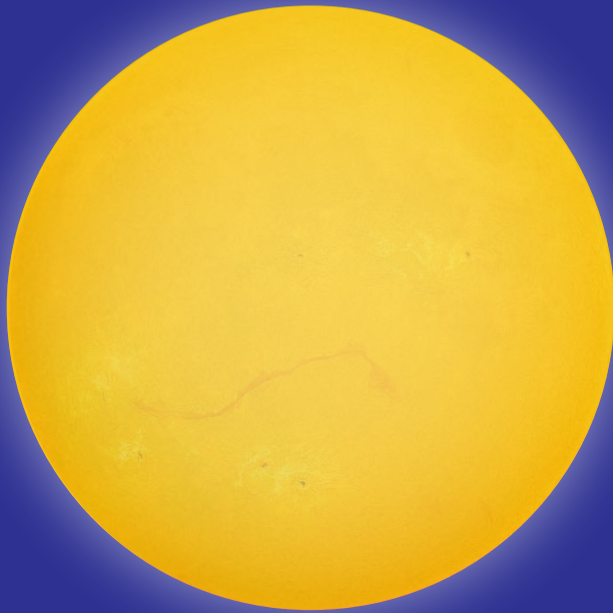


# Mysteries and Challenges of Birth, Life and Death

Becoming a new human being



Roze kruis Pers



MYSTERIES AND CHALLENGES  
OF BIRTH, LIFE AND DEATH

becoming a new human being



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**MYSTERIES AND CHALLENGES  
OF BIRTH, LIFE AND DEATH**

Becoming a new human being

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## preface

**F**or many decades we, as humanity, have experienced tremendous acceleration. What was experienced in the past during the course of several generations, we now experience in just one lifetime. Developments in the technical, medical, economic, social, cultural and political fields are moving at lightning speed. We are continually forced to make choices, both individually and also collectively, because if we do not choose for ourselves, someone else will choose for us. If we want to change our experience of outer circumstances, we will have to start working on our inner self because the world that we experience externally is a reflection of our inner self. The challenges that we face as people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot be overcome with hard work but by working from the heart. As a human being, we are still far from finished. We are beings in the making, and becoming true and complete human being begins from the divine principle in the heart.

In this way we arrive at what is called the knowledge of the heart: gnosis. That is a knowing from the inside out. Gnosis is not the property of a particular philosophy or religion. It is universal because it is connected with human experience. There are many currents that can be described as gnostic. They all have in common that the human being is regarded as twofold: both mortal as well as eternal. They teach that we can go a road by which we live more and more from eternal inspiration and stimuli through which we will fulfil our inner calling and be transformed into a new person. This book proceeds from a gnostic perspective to examine what is important for every person: birth, life and death.

Birth is the opposite of death, but life has no opposite. Life was, it is and it always will be. It is a mystery. We will never fully understand it, but we may still penetrate it more deeply.

After my death my body decays, but what happens to my consciousness? Does that disappear too? Or does it actually increase? Will I go to heaven or will I return to earth in another body? Why am I living here on earth anyhow? What am I to do here? These are essential questions about life that are asked by people everywhere, regardless of their culture, their education or their religion. If we can continually keep such questions about life active within us, we may not receive direct and definitive answers, but the questions will gradually dissolve within us until we ourselves become the answer.

The essential question is not whether life exists after death, but whether we are really alive *before* our death. Our view on life and death is decisive for the way in which we shape and experience our lives. If we take our lives seriously, we will also have to take death seriously. Life and death are not so much riddles that we can solve, but rather mysteries that we can consciously experience so that our lives become more meaningful, more intense and more valuable.

*'Mysteries and Challenges of Birth, Life and Death – Becoming a New Human Being'* is the fourth volume in the *Spiritual Texts Library*, a series of guides for 21<sup>st</sup>-century people who want to follow a path of spiritual awareness and renewal in their daily lives. This series of books is based on carefully selected classical spiritual texts and reflections on these subjects, taken from the more than four centuries old living tradition of the Rosicrucians.

All publications of the *Spiritual Texts Library* are broadly oriented, deeply rooted and spiritually inspired. The books in this series are synchronised so that together they offer a richly varied insight into the mysteries of life, death and rebirth. They contain

many points of interest that foster discussion and are therefore ideal to work with in discussion circles.

This book is a sequel to '*Mysteries and Symbols of the Soul – Becoming a Spirit-inspired person*', which is mainly concerned with the road to unity. On a deeper level, everything is of course connected to everything else. The dispersion that we experience constantly still originates from unity. As human beings, we are called to be living connections between this unity and the multiplicity in which we live by becoming ourselves a unity: a unity of spirit, soul and body.

'Freedom' is the central theme in '*Mysteries and Challenges of Birth, Life and Death*'. When we can release any blocking imaginations and attachments – that is a form of inner dying – then we can reach a higher level of freedom, so that we can make a greater contribution to the unity. Something eternal will also develop in us, something not tied to the earthly cycles that rise, shine and fade.

In the first part of this publication, the discussion of the mysteries of birth, life and death is based on Bible excerpts and inspired by the extensive writings of J. van Rijckenborgh (1896-1968) and Catharose de Petri (1902-1990), co-founders of the International School of the Golden Rosycross. Each chapter is preceded by a quote from one of their books, either '*Elementary Philosophy of the Modern Rosycross*' or '*The Living Word*'. These publications are composed from lectures that were held between 1950 and 1980. Well-known concepts such as hell, purgatory and heaven are considered as well as reincarnation, karma and transfiguration.

The Bible quotations that are included in this book are derived from several different versions of the Bible. Several quotes are also taken from the apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas*. Since it is vital that developments in society be viewed from the standpoint of the timeless universal wisdom, practical and ethical questions

are also discussed from the spiritual vision that is unfolded in this book.

The conditions of death can actually enrich us when we no longer cling to physical personal property, but instead open ourselves to influences from the soul. Then we are at the beginning of a path of self-initiation. On this path, an immortal resurrection body is developed through which we may experience enlightenment and liberation.

Rozekruis Pers,  
Doride Zelle

# introduction

DANIËL VAN EGMOND

*I do not believe in death: I die by the hour, each day  
And I have found a higher, better life this way*

ANGELUS SILESIVS,  
Cherubinischer Wandermann I, 30a

**L**ife and death are mysteries. What does this mean? A mystery is not a problem or puzzle for which we have to find a solution. A mystery has an unfathomable depth and every time we engage with it, our wonder of it grows. But, as the classical philosophers taught us, wondering leads to wisdom, while solving a problem only means an increase in knowledge. So, if we want to connect with the Sophia, the Wisdom, if we long to be 'loved by it' (which is the literal meaning of the word philosophy), we must turn to the mysteries.

Why would we want to love Wisdom and, conversely, want to be loved by her? Who is she? Jacob Boehme tells us that she shows us the gate that gives access to the Patrimony (Drey Principien – Three Principles XX, 40). Only through this gate can we properly enter the "world of light" and eternal life. If we allow ourselves access to that world on our own power, then it no longer remains a paradise. *'The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross'* relates how, on the second day of Christian's adventure, there were many there who were not invited to the wedding of bride and groom at all, having climbed over the walls to come into the castle. In the end, however they are all condemned and sentenced. This refers to the well-known Bible text: *'Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber'* (John 10:1).

Wisdom must help us find this door. If we force it with our own

hands or on the basis of our own knowledge, then we will become entangled in our own ideas, theories and illusions.

All our knowledge of life and death can only be of a provisional nature. It consists of earthly concepts that are at best a very poor shadow of the fullness of the symbolic reality of the heavens. If we want to fathom them, the mysteries of life and death cannot be translated into ordinary language or through our common thinking ability. If we were to do this, we would turn them into ordinary theories that are powerless to direct our lives. Instead of giving us access to the reality of Wisdom, they would shut us off, because we might think that we have already found the solution to the mystery.

Wisdom points us upwards, but not in a spatial sense because it has nothing to do with chronological time and physical space, nor with evolution or with journeys to distant galaxies. It points to a different reality and a different level of consciousness than that of our daily lives. That reality cannot be captured in ordinary concepts and language but is revealed to us by means of ancient symbols that we can find in all cultures and all authentic spiritual traditions. Each of these symbols is an entrance into the heavenly reality, provided we have learned to allow them entrance into our own lives. And for that we need Wisdom.

Only if this Wisdom loves us, and if we love her, can we learn to realise the depth of these symbols instead of merely understanding them. Our comprehension grasps only an extremely selective part of reality by means of concepts. Our comprehension – termed ‘the passive intellect’ in classical philosophy – receives and includes symbolic reality and reflects this to us as awareness. But first our comprehension must be awakened by Wisdom. After all, this ability has to do with love, receptiveness and the heart. The feverish activities of our ordinary mind and of our psyche, or personality, must first come to rest before the passive intellect

opens to embrace the heavenly, symbolic reality. Then the mysteries will reveal themselves to us more and more – a process that never ends.

We are so fused with our psyche and our thinking that we have forgotten that we are receptive enough to receive Wisdom only when they have come to rest. When we succeed in becoming silent inside, we quickly notice how thoughts, feelings, impulses, fantasies, emotions, etc. come and go, whether we want them or not. Yes, sometimes we manage to create an apparent calm for a single moment, after which thoughts and feelings will breeze through us again in full force. Since it is apparent that we are not able to stop this flow, we have to conclude that we ourselves are not the main source of all those thoughts, feelings, and so on. That is an extremely important observation, because it immediately raises the question of who we really are if we are not the ones who produce all these thoughts, fantasies, impulses and the like.

Most spiritual traditions tell us in a variety of ways that we have to make a distinction between the ‘outer man’ and the ‘inner man’. In virtually all medieval texts, the outer man is identified with the ‘body’, with the result that we interpret this to mean our biological body. With a few exceptions, however, this is not the case. Then they meant what we nowadays call the ‘personality’, i.e. the indivisible unity of psychic, mental and biological processes. The ‘inner man’ was often called the ‘soul’ or ‘psyche’, but under the influence of the psychology of Freud and Jung these words mostly mean the outer man. Therefore it is often difficult to properly understand the old texts!

The outer being is inseparable from the earthly world, which includes not only biological and physical aspects but also the psychic and mental processes. This outer man is dominated by the ‘prince of the world’ and almost all of our thoughts, feelings, desires, and so on find their origin in his world. Because we con-

stantly identify ourselves with all these processes, we believe that we *are* our thoughts, our feelings and our desires. Consequently if we were to become silent, if we were to stop identifying with our ordinary thinking and our ordinary fantasies, then we would feel that we were fading and vanishing.

The inner human being belongs to heaven and therefore continually lives in a symbolic reality that sometimes, very occasionally, permeates our consciousness, for example through symbolic dreams or through certain forms of contemplation. In both cases the outer person has more or less calmed down: either she is asleep, or she has learned to no longer identify with all sensory, psychological and mental processes. Then passive intelligence is able to pass on its comprehension of the symbolic reality to the outer being. Formulated differently: it is as if we went through the gate of sleep or through the gate of contemplation and were allowed to be in paradise for a moment.

However this heavenly reality can pervade the outer being's awareness only when he or she has learned to live with symbols, to live with mysteries, and thus no longer tries to understand them with the ordinary thinking ability. For the concepts that have been developed by us are incapable of rightly expressing the mysteries which are opened, and thus become 'present', through these symbols.

Between the inner and the outer man there is an 'abyss' – at least as seen from the standpoint of the outer being. The inner man includes the outer man, but the reverse is not the case. If our outer man dies, we will therefore not go anywhere, because the inner man already *is* in heaven. It has, however, become impossible for him to express himself on earth through the outer man. Thus it follows that with every transition from the outer to the inner man (and from this world to paradise), we have to pass through



a door. This is a form of death for the outer man, time and time again. That is why Angelus Silesius admonishes us ‘to die every hour’ thereby receiving the celestial life-force again and again.

Nothing is more difficult than this art of daily dying. Like all other arts, this requires continuous attention under the guidance of someone who has already taken some steps in this direction. All authentic religious traditions emphasise that it is not about fleeing from the world and storming the gates of heaven as quickly as possible, because then we are as the thieves and robbers mentioned in the Gospel of John. It is about becoming a gatekeeper, a mediator between heaven and earth, and therefore also a mediator between the inner and the outer man.

Only in this way can we die every day and so be born again. Only then are we able to encompass the Mysteries and present them today in this world, helping others to find the right gate. Then we must be philosophers – a being loved by Wisdom – and be willing to undertake the difficult and perilous journey that Christian Rosycross travelled in ‘seven days’. This journey does not have the purpose of becoming a resident of heaven but instead is one that prepares us for the important task of being a gatekeeper.

*For which door or gate?*

*For the gate of the Mysteries.*

Daniël van Egmond

Bithoven, 2017

*Come, wake the soul to Life  
Follow the Call, oh earthly man  
Make this your goal in life.*

*And let the Man who was of yore  
Rise now from his grave  
For this go down into the pit  
Be well-prepared and brave.*

*The Voice that has called out to you,  
Demands us to die daily  
So that we too, may then ascend  
And gain Eternity.*

*After this, our earthly life  
We leave this nature's mire:  
The ashes of life's fire.*

*So, enter now the Garden-Court,  
the Rose-garden go in!  
And all souls in that Temple field,  
Eternal Now shall win.*

A diorama of a forest scene. The foreground features several dark brown tree trunks. The background is a misty, ethereal landscape with soft, glowing light rays filtering through the air. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and ethereal.

PART 1

**MYSTERIES OF  
BIRTH, LIFE AND DEATH**

*The Logos always manifests itself through its creation and its creatures. When one discovers how it manifests itself, one will at the same time understand the divine process of salvation as it wishes to reveal itself.*

*Such a revelation can never be limited or dogmatic. It can never be recorded in one book or said in one word. That is why he who goes the path of the mysteries always remains a pupil; his knowledge always falls short of the ultimate revelation. When a student chains himself to knowledge and lacks the openness and capacity for revelation, he will be seized by crystallising intellectualism. To approach the wisdom that is with God means to go on eternally from horizon to horizon.*

*So a divine hierarchy has existed from the beginning of time, manifested in and through man. The threefold divine manifestation is active in this divine-human hierarchy. This hierarchy consists of entities who either remained steadfast in the dim past during the great temptation which caused the Fall of mankind, or rose again to their original destiny.*

J. van Rijckenborgh,  
Elementary Philosophy of the Modern Rosycross<sup>1</sup>, Chapter 2

CHAPTER 1

**ACCEPTING THE WORD**

SPIRITUAL TEXT: **John 1:1-34**

**I**n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me. For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is

in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent unto him from Jerusalem priests and Levites to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; and he confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet.

And they had been sent from the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptise in water: in the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.



## CHAPTER 1

# ACCEPTING THE WORD

## REFLECTION

*You are a miracle.*

*You breathe and you move.*

*You observe, you experience and you learn.*

*You think, you feel, you wish and you act.*

*You desire, you work, you acquire, you enjoy and you develop.*

*You dream, you communicate, you create, you harvest,  
you evaluate and you laugh.*

*You sleep, you wake up, you become troubled,  
you struggle, you lose and you cry.*

*You suffer, you seek, you find, you strive and you persevere.*

*You are amazed, you pray, you receive and you give thanks.*

*You believe, you hope, and you love.*

*You die and you revive.*

*Truly, you are a miracle.*

**L**iving your life on Mother Earth in the here and now is truly important. Here, you have received your life in order to prepare for inner breakthroughs, so that the spiritual light may penetrate more and more deeply into you and make you aware that you are an essential part of a powerful divine plan that stretches from eternity to eternity; aware that your deepest being is part of a heavenly symphony, a cosmic dance and a radiant joy.

Why don't you realise that yet? Or only barely realise it? Because you are still closed to the light of the spiritual sun. You may actually be grateful for that, because if the full light would reveal itself within you, it would completely disrupt your current life.

If cracks appear in your auric armour and rays of divine light are then able to enter your system, you may experience them as

inconvenient, even painful. But you may also view them as a gift because you will then see both yourself and the world in a different light. An entirely new and gradual development becomes possible, one that is the unfolding of the divine potential now hidden deep within you, like the proverbial mustard seed. This mustard seed may have already germinated within you, ready to grow into a tree of life. These words are, of course, only images that have been strung together to render something of the great plan that is the hidden purpose in your life, the great plan that actually lies hidden in everything that has been created. This divine plan is a great mystery. We cannot possibly know it, but we may penetrate it so that we may attune our lives accordingly. As soon as a person has reached a certain inner spiritual maturity, then moving along in the mysteries of life is not only possible but even becomes necessary, because it is contained and ordained in the divine plan.

### **Divine reality**

For several millennia and in various cultures there have been persons who testified of a divine reality, encouraging their fellow human beings who were receptive to this message to contact this other Reality and begin living from It. These men and women were named prophets, apostles, gnostics or torch-bearers. The truly spiritual giants among them were called bodhisattva, avatar or messiah. We may think of people like Krishna, Buddha and Jesus, made known to us through ancient sacred writings.

Perhaps you look up to these world teachers with admiration. That is not really necessary because their established biographies possess a large mythical component. We must not forget that such reports – in fact all authentic holy scriptures – have the sole purpose to encourage the divine spark within us to grow ever more powerful. The great world teachers call us to follow them so that the spirit that worked in them can also work in us. Jesus, as



bearer of such a spirit, says to his disciples: *'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do'* (John 14:12).

On your journey through life you can listen to the whispers of Krishna, of your inner master. If you consistently pay attention to your Buddha-nature in the silent centre, it will become more and more powerful in you. You have been called to an awakening, so that the Christ Spirit can shine through you. The apostle Paul urges people who have come to the limits of their outer life – indicated as Ephesians, dwellers on the border – to wake up to divine reality. He writes to the church of Ephesus: *'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee'* (Ephesians 5:14).

The terms 'sleep' and 'death' are not related here to the rest of our sleeping body or to a dead physical body, but to a state of a constriction of the consciousness in which a person no longer experiences anything of the divine reality. The words 'sleep' and 'death' are meant symbolically here. Thus we can also say that we are deaf even when we hear, because we do not yet hear the divine word and the harmony of the spheres, which sound forth day and night; that we are crippled because we cannot yet move in the rhythm of the divine world; that we are blind even when we see, because we cannot yet be open to the divine light which continuously shines forth.

All of this may sound rather dramatic. And that it is! As humanity, we have made a wilderness of life on earth, even though much of it may look neat on the outside. We are empathetic, intelligent, of good will and civilised. Yet in many ways we do not differ much from mammals, as the Jewish prophet Isaiah suggests in several places in his book of the Bible.

It is confronting when we determine that, but it is quite beneficial, because only by recognising and living through our in-

adequacy can a desire for healing arise that makes possible a regenerative development based on divine power. Isaiah sketches our plight, and at the same time is convinced that recovery is possible when the Spirit comes down from the heights.

*'Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city. For the palace shall be forsaken; the populous city shall be deserted; the hill and the watch-tower shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest. Then justice shall dwell in the wilderness; and righteousness shall abide in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence for ever.'* (Isaiah 32:13-17)

### **Great initiates**

Isaiah lived around the sixth century before Christ. That was a dark period and precisely for that reason many people in several countries were open to spiritual inspiration. In that time we find many great initiates who gathered followers around themselves to go the spiritual path under their guidance. Buddha worked in India and the Greek Pythagoras, who is best known for his theorem on right-angled triangles, led a mystery school in southern Italy. Several researchers believe that at about the same time the great prophet Zarathustra in Persia and the sage Lao Tzu in China laid the foundations for powerful spiritual impulses that continue to work to this day and which we still gratefully use.

In chapter 40, Isaiah admonishes the readers of his writings to start to make their preparations so that a mighty spiritual development can take place within them. Some seven hundred years later these words inspired the writers of the biblical gospels. They even put the words of Isaiah in the mouth of John the Baptist, the Prophet who announced and prepared the coming of Jesus. Isaiah writes:

*'The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah; make level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.*

*The voice of one saying, Cry. And one said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever' (Isaiah 40:3-8).*

This text is not just a statement but rather an invocation, a call. These words, like most parts of the Bible and other holy scriptures, are a formula of power that can awaken something in the human being, which causes the Spirit to descend 'from the heights' into a person. God can thus become active in us. We can recognise this in the inscription on the rim of the Dutch two-euro coins: 'God be with us.' It is a poor translation of the name Immanuel, of which Isaiah writes: '*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*' (Isaiah 7:14).

A better translation of Immanuel would be: 'God within us.' God is high above us, rising far above us and our world of space and time. As such, he is transcendent. But at the same time, he is also within us – immanent – as a latent divine spark that can flare up within us.

For many theologians who were blinded by the cultural-philosophical and intellectual movement of the eighteenth century known as the Enlightenment, this was by far the biggest heresy. They took the biblical texts literally and constructed via their rational reasoning – symbolically on sand – their houses of dogmatism. Unemancipated listeners slavishly followed the instructions of the preachers and, for this reason, caused great suffering for many generations.

It was taught that we are all conceived and born in sin, unable to do any good, inclined to evil, and that only the grace of Jesus Christ can save us. In a certain sense, they were right, but inner understanding was lacking and truth became more important than virtue. Because their designation of 'sin' was understood wrongly as 'moral evil' and the one necessity – the love that is above all – had a limited presence. A lot of people were saddled with obstructing conditioning and unfortunately also with religious traumas.

### **To miss the goal**

The Greek word for sin (hamartia) is derived from archery and means something like missing the goal and not being well-focused. So, sin is actually not badness in a moral sense, but rather ignorance and lack of practise. The Prophet Hosea therefore writes: *'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge'* (Hosea 4:6). Prophets like Elijah, Hosea, Isaiah and John the Baptist make people aware of their sinful state-of-being so that they will desire to remedy this situation, to make their paths straight and to acquire and maintain proper orientation.

Many people long for world peace and struggle to achieve it. Their efforts will not be fruitful as long as their activity is not inspired by the Spirit. Jesus was expected to solve all problems on earth. However, that is not his job. He is not focused on bringing about external changes in the world, but rather on promoting an inner transformation in people as a result of the awakening of the sleeping divine spark within them. That is why he expressly says: *'My kingdom is not of this world'* (John 18:36).

The churches in many Western European countries have been steadily losing their grip on believers since the sixties of the last century. The currents of Aquarius and the breath of the Spirit wash away the houses built on the sand of obsolete dogmas. The

hills in the desert are levelled into the plains and young greenery will sprout in the fertile fields and will grow into a beneficent orchard. Various studies repeatedly show that the churches in the west are emptying, but that a large percentage of the population is certainly not atheistic and even seeks meaning, spirituality and inspiration based on holy scriptures.

Seekers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are certainly open to meetings in which faith is a central subject, but generally have little need to do so within existing institutions. Institutions can be very valuable but have a natural tendency to rigidity and often focus primarily on the maintenance of systems that functioned well in the past. But everything constantly changes, everything flows, 'panta rhei'. As soon as the members of a sparkling spiritual or religious community no longer live and work in the living present, there is no more liberating activity possible in that group. Then stagnation sets in, petrification, due to which the Spirit withdraws.

Jesus did not set up an institution. He gathered small groups of people around him to follow a spiritual path together on the basis of aspiration fed by sacred writings of authentic spiritual traditions, separated from the crystallised orthodoxy of the Pharisees and scribes of his time. Those who do not pay attention to this sacred tradition can easily get lost, because they do not know the map, do not notice – or ignore – the signposts and have not yet learned to work with their inner compass.

The first Christians were referred to as 'companions on the path'. This designation occurs several times in the Bible book, the Acts of the Apostles. Young Christianity is thus associated with going a spiritual path, a way of living with a dynamic element: moving, following a direction, renewing. Jesus even considers himself the way to the Father because he says: *'I am the way, and the truth, and the life'* (John 14:6). And also: *'I and the Father are one'* (John 10:30).

## **Giving direction to your life**

This book is intended to enable you to give direction to your life based on an inner desire for fulfilment. We urge you not just to accept everything that we state here, but to consider it and to find out to what extent it finds resonance within you. Reading or listening without feeling and thinking is like eating without digesting. And just to stay with this symbolic comparison: taking time and rest to partake of these deliberations again and again is necessary to come to spiritual awareness and renewal.

Central to this book is the imperishable Life, with which you can make contact and on the basis of which you can overcome death. Not the death of your physical body, for that is inevitable, but your momentary inability to live from the divine world, the domain of which Jesus says: *'The kingdom of God is within you'* (Luke 17:21) and that Isaiah expresses in the name Immanuel, *'God in you'*.

In *'Mysteries of birth, life and death'*, we used certain parts of the Bible as a framework to elucidate the spiritual way that you can follow. We could have also chosen sections from other holy scriptures, however, such as the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, Lao Tzu's Tao De Ching, the Dhammapada, the Gâthâs of Zarathustra or the gnostic Christian and hermetic writings found in 1945 in Nag Hammadi in Egypt.

Yet we have deliberately chosen the Bible because it is firmly anchored in our culture and no other holy book makes the spiritual path so clear. A significant proportion of the people currently living on earth have lived in previous incarnations within Jewish-Christian traditions. Their experiences are recorded in the microcosms that they now inhabit, so that they now have affinity with Judaism and/or Christianity, consciously or unconsciously. A powerful influence that can be experienced intensely emanates from the Bible. Jan van Rijckenborgh, one of the founders of the School of the Golden Rosycross, writes about this in his book *'The Confession of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross'*.<sup>2</sup>

*'Whether you read the Bible exoterically or esoterically, you will experience the deep fascination of this tremendous magic. Garment and essence have grown into a wonderful unity and you will need to know these things if you are to be able to approach the Christ-mysteries. Even as a mere book, as a phenomenon, the Bible exerts a most mysterious influence, a more exceptional power.*

*What, then, is a book, a closed book in your bookcase? A lump of dead matter! But your Bible is not! You see that book in the foci of our temples. Is it there purely for decoration, just a pious, mystical symbol, nothing more? No, even as a book, this awesome piece of magic, this focus of Christ's wisdom in the darkness of this world, is capable of purifying the atmosphere of our temples of all evil forces: they do not dare to approach the open book.*

*Like us, patients who are plagued by astral forces know how the open book can draw a protective magic circle. That is why biblical terminology is one of the preconditions for our teaching, and there is no other holy book in the world that demonstrates such an influence.*

*Another example we would like to give, a purely exoteric Christian one, is of a simple soul hungry for wisdom, for salvation from some fearful moment, who understands a word, comes under the spell, under the influence of its magical powers, which then bring about one aspect of what we call faith. If you had faith as small as a grain of mustard seed, you would be able to move mountains.*

*What faith does this mean? Faith in some terminology or other? Of course not. It means faith in Christ, who is not a mere idea, but a force, which governs, dominates the entire essence of our existence. This force has manifested itself to us in a certain garment, a garment made not by us but by the Lords of Destiny, who give what is necessary for everyone's spiritual development. The garment becomes soiled, spat upon, torn to shreds, denied even in its most elementary aspects by many churches, but nevertheless the form continues to go with us, as a divine offer of assistance.'*

The quoted Bible texts in this book come, as indicated earlier, from several English versions of the Bible.<sup>3</sup> We observe the following nine standpoints with respect to the Bible:

1. The books of the Bible, like other sacred writings, have been written by people who were inspired by the Spirit to promote a spiritual awakening and renewal.
2. Not all passages from the Bible are of equal importance and value to current humanity.
3. Only a fraction of the mysteries of life has been revealed in the Bible. Since then there have been many more revelations, and many more will still follow because man progresses constantly. Jesus therefore said: *'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth'* (John 16:12-13).
4. The Divine manifests itself not only in the holy scriptures of humanity, but also especially in nature and in man himself. Religion can therefore not be viewed separately from science and art.
5. Quite a few biblical texts have been deliberately or unconsciously modified or maimed in the past by copyists and translators in order to achieve certain goals.
6. The truth can never be fully expressed in form and matter. That is why many biblical texts make use of symbolic language that can be understood in several ways. Symbols make it possible to say something about divine reality that is more accessible to our senses and our intellectual thinking.
7. Many biblical texts are not intended as information, but as an invocation or a call. When there is the right focus in speaking and listening, divine powers are called up that can become active in humans. The apostle Paul writes in this connection: *'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life'* (2 Corinthians 3:6).



8. Bible texts can contribute to the growth of our inner understanding on the basis of which one can give direction to one's own life and possibly also to that of others. The psalmist poet formulates this as: *'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and light unto my path'* (Psalm 119:105).
9. Those who attune themselves to a specific part of the Bible may experience something of the high level of consciousness from which it originates.

A portion of the Bible that emanates tremendous power is unmistakably the prologue of the *Gospel according to John*, specifically the first eighteen verses. It is a compendium: the entire spiritual path is embedded in these words. Read or listen to this summary of the universe every day for a week or even longer and experience what that does to you. You can also limit yourself to the first five verses because those are already of an exceptional depth. Learn them literally 'by heart' so that you always have them with you. If you thus store them in your heart, a transforming effect will take place. Then you will also understand why 'memorising' is called 'learning by heart'.

### **The divine plan of creation**

In the prologue of the Gospel according to John, which is the most gnostic gospel in the Bible, the 'Word' or 'Logos' is mentioned several times; we may understand this as the divine plan of creation. If you accept this Word, it means that you must begin to make an effort to make the human system that you inhabit suitable for the implementation of the divine plan, thus becoming part of the God-human Hierarchy or the universal Brotherhood. This Hierarchy consists of the angelic hosts as well as the human entities that either have never fallen or have successfully followed the path back to the father's house.

In the first thirteen verses of the prologue of the Gospel of John,

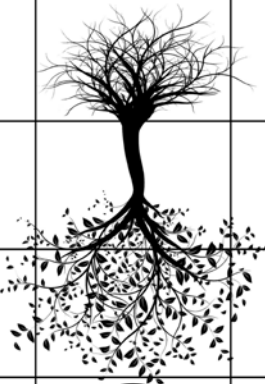
1. Father world of the spirit conception of the divine thought ideality ignis	the Word <b>1</b> I am the true vine		children of God <b>7</b> I am the resurrection and the life
2. Son world of the soul working with the divine thought vitality flamma	the life <b>2</b> I am the way, the truth and the life		the true light <b>6</b> I am the light of the world
3. Holy Spirit world of the personality realisation of the divine thought reality materia	the light of man <b>3</b> I am the door		John <b>5</b> I am the good shepherd
4. world of the body incarnation of the divine thought corporeality mater			the light in the darkness <b>4</b> I am the bread of life

image 1: creation and re-creation in the gospel of John

we can recognise the same sevenfold structure as in the creation myth in Genesis 1, and it is explained in Chapter 6 of the book *'Mysteries and symbols of the soul'*.<sup>4</sup> Both these sections of the Bible deal with the creation and regeneration of your innermost being, of the microcosm that you now inhabit. Something of this is shown schematically in image 1. It also shows the seven 'I-am' statements of Jesus in the Gospel of John. It would be overdoing it to explain this further here.

We conclude this first reflection of the book *'Mysteries and challenges of birth, life and death'* with the majestic first five verses of the prologue of the Gospel of John. They summarise the development of the entire human system that you currently inhabit and that is now ready to be regenerated.

*'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things*

*were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not'* (John 1:1-5).



*By an earthly birth process a personality is now born and linked with a soul. That personality is in itself another miracle of God's love, for it should be seen as part of an emergency order plan to bring the original fallen human being back to life.*

*The calling of the earthly personality as a temporary phenomenon is to liberate its soul, its microcosm, from its imprisonment through self-surrender and by merging, through the endure, into the Other One, who must be resurrected.*

*At present the microcosm is bound to its system of time and space, but when the Spirit, the soul and the transfigured personality are reunited, the microcosm will be fit to re-enter the divine state of omnipresence. Until then the microcosm remains broken and damaged. This is why the call resounds continuously for everyone to accomplish this great work of salvation in and through the great power of the original nature.*

## CHAPTER 2

# INCARNATING ON EARTH

SPIRITUAL TEXT: Exodus 1 and 2:1-10

Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, who came into Egypt (every man and his household came with Jacob): Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: and Joseph was in Egypt already. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens.

And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.

And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other

Puah: and he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birth-stool; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive.

And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwife come unto them. And God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them households. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it. And she opened it, and saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother.

And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water.



## CHAPTER 2

# INCARNATING ON EARTH

## REFLECTION

The mighty, divine plan of creation is carried out in great freedom, creativity and joy by intelligent and advanced beings that are concrete manifestations of God: a host of angels and human entities that belong to the divine hierarchy and the universal Brotherhood. We cannot perceive them with our earthly senses because they do not have physical bodies but have more diaphanous, immortal vehicles. We can at best experience only a minuscule part of all their works.

In the beginning was the Word, that is the creation plan that comes from God and is one with it: the Word was with God and the Word was God. Without that plan there would be nothing: without this plan, nothing would have become what it did become. Because the participants in the divine hierarchy work to realise the plan of God – because they thus speak the creative Word – they are inspired by the Spirit, the holy breath: in the Word was Life. Thanks to that inspiration, human entities can take a path of continuous development in which they become ever greater, more powerful and radiant: this Life was the light of the people.

But then a big problem developed: man separated himself from the world of Light by identifying with his personality. Because of this ‘fall’, which is described in Genesis 3 in the form of a myth, he distanced himself from the Spirit and thus lost his receptivity to the divine Light. That state of separateness is formulated as: *‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it’*.



Yet we humans have the potential to once again become part of the god-human hierarchy and have full disposal of our lost powers. How? By opening ourselves to the true light that shines over every person. Then we receive the power to become children of God again. In this way we come to the true purpose of every authentic religion: to offer people opportunities to reconnect and realign with the divine origin from which we came.

Fortunately, from time to time great souls incarnate on earth with a mission to testify of the light on behalf of the universal Brotherhood. They make people who are ripe for it and hunger and thirst for the lost paradise, aware of their fallen state, and provide them with teachings, methods and power to be healed in the broadest sense of the word.

### **The living water**

John the Baptist was such an emissary, as were Moses, Jesus and Elijah. John was linked directly to the divine origin, standing in the living water of the divine river that springs from the Primeval Source, symbolised by the Jordan. In its waters, he baptised his followers who had decided to become disciples of the soul. Water baptism is a ritual by which, among other things, the soul in a human system begins a process of cleansing and purification as a preparation for receiving the Holy Spirit: the baptism by fire.

In the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke, we read that the births of John and Jesus were anything but ordinary. It is important to realise that stories in sacred writings about the birth of great prophets or world teachers are not just reports of their actual birth, but narratives that tell us how it is apparent from the beginning that the child will grow into an influential person who will undertake a great spiritual mission. Many such birth stories are also symbolic of the inner birth that can take place in ourselves, as has been discussed extensively in the book '*Spiritual Christmas*'.<sup>6</sup> It is told of the Chinese sage Lao Tzu that he was born from the

left armpit of his mother. According to the story, when he was born he had grey hair and could walk immediately. According to other ancient writings, the birth of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha was also an impressive event: all the worlds were flooded with light, blind people could see again, the deaf could hear again, the lame walked, and prisoners were freed from their chains.<sup>7</sup> According to the evangelist Luke, angels sang while Jesus was born. This was in Palestine during a period of occupation by the Romans.

Moses probably arrived in Egypt around 1300 B.C. into a state of slavery in Egypt. Like Jesus, his life was threatened by child murderers commissioned by the king. That is why his mother placed her vulnerable baby in a rush basket on the bank of the Nile, where the bathing daughter of the pharaoh found him and subsequently adopted him. She then arranged for the education and training of Moses at the court in Egypt.

### **I called my son from Egypt**

Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus fled to Egypt to escape the violence of King Herod. Later, Jesus taught his disciples how to return to the Father's house they had once left. Moses led the people of Israel through the Red Sea and the desert to the border of Canaan, the promised land. That is why the Jewish prophet Hosea wrote that God said: '*When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt*' (Hosea 11:1).

Holy writings can be interpreted in several ways. The most obvious interpretations are the literal and historical interpretations. Many, however, are not interested in these because they concern events from past times that are not relevant to life here and now. It is also very questionable whether these historical reports are factually correct, because most biblical writers were not interested in historiography but rather in the transfer of inspiring ideas.

People today can be touched by Bible stories from way back then if they recognise themselves in them. The question whether the

stories are historical or not is irrelevant because the texts offer recognition, hope, courage and inspiration. The reformer, philosopher, theologian and pedagogue Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670) writes in his book *'Unum Necessarium'*:

*'Every time a Christian reads the sacred texts, it is of the utmost importance to pay attention to the fact that he does not regard what he finds there as something that is outside himself and does not concern him, but as something that directly concerns his person, as when he looks in a mirror. He must always put himself in the place of the ones who are addressed in these texts, be they devout or wicked. He always has to apply everything he hears or sees to himself.'*

The symbolic journey through the desert is very recognisable to many of us: they have left behind their old lives in which they are trapped – symbolically represented by Egypt – to go to the promised land. For them, earthly life has lost its sheen. They feel lonely and abandoned and suffer inner and sometimes also external hardships. This desert phase can sometimes take a long time – symbolically, and perhaps even literally, forty years – but it will pass if the pilgrim perseveres. Seven sinful tribes must be exterminated in an inner struggle before the land of milk and honey can be inhabited (Deuteronomy 7). Jesus also refers to this inescapable inner conflict and the resulting struggle when he says: *'Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword'* (Matthew 10:34).

For a deeper understanding of the Bible stories, it may be useful to know the meaning of the names used. Moses literally means 'Pulled from the water', symbolising that he came from the divine river of living water, symbolised by the Nile that makes Egypt fertile. The Greek philosopher Plutarch represented the Egyptian name for Egypt as *Khêmeia*, which translates as 'black earth'. This phrase indicates a materialistic vision in which the perceptible reality is regarded as the only reality, as expressed in a verse in

the prologue to John: *'The light shines in the darkness (Egypt), and the darkness did not comprehend it'*.

Israel is the name which the patriarch Jacob received after he wrestled with an angel of God; it means literally 'wrestler with God' or 'hero of God'. However we should view the people of Israel in a much broader sense than being just Jewish people, the offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob who became the twelve tribes of Israel. Every human being who undergoes the inner struggle to emerge from the dark world – regardless of religion, convictions or nationality – belongs to the people of Israel, the chosen people. Jacob becomes stronger because of the inner struggle he endured. Inner strength is more important than external strength. That is why the author of the Book of proverbs wrote: *'He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city'* (Proverbs 16:32).

The universal wisdom can sometimes also be found in biblical texts, recognised by analysing the numerical values of letters and words. The 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet all have a characteristic numerical value. (20) Therefore a value can be assigned to each word consisting of the sum of the numerical values of the letters in that word. For example, the Hebrew name for Egypt is 'Mitsrajim' which translates as 'land of distress' or 'land of oppression'. It is spelled as m-ts-rjm and has a word value of 380. This word value can first be reduced to  $3 + 8 + 0 = 11$  and then to  $1 + 1 = 2$ . The total value of 'Canaan' (spelled as k-n-a-n) is 190 and can first be reduced to  $1 + 9 + 0 = 10$  and then to  $1 + 0 = 1$ .

### **Making the two into one**

Thus: Egypt stands for 2 or duality, while Canaan stands for 1 or unity. On the spiritual path, the ultimate goal is to make the two into one, to connect time and eternity, the horizontal with the vertical. Jesus expresses this beautifully in Logion 22 of the Gospel of Thomas. The well-known professor of church history Gilles Quispel (1916-2006), the foremost Dutch researcher into gnos-

tic texts, believed that this apocryphal gospel contains authentic words from Jesus that are not in the New Testament. Quite a few colleagues of his opposed this view, but nowadays this is fairly generally accepted. In Logion 22 we read the following.

*‘Jesus saw some babies nursing. He said to his disciples, These nursing babies are like those who enter the Father’s kingdom.*

*They said to him, Then shall we enter the Father’s kingdom as babies?*

*Jesus said to them, When you make the two into one, and when you make the inner like the outer and the outer like the inner, and the upper like the lower, and when you make male and female into a single one, so that the male will not be male nor the female be female, when you make eyes in place of an eye, a hand in place of a hand, a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then you will enter the kingdom’ (The Gospel of Thomas, Logion 22).*

In the prologue of the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ is referred to as the Word that has become flesh. We thus see that the natural man Jesus, who was born of Mary, was connected with the Christ Spirit through his baptism in the river Jordan, and that he thereby became fully and completely Man as ordained in God’s plan, the Word. Jesus was ‘anointed’ with the Spirit from on high. The name Christ means literally ‘anointed one’. All who take Jesus Christ as their example and thus open themselves to Christ’s power are enabled to become children of God, therefore creating, eternal and divine.

Moses, Elijah, John, and Jesus were all destined to go and teach a spiritual way – a path of spiritual awareness and renewal. Their lives differed greatly from each other, but there are also similarities.

The famous American mythologist Joseph Campbell (1904-1987) studied countless Bible stories, myths, legends, legends, fairy tales and other stories. In these he discovered a basic pattern that he describes in his standard work *‘The hero with a thousand*

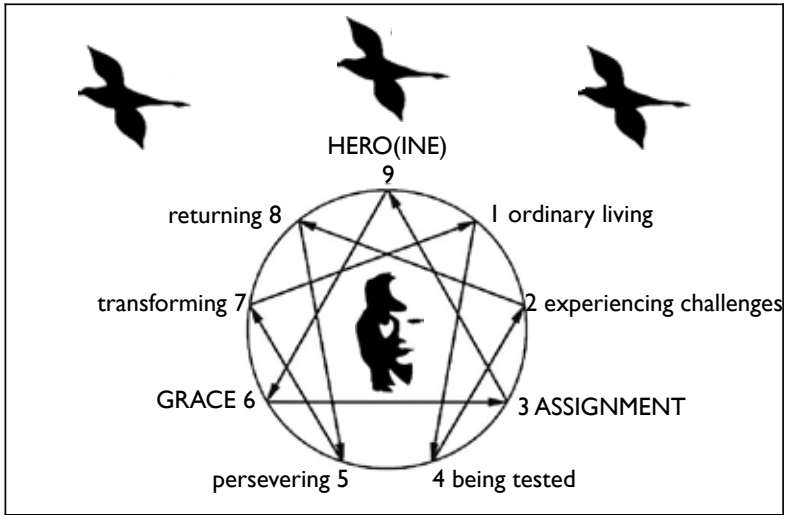


image 2: the universal structure of narratives, based on Joseph Campbell

faces'.<sup>8</sup> Campbell distinguishes a number of steps and combines them into what he calls *The hero's journey*. He describes the hero as someone who unselfishly gives his or her life to something bigger than himself.

There are many ways to schematically display the steps of the hero's journey. Here we use the tried-and-tested process model of the enneagram, which distinguishes three main elements that are represented in a triangle: the hero or heroine; his or her mission; and the help received from outside, also referred to as grace (see image 2). This approach is cyclical: after a clockwise cycle in time, a new circle always starts in which experiences are on another, possibly higher, level if all has gone well. The six-pointed figure in the circle shows the sequence of thought processes again.<sup>9</sup>

The steps are as follows: the protagonist first leads a normal life but runs into certain difficulties. At one point he then receives the assignment to solve these problems. This assignment can be one given by another person, but it can also be a task that is taken

care of independently of others. For example, Moses learns from a burning thorn bush of his commission by God to lead the people of Israel out of their slave existence in Egypt (Exodus 3:10).

### **Unexpected salvation**

The hero or main character becomes irrevocably involved in all kinds of tests in the execution of his mission. It is important for him to endure these tests completely and to persevere and persist. At a time when the need is highest, he receives unexpected help. For example, in the story about the exodus of the people of Israel, we read that there a way through the sea opens, that food descends from heaven in the form of manna and that living water flows forth when Moses hits the rocks that are obstructing the path with his staff.

People become purified through all these experiences and thus become suited to undergo an inner transformation, after which it is possible to return to his former 'ordinary life' as a renewed person. Then his mission is accomplished and he receives the assignment of the inner Christ: *'Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light'* (Matthew 11:28-30).

Many great stories, such as those about the lives of Moses, Odysseus, Hercules, Job, Jesus, Percival, Dante and in our time Frodo Baggins (*The Lord of the Rings*) and Harry Potter, contain all the themes of this heroic path, but there are also stories with only one step or just some of the steps that were mentioned above. It is very surprising that the structure of the path of the hero(ine) applies not only to such life stories but also to the spiritual path that every person can go.

The way of the hero is also your way. You have received the assignment to live your life on earth. You are free to make your own

choices, but it is good to realise that many choices have already been made for you. We humans are led mostly by the forces of nature, but fortunately also by spiritual beings who are more advanced in their development than we are and are part of the divine hierarchy, of the universal Brotherhood.

It is said that a human entity who wants to incarnate on earth will get an overview of his coming earthly life, of the people with whom he will enter into a relationship and of the life lessons he has to learn through experience. In this context, it is sometimes regarded as a sacred contract that the person concerned signs by connecting his microcosmic system with a fertilised egg from which a completely new physical body is formed.<sup>10</sup> The conscious memory of that sacred contract disappears because the evolving earthly personality must be placed in circumstances he himself would not consciously choose, but ones that are nevertheless necessary in order to be healed as a microcosm.

### **Light birth**

When you came out of the mother's womb as a small human body, you were born into the outer light. As an adult, you can now contribute to the *inner* light being born within yourself. This light birth, this inner Christmas, gives insight, joy and renewal. The term 'light birth' is composed of the words: 'light' and 'birth'. This does not refer to light and birth as we may experience in the sensory world, but to inner perceptions that bear a certain resemblance to what we experience as light and as a birth in the outer world. If the birth of light has taken place within you, then the so-called resurrection body may grow within you as discussed in the book '*Spiritual Easter and Pentecost*'.<sup>11</sup> We conclude this reflection with part of a parable by Pablo Molinero about twins in a womb because it reveals something of the mystery of life.<sup>12</sup>

*There were once twins in a womb. As the two fetuses matured and their brains began to function, they became vaguely aware of their*



environment and their own existence. After a while they also discovered each other. Weeks and months passed. They started to notice all kinds of changes in their bodies and in their experiences. It was clear to them that a big change was in the offing and they started talking about this.

'We are changing,' said the one, 'what can that mean?'

'It means,' replied the other, 'that we are going to be born.' The two shivered and became frightened because they knew that their birth would bring an end to their present existence and that they would have to leave the world in which they now lived.

'Do you really believe in a life after birth?' the one asked.

'Yes, I do. Our life here brings us growth and development in such a way that we will be sufficiently prepared and powerful enough for that existence.'

'Nonsense, I don't think it exists. What must I imagine by such a life after birth?'

'I do not know that exactly. But surely it will be much lighter and brighter than it is here. And maybe we'll be able to walk around and eat with our mouths.'

'What nonsense! Walking around, indeed! That won't work at all. And eating with our mouths, what a strange idea. Don't we have our umbilical cord that feeds us. Moreover: walking around is impossible because our umbilical cord is far too short for that.'

'Still, I'm sure it can be done. It's all just a bit different than it is here.'

'But no one has ever returned from this "after birth experience". With our birth our life has come to an end. And life here is just darkness and a torment. If our conception and all our growing and development signifies nothing else than that it all ends with birth, then this whole existence is completely absurd.'

'And still, even though I do not know exactly what life consists of after birth, we will at least see our mother and she will take care of us.'

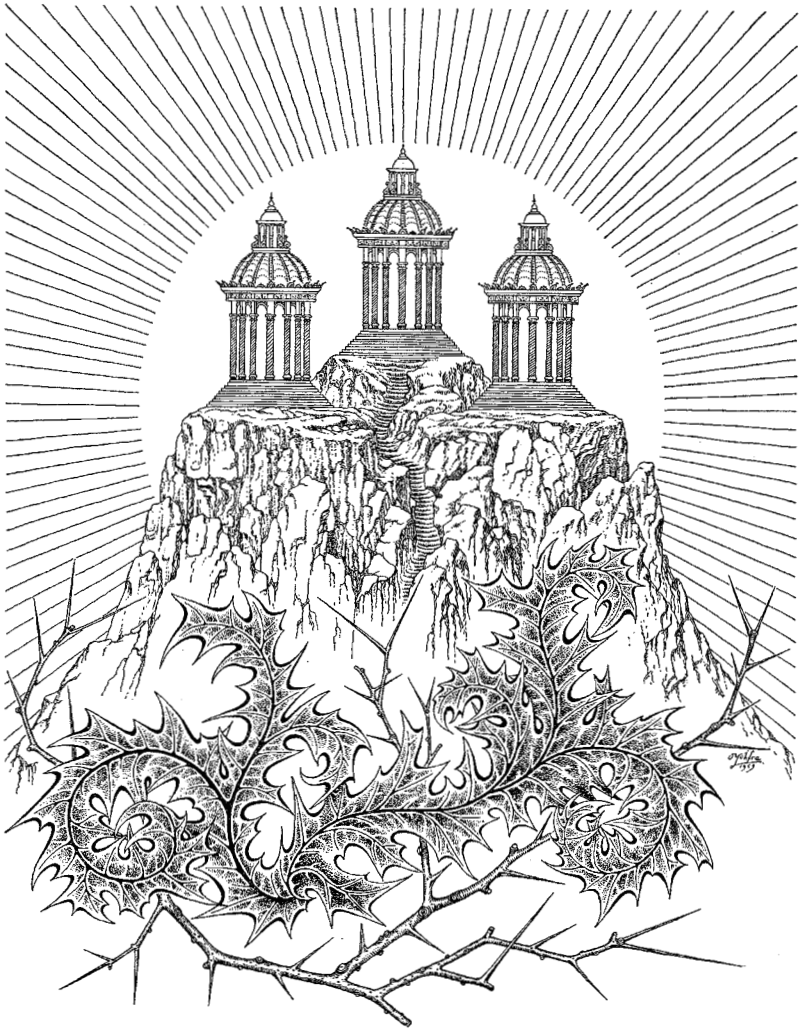
'Mother? You believe in a mother? Where is she then?'

*'Well, everywhere around us. We are and exist in her and through her. We would not exist without her.'*

*'What utter nonsense! I have never noticed or seen anything of a mother, so she does not exist.'*

*'Yet, sometimes when we are really quiet, you can hear her sing for us. Or feel her caressing our world.'*







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## THE GOLDEN ROSYCROSS

The book, 'Mysteries and Challenges of Birth, Life and Death', is developed within the School of the Golden Rosycross. We invite you to have a look at our Golden Rosycross Global Social Network, and maybe watch a video-lecture, listen to a podcast and scan some articles. If it appeals to you, we recommend you to register. As a subscriber you will receive regular e-mails with meaningful content. When you absorb the content attentively, you enroll in process of growing in spiritual awareness.

The Rosicrucians are devoted, symbolically speaking, to strengthen the connection between the cross and the rose, between the temporary and the eternal, between the natural and the divine. This work contributes to the regeneration of man and society. The teachings of the Golden Rosycross are universal and Christo-centric at the same time. It is possible to come to inner knowing, to gnosis, by going a path of initiation within the School of the Golden Rosycross.

In all authentic wisdom traditions there is the idea that there is one source of life, wisdom and love. This source has many names: Tao, Brahma, the One, the Unknown, the Creator and the Father-Mother. The School of the Golden Rosycross consists of people who discover this source in themselves, allow themselves to be refreshed by it and want to share this joy with other people who resonate with it.

The School of the Golden Rosycross is a non-profit organisation for promoting spiritual awareness and renewal. It was founded in 1924 in Haarlem in the Netherlands and has now more than 200 locations in about 40 countries. This spiritual school has its roots in an ancient tradition of mystery schools, is connected with the impulse of the classical Rosicrucians from the seventeenth century and relies primarily on gnostic Christianity and Hermetism that is in tune with people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We undertake many initiatives around the globe to offer seekers possibilities for becoming a spirit-inspired person: books, magazines, video-lectures, podcasts, online-programs, contemplative meetings, temple-services and live conferences. Would you like to follow us online? Then, register for free with our Golden Rosycross Global Social Network.





## The spiritual art of living from inner knowledge, love and strength

Why was I born? What am I supposed to do here? After my death my body decays, but what happens then to my consciousness? Does that disappear too? Or does it increase instead? Will I go to heavenly spheres or will some part of me possibly return to earth in a different body? How can I deal with practical and ethical dilemmas about life and the end of life?

These are essential life questions, posed everywhere by many people, no matter what their culture, religion or social position. If you keep these questions truly alive in your heart, you do not receive precise answers, but those questions dissolve and you yourself become the answer. The true question is not whether there is life after death, but whether you are truly alive before death. Your vision of birth, life and death are determining the way in which you experience and shape your life now.

Birth is the opposite of death, but life has no opposite. Life has always been and life will always be; it is a mystery. You will never fully understand it, but it is possible to penetrate deeply into it, so that you are filled with the true, the good and the beautiful.

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- 1 accepting the word
- 2 incarnating on earth
- 3 fathoming cycles
- 4 coping with loss
- 5 making the two into one
- 6 using your talents
- 7 becoming free from illusion
- 8 acquiring the resurrection body
- 9 experiencing the eternal now

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