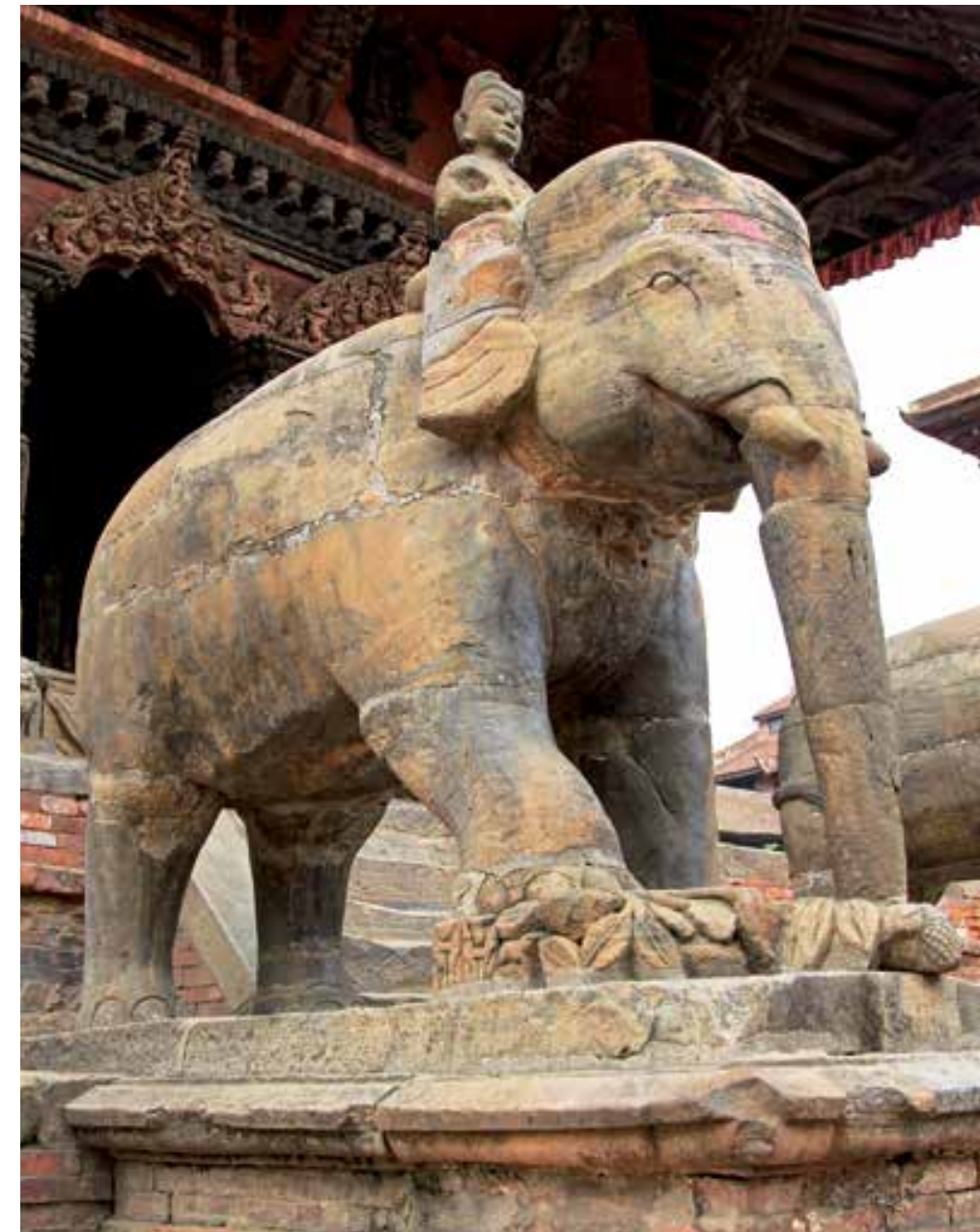
J. van Rijckenborgh regards the process from a still higher perspective when he writes in *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis*: "The human being of which the universal doctrine and the holy language speak is a totally different being than the bodily man, who is mistakenly seen as the ultimate. We are in fact dual beings. Within us the true human yearns for liberation – the true human being who is held captive by the nature-born being. If you keep this thought uppermost in your daily life you will do yourself a very great service. The true man, imprisoned within the nature-born man, is Life and Light. He is God."

We also find this particular perspective in the Upanishads when we read: "The Self-existent God created the sense organs (including the mind) with an out-going disposition; therefore man perceives things outwardly but not the inward Self. A few wise men, desirous of immortality, turned their senses (including the mind) inward and realized the inner Self. "

All the systems of liberation suggest that we are to die with regard to this relative and illusionary existence while we are still living, which means without waiting for physical death. For that reason we are taught to direct our attention to our core being and realize that, in our existence of relativity, we ourselves are not the movers of things and events. The energy to direct our attention to the core being emanates from this core being itself!

Nachiketa

In the Upanishads we find the story of Nachiketa who, already at a young age, was fascinated by the mystery of life and death. "Who am I? Where does this life lead me? Is everything transitory or is there something within me that lives forever?" Nachiketa's father, so the story goes, made sacrifices to the gods because "he longed for bounty from heaven." But what he sacrificed were mostly old cows that could no longer eat, drink, calve or give milk. And Nachiketa was sad because of the parsimony of these gifts. Therefore one day he asked his father: What is the value in this?"



Elephant guarding the Shankaragaurishvara temple in Patan, Baramulla, India. The temple was built in the years 883-902

In our relative existence we are not the mover of things and events

.....

His father was annoyed by his son's critical question. "How dare you question me", he exclaimed, but Nachiketa, undaunted, followed up with the question: "Father, to whom will you give me away?" And he asked him this again. And again. After the third time his father answered him crossly: "I shall give you to Yama, the God of death." So Nachiketa departed to the dwelling of Yama, the lord of death.

When we realize that this story is really about ourselves we may see the father as an aspect of the traditional man within us, the one who respects the outward forms but has lost contact with the source of spiritual inspiration. The outer being can only offer "old cows" from which true Life has gone. In his conditioned state of life, ruled by his senses and disoriented by all the quantitative and qualitative variances of his time-spatial life, he is unable to observe the inner spiritual world. In this context it is striking that the name Nachiketa means: "that which is not perceived."

Nachiketa symbolizes the inner spiritual being within us, the Absolute Self. When a human being can hear the call of the inner spiritual Self, that is to say when he responds to the threefold impulse, it is like the birth of an inner Son through whom the knowledge of life and death is imparted.

And so the story unfolds how the son arrives in the residence of Yama, the god of death, who was not present at that moment. Thus he had to wait for three days, without food or water. When Yama finally came home, he felt guilty and called out to him "O Brahman, because as a revered guest you have waited in my house for three nights without food, you may ask of me three wishes, one for each night."

Symbolically: Nachiketa abstained from his conditioned impulses for three days just as Jesus did during his temptation in the desert. The three impulses from the inner spiritual world become manifest in him as: ideation – meditation – realization. Yama had no trouble whatsoever with Nachiketa's first wish. He wished that his father, once calmed down, would gladly welcome him back on his return. Thus the earthly man is touched from within, opens himself for the inner impulses and acknowledges the inner world. This process takes place without the involvement of the egoic consciousness. The second wish: being shown the path to heaven and how to kindle the sacred fire, Yama could also grant him without any hesitation for it is a path of devotion and self-surrender by which old age and death can be overcome. It is the conscious connection with the Light of the core Being. "This is what I really am" he realizes again and again in his life. This enlightened insight is not enough however to cross the border. That is why Nachiketa then asked his third question: "There exists great doubt among people what happens when the visible man dies. Some say that he still exists elsewhere. Others say that he has ceased to exist. Tell me: What is in the hereafter? This I would dearly desire to know. It is my third wish!"

In fact here Nachiketa asks the key question of all questions: he asks whether there is something present in man that is permanent, eternal. Or is man only a temporary phenomenon of which nothing will remain? He desires knowledge about his essential Being, beyond life and death and therefore even beyond Yama's influence.

And so Yama begged him: "Of old, even the gods have been in doubt in this regard for this is surely not easily understood but very obscure. Choose another question, Nachiketa, I beg of you and do not insist on an answer. Release me from this last question!"

The relative state is about to be relinquished and the scripts of life and of death are now clear.

Choose
another
question,
Nachiketa,
and do not
insist on an
answer

.....

Yama offered him all sorts of worldly joys and pleasures, all wealth and as many years on earth as he wished, if only he would not have to answer this one question.

"Choose sons and grandsons who shall live a hundred years. Choose elephants, horses, herds of cattle and gold. Choose a vast domain on earth and live there as many years as you desire. Choose wealth and a long life. Be the king, o Nachiketa, of the wide earth. I will make you the enjoyer of all desires. Whatever desires are difficult to satisfy in this world of mortals, choose them as you wish: these fair maidens, with their chariots and musical instruments – men cannot obtain them. I give them to you and they shall wait upon you. But do not ask me about death."

But nothing, absolutely nothing could deter Nachiketa from his deepest question: "Reveal to me the mystery of immortality!"

"For," Nachiketa stated, "everything you propose, O Yama, are enjoyments that will be gone tomorrow. They exhaust the vigour of all the sensory organs. Even the longest life is short indeed. You can keep your horses, dances and sons for yourself. Wealth can never make a man happy. Once we have beheld you, we possess nothing.

We live only as long as you allow. The wish I want to see fulfilled remains the same. This wish, this deeply hidden desire and no other, will be chosen by Nachiketa."

When Nachiketa had spoken his third wish three times, the lord of death had to give in. He admired the purposeful dedication to the truth by this curious young man. But he wanted to make extra sure that he was honest and sincere and that his question was not a display of courage or the result of something learned through knowledge.

Now that he felt reassured that Nachiketa was sufficiently ready to receive this knowledge, he addressed him: "O Nachiketa, after contemplating all this well and truly, you renounce all these precious and attractive objects of desire that lie within your reach. You do not follow the silly pathways that abound in wealth, and on which many people drown. Oh, may there always be inquirers like you."

And then ... then he finally instructs Nachiketa with the words:

"The wise man who, through self-contemplation, knows God as the One, difficult to be seen and experienced, the Unmanifested who is hidden and who dwells in the spirit and rests in the body – this man indeed leaves sorrow and joy far behind.

Smaller than the small, greater than the great is the divine Essence hidden in the heart of all living creatures.

He who is free from desires beholds the majesty of the Self through the tranquility of the senses and the mind and is free from grief."

Yes, Yama was forced to reveal to Nachiketa the highest Knowledge with the words:

"This immortal Self is not found by study or merely thinking deeply, nor by talking, listening or hearing.

To him who knows nothing other than the desire for Self, the Divine Self will reveal itself in Its exalted state.

To find this Self requires an absolute devotion from the seeker for Truth and total dedication to the One Goal.

He who, in one-pointedness, gives himself completely, knows with absolute certainty that the Immortal Self is living deep inside of him.

He who discovers the divine Self in his own heart, finds within himself the peace and quiet he seeks. He sees the highest self in all that lives and moves.

This Servant of the Self becomes one with the divine All."

LIFE EXPECTANCY

“There comes a time when medical developments will overtake the processes of ageing”, thinks Aubrey de Grey. He advocates the idea that the rate at which people will age will be slower than the speed with which medical science will be able to heal us. In his recently published book *Immortal*, MD Terry Grossman says: “I think that in some twenty years we shall be able to identify the genes that start the ageing process in us. If we can change them or put them on hold, then we shall be really powerful. I think that a life expectancy of two hundred years or more will then be realistic.”

The goal is the Self, the inner Being that cannot be known by the personality. When the heart of a human being comes to rest, this Being finds itself unhindered by the personality that is part of the relativity. It cannot be otherwise, for an arrow and its target are not separated. And so, after a profound development of the consciousness of the pupil, the Lord of death turns out to be the great sage, a touchstone, but at the same time a friend on the path to awakening. He is the Creator and the Destroyer, the wise man and the knowing one. The principles of creation and destruction point us to the fact that in the world spoken of by Hermes in the earlier citation, everything is ever new, which is certainly not the case in our own existence. We are as it were crystalized incidents in the eternal solubility, which is the reason why the microcosm, because of these destroying and renewing forces, is able to provide the inner spiritual Being with a new opportunity again and again for the great process of transfiguration. “Death”, says Hermes, “refers to doom and destruction, but none of what exists in the universe will be destroyed!” Only that which is composite will fall away into parts that are whole and complete in themselves. Our true being is not composite but lies beyond life and death and is ever new. When we return to our physical death the question could arise: Does this mean that we are no longer allowed to feel any sorrow when someone that we dearly love passes away? Of course there will be pain and sorrow when there has been love and affection. The energy connection between ourselves and the deceased has been severed and time is needed to adjust. This severed tie is like a wound and needs time to heal. Loving something or someone and grief for the loss of something or someone are real-time processes taking place within this relative world. Our inner Being however is outside and beyond the relative and composite state of things. It views with love all that appears and disappears again. The soul knows that “the great sense of loss cannot be filled by another but by the Other”, the non-relative core-being. This discovery is totally healing and life-giving. The story of Yama and Nachiketa in the Upanishads ends with the words: “The Other one within us is like fire without smoke. It lives hidden in every human being, deep in the cavity of the heart. It is the ultimate ruler over time. It rules over present, future and past. It is unchanging, ever the same, and all that is, is This. “

Through his not-knowing and his willingness and readiness to ‘die’, Nachiketa found the One, Brahma, within himself and so was freed from passions and death. ☸

Pentagon 24 faces

World images



There is an almost infinite amount of forms, bodies, powers and phenomena in the world. The world shows them to us, dissolves them, and then presents them as new. As part of this process, the world shows these various values and powers that may be available, but without certain possibilities, these powers and values exist only for themselves and thus the essential, the real, the divine being, remains hidden. The world is a forecourt of the divine being, a field of change in which our perception and thinking power shape all things, and then dissolve them again.

Pentagon 24 faces (envelope)
Snub cube (core)

‘The principle of our ignorance is that we try to obtain knowledge of the One, using the same methods by which we obtain knowledge of outer things – namely by our intelligence, by scientific knowledge, or through thought. Understanding of the One can not be obtained in this way, but rather by the presence of something that is higher than us.’ – Plotinus – Enneads

Beyond the colours

We humans are fond of analysing. We cannot do anything else at a certain level. As a means to understand something we need to deconstruct it and to see its separate elements. Taken to the extreme, we can start with something whole and by breaking it down into many fragments we destroy its integrity – we are rather good at this. Yet, with regard to our essential being, we have at one time arisen from the Unity – and will return to it some future time. ‘Human existence is the way to the Unity’ – so we are taught. It is difficult to compress it further. But we hardly have any idea of what unity is, let alone the ability to find our way to it. At most, we understand it as a given abstraction, only to access it in some partial aspect or other. Let us consider colour. Colours are like salt sprinkled through our lives like so many flavours and facets of the infinitely variegated Kingdom of Light which is around us and in us and which invites us to an experience of It. Gardens, streets, forests, squares, parks, countryside – all spread an orgy of colours and hues in seven times seventy-seven shades. Flowers rise from the earth, each in the colour and shape of its own nature. They wither and return to the ground from which they originated and on which they fed; with or without thorns, they all have their place and their task in the All. The diversity is unimaginable, while the source is the same for everyone and everything. However, sometimes we like

to use these colours to distinguish ourselves and to categorize various things that appear before us. Political parties, sports clubs, flags, stop-go, yes and no, what is allowed or not. Granted, there are a lot of useful applications, such as the red button and the green light, but we do not need to elaborate on that. We do not see light but it makes everything else visible, perceptible, as colour in seven aspects which we can name. Reunification, recombining these colours, these seven aspects, then re-forms the white light, the colourless and nameless, the Unity. This is only possible by combining the seven pure colours. Though, with every form of exclusion, preference and disapproval, with every shade of ego-centric impurity with its enmeshment in duality, we shall see only drab, murky and grey. The white Light is veiled from us, hidden, with the uncomfortable feeling of something missing or not-quite-right, but not knowing what it is. But when our mind, as an Ark, takes in all the pairs of opposites, and dissolves them, suddenly there appears to be a renewed world, above which, as a Promise, the divine Sign radiates: the Rainbow. In seven pure colours the eye beholds them, in one luxuriance of pure white for the soul – a respite for body and soul. The colours, once so cherished, proved to be transitory, an illusion. There is nowhere we need to go to or return to, because ‘time’ and ‘place’ are just words. Nowhere. Now...here...one Being. ✪

Nike Sawas. Rally, 2014. Installation with plastic flagged cloth, stretched with wire. Electric fans let the strips move



Perception

A search

Whoever looks at a photograph sees it, as it were, through four eyes: his own and those of the photographer. The photographer lets others see what he has seen himself. Thus, to some extent, he directs our eye. The challenge for the photographer goes further however, as the work of Hiroshi Sugimoto shows.

Our eye filters out many of the details whilst the camera, the fifth eye, correctly records everything, even the details the photographer has not seen. It is therefore not so strange that for photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto, although he chooses subjects like seascapes, movie theatres, wax statues, diorama's and electric discharges, his real field of research is perception. What actually does the looking? And what is seeing?

On most of his seascapes we only see water and sky. The eye shall look quickly for details, for something it can make a story of, or give a meaning to. The horizon only offers the restless eye a tentative hold, for it is in the nature of a horizon to remain unreachable.

There is only the fullness of the emptiness, there is no boat, no seagull, no striking coastline, no clouds or waves. In some pictures, the shot is consciously kept out of focus. There is only what is. The eye searches and in doing so causes us not to see that what is. Influenced by Zen Buddhism, Sugimoto pondered: What happens if I could capture an entire film on just one photo?

In his shots of movie theatres, we see the (projection) screen surrounded by the theatre. Because for the one single photo he has the camera shutter open in one long exposure during the entire performance, all that has moved during that time is not longer visible. Thus, although people came

in, saw the movie and left again, we only see a white screen and the empty theatre chairs. Of the movie with its moving images only an illuminated white surface is left.

Because there is a screen we see the light that makes the projection possible and because of the light we also see the space for the spectators. We see no spectators however and no movie, only light and space.

In his dioramas we see imitations of natural scenes. In the Victorian time these were popular arrangements of stuffed animals in a décor that suggested their natural surroundings.

Also, waxen images of historical figures depict living beings but they are only exact copies of the real thing.

It is all artificial and we experience only a second-hand viewing. For we look at interpretations and thought images of how something must have been and we do not see the real life of these animals or people. The research of perception is put into focus when Sugimoto in the photo's he takes – besides the bizarre looking real or dusty lifelessness – also seems to put aside their history of education and entertainment. Thus, there is freedom to really look. The images and the scenes in his photos are therefore of the same quality that a painter might obtain if he were to have such animals and people alive before him.

In his series 'Lightning Fields' he seems to have withdrawn himself completely from the steering dominion of the eye. In a bath with chemicals wherein a photographic plate lies, he causes an electric charge. The effects of the discharge are then photographed. On the photos, with their etheric structures, it seems that we are seeing life itself appearing. Without the intervention of the eye of the photographer it is allowed to show itself. He is only instrumental in the publication. We are being thrown back to our only

perception, eye to eye with nature.

Because in the theatre-photos of the entire movie presentation and its audience only the white screen and the empty space of the theatre is captured, life's transitory nature becomes visible as it actually is. The motion and perception of the human being takes place in time and space and this truth and our perception are now put under a question mark.

While we think that our eye perceives neutrally, we only see our own ideas projected over what we see. The viewer and what he saw affirm each other in their temporary and relative existence.

But first, when we give the images and the perception an absolute status, they are seen as real and only later do we see the make-believe life and do we recognize that our eyes blind while seeing. We are thus trapped in the unceasing exchange of the opposites: of good and evil, stress and relaxation, hate and love. And we must satisfy the desire for emotion by looking further at that 'movie of the appearance of reality'.

The many changing images on the movie screen and as well as our perceptions are only possible when there is light. All that is manifested is only possible because of the light. It is of course true for most people that the light of consciousness illuminates the movie track of their memory. It projects stories and images in our brain and our desires and fears deform the perception.

Therefore, when there are no spectators and no movie, there is only light and there is no movie without an observer. Public and movie, the observer and the observed, the subject and object are ultimately unreal. Only the light is permanent and real.

In the photographs, the light of the movie projector seems to be separated from the observer and the observed and to take

While we think that our eye perceives neutrally, we only see our own ideas projected over what we see.



the place of observation itself. And the dictatorship of the conditioned clouded eye seems to be absent for a moment. The eye sees by means of the light but we do not see the light itself because the seeing and the light are in reality one. The sight and the clarity of the light that does not cast a shadow makes use of the eye when necessary in order to show 'that what is'. It is the liberated light of the consciousness in the soul that knows all and gives life to all things. No knowing and no known one, just a Knowing in itself. A free emergence of everything. That is possibly what Sugimoto caught a

glimpse of during his childhood and later as an adult through his Zen-orientation and his out-of-body experiences and what inspired his research on perception. When you think to know something, you have brought it back to a concept. Attribution of words and concepts like sea and air are of course practical in relative existence, but yet there still appears a horizon that separates. Beyond and outside of this relativity there is no longer a photograph to show our vision, only light, only 'that which is' ★

Hiroshi Sugimoto. Diorama. 'When I came to New York in 1974, I visited the Museum of Natural History, where I made a strange discovery. The stuffed animals against their painted background looked completely fake but if you looked quickly with one eye through your eyelashes, all perspective disappeared and suddenly they did look real. This way I was able to see the world like a camera functions. However artificial an object might be, once photographed it is as good as real.'

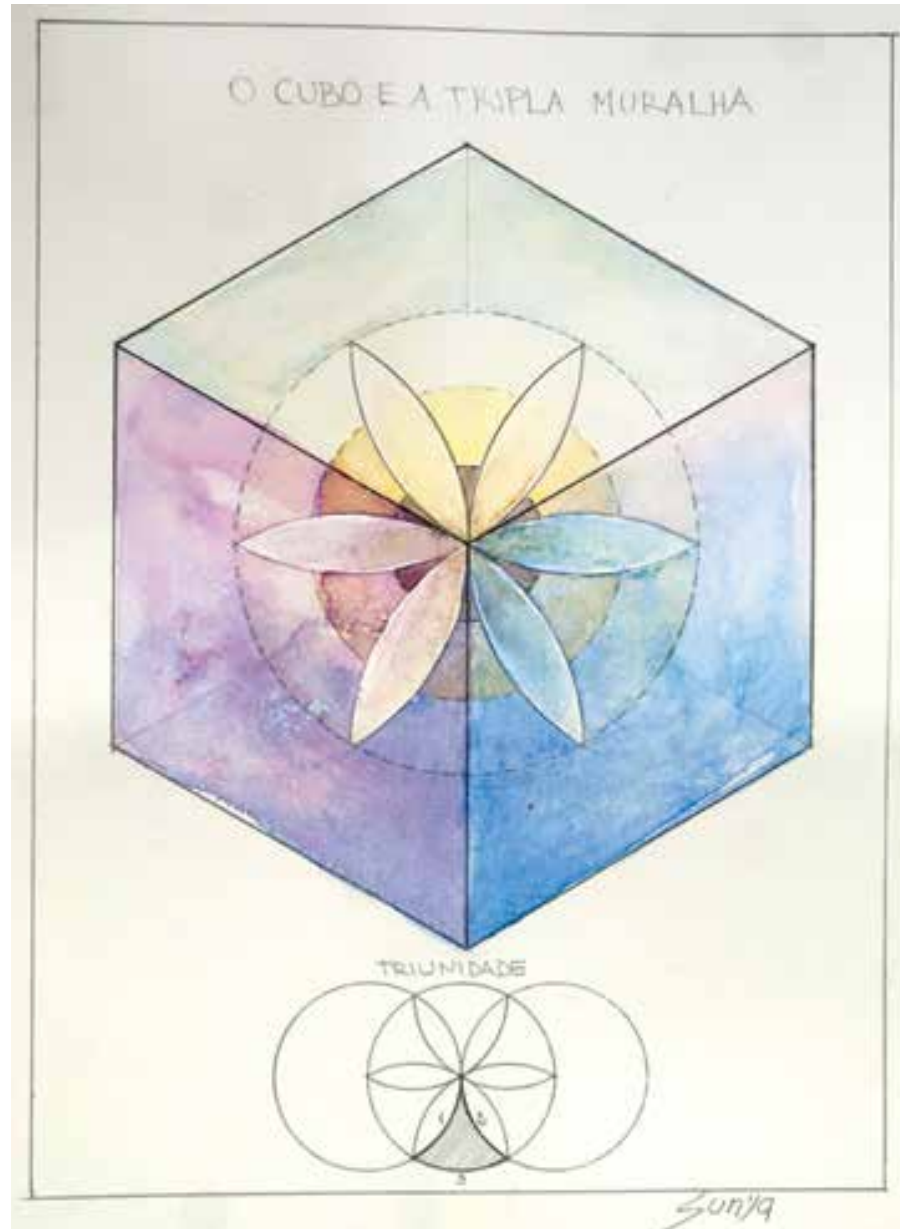
World images

Cube

'Love slumbers in the center of your being and is waiting to awaken. Only you can give yourself and others the love you all need. Then there will be no 'other' or 'you' anymore, just the love that must give itself away.' – Helena Blavatsky

Tree of life

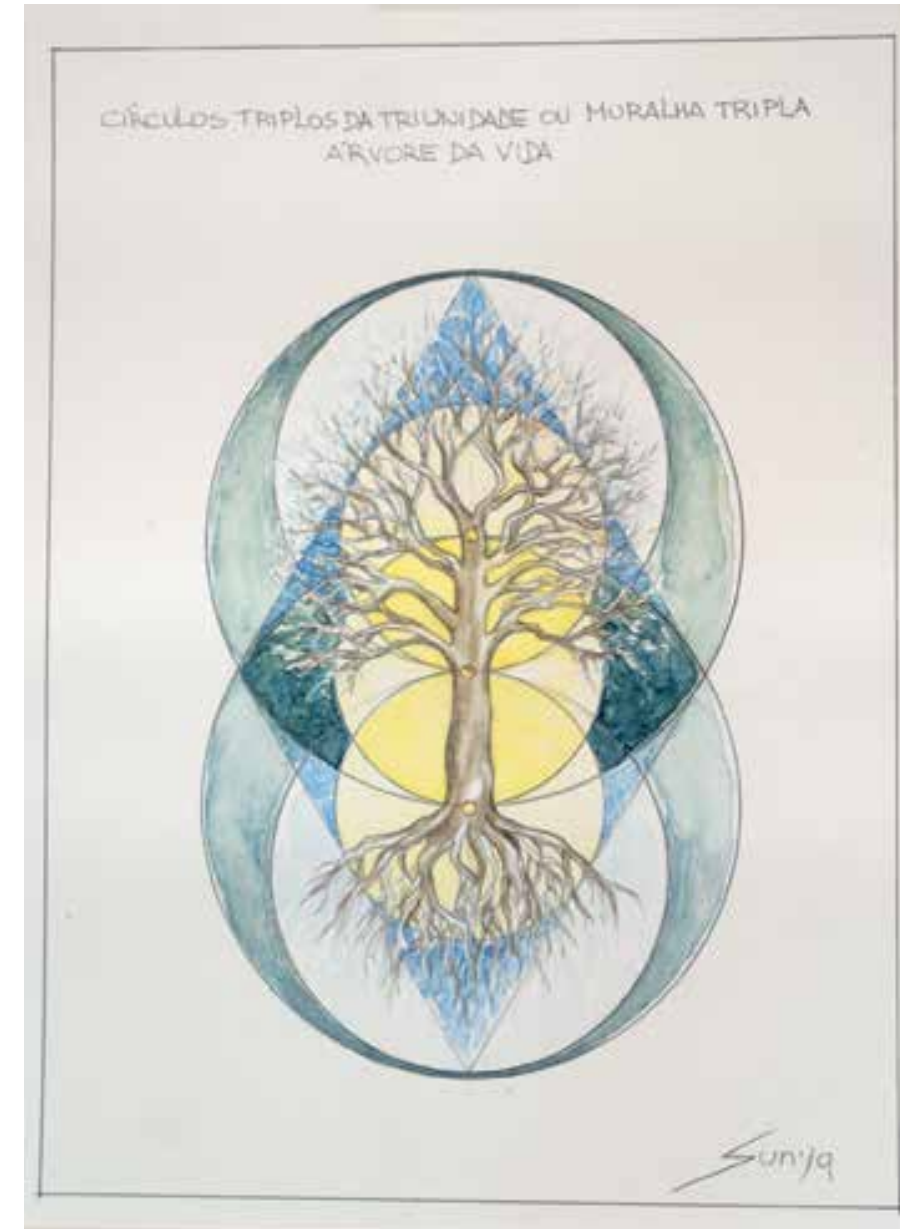
'He who overcomes, I will give him to eat from the tree of life that is in the middle of paradise. Receive everything, let go of everything, and thereby renew everything. Protect all the seeds that are received from God, and help them to manifest themselves in all things and thereby to renew all things.'



triple wall – tree of life

Process of transformation

World images



Threefold tree

'Therefore, we know the legend of God's paradise! In the midst of pure original creation, in the midst of this paradise of God, was Pymander, the sanctifying spirit, as a prize for the souls of the tree of life.'

Process of transformation

'... the perception and the World-spirit have been created to be instruments of God's will. They, as competent gardeners of life, form all things, then relinquish them, so that all the seeds of the mind of God are restored to their rightful place. By that solution, all things find renewal, and are thus re-shaped according to their own calling.'

– Hermes Trismegistus

The meaning behind Christian Rosenkreuz' travel to Damcar and Fez

The Middle Ages still shed their shadows. But a boy of sixteen, raised within the closed walls of a German monastery, is traveling. To Damcar, to Fez, to a world of science, trade and diversity.

In the story of Christian Rosenkreuz we read that a boy of sixteen, raised behind the closed walls of a German monastery, sets out on a journey. Even when his mentor dies, he does not want to stop his journey, but he determinedly continues his path. The reason for this is not immediately apparent. The only thing that can be surmised is that probably he is guided by a protective and enlightening energy. Because if it is his inner mission to gather all the knowledge of the world before discovering his own mission, he does not get very far with what is available in science subjects in the region he comes from and in which the dark Middle Ages still shed their shadow. On the way, Christian endures some seemingly coincidental physical complaints, just when he arrives in Damcar. We do not know which specific city is referred to – it is suspected that it is not present-day Damascus but the ancient city of Petra – but from the continued story it can be seen that his wisdom is gathered from all over the world. It appears that he is already

known and even expected, and in addition he receives all the cooperation he needs in order to acquire divers forms of knowledge. He learns, among other things, the Arabic language, studies physics and mathematics and also makes a Latin translation of the book M. He stays there for three whole years before continuing his journey. After crossing the Arabian Gulf, he stops in Egypt, where he mainly studies nature. However, it does not appear to be his ultimate destination, and he does not stay long. Through the Mediterranean, our traveller then moves towards Morocco and he gets acquainted in Fez with the 'residents of the elements'. And what sounds a bit odd to our ears today is the fact that every year there is a meeting between Arabs and researchers from other nationalities. Christian gives it a lot of attention but he also comes to the staggering discovery that their magic is not wholly pure and their thought system is contaminated by the current religious beliefs. Nevertheless, he finds there the appropriate basis for the underpinning of a

belief that fully complies with the harmony of the whole world. We must bear in mind that the importance of the Arab world during the Middle Ages must not be underestimated. From about 750 AD to the end of the tenth century, almost all Greek writings and those from the Eastern-Byzantine Empire and the Middle East, whether literary or historical, were translated into Arabic and thus preserved for posterity. These included, among others, writings of astrological, alchemical and occult elements. But it also involved works on more scientific fields: mathematics, geometry, astronomy and music theory, or from applied fields such as physics, biology and botany. In addition, health-related books on general medicine and phar-

macology, but also veterinary medicine. And thanks to the extensive translation work, the philosophical, metaphysical, ethical and logical treaties of often Aristotelian style have thus come to our disposal. This requires some historical explanation. This extensive translation work that took place mainly in Baghdad for two centuries, started around the year 750. By that time, the Abbasids had come to power in the Persian Empire after the expulsion of the Sassanids (226-651) and the Omayyads (661-750).

The Abbasids conquered the entire Middle East. Their conquest started about 660, thirty years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632, and reaffirms the annexation of all areas that

belonged to the empire of Alexander the Great one thousand years earlier. An area later occupied by the Romans and Byzantines and extending from Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent to Spain and the Pyrenees and Persia through Mesopotamia and Syro-Palestine to Egypt. For the first time, an Islamic dynasty knew how to gather such a vast area under its political, administrative and economic leadership. But in the formation of the Abbasid state, in addition to the emerging Islam, Persian state ideology played a decisive role. The new leaders not only came to power thanks to the Islamic and the Zoroastrian Persians, and even took from their predecessors the idea of the state in which the ancient Zoroastrian religion had a major influence.

A lively trade blossomed and flourished between the caliphate of the Abbasids and Persia like never before which caused an extensive exchange of science, art and knowledge. This was possible because the production of paper had already been introduced by Chinese prisoners of war in 751, and in the Abbasid kingdom it soon became the most important writing material.

The influence of the eastern Roman empire of Constantinople waned. Already responsible for previous schisms and the expulsion of Syrian Christians and Nestorians, the Byzantine Empire continued to oppose any kind of science and philosophy, thus putting them increasingly in a political and geographical isolation. Where Greek was

INTER-RELIGIOUS DISPUTES

'In the days of Al-Mahdi, heretics and apostates were numerous and publicly proclaimed their different faiths. They studied the books written by Mani, Bardesan and Marcion, translated into Arabic from the Neo-persian and Pahlavi. And they spoke about the writings that supported the teachings of Manicheism, Bardesanism and Marcionism. As a result, the number of Manicheans increased and their opinions were openly expressed. Al-Mahdi was the first caliph to command the theologians to use dialectic disputation (al-gadaliyyin) in their research to compose books against heretics and other infidels. The theologians then produced demonstrative evidence against the disputers (mu'anidin), sharply countered the problems posed by the heretics and expounded the truth into clear terms to the doubters'. (Mohammed al-Horasani Al Ahbari)

Also from the side of the Jews and Christians, there was violent resistance and with their age-old experience they had real verbal power of argument. The great importance of the inter-religious disputes is evident from the vast number of Arabic translations that have come to us. In the seventh century, this form of debate was also an important form of communication in the conflicts with the Chalcedonians, the Monophysites and Nestorians. But the Islamic pursuit of one overriding religion focused especially on the Manicheans. The different dualistic spiritual currents that were active in this time therefore deserve a more important place in Arabic history than has been the case until now. Do not forget that they were not regarded as strange in that culture because they all dated back to the Persian roots of Zoroastrianism. However, it was also the strict edicts of al-Mahdi and the accompanying prosecutions that led to its total disappearance in the tenth century.

Between the Abbasids and Persia an exchange of science, art and knowledge flourished



Souk in Damascus, Syria

The sages of Fez (Morocco) were the most skilled in mathematics, physics and magic



still the administrative language during the Omayyad rule, Byzantine, Constantinople's power decreased further to only the Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians. The other Hellenised populations were therefore driven into the arms of Arab rulers. Meanwhile, in the Arab community, the first education centres and universities were founded. In addition, there was also room for the important religious centres that were still of Nestorian and Zoroastrian origin. Apart from nationality and language, an intensive collaboration took place between Persian, Greek, Syrian and Indian scholars and between representatives of all active scientific traditions and experts in various disciplines. Through personal con-

tact or extensive correspondence, they shared the rich common backgrounds of knowledge. This explains why many of the scientists in the Abbasid Court were active as translators of the most diverse writings. The Omayyad ruled from Damascus but the new caliphate had its centre in Iraq, with Baghdad as the main metropolis.

As a result, the cultural centre of gravity shifted further to the East and reduced the Byzantine influence even more. This was a multicultural society which, on the one hand, consisted of a population of Christians and Jews that spoke Aramaic, but also of Persian speaking peoples, and of Arabs who were not always Muslim but sometimes also Christian.

Around 750, the first education centres and universities rose in the Arab commonwealth



AVICENNA AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW CONSCIOUSNESS

We are already in the early eleventh century when the work of Avicenna, ibn Sinna, coloured an intense polemic within the Islam in the philosophical arena. It was conducted between the Shiite and Sunni Muslims and lasted for three centuries, once again bringing about a similarly extensive literary production. At the same time, a completely new intellectual system developed on the basis of Avicenna's treatment of Greek philosophy. In the same vein of thought as Avicenna, we also see an important integration of Aristotelianism into Shiite thought. It is a combination of, on the one hand, an idea of god that derived its belief mainly from Greek philosophy and, on the other hand the well-known Sufism which bloomed in particular in Iran in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. It also found enthusiastic practitioners among the Ottoman scholars from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

Are these the scholars that CRC found on his journey during his special tour of the Arab world? Are they the ones who served him in the preparation of his great global world reform? Is his synthesis among other things not prepared in the great crucible of classical philosophical traditions, Arab paganism, Judaism and Christianity, of Gnosticism and Hinduism, and of all previous cultures and traditions such as Zoroastrianism? We do not know for sure, but we can well imagine it. What we do know with certainty are the consequences this has had for Europe. As we can read at the end of the Call of the Brotherhood in as many words, it has gradually stimulated another consciousness in Europe.

In addition, the ancient spiritual sources were still accessible. Let us not forget that, until the third century, Zoroaster's teaching remained the official state religion in the Persian Empire. This includes the Avesta, the holy book of the Persians, which Zarathustra himself would have written. According to Qusta ibn Luqa, a nineteenth century scholar, the work consists of 12,000 parts, tied in water buffalo leather and written with gold ink and contains, in many languages, all the knowledge of the world. These books were said to have been stolen or even destroyed by Alexander the Great because he was jealous of the rich Persian science. Another book attributed to the Persian prophet is 'The Book of Horoscopes', parts of which were translated into Persian by Mahankard of Persia from the ancient Avast script.

Not long after the reign of the Arabs was over, these books, as e.g. 'Kitab al Mawaid' were kept from further decline by their translation into Arabic.

This diversity was in stark contrast to the decreasing influence of the ancient Byzantine Empire.

In the sixth century, the authoritarian Christian Emperor Justinian finally closed the Platonic Academy of Athens as well as the other schools. Thus, the last remains of science and wisdom were expelled from the Roman Empire to Asia.

Many Nestorian Africans had fled to Persia in 455 after the condemnation of the heretics by the Council of Chalcedon. Greek and non-Christian thinkers were received by the Persian leader Chosroes I with open arms. After all, it was his intention to establish his own academies following the model of the Academy of Alexandria, such as the one of Jundi Sabur (Gondishapur).



Dining room or refectory in the monastery of Bebenhausen, which might serve as a model for the monastery where CRC spent his youth

DAMCAR AND FEZ

'When Christian was sixteen, he travelled to Damcar where he was expected by the wise men there. He studied the Arabic language and gained knowledge of physics and mathematics. There he translated the book M into Latin. After three years he returned and crossed the Arab Gulf to Egypt. He did not stay there for long but studied nature in its entirety.

He crossed the Mediterranean Sea and travelled to Fez. Every year, Arabs and other nationalities gathered there to discuss whether there were new discoveries or other perspectives. The sages of Fez were most proficient in mathematics, physics and magic. Christian also became acquainted with the "residents of the elements" as he called them. He stated that he had learned much of the residents of Fez, although their magic was not pure and their Kabbalah was affected by their religion. He had found an even better foundation for his faith, which was completely consistent with the harmony of the whole world.'



Sunset over Jeruzalem

In the universities founded by King Chosroes Anursirvan (531-579), the Alexandrian curriculum was introduced and Galenus' medical books studied. Chosroes welcomed not only Indian scientists but also all who fled Justinian. An important impetus was given to the integration of Hellenistic and Indian knowledge into the later Arabic language.

One of their main arguments for the translation of ancient writings on a large scale was that the Islamic Arabs must have realized that they had insufficient knowledge to conduct the debate with their various religious opponents. In the beginning, Islam was still too young to have a theology of significance. That is why, for example, the translation of 'Topica' the theory of argumentation of the philosopher Aristotle was very useful to them. For that ambiguous reason, the caliphs proclaimed themselves as the true protectors of ancient Greek philosophy. Therefore, they also encouraged the translation of the largely astronomical and astrological writings from the Sanskrit language after being first converted into pre-Islamic Pahlavi.

All this made Baghdad the intellectual crossroad of many cultures. Baghdad is a city designed under the direction of Caliph al-Mansur (754-775) in a circular shape, possibly following the principles of Euclidean geometry. According to tradition, some doors to the gates of the city were previously used by Solomon in a city he had built at Wasit. Still other doors were from Omayyad's.



ZOROASTER

The ancient Persian wisdom teachings spread by the Prophet Zoroaster or Zarathustra around 1000 BC, in addition to the belief in the highest God Ahura-Mazda, are characterized by a strict dualism in which two cosmic forces stand opposite to each other, the evil being embodied by Ahriman. His teaching has come to us through hymns – the Gathas or Kathas – found in the Desatir and the Zend-Avesta. His influence has penetrated throughout the ancient world, including in ancient Mithraism and Christian Manicheism. In modern times, his name reappears in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche who introduced him in his *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1885).

MANI'S INFLUENCE LASTED UNTILL THE TENTH CENTURY

It is well-known that the Manicheans lived in the two-stream country until the tenth century. Manicheism is regarded as the most advanced form of Gnosticism. The prophet Mani himself was born in 216. After joining a Mandaean group for a time, related to the teachings of Bardesan, in a vision, he met his twin brother, his 'alter ego'. His own teachings are found mainly in the 'Kephalaia' and in the wonderful hymns or psalms. Mani travelled through Ctesiphon and Belabad to India and the fact that his followers could be found as far distant as China shows that Manicheism was able to compete with the great world religions for quite some time. Like Zarathustra, in his teaching the contrast between the kingdom of light and that of darkness played a central part. However, initially supported by King Shapur I, Mani was captured and executed in the year 276 or 277. His followers were furiously hunted, both inside Christianity as well as in the Islam.



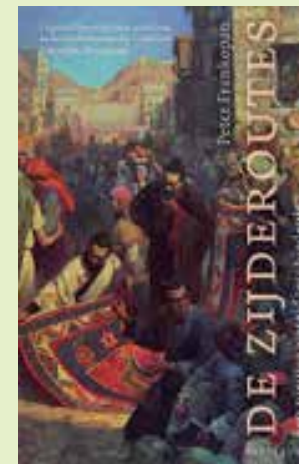
For Jews, Christians and Egyptians alike, this made Baghdad not only a tangible symbol of the rule of the Abbasid dynasty over many peoples, religions and traditions, but also the heir of the rich past throughout the Near East.

At the same time, a counter-movement was also set in motion from 743 onward. The conversion to the Islam increased hand over fist. The Abbasids soon demonstrated their support for the introduction of one specific religion and immediately triggered strong opposition. In the beginning this was expressed in vivid disputes and debates. In that light, the translations of ancient Greek and other writings gained added value. After all, they served to teach and to oppose opponents who were incorrect in their interpretation of doctrine and to defeat them with the appropriate arguments. Al Mahdi, who succeeded his father, Mansur in 775, devoted himself diligently to eradicate differing views and focused in particular on the widespread religion of Manicheism. ✪



Mosaic walls in Samarkand, Persia

The Silk Roads – Peter Frankopan



A new world history.

A magnificent exploration of the elements that were the driving force behind the rise and fall of world empires, which determined the flow of ideas and goods and which do so again in the 21st century.

Peter Frankopan studied history in Cambridge and has been director of The Centre for Byzantine Research at Oxford University since 2000. Earlier he wrote *The First Crusade*. The author tells us in his introduction that at school the history classes were only concerned with Western Europe and America. The rest of the world remained largely undiscussed. On the map above his bed, Europe was central. But what was there in the East?

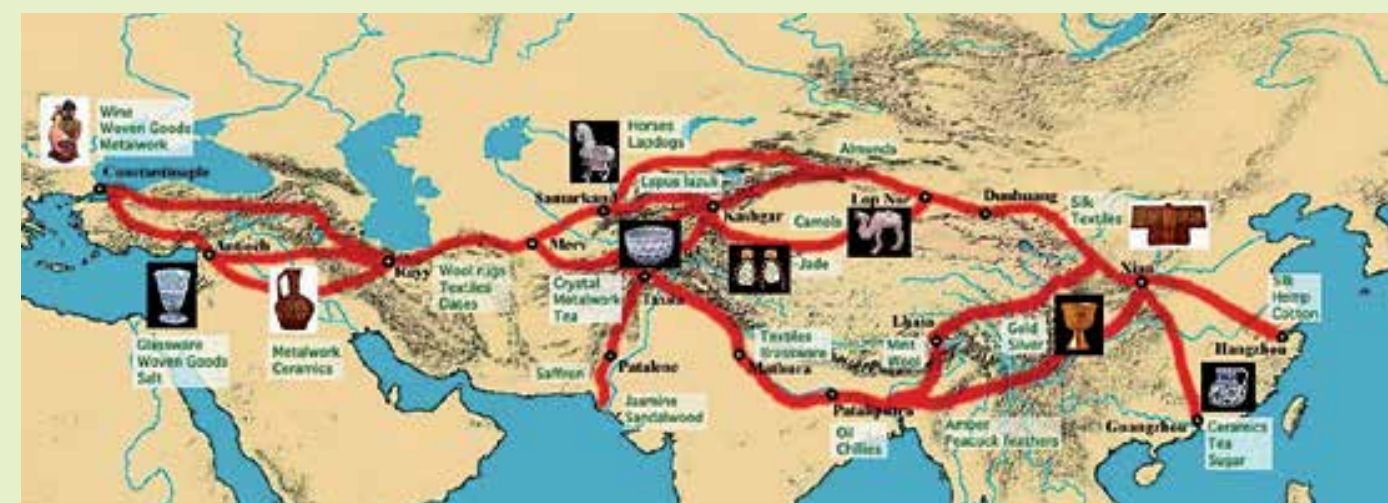
He went looking. At the Mappa Mundi in Herford's Cathedral, he saw Jerusalem situated in the middle as the centre of the world with England bumped on the edge. As well he found maps with the Caspian Sea in the middle. Even a medieval map from Turkey with a city in the centre which no longer existed but which was once considered to be the centre of the world. His curiosity was awakened as to the great kingdoms of the East, to the rise of Christianity from an Asian point of view and

as to how Afghanistan and India looked at the two world wars.

In short, he went looking for a new history, from a new perspective.

He taught Russian and Arabic to rediscover the world. He discovered that for thousands of years the area between the Great Ocean and Europe has been the axis of world history. This bridge between East and West was at the crossroads of civilizations. For example, nearly 5000 years ago in the Indus country, the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were world wonders of ancient times.

Other major civilization centres were Babylon, Ninive, Uruk, Akkad. Here the great world religions originated:



Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism. Here constant collisions occurred between cultures – large empires came and went. Here thousands of kilometres of routes formed a network that went in all directions along which pilgrims and warriors, nomads and merchants travelled. Here goods and products were traded and ideas exchanged, modified and refined. These roads not only caused prosperity but also death and violence, diseases and disasters.

Due to the centuries long trade in silk, the name of Silk Roads was conceived in the late 19th century. They acted as the world's central nervous system. Insight in all these connections enables us to understand how world history has unfolded – how cultures, cities, and people developed – how civilizations appeared and disappeared again. It is an overwhelmingly rich history of some 4000 years, from 2500 BC until 1500 AD, which played in that immense area until 1492. After discovering the Americas, Europe was no longer a remote region but became a pivot in a rapidly expanding communication, transport and trading system. Europe became the new central point between East and West. Now, in the 21st century, the focus is changing again. The new Silk Roads are the

thousands of kilometres of oil pipelines and transcontinental railways, such as the 10,300-km long Yuxinou International Railway from China to Duisburg. Trains of some 700 meters long carry in just 16 days millions of laptops, shoes, clothes et cetera, by means of this route which is significantly shorter than by sea. Railways are also planned to run through Iran, Turkey, the Balkans and Siberia to Moscow, Berlin and Paris. New routes will connect Beijing with Pakistan, and Kazakhstan with India. When the scheduled tunnel under the Bering Street is built, there will be direct trains from China to Alaska, Canada and the US. In this way the trek over the world continues and will continue. After the first Silk Roads routes, there were other 'roads', and they are all described in detail: the slave road, the gold road, the silver road, the road to Northern Europe. We also find chapters on the roads towards crisis, towards war, towards genocide, towards tragedy. It makes you stop and wonder. When you have finished reading this book, you need a moment of rest to catch your breath from almost 5000 years of history. A continuous fluctuation between war, peace, culture, civilization, barbarity, horror and destruction. And always the rebuilding of what was destroyed, in an endless stream.

As readers, we realize intensely how humanity has always journeyed over this globe: from peace and prosperity, luxury and well-being to ever-increasing tensions and wars, disasters and epidemics. The rulers became slaves, the new powers became again subjugated. Religions came up and were in turn overruled by others. Man had to go forward and gain experience, generation after generation, with unimaginable wealth as well as unimaginable poverty. All extremes have always been present in all parts of the globe. Especially the first 200 pages, describing the period up to 1492, are a revelation for Western readers. Frankopan points out that Western historians have provided us with a very unilateral image of savage tribes on the steppe which is only a small part of the story. The section of the Faith Roads shows that not only merchandise flowed through the life-veins that connected the Great Ocean, Central Asia, India, the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean region in antiquity, but also all the inventions and ideas travelled this way. With caravans of sometimes over 800 camels through steppes and deserts, from oasis to oasis, along which a chain of cities, also wise men and scholars travelled. The strongest ideas of all were

always the belief systems and the book shows that it is thus perfectly logical that for example Manicheism (Mani 216-276) could spread so rapidly and become a world religion from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean in such a short period of time. Yet, Manicheism has also vanished, just as the worship of Zoroaster (Zarathustra), for whom fire temples were erected throughout the whole of Persia and even as far as Rome. If there is one thing that this book teaches us, it's the law of Panta Rhei, everything flows. Everything is always changing, in order to give people new experiences. But one thing remains invariably the same: the search of man, in both horizontal and vertical directions after earthly and heavenly happiness. 🌟

Mysteries and challenges of birth, life and death. *Becoming a New Man* – André de Boer



The successful book series *Spiritual Texts Library* of the publishing house of the Rozekruis Pers, is based on carefully selected classical spiritual texts, on which André de Boer gives clear reflections, mainly from the more than four centuries-old living tradition of the Rosicrucians.

In *Mysteries and challenges of birth, life and death*, the writer proposes that we have gone through a massive raising of consciousness these last few decades. What in the past happened over several generations, we now experience in one life time. Developments in each area are moving fast and we are always forced to make choices because if you do not make choices yourself, you will be chosen by the events. If we want to change our experience of external circumstances, we will have to work on our inner self because the world we experience is a reflection of our inner being. The challenges we face in the twenty-first century are not solved by 'hard work' but by 'heart-work', according to the author. Then he sketches the familiar image that we are not complete as human beings. In us, from the divine principle in the heart as a basis, a new man could come to light. He assumes that we need to have what is called 'knowledge of the heart': Gnosis; a knowledge from within. Gnosis is not reserved for a particular philosophy or religion. There are many movements that can be identified as gnostic. They all show us that man can go a path in which he will live out of the eternal substance, and thus transform into a new man. *Mysteries and challenges of birth, life and death* starts from a gnostic perspective to view subjects that are of interest to you: life and death. They are not in opposition because the opposite of death is not life, but birth. Life has no counterpart. Life was, is and will always be. Life is a mystery, and even though we may never fully understand it – we can penetrate it more deeply. After my death, my body dies, but what happens with my consciousness? Does that disappear too? Or does it just increase? Is there a heaven? Is there reincarnation in another body? Why do I live here on earth? What should I do here? These are vital questions of life that are posed by people everywhere. Answers may be uncertain and individual, but if you keep those

questions constantly alive, the questions are gradually resolved. You become the answer yourself. The essential question is not whether there exists life after death, but whether you are truly alive before death. Our vision of life and death determines the way we shape and experience our lives. If we take our life seriously, we will also have to take death seriously. The first part of the book deals in nine chapters on gnostic wisdom about birth, life and death, using sections of the Bible and the living tradition of the Rosycross. The second part, *Mysteries and challenges of birth, life and death*, consists of nine essays from various authors, which illustrate, among other things, the practical issues on the path. 🌟

To this book belongs an online program 'Mysteries of birth, life and death' on the website <http://spiritualtexts.academy> in which the texts of the first part of the book can be read.

The Lemniscate symbol



In ancient Greece the word 'lemniscate' was also used for a flower garland. Each flower, intertwined in a double-twisted circle, follows the cosmic process of formation and equally determines the beauty of the whole, no flower excepted. Whether life follows the lemniscate, or the lemniscate follows life – it always is one continuous progress. Hence, the movement of this symbol is dubbed "everlasting". Often the lemniscate is also pictured as a drawing or a mathematical figure. And although there is a point of intersection, there are no separate poles, rather there is a continuous interaction between all "flowers" (points) that together make the "garland".

The lemniscate is therefore the symbol of the unity between a divine elevated life and the upwardly directed Divine Mind, in which no centralised 'I' or 'ego' is found anymore. You may also say: it is the ultimate imagination of servitude, intertwined with every flower in its unique place. Service, in joy and simplicity, at every level, in all worlds, because that is the adage and motto of life in the solar cosmos.



Dodecahedral pyramid

World images



*Your beginning is in the far distant past.
Your destination is found in your beginning.
Consider yourself in your place. Look around.
Compare.
Everything is sameness.
Nothing changes.
Only the colors and lines change.*

Pyramide dodecaëder (omhulling)
– icosaeëder stomp (kern)

*What do the colors mean to the Lord of the Light?
In each color the light is the same.
What do the lines mean to the Lord of the Rhythm?
The others perceive shadowy eyes.
The world is in confusion
with all the latest shapes,
and passing fads of décor and color.
Perceive through your eyes.
See things as they really are.
In wisdom.
And you will oversee it all – far beyond all this.*

Cecilia Meireles

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