



International School of the
Golden Rosycross

THE TWELVEFOLD PATH OF INITIATION

LESSON 2: Become the Path.

In the divine Plan lies enclosed that we become the path, that we become a living link between the world in which we live and the divine world. On the path of initiation one works consciously and conscientiously at the realization of that link. When this link has come into existence, be it fully or in part there are degrees of initiation one is an initiate. An initiate does not live primarily for himself, but for the great whole.

An initiate lives from out of the Unity because he knows from within that everything is linked to everything else. He experiences that the whole is more than the sum of the separate parts. He has left the lamentable heresy of separateness far behind. He lives from out of the vertical dimension. Jan van Rijckenborgh gives a poetic description at the end of chapter seven of his book about the Nuctemeron:

The initiate imparts a new prosperity to peoples and nations. He supports them with his lofty directives.

*He hovers over them like an eagle. He directs the currents of astral fire.
All the gates of the Sanctuary are open to him, and all the souls seeking truth place their trust in him.*

He is beauteous with moral greatness, and he carries with and within him the radiant power of Love.

To reach this stage, we will first have to pass through a drastic process of change. The changes required take place gradually on the path of initiation. To this end, we need to trek like a pilgrim through the dark desert of this world, equipped with hood, lamp and staff. The hood indicates that we are directed to our goal and do not let ourselves be distracted from it. The lamp points to the immortal divine principle in our heart, which gives us insight into how we should step by step go the path of initiation. The staff represents the mystery school with which we have connected ourselves as souls ripe with experience, and where we are being taught and spiritually nourished.

In lesson 1 we outlined several important aspects of the entire path of initiation. In this second lesson we will delve a bit more deeply yet into the whole path, which also is called the path of becoming whole again, or the path of becoming truly human. Then we will have laid a solid basis for discussing the individual hours of the Nuctemeron. Lesson 3 will be devoted to the first hour. The second and third hours will be discussed in lesson 4. In lesson 5 we throw light on the fourth and fifth hour, and in lesson 6 we will briefly look at all twelve hours.

Directions.

In mystery schools pupils receive directions for their daily life. Such directions are not meant to lead the human being to a virtuous life, but to create the right conditions for the necessary processes of change that will have to take place in him during the going of the path. To give you an impression, we quote here the verses 14-37 from “The Golden Verses of Pythagoras” one of various texts with directions for pupils of the Pythagorean mystery tradition.

Accustom yourself to always behave according to rule and reason. But know that destiny has ordained that all must die.

And that the goods of fortune are uncertain, that they can be lost like they are acquired. With regard to all the calamities that attend mankind according to the divine law:

With patience bear your lot, whatever it may be and never grieve at it, but try as much as you can to improve it.

And know that fate does not send the larger part of these misfortunes to the good. There are many sorts of reasoning among the people: good ones and bad ones; admire them not too easily, nor reject them;

But when untruths are advanced, listen to them with mildness and arm yourself with patience.

And above all observe well what I now am going to tell you:

Let no one seduce you by his words or his actions, nor entice you to say or to do what is not profitable for you.

Consult and deliberate before you act, lest foolish be your action.

Because it is the way of a miserable human being to speak or act without reflection.

But do that which will not afflict you afterwards, nor oblige you to repent. Never do anything you do not understand;

But learn all you ought to know, and sweet will be your life.

In the last verses (69-71) of this text a grand perspective is held up to the pupil of the mysteries:

Let yourself always be guided and directed by the understanding that comes from above and that ought to hold the reins.

And when, having divested yourself of your mortal body, you come to the purest ether, then you will be a god, immortal, incorruptible, and death shall have no more dominion over you.

Overcoming death.

The victory over death of which we speak here, refers to the becoming free from the wheel of birth and death. The pupil then has managed to cleanse, purify and renew his human system in the microcosmic sense to such an extent, that this does not have to reincarnate anymore after his death. He has woven the new soul garment with which he can enter the divine world. This human being, healed according to spirit and soul then can rightly be called a god, in accordance with the word from the Bible:

You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you. (Psalm 82:6)

Overcoming death, i.e. gaining immortality, is an important aspect in many religions. Also in many ancient Greek myths we repeatedly find this theme. For instance in the myth of the twelve labours of Heracles, named Hercules by the Romans. Heracles was a demigod, because he was born from the god Zeus and the mortal woman Alkmene. To become a god and gain immortality, he had to perform twelve great tasks, realize twelve mighty labours. The heroic Heracles managed to accomplish the twelve labours, thus obtaining immortality.

We too, just like Heracles, are demigods. We are twofold, because we are mortal according to the body and immortal according to the divine spark dawning within us. We are called to let that divine spark flame up and lead it back to the all- encompassing divine fire of the Father-Mother who is in the heavens. To this end we have to realize twelve labours, pass through twelve phases or stages. That is no small matter, not something we do just like that next to all our other activities. If we want to climb the ladder to heaven, the ladder with the twelve rungs, that will have to be the most important thing in our life. This does not mean that we should neglect the duties we have taken upon ourselves in our life, but that we should deal in a spiritually intelligent manner with regard to the situations in which we find ourselves.

The circumstances in which we now find ourselves in this life, reflect our inner being and are necessary for us to become spiritually aware. We harvest now what our microcosmic predecessors in previous lives, and we ourselves in this life, have sown. On the path of becoming truly human, we will experience without any doubt much opposition. That is not always pleasant, but this does offer us the possibility to grow and become stronger. Friction is necessary in this world to be able to make real progress. A car on slick ice cannot get up speed. To fly a kite a headwind is needed. In our life we continually run into adversity, because this then offers us the opportunity to conquer our self. Inner growth is ultimately worth more than the realization of external goals:

*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city. (Prov. 16:32)*

When we will have accomplished the twelve labours, when we have climbed the ladder with twelve rungs, then we will be immortal. Our mortal body still will die of course, but then, after the death of our body, our reborn soul can continue its path of development in the divine world. Then we will have liberated our human system from the wheel of birth and death.

Twelve phases.

Apollonius of Tyana describes the twelve phases of the path of initiation in the Nuctemeron in the form of a day of twelve hours. We should not think here of a strict sequence of stages, because in fact the twelve phases are one. We can imagine it thus, that in every hour the other eleven lie enclosed. In other words, in the first hour the pupil of the mysteries not only encounters aspects of the first hour, but also of the second through the twelfth hour. In the second hour the pupil again gets to deal with all twelve aspects, but now on a higher turn of the upward leading spiral. So we are not dealing here with a linear development, but with a progressive cyclical process.

It is not by chance that we find a division into twelve stages in both the myth of Heracles as well as in the Nuctemeron. The number twelve is the symbol for completeness. We often run into this number in macrocosm., cosmos and microcosm, in the human being and in nature. We know the twelve signs of the zodiac and the twelve months of the year. With a child a new period in his life begins at about his twelfth year. In our body we have twelve pairs of cerebral nerves and twelve pairs of ribs.

In many holy writings the number twelve plays an important role. Restricting ourselves to the Bible, we can mention among others:

- The twelve sons of Jacob (Genesis 35:22)
- The twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 49:28)
- The twelve year old Jesus who asks wise questions in the temple (Luke 2:42)
- The twelve disciples of Jesus (Matthew 10:1)
- The twelve baskets with left-over pieces of bread of the miraculous feeding (Matthew 14:20)
- The woman with a crown of twelve stars on her head (Revelation 12:1)
- The twelve gates of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:12)
- The tree of life yielding fruit twelve times (Revelation 22:2)

The number twelve relates to a complete rotation, a cycle, in which the end merges into a new beginning. The division of the night and of the day into twelve hours is not arbitrary, but follows from the laws of the cosmos, the human being and nature. A complete cycle can be subdivided into four groups of three stages. We recognize this in the clock face: four quarters which are subdivided into three times five minutes. In a calendar year we know four seasons each of three months: winter, spring, summer, autumn.

The three stages within a part of a process relate to degrees of development. There is a beginning phase, an in-between phase and an end phase. This corresponds with three phases in a human life: child, adult, elder. There also is a similarity with the three stages which were distinguished in the medieval guilds: apprentice, journeyman and master. In the guilds apprentices were concentrating on preparation, journeymen on realization and masters on imparting. We can also look at the three phases of a process in a more technical manner, as if it were a black box. Then we speak of an input, a transformation and an output.

First taking root.

The twelve phases which the human being passes through on the path of initiation, can be compared to the cycle through which a tree goes in the course of a year. Let us look for instance at an apple tree during the four seasons of winter, spring, summer and autumn. Projecting the four seasons onto the dial face of a clock, the quarter of the twelfth to the third hour then refers to winter, the third to the sixth to spring, the sixth to the ninth to summer and the ninth to the twelfth to autumn.

We see that in winter the attention of the apple tree is directed inwardly, that is: to the roots. In a like manner, the pupil of the mysteries first has to be directed inwardly on the path of initiation. He cannot yet successfully approach the world with his beginning insights. When the blind leads the blind, both fall in a well. He first has to thoroughly take root. The required inner change cannot take place when he loses himself in external activities. In the first three hours of the Nuctemeron a cleansing and a purification of the personality take place.

In the spring the attention of the apple tree is with the blossom. With the pupil on the path, the lustre of the new soul reveals itself from the third to the sixth hour. A sparkling renewal radiates from him. He sets out for the promised land, becomes enthusiastic about it and urges his fellow human beings who are ready for this, to also take up the pilgrim's staff.

From the sixth to the ninth hour the new soul becomes ever more forceful and powerful through its work for world and mankind. She sustains a protective force field in which new spiritual life can come to development in others. This period corresponds with summer. The attention of the apple tree is then with the leaf. The tree protects little plants growing under it with its crown of leaves against the burning heat or the freezing cold of this nature, thus forming an oasis and a haven in this world.

In the fall the apple tree's attention shifts to the fruit. The pupil on the path then really can bear fruit. His totally renewed soul is being connected with the Spirit. He stands in direct contact with the divine world and can work with the forces of that life-field. He consciously cooperates in the execution of the divine plan. In this way he furthers mankind's spiritual development in an inconceivable way.

Awakening through the Light.

The process put into words by Apollonius of Tyana, does not only relate to the path of initiation of the individual human being, but also to the path of development all of humanity is going. In which hour of the Nuctemeron does present-day humanity find itself? We can fathom the answer to this question when we consider that every day of twelve hours is preceded by a night of twelve hours. Apollonius directs himself not to the sleeping, but to those who are awake.

The sleeping are those in whom the divine principle in the heart is still slumbering. They are not yet conscious of their Divine calling. They have not yet heard the inner call. They are actively engaged in creating a paradise on earth and do not know that the world in which we live is a bridge; yet a bridge on which we should not remain seated, but over which we should cross to arrive in the divine life-field.

We can conclude that most people on earth still are asleep in the sense just discussed. We have to accept that. It would be uncharitable to awaken them assuming a moment that we are awake ourselves because they need their sleep. They have not yet gathered enough experience in this world to be able to go the path of initiation. The best thing we can do in the gnostic sense for mankind is to go the path ourselves, because then through us light will shine in the darkness. Through the light imparted to us from above out of the vertical dimension and which we have to spread here below in the horizontal plane, sleeping ones will be lovingly awakened.

We conclude this lesson with a section of the eighth chapter of the Gospel of Luke about the parable of the sower.

And when a great crowd came together and people from town after town came to Him, He said in a parable:

'A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold.' As He said this, he called out, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'

And when his disciples asked Him what this parable meant, He said, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand'.

Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience. (Luke 8: 4-15).