



International School of the
Golden Rosycross

THE TWELVEFOLD PATH OF INITIATION

LESSON 5: Free yourself from delusion.

After the third hour of the twelvefold path of initiation, the pupil is entirely prepared and equipped to walk the path of self-liberation as an independent human being. To this end he has divested himself of hindering ties and ballast. Now the new soul has to be propelled to birth and to development through self- activity. In the fourth hour the pupil comes to terms with delusion. In the fifth hour he conquers death and matter.

In the previous lesson it became clear that we as microcosm have already been journeying for ages. Because our microcosms all have gone the path of involution. The goal of this journey, on which we enveloped ourselves in matter, was not clear to our consciousness. We were asleep as far as that is concerned. Now our consciousness has awakened on this point. In the Divine plan lies enclosed that we, after having walked the path of involution, will return to the divine world from which we have come, enriched with the experiences of many earthly lives. This can be done by way of the wide, long and twisting path of evolution, which is based on personality culture. But it can also be done by way of the narrow, fast and straight path of initiation, which is based on the reversal of the personality.

The knowledge used on the path of evolution is called the teaching of the Eye in “The Voice of the Silence”. The knowledge needed on the path of initiation, Gnosis, is called the teaching of the Heart. About this we read:

False learning is rejected by the wise, and scattered to the winds by the good Law. Its wheel revolves for all, the humble and the proud The ‘Doctrine of the Eye’ is for the crowd, the ‘Doctrine of the Heart’ for the elect. The first repeat in pride ‘Behold, I know’; the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, ‘thus have I heard’. “Great Sifter” is the name of the ‘Heart Doctrine’, o disciple. The wheel of the good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beatings of the Karmic heart.

True knowledge is the flour, false learning is the husk. If thou wouldst eat the bread of Wisdom, thy flour thou hast to knead with Amrita’s (Immortality’s) clear waters. But if thou kneadest husks with Maya’s dew, thou canst create but food for the black doves of death, the birds of birth, decay and sorrow.

Leaving ballast behind.

As microcosms we have a great journey behind us in the form of passing through the process of involution. Often we are still carrying its baggage with us. Thanks to that baggage we could progress during our journey in this world. We have acquired practical knowledge in this life by way of among other things our upbringing, our education, our work and our friendships and relations. That knowledge is valuable for being able to function well in this world. But if we simply apply the methods and techniques which bring us success in our daily life to the going of the path of initiation, we will be deceived.

We all are programmed to think, feel, will and act in a certain way. In many cases such conditioning is very meaningful, because we save life-energy this way. Driving a car would be extremely tiring if we would have to perform every movement very consciously. However, we also run “computer programs” in ourselves which may have been useful in the past, but now are no longer relevant, or even a hindrance. Many ingrained thought-, emotional-, will-

and action patterns are barriers to spiritual renewal. The pupil on the path of initiation should let go of his “software”, which will keep him from achieving the new goal he has set for himself

In the previous lesson we discussed the hindrances of dogmatism. Dogmatism is needed to hold up a goal to us and show the path leading to it. When we have reached the goal, we no longer need this dogmatism. However, if we do not put these dogmas into practice in our life, they will turn into the dead letter and become ballast. On the path we have to let go of our useless conditionings.

The pilgrim with his hood, lamp and staff about whom we spoke in the first lesson, inevitably will meet barriers on his path through the desert which he will have to overcome. When he comes to a river too wide to wade through or swim across, he makes a boat to conquer this obstacle. When he has crossed the river and safely has reached the other side, he drags the boat behind him so he can cross possible later rivers. That tires him very much and he progresses only very slowly.

When the pilgrim comes to mountains he has to cross, he can no longer take the boat along. He has to leave it at the foot of the mountain. Then he realizes that it would have been better if he had not dragged the boat along. He would have been much further ahead on his journey and could have directed his life energy to more useful matters.

New ability to judge.

When in the third hour of the twelvefold path of initiation, we have let the renewed serpent staff come to development in us, have passed the three-headed dog of hell Cerberus and thus have left fear, idols and dogmatism behind then we are wholly prepared and equipped for our journey Home. We need to prove that we as independent human being can walk the path of self-liberation. We then can no longer use “software” handed us by others. We need to write our “programs” ourselves, on the basis of the new points of departure we have recognized and acknowledged as truth. In the commentary on the Nuctemeron we read:

Imagine yourself in this situation: you are equipped for the journey; you have your clothes, the money available. The destination is known to you. In principle, nothing can get in your way or oppose you anymore; but it is not so that on your journey through the Universal Mysteries you will, as it were, be picked up, swaddled, taken along and delivered to your destination. Or, expressed more romantically: that you will be borne away to the goal as on angel's wings with music and psalm-song. No, equipped with all the capabilities and powers, you yourself have to determine the direction, step by step. You yourself have to decide every detail of the journey. In other words, the new powers have to be used, tried and one has to learn to work with them and practice them. So the whole journey depends on your own judgment. If you have brains, you have to use them; if you have a heart you have to let it radiate! Thus all the faculties of the mankind-liberating soul-state have to be practiced in actual practice. And that is why many Difficulties arise in the candidate's development only after he has passed Cerberus. Difficulties flowing from the lack of practice in the beginning stages, from the newness of a new state of birth. Because we repeat: the whole journey now to begin, will have to be based on one's own new faculty of judgment. Not someone else will have to decide what you should or should not do in the Fourth Hour, but you yourself will have to judge, take the decision and carry it out. The voices of all your brothers and sisters are silent in the Fourth Hour, which states:

Fourth Hour: In the fourth hour the soul returns from visiting the graves. It is the time the four magical lanterns are lighted at the four corners of the circles. It is the hour of enchantments and delusions.

In this fourth hour, like in the other eleven hours, a task lies enclosed. At this hour the soul needs to return from visiting the graves. What does this mean? The pupil has recognized and acknowledged this world as a life-field in which everything is subject to breaking and death. In the first three hours he has prepared himself to inwardly leave this nature of death. In the fourth hour he needs to prove that he really inwardly has taken leave of this world. In the previous hours he has already given up the coarse aspects of this world. Now he stands before the task to also leave behind what is cultured and refined in the nature of death. The pupil has to learn to see through the cunning of this world and has to detach himself from it. That is why this period is called the hour of enchantments and delusions.

Circles of life.

In certain currents it is said that the world in which we live, the material world perceptible by the senses, is unreal, sham; maya. That is incorrect. The material world is very real. We cannot avoid it in our life and have to take it into account. However, we live under a delusion if we think that the sensorial world is the only world that exists and totally absorb ourselves in this world of matter. But this is not the kind of delusion the pupil of the fourth hour has to get rid of. This pupil has long left that delusion behind. He knows of the subtle life-circles within dialectics. He knows that the divine world is present everywhere and penetrates everything, but that it differs from the dialectical spheres by a seemingly unbridgeable difference in vibration.

According to the Hermetic tradition, whose foundations can be traced back to Pythagoras, there are four life-circles which are characterized by a specific experiential structure and by differences in the level of vibration. The Pythagoreans spoke of the holy quaternion or the tetractys. Let us now look more closely at the four life-circles we will have to deal with when we go the path. They are successively from below upwards, that is from dense to subtle:

- The world of matter perceptible by the senses. This life-circle is called the Hall of Ignorance in “The Voice of the Silence” and corresponds to the element earth.
- The astral world of feeling and concrete thought. This life-circle is called the Hall of Learning in “The Voice of the Silence” and corresponds to the element air.
- The mental world of abstract thought. The Voice of the Silence calls this world the Hall of Wisdom. This world corresponds to the element water.
- The spiritual world of Being which has come forth from the unknowable. In the Voice of the Silence this world is called the Vale of Bliss. This world corresponds to the element fire.

These four worlds each can again be divided into four worlds which correspond to the four worlds mentioned. It goes too far to go further into this in this lesson about delusion.

To understand the phenomenon delusion, it is important to realize that mankind has behind it a process of involution lasting millions of years. During this process human entities gradually descended from the Divine Realm through the four worlds down to the world of matter. This process of involution is still going on. In the astral, mental and spiritual worlds there are entities undergoing the process of involution.

The delusions with which mankind has to contend generally have to do with the astral world. That world should be seen as an enormous storehouse of powerfields, life forms and entities. The forces of the divine world are present there of course, but among other things we can also find there human entities in the process of involution, astral shells of deceased people and power formations which reinforce illusion and egotism in the human being (archons of the eons). When we further learn that the memory of the earth (the Akashic records) can also be found in the astral world, then we can understand that there is very much knowledge in that astral world, but that it is also heavily polluted and because of this full of delusion and illusion.

As human being we are called to work in all four of the above-mentioned worlds. When we can function consciously in those four worlds, we can form a bridge between the material world and the divine world. So we also need to be able to work in the astral world. In the astral world activities of two kinds of power can be discerned: powers having to do with the process of involution and powers having to do with the return to the divine world. If we want to make ourselves suitable for fulfilling the above mentioned function as bridge, then we should have nothing to do with the astral forces connected with the process of involution. Because if we do, we will go a regressive path instead of a progressive path. So we may better understand the fourth hour of the Nuctemeron about circles, enchantments and delusions, we now quote from the Voice of the Silence:

Three Halls, o weary pilgrim, lead to the end of toils. Three Halls, o conqueror of Mara (the great Ensnarer), will bring thee through three states into the fourth and thence into the seven worlds, the worlds of Rest Eternal.

If thou would'st learn their names, then hearken, and remember. The name of the first Hall is IGNORANCE Avidya.

It is the Hall in which thou saw'st the light, in which thou livest and shalt die. The name of the second Hall is the Hall of Learning. In it thy Soul will find the blossoms of life, but under every flower a serpent coiled.

The name of the third Hall is Wisdom, beyond which stretch the shoreless waters of AKSHARA, the indestructible Fount of Omniscience.

If thou would'st cross the first hall safely, let not thy mind mistake the fires of lust that burn therein for the Sunlight of life.

If thou would'st cross the second safely, stop not the fragrance of its stupefying blossoms to inhale. If freed thou would'st be from the Karmic chains, seek not for thy Guru in those Mayavic regions.

The WISE ONES tarry not in pleasure-grounds of senses. The WISE ONES heed not the sweet-tongued voices of illusion.

Seek for him who is to give thee birth, in the Hall of Wisdom, the Hall which lies beyond, wherein all shadows are unknown, and where the light of truth shines with unfading glory.

That which is uncreate abides in thee, Disciple as it abides in that Hall. If thou would'st reach it and blend the two, thou must divest thyself of thy dark garments of illusion. Stifle the voice of flesh, allow no image of the senses to get between its light and thine that thus the twain may blend in one. And having learnt thine own Ajnana (lack of Gnosis), flee from the Hall of Learning This Hall is dangerous in its perfidious beauty, is needed but for thy probation. This light shines from the jewel of the Great Ensnarer (Mara). The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck.

If through the Hall of Wisdom, thou would'st reach the Vale of Bliss, Disciple, close fast thy senses against the great dire heresy of separateness that weans thee from the rest

Let not thy 'Heaven-born' merged in the sea of Maya, break from the Universal Parent (soul), but let the fiery power retire into the inmost chamber, the chamber of the Heart and the abode of the World's Mother.

This fragment speaks about Mara, the great Ensnarer. That is the power holding on to us in the astral world and keeping us from setting out for the third hail, the hail of Wisdom which corresponds to the element water. So Mara corresponds to what in the third hour of the Nuctemeron is called Cerberus. Mara, and so also Cerberus, is the one that puts us to the test or the gate-keeper between the second and the third hail. As long as Mara still can ensnare us with her play and illusions, we will be open to fascinations and cannot go to the next hail. Because, if we go through that hail while fascinated, we will be threatened by great dangers. Those dangers will not occur when we light the four magical lanterns.

Four magical lanterns.

Apollonius teaches us that we have to light the four magical lanterns at the corners of the circles to safely get through the hour of enchantments and delusions. In the first lesson we said that the pilgrim holds a burning lamp in his hand and that this lamp refers to the divine principle in the heart. We now want to elaborate this idea. Apollonius distinguishes four lanterns. We can see these as the four faculties of the human being: thinking, willing, feeling and acting. Apollonius calls these lanterns magical because they will be consciously used to illuminate the path, to see, to go and to become.

An oil lamp can only burn when there is oil. Thus the human being's faculties only can lead to enlightenment when he uses forces relative to progress, to the conscious return to the divine world. For an oil lamp to burn, a lantern and oil are not sufficient. We also need fire to light the lamp. That fire is the divine principle in the heart which has been awakened to life, the enflamed divine spark.

Jan van Rijckenborgh writes in his commentary:

The magical square of the ennobled se(f-judgment, in which lies the power to pass through all the enchantments and delusions of the circles, one can indicate as: the pure reason, the pure feeling or heart, the pure will and pure acting. The absolute judgment depends on whether our reason is entirely secure in the Gnosis and is unwaveringly directed to it. Our heart should love only that which the Gnosis wishes it to love. Our will should will only that which the Gnosis wills! Our acting should realize only that which thus is in accordance with reason, will and heart.

When the pupil has reached this stage, he enters into the fifth phase, which states:

Fifth Hour: The Voice of the Great Waters glorifies the God of the heavenly spheres.

The pupil hears the voice of the Great Waters and therefore no longer experiences life as a desert. There is mention of Waters because the pupil has entered the Hall of Wisdom, the hail which corresponds to the element water. In the Nuctemeron Apollonius speaks of Great Waters. "The Voice of the Silence" speaks of shoreless waters. This means that there also must be small waters. What are those small waters? That is the thinking of the human being in the Hall of Ignorance and the Hall of Learning, in other words thinking that is tied to the material world and to the astral world, and thus to desires.

The fifth hour is about the birth of the new soul or the new mental body. The basis for this new soul garment is laid in this phase. The number five in gnostic traditions always has to do with the new human being and is symbolized by an upright five-pointed star, a Pentagram. We can think here of the star of Bethlehem which began to shine when Jesus was born. The five-pointed star resembles the body of the human being who stands with arms and legs spread out. The points of the star stand for the five parts of the body to which the new soul garment is connected: forehead, both hands and both feet.

The pupil of the fifth hour has closed his senses to the great and sad heresy of separateness. He now is going to work for world and mankind on the basis of his inner knowledge. He considers that as holy work, as work that leads to the making whole of himself and of others. He then is the high priest who enters his renewed inner temple. The number five accordingly is also the number of the high priest.

From the first through the fourth hour the pupil possibly did cooperate in the great work of liberation, but then he could not put much power into this because he only had the capabilities of his personality at his disposal, and not yet those of the new soul. Jan van Rijckenborgh says about the pupil of the fifth hour:

Thus he steps forward as servant in the great mansion of the divine intervention, to fulfil the tasks awaiting him in the harvest field. It is a nuclear power with which he will bring peace and calm everywhere, even in the deepest depths of hell. The peace of Bethlehem. Whoever may and can use this power, does no longer have to do battle, because all strife arises from the reciprocal enmity between the twin powers of the dialectical nature. He, who no longer lives out of these powers, rises above all strife and is for all those who still live in darkness, a bearer of peace on earth.

We end this lesson with part of chapter 12 of “The Admonition of the Soul”:

When a human being plants the tree of perseverance, he will harvest from this the fruits of attainment and he will celebrate victory. He will achieve what he desires and be happy. If however he plants the tree of sloth and negligence, he will harvest from that the fruits of failure. He will not attain what he desires and be unhappy. I want to place you before some precepts, o soul Learn them and realize them. Desire originates with the soul. She desires what is good That which has to support her with whom the desire originates, is perseverance. And that which helps her to attain what is desired is nothing but that same good and that same goodness. Because when the activity of the one who desires is connected with the activity of that which is desired, then the one who desires and that what is being desired are led to each other.

Perseverance tastes bitter, but it bears sweet fruit Sloth tastes sweet, but it bears bitter fruit and brings anxiety. Persevere and be steadfast in the adoration of the one true God, and beware of being made to waver by aversion and apathy, so that you will not forsake the adoration of the one true God by serving many gods. He who believes in many gods, also has to adore many He will experience trouble and vexation. He will be engrossed in worries and be tortured by anxiety and eventually he will perish.

To be infected by apathy and aversion is a characteristic of the animal soul.

Perseverance and steadfastness are characteristics of the ripe and truly human soul. So beware of being made to waver by apathy and aversion and do not be tempted to follow more than one God Because when you do that, you will become confused, you will become exhausted, so that your light will be extinguished, your power diminished, your high standing

*negated and your independence will come to an end And this will mean your death. So beware of this death and turn away from the things causing it
You should o soul, obtain true knowledge of your own being and of its forms and aspects. Do not think that any aspect about which you would like to obtain knowledge, is outside of you; no, everything about which you need to obtain knowledge, is within you. So beware of being led astray, leading you to seek elsewhere for that which is in your possession. Many forget where insight should be found and seek for it outside themselves and are being misled by this. But later they will remember that everything is within them and not outside of them.*