

**Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov**

**THE FRUITS  
OF  
THE TREE OF LIFE**  
*The Cabbalistic Tradition*



*Complete Works*

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**P R O S V E T A**

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Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

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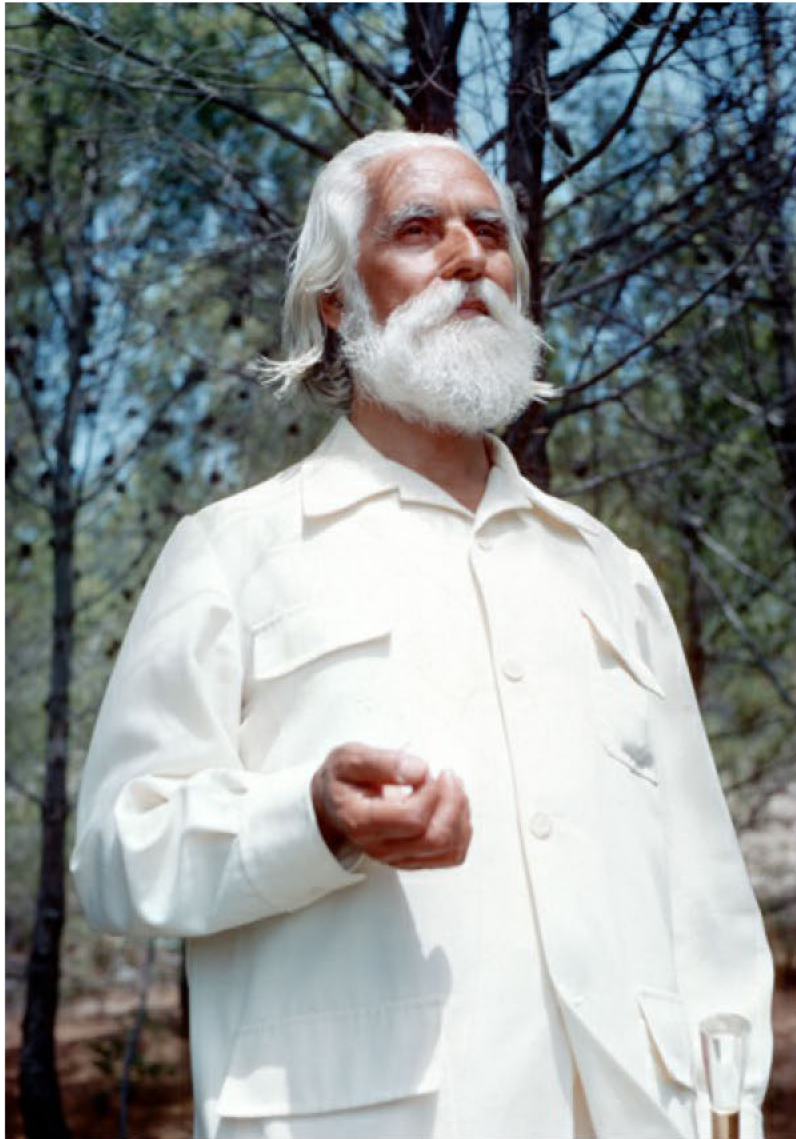
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*Readers will better understand certain aspects of the lectures published in the present volume if they bear in mind that the Master Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov's teaching was exclusively oral and that the editors have made every effort to respect the flavour and style of each lecture.*

*The Master's Teaching is more than a body of doctrines: it is an organic whole, and his way of presenting it was to approach it from countless different points of view. By repeating certain aspects in a wide variety of contexts, he constantly reveals a new dimension of the whole and, at the same time, throws new light on the individual aspects and on their vital links with each other.*

## **Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov**



# Chapter One

## How to approach the study of the Cabbalah

People sometimes tell me that they are interested in the Cabbalah, that they have read a lot of books by well-known students of cabbalistic science – people such as Lenain, Papus, Eliphas Levi, Dion Fortune, A. E. Waite and Israel Regardie – and that they would like my opinion and advice. Certainly, there is a lot to be learned from all these books, but the first thing I ask somebody who wants to know what I think about these books is *how* he or she has read them. And, all too often, the answer I get is, ‘Oh, from time to time I read a few pages, here and there.’ Well, I am sorry to have to tell you that that is not the way to study the Cabbalah. If you tried to study mathematics by beginning with differential and integral calculus, for instance, before mastering the four basic operations, the science of mathematics would remain a closed book to you! You have to begin at the beginning and understand the first lessons before trying to assimilate more difficult things. Only if you do that can you expect to make rapid progress. As long as some point is not quite clear to you, you must not try to go any further. You have to advance step by step, without rushing things. If this is true of mathematics, how much more so is it true for the Cabbalah. You cannot read the Cabbalah as though you were reading a magazine.

Before I go any further, I should make it quite clear that, although I sometimes talk to you about the Cabbalah (about the sephirotic Tree of Life, the angelic hierarchies or the seventy-two planetary spirits, for instance) in my lectures, it is not because I think you should study it in detail, but because it is important for you to have an idea of some of the essential elements of the Cabbalah that can help you to grow spiritually. The Cabbalah is a very special science, quite unlike any other, and it demands very special qualities in those who want to study it in depth. In the first place, they are advised not even to begin before the age of forty and, only then, if they are truly destined to do so, if they have the mental and psychic capacities required and if they possess the moral integrity that will ensure that they never use their knowledge to achieve their own, personal goals. The Cabbalah is a mysterious, sacred doctrine and it presents many difficulties, even dangers, to those who venture to explore it. Cabbalists have a parable that emphasizes this: one day, four rabbis decided to meet in order to study the Cabbalah together. Not long after, one of them had abandoned the attempt, another had

lost his faith and a third had gone out of his mind. Only the fourth had pursued his study and received great blessings from it.

I do not advise you to embark on a serious study of the Cabbalah, therefore. Learn only what can be useful to you, what is within your reach; for my part, I shall not reveal more than that to you. And, if you are not ready for it, begin with other subjects and other exercises which will prepare you to explore the Cabbalah later on. Believe me, it is an extremely difficult science; not everybody can undertake to study it. Indeed, it would be sacrilegious and even dangerous to do so without proper preparation.

If I say this, it is not because I want to discourage you but because I want to be useful to you. It is my duty to warn you that to launch rashly into the study of cabbalistic science can upset your psychological balance. If this happens, of course, it is not the Cabbalah that is to blame, but your own misplaced curiosity or your desire to gratify your own greed or ambition. I have sometimes said to people, ‘You study the *Shem Ha-Mephorash* and learn the names and attributes of the seventy-two planetary spirits, but what do you intend to do with them once you know them?’ ‘I want to ask them to protect me and give me success, love and wealth.’ Exactly, and that is where the danger lies! In the first place it is extremely unwise to try to force these luminous spirits to serve human greed, and in the second place you must not imagine that they are ready to obey every Tom, Dick and Harry. You have to begin by reaching a certain stature in the spiritual world, otherwise the spirits will see through you at once and leave you to flounder along on your own.

The seventy-two planetary spirits are under no obligation to gratify your whims. If you want to give them orders, you must be possessed of great power, a very strong will and a high degree of self-mastery; it is not enough to know and pronounce their names. A great many people think this is all they need to do, and of course they get no results. Before launching out on your own, therefore, be sure to examine the whole thing very carefully in advance, especially as the danger in venturing alone and uninstructed into such practices, without the help of a guide or Master, is that it can lead to sorcery and black magic.

Look at all the publishers that have started to bring out books about the occult within the last few years. It is nothing less than witchcraft! Some of those books contain terrible formulas and even detailed explanations about how to make a pact with the devil. The tragedy is that a great many people – many more than you might imagine – are fascinated by such books and

believe every idiotic word in them. Some of it is true, of course, but a great deal of it is not only a tissue of lies, it is also dangerous, but there are many who are gullible enough to swallow it all. I am well aware of all that goes on in this respect; I know that witchcraft is still very much alive in some country areas where people still use old books of magic to cast spells and conjure up spirits. They even try to call up the devil himself – and the astonishing thing is that they succeed! Why? Because, with their faith and tenacity and, especially, their patience, they attract infernal spirits. These spirits attach themselves to them in order to feed on them. So, not only are these people in close contact with the spirits they call up, they also lend them life, as it were. I am aware that these things happen, and I am also aware that many people have fallen victim to their own practices and died as a result. You must never, never do things of this kind! That is not true spiritual science. The science you receive from me will never lead to your doing anything of this nature. What is the use of becoming rich and powerful and having all the pleasure in the world if you then find yourself bound hand and foot, persecuted and possessed, and end by having to go to an exorcist to be freed from an evil spell?

People do not realize how dangerous witchcraft is. The publishers and bookshops that sell these books have a heavy burden of responsibility in this respect. It seems that the more extravagant the titles, with their so-called Hebrew, Chaldean and Persian names, the more popular they are! But the names are distorted out of all recognition and have no connection with the originals, for the manuscripts have been handed down, from one person to the next, for centuries, and every time they are copied the errors they contain increase. But there is nobody to warn you of the dangers involved. You find it fascinating to practise some of these methods, but have you ever considered the psychic effects they will have on you?

I want it to be quite clear in your minds that I shall never lead you into ventures of this kind. Try to understand the difference between our spiritual, initiatic Teaching, whose only goal is the light, and other occult practices. In this Teaching you are perfectly safe. If you want to venture into other areas, without a guide and without the light, you are free to do so, but you run the risk of sinking to the level of black magic. You are free to dabble in all this if you want to, but I cannot answer for your safety if you do. If you decide to abandon the Teaching I cannot be responsible for you any more.

Before approaching the sacred science of the Cabbalah, you must purify

yourself, purify your heart and your mind; otherwise the heavenly spirits will see that you are committing a sacrilege and put obstacles in your way. On the other hand, the spirits of darkness will be delighted to snare one more gullible creature by dazzling him or her with the prospect of easy success. It takes a great deal of effort to keep climbing upwards, but it is all too easy to slide downhill, down to hell; it is enough to follow the pull of one's own lusts and appetites.<sup>1</sup>

I sometimes say to people: 'Why are you so strongly drawn to occult practices? Why do you neglect the great truths I have given you, which could help you improve your health and have better relations with your fellow human beings, as well as with the intelligent forces of nature and heavenly entities, and even with God himself? These truths don't really interest you very much, do they? There are other things that interest you more – the hope of some rather dubious advantages, perhaps, or the urge to fulfil an ambition? If you are truly honest and upright you will begin by studying these great truths. There is enough there to keep you busy and happy for the rest of your life. If you neglect them, it means you are driven by inferior motives, you want to command the spirits so as to get money, love and worldly success, without taking the trouble, first of all, to acquire purity, intelligence and kindness. Let me tell you that this makes you a member of the Black Lodge. It is the Black Lodge that gives you this desire to command the spirits before you are worthy to do so, before you are a true son of God.'

Of course, the desire to study the Cabbalah has, in itself, nothing to do with witchcraft. The only thing is that, before discovering its secrets, you must be willing to pass through all the preliminary stages, to work on yourself and improve your own character, and to prove yourself both worthy and capable of going further. But, if you are in too much of a hurry, if you want to skip the preliminaries and force your way into the realms of the sacred before you are fit to do so, you will not be allowed to. You will be held up by the guards at the gates and refused permission to go any further until you have passed some tests and given sufficient proof that you possess such and such a virtue.

On the other hand, nobody will make you pass any tests if you want to do evil. On the contrary, the viler and more malignant you are, the more readily you will be recognized as a hero and leader, someone to be respected by others of your kind. What happens in a gang of cutthroats? The most brutal and violent of the gang is spontaneously recognized as the leader. This is

simply a reflection of the way things are done in hell, where the leader is the blackest of all its inhabitants. In heaven, on the contrary, it is the gentlest and most luminous, the one who is most full of love, who reigns. This is why the Cabbalah sometimes compares the universe to a white head, which is reflected in the form of a black head. The black head is the shadow, the inverted reflection of the white head. Hell is the image of heaven in reverse. In hell it is the most degraded who rules; in heaven it is the most exalted.<sup>2</sup>

‘What is below is like what is above’, said Hermes Trismegistus. What is at the bottom, therefore, is like what is at the very top. The sephirah *Kether*, at the summit of the Tree of Life, is reflected in an inverted *Kether* at the bottom. And in this world of human beings, who are the rulers? Are they the best and most worthy? Have those who hold the reins of power – the men in charge, the barons of finance, politics and economics – been chosen because they are nobler, more generous and more disinterested than their fellows? On the contrary, they are the most ambitious, the most self-seeking. This is the world that lies below the diaphragm, the world of the inverted reflection, or, to use Dante’s image, ‘the inverted cone’, and those who hold sway in this world are those who are most suited to do so. To be sure, there are some happy exceptions, but, generally speaking, those who are best equipped are those with the longest fangs, the sharpest claws and the hardest hoofs. Here and there, fortunately, there are still a few exceptional, disinterested beings in government and industry, men of intelligence, competence and integrity. True, but they are few and far between.

But, to get back to the question of the Cabbalah: you would do much better to begin by studying in depth all that I have already given you in my lectures. You have not begun to see how useful these truths are; it has not yet occurred to you that you can do tremendous work with their help. You say, ‘I want a formula that will enable me to command the spirits!’ No, it is too soon; you are trying to go too fast. Read my books again, two or three times, and you will realize that they contain all kinds of rules and many revelations about the highest magic, the highest cabbalistic science, even about theurgy. I have quietly slipped these things into my lectures from time to time, without insistence or special emphasis, without raising my voice, because they are for those who are awake to these things. Have you never noticed them? It is up to you, now, to look for them.

You are probably not aware that, in the past, most of what you learn here was virtually inaccessible except to initiates. My lecture about Egyptian

initiations, for instance, showed you how difficult it was and how many trials one had to go through to be accepted as a candidate for initiation in one of the temples. The postulants were even ready to risk their lives in order to be admitted and given access to this knowledge. Today, the invisible world allows Initiatic Science to be diffused much more widely, for the enlightenment and instruction of men and women, but if they misuse it and turn to black magic they will be punished most terribly.

<sup>1</sup> See '*Et il me montra un fleuve d'eau de la vie*', Synopsis Coll., Part X, chap. 1: 'La porte du monde psychique: Yesod'.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Part IX, chap. 1: 'Le fleuve de la vie divine'.

## Chapter Two

### The number ten and the ten sephiroth

#### I

*The Master reads a passage from the works of the Master Peter Deunov:*

‘To discover one’s personal number is to receive an unexpected inheritance of ten million leva. If you are sensible, this number will enable you to overcome a great many difficulties. Numbers contain a secret magic force. To receive ten million leva is to receive the possibility of acquiring houses, friends and happiness, and what greater riches could anyone ask for? Everyone bows down before ten million leva. Why? Because ten is a living number. There is tremendous power in a number, and that power is far greater when it manifests itself in human beings. When they penetrate the secret of the power of numbers, the professors of light open the gates of their university to them. Even if only one gate is opened, they will go through it on a chariot of fire like the one that carried Elijah to heaven. But those who do not understand living numbers will wait at the gates of the university for a long time; no one will open them to them. In order to enter the university of light you must possess love, for love solves all problems. Without love all is emptiness and failure.’

Some of the details in this passage may surprise you, so I would like to explain them to you. I don’t want you to go away with a mistaken idea of the Master Peter Deunov’s Teaching.

He says, for instance, ‘Everyone bows down before ten million leva.’ There is nothing very extraordinary in that; we see it happening all round us – although, of course, ten million leva are not worth very much today, not even enough to build a little shack! But then he goes on to say, ‘To receive ten million leva is to receive the possibility of acquiring houses, friends and happiness’, and this seems far from certain. Houses, yes, but friends and happiness? I think not! Now, don’t jump to the conclusion that I am contradicting or criticizing my Master, not at all; just the reverse, in fact, and I want to show you that the underlying meaning of these words is deeply true.

What does it mean, ‘to discover one’s personal number’? And why did the Master speak of the number ten? Because he was speaking the language of all great initiates and, for an initiate, numbers are everything. Numbers are the framework of the universe, and those who know them not only possess the

science of creation but also become all-powerful, for numbers are magic forces. All human beings have a specific number, and if they know it, they also know exactly where they fit into the universe. You could say that every human being is a number which has its own particular vibration and that this fundamental, essential vibration, determines their being and the whole of their life: their destiny and their path in life, as well as their physical body, their health and even the cast of their features. A person's number represents the vibrations of his or her innermost being, which attract certain elements and repulse others, in accordance with the law of affinity and polarity, of which I have often spoken.

For an initiate, a number is the skeleton around which all the different elements cluster. Let me illustrate this: I once saw a pedlar who had attracted crowds of people to his little side-show. He had a collection of wire structures in the form of different kinds of trees, and he would spray these structures with certain chemical substances, which stuck to them and built up to give the impression of foliage. This is an excellent image of creation. A number is something abstract, but it is a real being and, when it has to manifest itself on the physical level, it clothes itself in flesh in order to have a body. It is still a number, but it is concealed by so many layers it is impossible to see the inner reality. If you want to discover the real being you have to strip away the visible wrapping and see what lies behind the flesh and blood, skin, bone and muscle.

All the sciences – astronomy, physics, chemistry and mechanics – study the formations that have taken shape around a number or that have been triggered by a number, and scientists of all disciplines know very well that neither technology, nor the hypotheses on which technology is based, can succeed or advance if they do not have a solid mathematical basis. This is why the language of science is mathematical. Scientists have understood that everything is ruled by numbers and that they must know how to relate and combine numbers in order to master matter.

I said that everything was based on numbers. It would be more accurate to say that numbers are the summit, the fountainhead, and that matter accumulates around them through the phenomenon of crystallization, thus producing all the elements of creation: rocks and mountains, trees, flowers, animals, insects and human beings. The whole of creation consists of numbers that have incarnated. Of course, this is a rather rough and ready explanation; it is difficult to find words to express such a complex reality.

But the fact is that every human being who comes to earth is determined by the fundamental number allotted them by Cosmic Intelligence or, rather, by the number they have earned for themselves by the way they have lived in previous incarnations.

But let's get back to the Master Peter Deunov's ten million leva and have a closer look at the number ten. How did those who gave this number its particular form proceed? Was it by chance that they picked on the form of 10? No. It was thanks to their knowledge of the science of symbols. And this is what I shall try to show you, now.

If you reread the beginning of *Genesis*, you will see that Moses describes how God put the first man and woman into the garden of Eden. In the garden were two trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve were told to eat only the fruits of the tree of life, and, of course, you all know that, urged on by the serpent, they tasted the fruit of that other tree.<sup>1</sup> But we must leave the question of the serpent, for the time being, and concentrate on the tree of life.

The tree of life was impregnated with forces so harmonious and beneficial that its leaves healed every illness and its fruits bestowed eternal life. Thus, illness, suffering and death were unknown in paradise. When Christians read the first verses of the book of *Genesis*, do they have a clear idea of what the tree of life really is? They obviously know a good deal about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, since they constantly alternate between joy and sorrow, health and sickness, opulence and poverty, but what do they know of the tree of life?

The tree of life is the universe, the universe in which God dwells and which he impregnates with his own life. It is a symbolic representation of the divine life that flows through the whole of creation. A human being, too, is the tree of life, but in miniature and, this being so, we might ask why humans are not immortal? The answer is that they were immortal as long as they remained attached to the parent tree but, by disobeying God's injunctions, they cut themselves off from that tree and lost the gift of immortality. There was a period, therefore, in which humans were still attached to the tree of life; they were permanently in communion with it and ate of its fruits. To this day, in fact, this is the symbolic meaning of the verb 'to eat': to be in communion. But when man and woman cut themselves off from the tree of life, they were banished to 'the earth', that is to say, to the region of the densest form of matter, the region of *Malkuth*, the tenth sephirah of the cabbalistic system.

Cabbalists divide the universe into ten regions or sephiroth, which correspond to the numbers one to ten. These numbers were originally purely abstract realities, but, descending into denser regions of the universe, they became clothed in matter. This is why each of the ten sephiroth possesses not only a spirit (the number), but also a soul, an intellect, a heart and, finally, a physical body in which they dwell. As each sephirah is structured in the same way: there are five aspects to study in each one.

The first aspect, which corresponds to the spirit, is represented by the name of God. Starting with *Kether* and ending with *Malkuth*, the ten names are *Ehieh*, *Yah*, *Jehovah*, *El*, *Elohim Gibor*, *Eloha va Daath*, *Jehovah Tsabaoth*, *Elohim Tsabaoth*, *Chadai-El-Hai* and *Adonai Malek*.

These are the sacred names of God, which should only be uttered with the utmost reverence and in the silence of the soul. If I dare to speak these names here, today, it is because I sense that certain conditions of purity and light are present and that we are surrounded by a host of magnificent entities. By pronouncing these sacred names – the true power and meaning of which are known only to cabbalists – we can project rays of light into the consciousness of men and women throughout the world, so that those who are best prepared to receive these blessings may be awakened to a new life.

Each sephirah is a region inhabited by a hierarchy of luminous spirits governed by an archangel, who is, in turn, subject to God. It is God himself, therefore, who rules over each of these ten regions, under a different name for each region. This is why the Cabbalah gives ten names, ten attributes, to God. God is one, but his ‘expression’ changes; he manifests himself differently according to the different regions. He is always the same God, but with ten different expressions, ten different faces.

The second aspect of a sephirah, the aspect which corresponds to the soul, is represented by the name of the sephirah itself. Thus we have *Kether* (the Crown), *Chokmah* (Wisdom), *Binah* (Intelligence), *Chesed* (Mercy), *Geburah* (Severity), *Tiphareth* (Beauty), *Netzach* (Victory), *Hod* (Glory), *Yesod* (the Foundation) and, finally, *Malkuth* (the Kingdom).

The third aspect, which corresponds to the intellect, is represented by the chief archangel of each of the ten Choirs of angels. These are *Metatron* (the one who stands by the throne), *Raziel* (secret of God), *Tsaphkiel* (contemplation of God), *Tsadkiel* (justice of God), *Khamael* (desire of God), *Mikhael* (who is like God?), *Haniel* (grace of God), *Raphael* (healing of God), *Gabriel* (power of God) and *Uriel* or *Sandalphon* (God is my light).

The fourth aspect of the sephiroth, the aspect that corresponds to the heart, is represented by the order of angels that dwells in each sephirah. These are the *hayot ha-kadosh* (holy living creatures) or, as they are known to Christianity, the seraphim; the *ophanim* (wheels) or cherubim; the *aralim* or thrones; the *hashmalim* (shining ones) or dominations; the *seraphim* (fiery ones) or powers; the *melachim* (kings) or virtues; the *elohim* (gods) or principalities; the *bnei elohim* (sons of the gods) or archangels; the *kerubim* (strong ones) or angels, and the *ishim* (men) or beatified souls. Each order of angels has its own forms, colours and manifestations, and each is predestined to accomplish a particular task. Within the structure of the cosmic Tree of Life, each one has its own special place as an integral part of a sublime whole, the beauty and harmony of which are beyond the power of words to describe.

Finally, the fifth aspect of a sephirah corresponds to the physical body and is represented by a planet. This aspect serves as the material medium of the first four aspects. It is, as it were, their flesh and blood. The planets are Neptune, Uranus, Saturn (*Shabbathai* in Hebrew), Jupiter (*Tsedek*), Mars (*Maadim*), the Sun (*Chemesh*), Venus (*Noga*), Mercury (*Kokab*), the Moon (*Levana*) and the Earth (*Aretz*).

There are five aspects, therefore, to each of the ten sephiroth, making fifty in all, and these fifty aspects are what is known as the fifty gates of understanding or the gates of *Binah*, for they are represented in *Binah*.

I should mention, at this point, that the ancients worked with only seven planets in addition to the Earth, so that neither Uranus nor Neptune had a place on the Tree of Life. For the first cabbalists, *Chokmah* represented the zodiac (*mazloth*) and *Kether* the nebulae or first swirlings (*rashith ha-galgalim*). Astrologers respected this order and based their calculations on it in determining the planetary cycle of the hours of the day,<sup>2</sup> for, according to the Cabbalah, the twenty-four hours of day and night come under the influence of the seven planets known to antiquity, which succeed each other in an unending cycle, always in the same order: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon.

Every symbolic image, all magic rites and ceremonies, all religious ritual, even the ritual of the mass, takes its inspiration from the Tree of Life. The numbers, colours and symbolic forms used in all these ceremonies are all remnants of the cabbalistic tradition. Even the twenty-two cards of the tarot have their origin in the Tree of Life.

The Cabbalah teaches that transcending *Kether* is another mysterious, unknown, limitless region, which is the home of the absolute God from whom God the Father emanates. God the Father, who dwells in *Kether*, emerges from the absolute God who remains utterly unknown to man. The cabbalists call this region *ain soph aur*, 'limitless light' (*aur*, 'light'; *ain*, 'without'; *soph*, 'end' or 'limit'). *Ain* is a negation, but in the mind of a cabbalist it is more than that. In the Egyptian initiations, when an adept passed certain tests, he was told, 'Osiris is a dark god'; 'a dark god' because no man could know him and, also, because light is born out of darkness.

And this notion is contained in the number ten. The ten, which is composed of the 1 and the 0, represents both spirit and matter. From the *hyle*, that is to say from chaos (zero), is born light (one). The combination of these two figures produces 10, and the 10 contains the basic elements of all mathematical operations – the ten fingers. The one represents the masculine principle, the zero represents the feminine principle, and the combination of the two represents matter animated by life. And this corresponds exactly to the reality; this is how God created. Through the action of the one on the zero he brought forth life, the whole of life, which is the ten. When mathematicians combine their figures, little do they realize they are working with the Tree of Life, with the ten, the fullness of being. The ten contains both principles; nothing is lacking. If it is represented as in Figure 1, it becomes the Indian symbol of the lingam, which has the same symbolic significance as the seal of Solomon – the two interlaced triangles (Fig. 2) – which represents the union of the masculine and feminine principles.

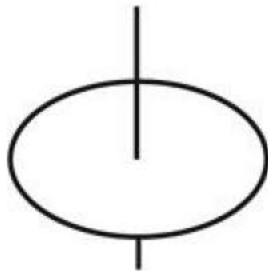


Figure 1



Figure 2

Those who know the numbers one to ten know the principles of all that exists and, at the same time, have the power to work with these principles, for humans possess ten fingers. The two tables of the law, which Moses placed in the ark of the covenant, are represented by our two hands, with five hidden commandments and five visible commandments. The tables of the law

represent the ten sephiroth, and it was through the power of the ten sephiroth and by means of his hands, the instruments of the sephiroth, that Moses worked miracles. Our hands are linked to the cosmic powers of the ten sephiroth: thanks to the ten fingers of our hands, everything is possible to humans. This is why the ten represents the fullness of being.

In the passage that I read to you earlier, the Master Peter Deunov spoke of ten million leva. Ten million is written with a one followed by seven zeros. The zeros after a number represent the favourable conditions that accompany it and the possibilities it has of manifesting itself materially. The more zeros a number has, therefore, the greater its possibilities of materialization, on condition, of course, that the zeros come after the number, not before it. Ten million is one followed by the seven forces or powers.

What greater wealth can there be than to possess the ten sephiroth within oneself? Whenever you wish to enter these angelic regions, these heavenly tabernacles, the doors open before you, and you are free to enjoy the delights they offer, to satisfy your hunger and quench your thirst. In other words, you receive inspiration and magnificent plans of action.

How can we work with the ten, the number of *Malkuth*? *Malkuth* is the tenth sephirah, the condensation of all that is above (the 1, the spirit) and all that is below (the 0, matter), and by its very nature it indicates that the work of disciples is to ascend to the highest peak by means of thought, before descending, once more, to animate, vivify and purify their own physical body (for that is what *Malkuth* is), and impregnate it with the qualities and virtues of the nine higher sephiroth. This is how a disciple forms his or her new body, the body of glory, the body of light. Those who succeed in uniting *Malkuth* within themselves to the other sephiroth achieve the ten and reach total fulfilment.

Ten is the number of success; it symbolizes the concrete realization of all the other numbers. *Malkuth*, when united to the other nine sephiroth, represents the kingdom of God. From the point of view of the spirit, the most important sephirah is, of course, *Kether*, but from the point of view of material realization it is *Malkuth*, because, in its perfection, *Malkuth* condenses and gives concrete form to the qualities of all the other regions. It is for this reason that, in one respect, humans are greater than the angels. We are richer than they are, because we have something they have not got – a physical body. You will say that our physical body makes us the slaves of matter, and that is quite true, but, if we manage to attain the purity,

intelligence and disinterestedness of the angels, these qualities transform our body. They illuminate, immortalize and divinize it, and thanks to a body that has become divine we are more than the angels: we are the number ten.

What I have given you today is the merest smattering, a few crumbs of the true science, the science that is too immense to be mastered in the space of one lifetime. If you asked an initiate to sum up, very briefly, this science that they have spent their life studying, they could do so in these few words: the Tree of Life. But would you understand what they were saying? Those few words need to be developed, and that is what I have begun to do for you today. The Tree of Life is ten. But, if it is to express the fullness of divine life, the tenth sephirah must be joined to the Tree. This is why, every day, and at frequent intervals during the day, disciples renew their contact with heaven so that the currents may circulate and flow through them and, one day, they may recapture their divine countenance.

The Cabbalah tells us that humans lost their divine likeness and got the numbers mixed up when they committed the first sin. Instead of putting the one before the zero they put it after it; in other words they chose matter in preference to the spirit. If I wanted to write the formula for materialism on the blackboard, I should write 01, but only an initiate would understand my shorthand. And the formula for spirituality would be 10 – the spirit first, because it is the cause, and matter second. Or, if you prefer, intelligence first and feeling second; reflection first and action second.<sup>3</sup>

Zero represents all the possibilities the spirit has of giving concrete, material form to its designs. Ten, therefore, represents pure spirit (one) enveloped in the subtlest of all forms of matter, a matter so subtle as to be almost immaterial: the quintessence of *Kether*, Isis in all her splendour.

Videlinata, 3 June, 1963 (morning)

## II

Human beings are created in the image of the Tree of Life. The sephiroth *Kether*, *Chokmah*, *Binah*, *Chesed* and so on are all within them, with all their elements, entities, activities and materials. This is why true self-knowledge can only come through knowledge of the Tree of Life. To know oneself is to know the vast dimensions of one's own inner being with all its different regions, and the link that holds them together, for the ten sephiroth are not isolated from each other; they are united by the one stream of life that flows

through them. This living link is represented by the twenty-two paths, which join the sephiroth one to another.

Unfortunately, in humans, *Malkuth*, the tenth sephirah, has broken its links with heaven. This is why it is necessary, now, to restore communication, to restore the number ten. The ten sephiroth exist in the universe as ten spheres bound together in a whole. It is only in humans that they are no longer united. Humans have destroyed the links that bound them to the whole and no longer receive the currents of life, light and joy that flow through them.

The work of true disciples, therefore, is to restore this connection. They are *Malkuth*, condensed, concentrated matter, and their work consists in restoring the links between their own material sphere and the higher spheres, which also exist in their own inner being. It is at this point that the difficulties arise for, owing to the senseless life of disorder, darkness and crime that humans have lived, they have created a road-block within themselves. Initiatic Science calls this road-block 'the guardian of the threshold' and teaches that it lies in wait in the ninth sephirah, *Yesod*, ready to pounce on the timid postulant and terrify him or her with its hideous, threatening forms. If a disciple lacks the light and courage they need to stand up to it, if their heart is not pure, they will be defeated.

As we have seen, the sephirah *Yesod* is the region of the Moon, and those who venture into this region without having worked to enhance their inner light and attain self-mastery are bound to lose their way in the labyrinth of its illusions and aberrations. But for those who have worked to prepare themselves, the Moon is a region of purity. As they pass through it, they are purified and become lucid, transparent and clairvoyant. It is here, in *Yesod*, that humans make contact with the angels, the *kerubim*, the bearers of life.

The Moon is a region with two faces: it is a reservoir both of all that is pure and of all that is impure; everything that is most foul and putrid accumulates on the hidden face of the Moon. It is from here that black magicians draw the elements they use in their evil work and, as Earth and Moon are in frequent contact, it is easy for the fearful creatures of darkness to come from the hidden face of the Moon to torment human beings and lead them astray. You can understand, therefore, why it is so necessary to prepare yourselves before venturing into the region of the Moon,<sup>4</sup> and why this preparation must be done under the guidance of a Master, for a Master knows the way; he has already travelled along it and experienced it. No one is admitted to this region without a Master; they will be halted at the entrance

by the guardian of the threshold. But when disciples are armed with true knowledge and have full command of all their inner forces – anger, sexual energy and so on – the guardian of the threshold steps aside and the way is open to them.

From *Yesod*, they move on to the third sephirah, *Hod*, the region of Mercury, where they can study all the disciplines of the divine school: magic, the Cabbalah, astrology and theurgy. *Hod* is the region of knowledge. All knowledge, all the sciences are here, duly filed, classified, and organized. It is in the sephirah *Hod* that the disciple makes contact with the angelic order of the *bnei elohim* (sons of the gods), known in the Christian tradition as archangels.

After *Hod*, the disciple moves on to the sephirah *Netzach*, the region of Venus. *Netzach* is the sephirah of beauty and grace. It is the home of all colours, forms, sounds and perfumes, of all true artistic and creative inspiration. *Netzach* is the home of the *elohim*, the gods that, as we are told in the beginning of *Genesis*, created heaven and earth.

Evidence that it was the *elohim*, the angels of the sephirah *Netzach*, that created the world, is seen in the fact that the event repeats itself, in miniature, every time a child is conceived. When a man and woman create a child, they are under the influence of *Netzach*, love, and it is the angels of *Netzach*, the *elohim*, that build the child's body. Even if the man and woman are unaware of it, the *elohim* are there and do their work. The sephiroth are not totally abstract and remote; they are present, every day, in every area of our lives. The creation of a child is only one instance of this: the *elohim* are here, very close to you; you call on them and, a few months later, everyone is lost in wonder at the infant that makes its appearance.

Once a disciple has studied the principles of creation and the forces that built the universe and human beings, in the sephirah *Netzach*, he or she must go on to *Tiphareth*, the region of the Sun, and make contact with the great spirit of this sephirah. We cannot really know the spirit of the Sun, for the spirit of the Sun is the spirit of Christ, an emanation of God himself, but if we create a bond with it, it will give us a share in all that it, itself, possesses: light, warmth, life, beauty, purity, health and so on. How can you create a bond with the sun? It is, obviously, not simply a question of exposing oneself physically to its rays. A great many people do this absent-mindedly, almost automatically, from time to time and, of course, in doing so they allow their physical body to absorb a few particles of the sun. In order to receive spiritual

elements from the sun, however, it is our spirit that must be exposed to it, not our body; our spirit must touch the sun and communicate with it, penetrate its depths and melt into one with it. This is a work for the spirit, not for the skin! Of course, it is excellent to expose oneself physically to the sun's rays, but if our consciousness and intelligence, our spirit, participates in this contact, we can obtain far more than warmth and vitality from it; we can obtain knowledge, illumination.

The sun is inhabited by the sublime intelligence that governs events on Saturn, Jupiter and all the other planets, for it is at the centre of the solar system, just as *Tiphareth*, at the centre of the sephirothic Tree of Life, is the heart of the world. All the great Masters of mankind come from the region of *Tiphareth*. We must work tirelessly with light, infuse light ceaselessly into every part of our being, into all the bones and muscles and cells of our body; we must constantly radiate light all around us, project light into all creatures, and in this way we shall, one day, enter the sphere of the Sun.

On leaving the region of *Tiphareth*, a disciple must be a valiant warrior, a soldier of Christ, a gallant knight, ready to defend the truth with utter fearlessness and face every adversity in order to help their fellow men. Then the gates of the next sephirah, *Geburah*, will be opened to them, and they will become truly invincible, for *Geburah* is the region of strength and power. The sephirah *Geburah* is active, dynamic, fiery; it is the abode of the exterminating angels. When God decides to destroy a city such as Sodom or Gomorrah, for instance, or to wipe out a civilization or even a whole continent, he entrusts the angels of *Geburah* with the task of destroying it and burning away its impurities.

When a disciple has developed a high degree of generosity, magnanimity, nobility and love for mankind, they enter the region of *Chesed*, 'Mercy'. Before being allowed to enter this region, they must have already learned to subdue the egocentric tendencies that urge them to impose their own will on others or to brush them aside and belittle or injure them. When they reach this point, they perceive that, far from being diminished, they have become stronger, for it is only when one learns to remain in the background that one becomes truly powerful. Only then is it possible to discover the heritage of *Chesed*, which bestows the power to govern, to rule with order, harmony, wealth and splendour. *Chesed* transmits to men and women the heritage of all the initiates, all their most marvellous discoveries and the fruits of all their labours.

After the magnificence of *Chesed*, the disciple sets foot on the path that leads to *Binah*, 'Intelligence'. This is the awe-inspiring, implacable region governed by the twenty-four elders, the lords of karma, who have absolute knowledge of all destinies.<sup>5</sup> It is they who know exactly what every creature has ever done, exactly what they deserve, the trials they still have to endure and what they still have to pay before they can be clear of debt and completely free. Freedom, true freedom, can only be obtained in *Binah*. Only those who can no longer be shaken by adversity enter *Binah*, those who remain dispassionate and unmoved in the face of loss, abandonment or pain, who are unperturbed by even the harshest deprivation. Saturn invites us to be like a hermit, an ascetic, and practise total renunciation and self-denial. Those who continue to rebel against the injustice of their fate, who persist in thinking they deserve better than they get, are still a long way from *Binah*.

*Binah* is the narrow gate.<sup>6</sup> Like a snake that discards its old skin by wriggling through a crack between two rocks, anyone who enters by the narrow gate of *Binah* is obliged to shed their old skin. When destiny wishes to renew someone, it makes them pass through events which oblige them to discard all unnecessary clothing and useless baggage. The narrow gate is cut to the exact size and shape of each one; each one must go through it symbolically naked and without baggage and, as soon as they pass this gate, all the treasures of universal wisdom are revealed to them.

Never forget, though, that all these regions exist within you. We live and work with all of them at the same time. Of course, if you want to concentrate more particularly on one of them in order to develop certain virtues, it is possible to do so. Generally speaking, however, whether we realize it or not we work on all the sephiroth at the same time and with varying degrees of success. These regions exist within us; they exist also in the cosmos, and when we advance on the inner level the gates of the external plane are also opened to us.

It is in *Binah* that the gates begin to open, in that severe, implacable region ruled by *Jehovah*. When it has become completely clear in our mind that the trials we are obliged to endure are necessary and for our own good, we see *Binah* from quite a different point of view. We begin to feel it is our mother. As a matter of fact, the Cabbalah calls *Binah* the cosmic Mother, a mother who is severe, for she chastises her children, and, at the same time, full of love, for she opens the fifty gates of understanding to them. As I have already mentioned, the fifty gates of understanding are the ten sephiroth, each with its

five aspects or divisions, and *Binah* opens these gates to the disciple, so that they may understand all that is still wrapped in mystery for them. Even though a disciple has passed through each of the sephiroth, even though they have developed the virtues that correspond to each one, it does not mean they have understood everything along the way. When you are given a degree in physics or chemistry it is because you have followed a series of courses in these disciplines, but it does not mean you know all there is to know about chemistry or physics. You all live on this earth, but that does not mean you know the whole earth. But when you reach *Binah*, you will know the whole path that you have followed, for *Binah* opens the fifty gates for you and, in particular, the gate that leads to *Chokmah*, 'Wisdom'.

*Chokmah* is the region of Christ, the divine Word.<sup>7</sup> In *Chokmah* are the numbers and letters of the sacred alphabet, which can be used to compose words, phrases and poems and to practise theurgy, the divine magic. There is an old tradition that *Raziel*, the archangel of *Chokmah*, gave Adam a book containing the secrets of creation but that, after the Fall, this book was taken away from him. The Cabbalah is an attempt to rediscover these secrets.

When St John said, '*In the beginning was the Word*', he was speaking of the Christ, that is to say, of *Chokmah*. It is in *Chokmah* that humans become all-powerful because it is here that they know every number, every letter and every sound with their powers, relations and affinities and their correspondences with each other. The sephirah that sets humans free, as I have said, is *Binah*; the sephirah that makes them omniscient and omnipotent is *Chokmah*, for here, in *Chokmah*, they understand that each letter and each number is a cosmic force with which they can act.

The Slavic languages are particularly significant in this respect. In Russian and Bulgarian, for instance, *slovo* means 'word', and *slava* means 'glory'. There is an affinity, an analogy between word and glory, between glory and the Word, the Logos. Those who reach the sephirah *Chokmah*, who know the Word and utter it correctly, enter into divine glory. Now you understand why Christ is called the Glory of the Father. The first Glory is the Father, and the second Glory, which reflects him, is the Christ, the divine Word.

It is in *Chokmah* that the thirty-two paths of wisdom become accessible. There is a connection between the thirty-two paths and our thirty-two teeth, with which initiates nourish themselves by 'chewing' divine wisdom. Why do you suppose we speak of 'wisdom teeth'?

Finally, on condition, of course, that they are predestined to do so, an

initiate reaches the following sephirah, *Kether*. Tradition tells us that only eighteen initiates have attained the heights of *Kether* and returned to earth alive. Apart from these eighteen, none of those who have reached this peak have survived; their physical bodies were annihilated by the force of the currents in *Kether*. The sephirah *Kether* is a region in which form no longer exists. This is why those who reach it disintegrate; on contact with the fire of *Kether*, they are consumed and, themselves, become fire. The only beings who can survive this experience are those who have been predestined, hundreds of years previously, to accomplish a supremely great mission on earth, who have been specially prepared, in advance, and rendered capable of attaining *Kether* without disintegrating. The physical body of a human being who reaches this degree of perfection is so transformed that it is no longer composed of physical matter, but of condensed light.

The name *Kether* means ‘crown’, and a crown is something that is placed above the head. *Kether*, therefore, is a subtle region that is no longer the physical head, but is rather the aura, light. Before a man or woman can enter *Kether* they must be absolutely pure and radiant and possess such complete mastery of matter that they are capable of transforming their body, at will, from the state of dense physical matter to a state of perfect subtlety.

The angels of *Kether* are the *seraphim*, those described by St John in the book of *Revelation*: ‘*Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, “Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.”*’ These four living creatures are the *hayot ha-kadosh*, the ‘holy living creatures’ or ‘sacred beasts’. These four sacred beasts are the four elements, the roots of matter: the lion (fire), the calf or ox (earth), the human (air) and the eagle (water). All the early Church Fathers were familiar with this cabbalistic symbolism. In fact, Christian tradition was so strongly marked by its influence that each of the four evangelists was portrayed as one of the beasts: St Mark as the lion, St Matthew as the human, St Luke as the calf and St John as the eagle (no doubt because he flew to greater heights than the others). This symbol of the four holy living creatures has its origins in the far distant past, and Christians will never decipher *Revelation* correctly unless they refer

to the Cabbalah.<sup>8</sup>

The leader of the angelic cohort of *seraphim* is *Metatron*, the prince of faces; it is Metatron who, alone, stands before God and speaks to him face to face. It is he who instructed Moses, who appeared to him in the burning bush and on Mount Sinai. Many passages in the Bible tell of words – commandments, reprimands or promises – that God is said to have spoken to Moses, but the truth is that no human being has ever been capable of conversing directly with God. No human being has ever seen God. No human being could survive in the presence of God. Those who claim to have seen God have, in reality, seen one of his representatives, one of his archangels, for it is the archangels that represent him. They act, as it were, as ‘electrical transformers’ to reduce the voltage. Divine energy or, if you prefer, divine electricity, divine light, has to be transmitted to human beings through the intermediary of the angelic hierarchies, and by the time it reaches us its power is greatly reduced.

Contrary to what some people think, it is impossible for humans to address God directly; we have to address him through the agency of a hierarchy. Those who refuse any intermediary between themselves and God are ignorant of the true nature of things. Whether they recognize that hierarchy or not, it exists, and they must learn, once and for all, that things are not necessarily exactly as they imagine. Without this hierarchy between God and humans, not a single human being would still be alive.<sup>9</sup>

Such a high degree of evolution is necessary before a human being is capable of reaching the sephirah *Kether*, that very few have ever succeeded, and, as I have said, most of those who have done so have been incapable of returning to their physical body. The forces and currents of *Kether* are so powerful that they simply disintegrate matter. To return from *Kether* to *Malkuth*, the most densely material region in which we normally live, an initiate needs the help of the two sephiroth *Chokmah* and *Binah*, each of which give them a particle which saves them from disintegration. If St John was not volatilized in the course of the visions he describes in *Revelation*, it is because he had received that particle. As you will remember, he says that he was told to swallow a tiny book, and this book was the symbol of that element that enabled him to survive the tremendously powerful vibrations emitted by the sephirah *Kether*.

The name *rashith ha-galagalim* means ‘the first swirlings’, that is to say, the first, incipient nebulae, the emerging cosmos, still in the throes of

formation, still in its purely etheric dimension, before it began to crystallize and take concrete form. In this region are born the first plans and designs of God. From this region comes the first impetus. *Kether* is the fountainhead, and the fountainhead flows and overflows and fills all reservoirs. Cabbalists say that the sephiroth are 'emanations', because they all take their origin in the fountainhead, *Kether*. As each sephirah overflowed into the one below it, the density of matter gradually became greater until, in the sephirah *Malkuth*, the divine quintessence reached its highest density.

Each sephirah, therefore, issues from the preceding one, by emanation. This is why tradition holds that the moon is the earth's mother. Even if astronomers don't agree, from the cabbalistic point of view this is perfectly true: *Malkuth* emanates from *Yesod*, and *Malkuth* is our planet earth. As you can see, you have never really known what the earth was. When you pick up a handful of soil, you are holding part of the quintessence of *Kether*. True, soil is drab and dense, but it contains the quintessence of *Kether*. If we succeed in restoring it to a state of subtlety we shall see that the earth is as pure and as luminous as the matter of *Kether*.

The Tree of Life is an intricate, highly organized world, a vast whole in which all the elements are bound together in an extraordinary concord, similar to that which reigns in a healthy human organism. The Tree of Life is also a higher state of consciousness. Those who eat the fruits of this Tree will live for ever, that is to say, they will be spiritually immortal. Why? Because everything in this Tree is connected; the treasures of each region overflow into all the other regions, and the divine energy that flows ceaselessly from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven flows through each one.

It is true that the Bible says that, when God banished Adam and Eve from the earthly paradise, he placed an angel armed with a flaming sword at the entrance to the garden, to bar the way to the Tree of Life. In other words, it is forbidden to have access to the Tree of Life. Yes, but to whom is it forbidden? Only to those who do not want to serve God, to those who refuse to obey him or who try to steal his riches by force; it is not forbidden to disciples.

Obviously, I have not told you everything. The true reality of the Tree of Life has been revealed to me by the invisible world, by the great Masters in the world above. They showed me that it has another form, a form of unutterable harmony and perfection. In the cabbalistic tradition it is generally represented as a vertical, upright form, but I have seen its true form and its

true dimension, and the sight of it left me speechless with wonder! But I can feel that I am not allowed to reveal this to you yet. In fact, I think I have already said too much. These things are sacred beyond words; you must receive them in your innermost being with respect, devotion and gratitude and with the firm intention of putting them into effect in your own lives, otherwise I shall be in danger of being punished by the invisible world. So, if only for my sake, and so that I may be allowed to continue to reveal these things to you, try to receive them with the greatest purity of heart. Do not mix them with anything else. Now that you know them, you must not give way to the same failings as in the past.

Videlinata, 3 June, 1963 (evening)

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, Izvor Coll. n° 210, chap. 1: ‘The two trees of Paradise’.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Zodiac, Key to Man and to the Universe*, Izvor Coll. n° 220, chap. 3: ‘The planetary cycle of hours and days’.

<sup>3</sup> See *Cosmic Balance – The Secret of Polarity*, Izvor Coll. n° 237, chap. 3: ‘One and zero’.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Book of Divine Magic*, Izvor Coll. n° 226, chap. 7: ‘The moon’.

<sup>5</sup> See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life*, Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 15-I: ‘The laws of destiny’.

<sup>6</sup> See *New Light on the Gospels*, Izvor Coll. n° 217, chap. 5: ‘The strait gate’.

<sup>7</sup> See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life*, Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 16: ‘Chokmah, the creative word’.

<sup>8</sup> See *The Book of Revelations: A Commentary*, Izvor Coll. n° 230, chap. 7: ‘The twenty-four elders and the four holy living creatures’.

<sup>9</sup> See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life*, Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 1: ‘From man to God, the notion of hierarchy’ and chap. 3: ‘The angelic hierarchies’.

## Chapter Three

### Structure and symbols of the Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is a symbolic figure which contains, in condensed form, the whole of Initiatic Science, the teachings of all initiates. It can be compared to a grain, a seed; plant it, and from it will spring the portrait of creation and all created beings. This figure can be an extremely potent pantacle, one of the most powerful instruments of magic it is possible to have. It contains everything – all the principles, all the elements, all the factors with which God created the world.

In the Tree of Life you have a system which can help you to avoid dispersing the efforts you devote to your spiritual work. If you work constantly with this figure for years, you will find it brings order and balance to your life; everything within you will become organized and harmonious. Every time you have a moment to spare, you can call to mind the Tree of Life and, by focusing on one sephirah, strive to develop the qualities or energies it contains. Whatever you stand most in need of, be it light or love, strength, protection, generosity, justice or life, look for it in the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is there for us, for the sons and daughters of God, who need to nourish themselves with divine life.

Concentrate on a particular virtue every day: pick one that you feel you particularly need, and try to nurture and strengthen it and give it concrete form within you. The best way to do this is to focus your thoughts, turn by turn, on the name of the sephirah, the name of God, the names of the ruling archangel and the angelic order in that sephirah and, finally, the name of the planet, for the planet represents the manifestation on the physical plane of the other four aspects.

Some cabbalists think we should be content to work with *Malkuth*. They say that the other sephiroth are so far above us and are of such subtle matter that we cannot reach them or get any results by working with them. They are right: it is sufficient to work with *Malkuth*, because it is not only itself but also the synthesis of the other nine sephiroth. Actually, this is true of each sephirah; each one reflects all the others. By working with *Malkuth*, however, we are in contact with all the others in a concrete, material form.

But there is no reason why those who feel capable of doing so should not concentrate on more distant realities. The twenty-two paths that link the sephiroth to each other make it possible to progress very gradually from one

to the other. Each of these twenty-two paths is associated with one of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The path that goes from *Malkuth* to *Yesod* is associated with the letter *tav*. This is the difficult path, which requires a disciple to rise above illusion. At the very top of the tree, the path which is associated with the first letter of the alphabet, *aleph*, runs from *Kether* to *Chokmah*. *Aleph* is the route by which God descends to incarnate in matter. *Tav* is the upward route that humans take in order to come closer to God. Only very, very few initiates have travelled the length of the twenty-two paths all the way to *aleph*, which represents the fullest achievement.

There is another way of working with the sephiroth, and it is the G clef that shows us how to proceed (Fig. 3). You begin by focusing on the Sun, then you follow a curve that takes you through *Chesed*, *Netzach*, *Yesod*, *Hod* and *Geburah*. From there you rise to *Kether*, passing through *Daath* and *Chokmah*, and you work your way down again, through *Binah*, *Daath*, *Tiphareth* and *Yesod* to *Malkuth*. Thus, you start with the Sun, you rise to *Kether* and then come down again to *Malkuth*. Anyone who works in depth with this progression through the sephiroth will find that there is a correspondence with the *Emerald Tablet*.

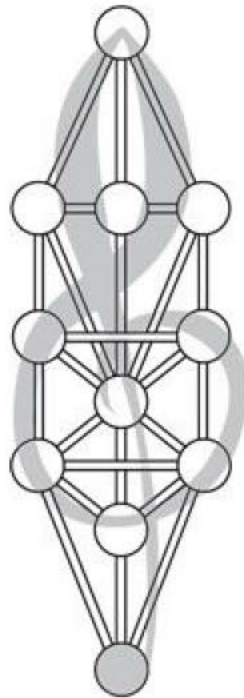


Figure 3

Another way to study the sephiroth is to group the sephiroth into three triangles (Fig. 4).

The first triangle is formed by *Kether* (the Crown), *Chokmah* (Wisdom) and *Binah* (Intelligence). This is the metaphysical triangle.

The second triangle consists of *Chesed* (Gentleness), *Geburah* (Severity) and *Tiphareth* (Sacrifice). This is the ethical triangle.

The third triangle consists of *Netzach* (Victory), *Hod* (Glory) and *Yesod* (the Foundation). This is the intellectual triangle.

*Malkuth* (the Kingdom, that is to say, the Earth) is not included in any of the three triangles. It stands alone, and the Cabbalah represents it as a square or cube because it is formed of the four elements, earth, water, air and fire.

This division into four parts can also be seen on the sephirotic tree as a whole, corresponding to the cabbalistic definition of the four planes of space. Beginning with the highest level, we have *atziluth*, the world of emanations; *briah*, the world of creation; *yetzirah*, the world of formation, and *assiah*, the physical world. And, as human beings were created in the image of the universe, these four divisions correspond to the four planes of man's being: *atziluth* corresponds to the soul and spirit (*neshamah* in Hebrew); *briah* to the intellect (*ruah*); *yetzirah* to the heart (*nephesh*) and *assiah* to the physical body (*guff*)

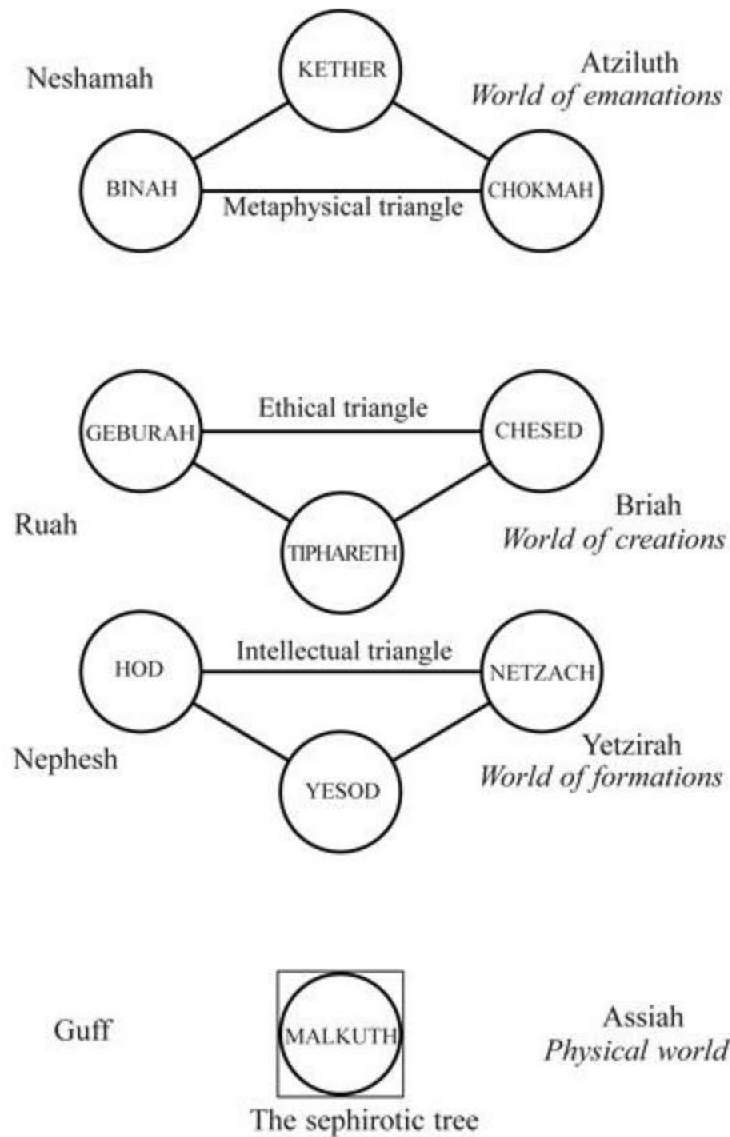


Figure 4

There is yet another way of working with the sephirotic tree, and that is to focus on its arrangement into three pillars. The pillar on the left, which joins *Binah* to *Hod*, is the pillar of severity or rigour (*boaz*). On the right, the pillar which links *Chokmah* to *Netzach* is the pillar of mercy (*yakin*). These are the two pillars of the temple of Solomon. Running up the centre of the tree is the pillar of equilibrium on which are placed *Malkuth*, *Yesod*, *Tiphareth*, *Daath* and *Kether*. To these five sephiroth correspond five major symbols: the philosopher's stone corresponds to *Malkuth*; the elixir of everlasting life corresponds to *Yesod*; the universal panacea to *Tiphareth*; the magic mirror to *Daath*, and the magic wand to *Kether*.<sup>1</sup>

*Daath*, therefore, is that mysterious, unknown eleventh sephirah which is

barely mentioned in the Cabbalah. *Daath* is the cosmic abyss, which contains all the records of the past, all the archives of the cosmos from the beginning of time. It is the primal chaos, the *tohu-bohu*, the 'void and darkness' over which hovered the Spirit of God. *Daath* also holds the key to the Fall of humankind, for it was through this sephirah that temptation came to Adam and Eve. The serpent was *Samael*, that extremely powerful spirit that sought out Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (the sephirah *Chesed*) and persuaded them to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As punishment for eating this fruit, Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise, that is to say, from the subtle, luminous regions in which they dwelt, and banished to the opaque, material region of *Malkuth*.

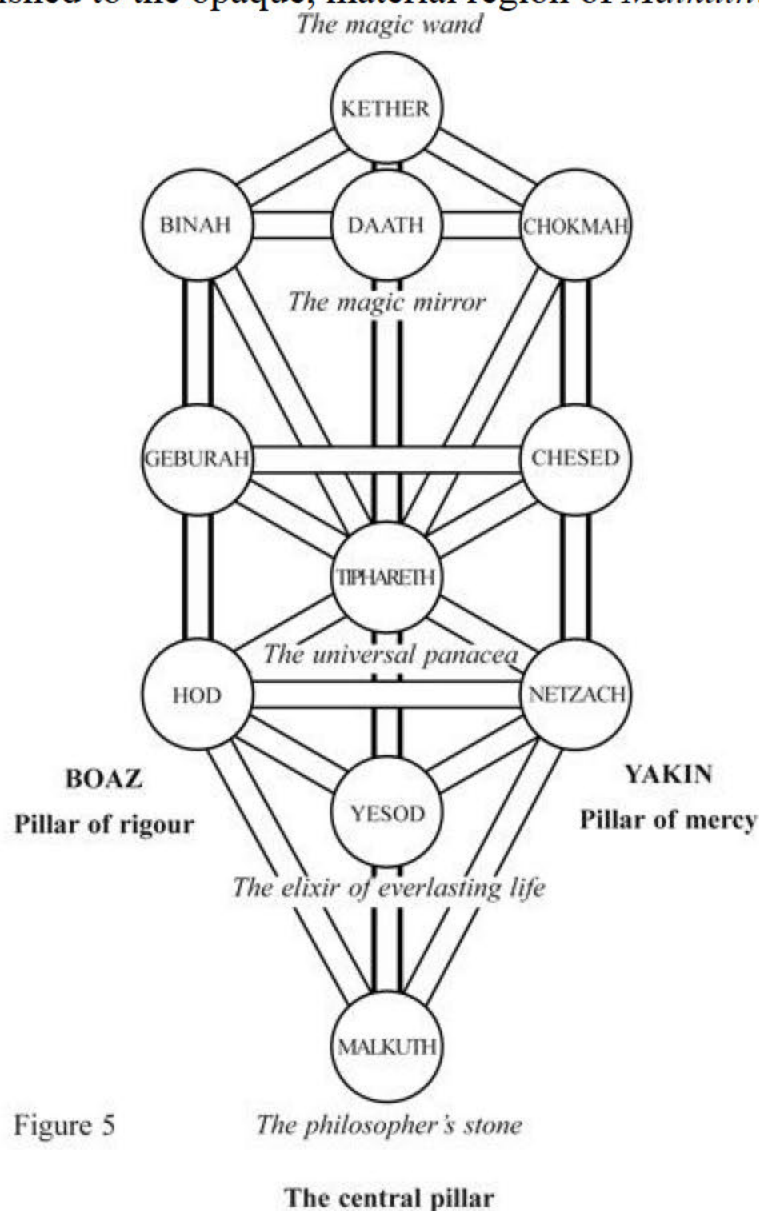


Figure 5

Cabbalists rarely speak of *Daath*, this invisible Sun that lies between *Kether*, the Father, and *Tiphareth*, the Son, the visible Sun, manifestation of the Father. Very few attempt to work with *Daath* because it is impossible to have access to this sephirah until one has travelled the length of all the other paths.

The five sephiroth of the central pillar correspond to the five planes of being in humans: *Kether* represents the human spirit; *Daath* the soul; *Tiphareth* the intellect; *Yesod* the heart and *Malkuth* the physical body. The Sun, *Tiphareth*, and the Moon, *Yesod*, lie one above the other on the Tree of Life, showing how the light of *Tiphareth* passes through the purity of *Yesod* to illuminate *Malkuth*. In the same way, when the light of the mind passes through a heart that is pure, it illuminates the body and all its cells and keeps it healthy and vigorous.

The central pillar maintains the balance between the pillars of left and right. If you follow it from the top down, you start with *Kether* and pass through *Daath*, *Tiphareth* and *Yesod* before reaching *Malkuth*. *Kether*, therefore, is one pole and *Malkuth* is the other. This is why the earth is said to be the reflection of heaven. When Hermes Trismegistus said, ‘What is below is like what is above’, he was expressing a cabbalistic truth. And when Jesus said, ‘*Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*’, he was saying, ‘May the things of *Malkuth* be as the things of *Kether*.’

All the great initiates have taught the same truths; each one has their own particular way of expressing things, but what they say is always true. For my part, when I tell you that the Sun, *Tiphareth*, is the spirit of Christ, it is true; I am not inventing anything for myself, I am simply interpreting things in accordance with an eternal, unchanging law. I am not the first to say these things. Just think: what a feather in my cap if I could say that I was the first to utter this truth! But I am sorry to have to admit that I am not. Thousands of initiates have said it before me, and all I can do is repeat truths that have already been taught for centuries. I leave it to you to judge whether I really am sorry about this – or just the opposite!

Let me add one more thing to throw a little more light on this question of the central pillar of the sephirothic tree. The Blessed Trinity is to be found on this pillar: God the Father in *Kether*; the Son in *Tiphareth*, and the Holy Spirit in *Yesod*. What is the Holy Spirit? It is precisely by working with *Yesod* that you will find the answer to this question. The Father is life, Christ is light and *Yesod* is love, every kind of love, even that which brings men and

women together on the physical plane. Each sephirah corresponds to a particular part of the human body, and *Yesod* corresponds to the reproductive organs. The Holy Spirit is related to love in many ways, and when it is said that Jesus was '*conceived of the Holy Spirit*', it means that the state of consciousness that reigned at the moment of his conception was a state of perfect purity.<sup>2</sup>

The archangel who brought the message of Jesus' conception to Mary was Gabriel. Why Gabriel? Because it is Gabriel that governs the region of *Yesod*. To one who already knows something of the Cabbalah and is familiar with the virtues and functions of the different regions, the reason why Gabriel was chosen in preference to any other archangel is clear and very eloquent, very significant. Jesus was really and truly conceived of the Holy Spirit, but not in the sense in which Christians understand this. He was conceived in the only way that has been known and practised for thousands of years. The manner in which a child is conceived is always the same; it is impossible for a child to be born otherwise than by the physical union of a man and woman. The difference lies in the state of consciousness of that man and woman. It is the motivation, the inspiration, behind the act that makes it either holy or impure.

One of the symbolic figures used by initiates to throw light on the human structure is the caduceus. Nowadays, this symbol can be seen everywhere, on medical or pharmaceutical products, etc., but no one understands what it means. The caduceus consists of two serpents intertwined round a wand, and the two serpents represent the two currents of cosmic life, the current of attraction or love and the current of repulsion or hatred, twined round the axis of the world. It is these two currents that move the world and everything in it: all movement is triggered by attraction or by repulsion. An initiate who knows how to channel and control these two currents can knowingly attract or repulse other beings. They use them to attract light and repulse darkness, to attract heavenly blessings and repulse the forces of evil. But each human being is a living caduceus. On the physical plane, the central wand is the spinal column, and the two serpents are the two currents, positive and negative, running along each side of the spine. The first current starts from the right hemisphere of the brain, passes through the left lung and the heart, crosses over to the liver, back to the left kidney and, from there, to the right-hand sexual gland and terminates its trajectory in the right leg. The other current starts from the left hemisphere of the brain, passes through the right lung, crosses over to the spleen, back to the right kidney and, from there,

travels through the left sexual gland to the left leg. As you see, therefore, the two currents follow a path that criss-crosses over from one side to the other.<sup>3</sup>

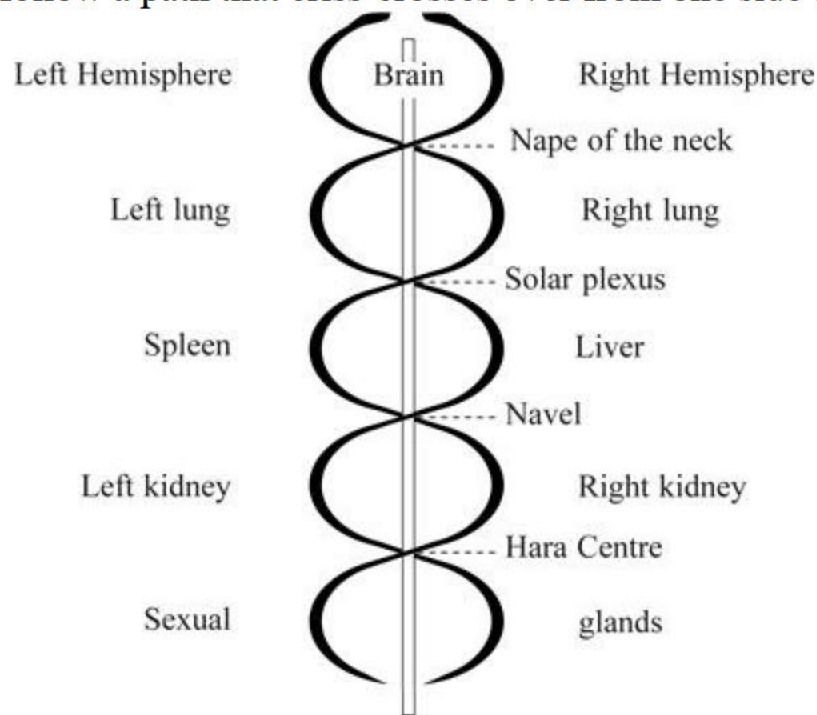


Figure 6

The symbols of the Tree of Life and the caduceus can be combined by superimposing the sephiroth onto the caduceus. In humans, the sephiroth are the chakras, and the two currents flow up and down, vivifying and activating the chakras and creating projections of energy and light. When human beings develop the ten sephiroth within themselves they are capable of working miracles, because, on the spiritual plane, they possess the magic wand which can transform all things, the spinal column with the two currents, *ida* and *pingala*, spiralling and criss-crossing the length of *sushumna*, the central channel in which the *kundalini* force is at work.<sup>4</sup>

In the past, initiates did not reveal these things to the masses for fear that, if some people aroused their chakras to activity prematurely, they might use the powers that this would give them for evil purposes. The symbol of the caduceus was attributed to the god Hermes and has been known, therefore, from earliest antiquity, but only the initiates knew its deepest meaning. Only they possessed the science of the caduceus, the science of the Tree of Life; only they put it into practice in their lives and, thereby, obtained their immense powers.

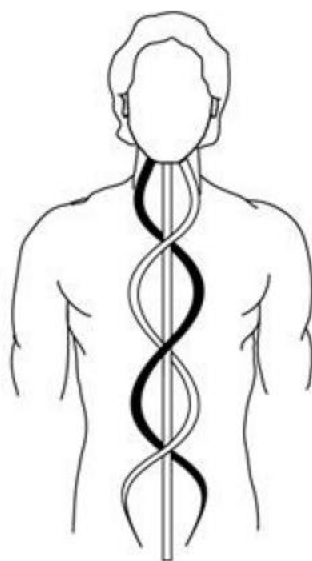


Figure 7  
Pingala (white) and Ida (black)  
spiralling round Sushumna

Every symbol, every figure, every pantacle or talisman is a fruit of the Tree of Life, and all humans bear this Tree of Life within themselves. In what I have told you, today, there is a great deal of material for you to work with. We shall see, now, how many of you are capable of using it to build something worth-while and channel their lives in the right direction.

Sevres, 4 January 1970

#### **BIBLICAL REFERENCES**

‘Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven’ – Matt. 6: 10

<sup>1</sup> See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life*, Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 5: ‘The sephiroth of the central pillar’.

<sup>2</sup> See ‘*Au commencement était le Verbe*’, Complete Works, vol. 9, chap. 10: ‘Le péché contre le Saint-Esprit est le péché contre l’amour’, and *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life*, Izvor Coll. 236, chap. 10: ‘The cosmic family and the mystery of the trinity’.

<sup>3</sup> See *Cosmic Balance – The Secret of Polarity*, Izvor Coll. n° 237, chap. 9: ‘The caduceus of Hermes – The Astral Serpent’.

<sup>4</sup> See *Man’s Subtle Bodies and Centres – the aura, the solar plexus, the chakras...*, Izvor Coll. n° 219, chap. 5: ‘Kundalini force’ and chap. 6: ‘The chakras’.

## Chapter Four

### The tetragrammaton and the seventy-two planetary spirits

The sacred name of God that has been handed down from generation to generation by the initiates is formed of the four letters *Yod, He, Vau He* יהוה. This is why it is known as the tetragrammaton (from the Greek *tetra*, ‘four’, and *gramma*, ‘letter’).<sup>1</sup> Tradition tells us that the people of Israel were forbidden to say this mysterious name; only the high priest of the temple of Jerusalem possessed the secret of its true pronunciation, and only he was empowered to utter it. This he did, once a year, in the temple, while the people massed outside made a great noise, shouting and blowing their trumpets, so that no one might inadvertently hear the name of God. Those who heard it without being prepared would have been struck dead on the spot.

The first two letters of this name are *yod*, which represents the dynamic, masculine principle, fire, and *he*, which symbolizes the plastic, receptive, feminine principle. The number of *yod* is 10, that of *he* is 5. The number of woman, therefore, is half the number of man, and the sum of the two is 15. If you add the two digits of 15 (1 + 5) you get 6, and 6 is the number of the third letter, *vau*, indicating that the son is truly the fruit of the union of father and mother.

Thus we have *yod*, the father, *he*, the mother and *vau*, the son. The son is the prolongation of the father just as the letter *vau* is represented graphically as a prolongation of *yod*. As for the second *he*, it is a repetition, a replica, of the first, just as the daughter is a replica of the mother, of the great cosmic Mother. The second *he* is visible nature. The trinity of father-mother-son is invisible to humans; only nature, the daughter, she whom philosophers have called *natura naturata* (‘natured’ or ‘passive’ nature), can be perceived by our five senses. The true mother nature, *natura naturans* (‘naturing’ or ‘active’ nature), which created the worlds, and through which the cosmic Spirit manifests itself, cannot be seen by humans. This is the one that is called the veiled Isis, the one whom the initiates seek to unveil, so as to contemplate her nakedness, that is to say, her truth.

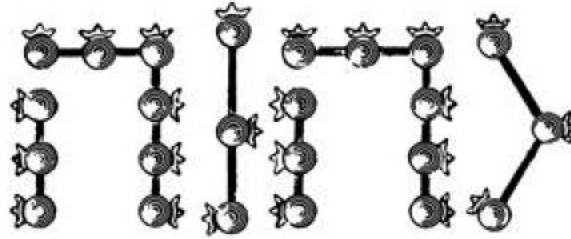


Figure 8

The cabbalists have developed a complete scientific system concerning the name of God. In the stylized rendering of the sacred name, shown in Figure 8, each letter has a certain number of nodes, each of which has three florets; if you multiply the number of nodes by three, the result is 72.

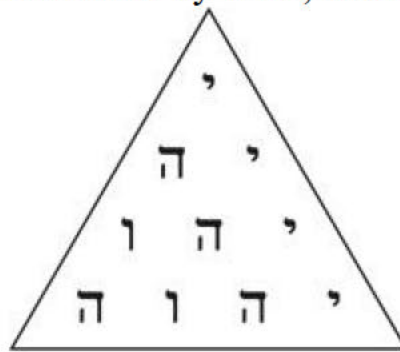


Figure 9

In the arrangement shown in Figure 9, the four letters are in the form of a triangle, and this, too, produces the number 72. How? As we have seen, each letter has a specific number. *Yod* is 10; *he*, 5 and *vau*, 6. By adding up all the letters contained in the triangle, you get the sum of 72. Seventy-two is the synthesis of all the powers of the sacred name of God, *Yod He Vau He*, and this synthesis of seventy-two powers is represented by the seventy-two planetary spirits. This is what cabbalists call the *shem ha-mephorash* which means, literally, ‘the name in detail’.<sup>2</sup>

The seventy-two planetary spirits are constantly at work in the universe. Tradition tells us that it was thanks to their collaboration that Solomon was able to build the temple of Jerusalem. This is because someone who knows not only the names of the seventy-two planetary spirits, but also their powers and virtues and the right time of year and the right moment of the day to invoke them, is capable of truly great accomplishments.

Sevres, 27 March, 1960

<sup>1</sup> See ‘*Cherchez le Royaume de Dieu et sa Justice*’, Synopsis Coll., Part I: La prière dominicale: ‘Notre Père qui es aux cieux’.

<sup>2</sup> See *Le grain de sénévé*, Complete Works, vol. 4, chap. 1: ‘La vie éternelle, c’est qu’ils Te connaissent, Toi, le seul vrai Dieu’.

## Chapter Five

### The creation of the world and the theory of emanation

Try to imagine, for a few minutes, that you are witnessing the creation of the world. It goes without saying that it is totally impossible for us to understand how it actually happened, but all the great spirits who have succeeded in reaching sufficient heights to find certain answers to their questions, and who have studied and gained their own deep insights into those answers, tell us that, before the world appeared, there was a state of inactivity they have likened to rest or sleep. This state of inactivity was, in fact, animated by a powerful force. Of course, none of this is easy to define or describe, but the image that most closely depicts the reality is that of a wheel spinning at such speed that one cannot see it is moving. It appears to be motionless. The great *rishis* of India call this state *pralaya*, and it is from this state of repose in the infinite expanses of immensity that God emerged and created the world by projecting from his own Being the substance that *Genesis* calls 'light'.

All creation, however, supposes a certain limitation, and this means that God imposed limits on himself. He emerged from that immensity, that indescribably subtle state of existence, in order to form a world, a receptacle, and into this receptacle he poured his own emanations. This is how *Kether*, the first sephirah, came to be. *Ain soph aur*, the absolute, unknowable, ineffable God, projected a reflection of himself, and this reflection is the manifested God that we call God the Father, to distinguish him from *ain soph aur*, the absolute God, who is forever unknown to humankind.

God the Father, in turn, also emanated a substance from himself, thus forming the Son, the sephirah *Chokmah*, 'Wisdom'. And this emanation from God the Father was so abundant that it filled the sphere of *Chokmah* to overflowing, and *Chokmah*, in turn, filled the following sphere, the sephirah *Binah*, the region of laws and rigidity. *Binah* overflowed and began to fill the following sphere, the sephirah *Chesed*, region of mercy and kindness. *Chesed*, in turn, overflowed and filled the following sphere, and so on.

At this point, I must call your attention to a very interesting aspect of this process of creation: the fact that, as the divine emanation flows from one world to create another, its polarity changes; it manifests itself under a different aspect or visage. From *Chokmah*, in which it represents universal

harmony, it flows into *Binah*, in which it represents justice and implacable, unrelenting severity. From *Binah* it flows to *Chesed*, in which it manifests itself as mercy, clemency, indulgence, forgiveness. On entering the world of *Geburah*, the generosity and mercy of *Chesed* are transformed into militancy (this is the region of Mars), strength of will, a consuming fire.

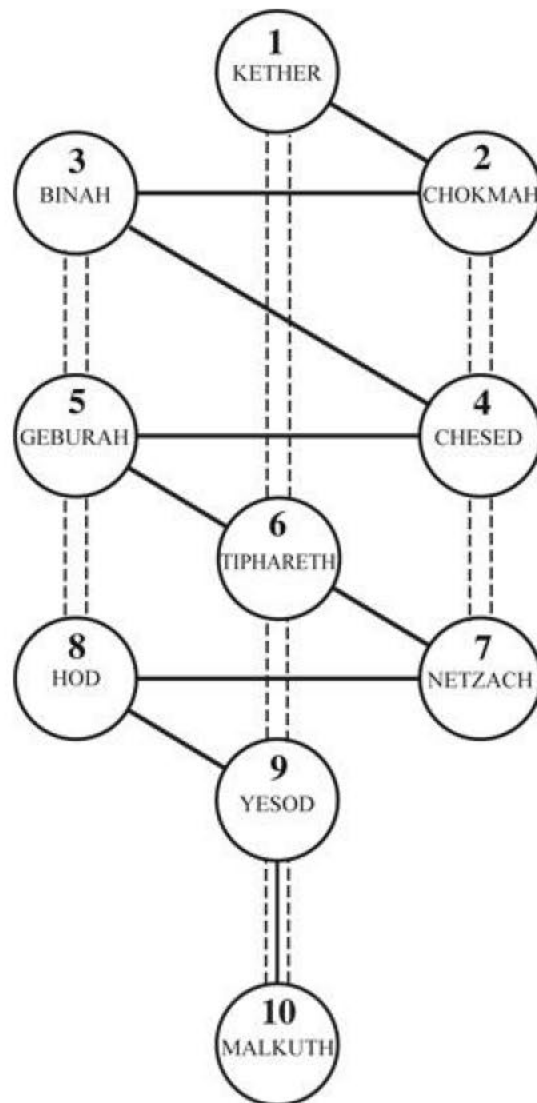
At each step, as it overflows and forms new worlds, the divine emanation becomes more and more condensed. The quintessence is always the same but the density becomes greater and greater, in order, ceaselessly, to create new energies, new colours, new forms. As it leaves *Geburah*, it flows into another region, the region of the Sun, *Tiphareth*, the world of beauty.

As you see, cabbalists place the spiritual region of Mars above that of the Sun on the sephirotic Tree of Life, and you will certainly wonder why this should be so. 'After all', you will say, 'The sun is more important than the planets in the solar system'. That is true, but we must not compare two systems which belong to two different planes of reality. The solar system studied by astronomers is a group of physical bodies, whereas the sephirotic tree is a series of spiritual regions. In the sephirotic Tree of Life, the planet Mars is not the physical planet we see in the sky, nor even the planet of astrology; it is a spiritual principle. The planet Mars is a condensation, a material representation, of the spiritual forces that dwell in *Geburah*. And the principle that dwells in *Geburah* is, in reality, neither superior nor inferior to that which dwells in *Tiphareth*.

*Tiphareth* is the region of beauty – beauty in intelligence, beauty in light, beauty in purity, for there is nothing purer than light. And the purity of *Tiphareth* is of another, subtler nature than that of *Yesod*. We shall come back to this, in a moment, and then you will see why this is so. But here, too, you must understand that it is not the Sun that fills Mars, Jupiter and Saturn with light and life, as in astronomy. *Tiphareth* receives divine life from the higher regions and pours it, in turn, into the receptacle of *Netzach* or Venus, the region of love.

As the divine emanation of *Netzach* overflows and fills *Hod*, its polarity is changed once again. *Hod* is the region of the intellect, the region of concrete, practical knowledge, science and reason. How does the love of *Netzach* produce the knowledge and intelligence of *Hod*?

This emanation that originates at such a great height, therefore, follows a sinusoidal course as it descends from one sephirah to the next.



The sephirotic Tree of Life  
Figure 10

When *Hod* overflows, it fills the sephirah *Yesod*, also known as the region of life. Does this mean that life does not exist in the higher regions? Of course not: life certainly exists in the higher regions, but it is a different degree of life, a form of life that is unknown, invisible and inaccessible to humans; it is the life of archangels and divinities. Why can human beings not have the same contact with the archangels as they have with each other? The sephirah *Yesod* is the point at which life, such as we know it, begins to manifest itself. It provides a protoplasm, a more condensed form of matter, suitable to the formation of organisms and living matter. *Yesod* is the realm of life and purity.

Finally, this torrent emanating from the divine fountainhead, overflowed

from *Yesod* to form *Malkuth*, the last sephirah.

The etheric dimension, that is to say, the subtlest aspect of matter, was formed first, then part of this etheric substance gradually condensed until it became the tangible, physical matter we know. That is what *Malkuth*, the Earth, is: the slag of the original matter of creation. It is, as I have already said, nothing less than the divine quintessence, but it is a heavy, drab, condensed form of this quintessence. When we succeed in restoring it to its original state of subtlety we shall see that it is as pure and luminous, as marvellous, as the matter of *Kether*. The whole point is to render it more and more subtle.

It is in this context that it becomes so important to understand the two processes of *solve* and *coagula*, the two operations of alchemical work: the solve, by which alchemists dilute matter, and the coagula, by which they condense it. One day, the universe will become luminous and return, once again, to its pristine state of purity and transparency. It will, once again, be matter as it originally emanated from God. Or, to be more accurate, I should say that it was not matter that emanated from God, but a quintessence of himself, which condensed to become matter. There can have been no particle of matter in God; it was he who formed matter.

Matter is the fruit of the activity of the spirit. It was the progressive condensation, the gradual ‘thickening’ of the spirit, that formed matter. As it became more and more condensed, the spirit formed a substance out of which it produced a multitude of different forms. Spirit and matter are both aspects of God himself. Matter is as sacred, as holy, as the spirit, because it is the daughter of the spirit.

When *Genesis* says that God created Adam and Eve, it is another way of saying that he created spirit and matter.<sup>1</sup> He created Adam (the spirit) and formed Eve (matter) from one of Adam’s ribs. For initiates, who possess the true science, matter has its origin in the spirit; it is born of the spirit. Matter could not have appeared from nothing; it is the fruit of God’s work. God is all. Everything that exists is his creation. And the way in which he created matter is a mystery, the greatest of all mysteries, not only for materialists but also for those with a spiritual philosophy. The crudest, most impure form of matter can be transformed and restored to its original purity when it is in the hands of the spirit. Incidentally, it is important to understand that we should have no way of gauging the power of the spirit if we never saw the effects of that power on matter. If matter did not exist we should know nothing about

the power of the spirit.

It is evident that Moses concealed a complete philosophy of the creation of the universe in his account of the creation of the first man and woman, in the book of *Genesis*. But you have to understand: the Adam of *Genesis* is not the miserable creature sometimes portrayed in comic strips. That is a child's notion of Adam. The Bulgarians, in fact, have their own version of this story. They say that when God found Adam under the apple tree, he asked, 'What are you doing there?' and Adam replied, '*Iadam, Gospodi*', which means, 'I'm eating, Lord'. (Indeed he was: he was munching an apple!) So God declared, 'Henceforth you shall be called Adam.' Then he asked Adam, 'Where is your companion?' and Adam replied, '*Evea, Gospodi*', which means, 'Here she is, Lord', and God replied, 'Very well, henceforth she shall be called Eve.' So, you see, Adam and Eve are originally Bulgarian names! Naturally, everybody spoke Bulgarian in the garden of Eden and, as Adam and Eve had never been baptized, when the time came, it was they who chose their own names. God was only too glad to be saved the trouble of finding names for them. The man said, 'I'm eating!' 'Very well, your name shall be Adam.' 'Here she is!' 'Her name shall be Eve.' Isn't this a good interpretation?

Adam, therefore, is not the little man we see in story-books. He is Adam Kadmon, the first being created by God, the cosmic Human, and the stars, the constellations and the nebulae are his physical body. God is above and beyond the created universe. He is above the sephirah *Kether*. *Kether* is the head of Adam Kadmon; *Chokmah* is his right eye and the right side of his face; *Binah* is his left eye and the left side of his face; *Chesed* is his right arm; *Geburah* his left arm; *Tiphareth* is his heart and solar plexus; *Netzach* is the right leg, and *Hod* the left leg; *Yesod* represents his sexual organs and *Malkuth* his feet.<sup>2</sup>

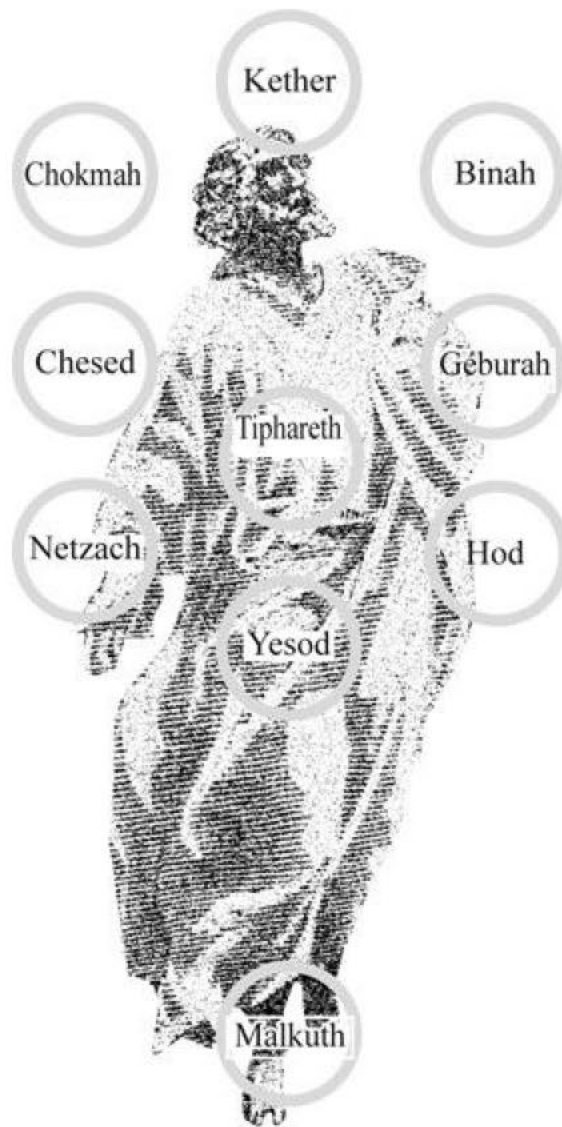


Figure 11

### The sephirotic Tree of Life

Actually, it would be true to say that creation, properly so-called, began with *Chokmah*, 'Wisdom'. In the book of *Proverbs*, wisdom says of itself, *'When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a little child; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always.'*<sup>3</sup>

*Chokmah* is the region of the light that first emanated from God. At the beginning of the world, God said, *'Let there be light!'* The first creature, the origin, the beginning of everything, was light. Light is Christ and Christ is the

Sun. Why is the spirit of Christ said to dwell in the sun, in the sephirah *Tiphareth*? Actually, we are speaking, here, of two different aspects of the one spirit; the spirit of Christ and the solar spirit are one and the same. Of course, when I speak of Christ in this context, I am not speaking of Jesus. Jesus was a man who lived in Palestine at a particular time in history and who had a specific mission on earth. The spirit of Christ existed before creation. He is the Word, the Logos, through whom all things were made.

Then, again, when I speak of the spirit of the Sun, I am not thinking of the physical, astronomical sun, but of the spiritual world inhabited by beings who have a specific culture and civilization. The spirit of the Sun is the Archangel Michael.

Christ and the Archangel Michael are two different ways of representing a unique Principle, the second Principle of the Blessed Trinity. The solar entity we call Michael is linked to Christ, to the Word of God, because the spirit of Christ is the spirit of the Sun. And Melchizedek, the being St John saw in the midst of seven golden lamps, holding seven stars in his hand and with a sharp two-edged sword coming from his mouth, is also an expression of the light, of the Word. The names are different, but the Principle is the same.

You can understand more clearly, now, how the passive state in which God dwelt – which was not, in point of fact, what we usually mean when we speak of passivity – was transformed into activity in and through matter. God wished to enter into matter. He wished to penetrate matter in order to manifest himself through it in the form of plants, animals and human beings. But this was a very slow process. It took a very long time for the Creator to penetrate into the depths of matter, and it is going to take as long, or longer, for him to emerge from it again, because he agreed to be restricted not only by the dimension of space, but also by that of time. He left the unbroken eternity in which he dwelt and took upon himself the constraints of time that is measured and broken up into a chain of fleeting moments. The sacred scriptures of India tell us that when God returns to his primordial state, all created things will disappear into dissolution, into a state of sleep. At the moment it is daytime. God is awake and has created the world. At some point in the future, he will go to sleep; it will be night-time, and the whole of his creation will sleep with him. Nothing will exist any more. Then, once again, a new day will dawn and a new creation will come into being, but no one knows what it will be like, what kind of creatures will appear or what form they will take.

In descending into matter, God went as far as assuming the immobility of stone. There is no aspect of material creation in which he is not present; even the stones of the earth contain a particle of the divine essence. How long must it have taken him, therefore, to emerge from matter and create beings endowed with the capacity to move and feel and think?

When a craftsperson works with matter to create new forms, it often happens that their first attempts are not very successful; they often have to smash them or melt them down and begin all over again. Nature works in the same way; we can see that it has made countless trial runs and rough models in an attempt to achieve the perfection of individual forms. We can still see traces of the innumerable experiments and rough models that nature made before reaching the perfection of a human face, of our five senses or our reproductive organs. And what a multitude of experiments there were before it managed to perfect the forms and functions of shellfish, flowers and insects, for instance! Human beings do not realize how much trouble nature had to take in order to create humankind. How many human races have disappeared because the forms were not as perfect as they should have been? How many times has the potter destroyed misshapen pots and made new ones?

In fact, this is what karma is. Karma is simply the consequence of an imperfect action, of an action that is insufficiently enlightened, harmonious or disinterested, the action of someone who is still groping and making mistakes. And you cannot grope your way through life without receiving a few knocks. This is karma: the link between cause and effect. Humans have abandoned their primordial state of peace, happiness and 'passivity' because they wanted to create, but the fact that they are not yet capable of doing so perfectly causes them to suffer. Does this mean that they should give up all activity and do nothing? Certainly not. They must act. 'But when we act we make mistakes and then we have to suffer!' Of course, you will suffer, but you will also learn and evolve, and one day you will suffer no longer. Once you know how to work without making mistakes, you will have no more karma.

Le Bonfin, le 25 septembre 1963

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‘Adam and Eve: spirit and matter’.

<sup>2</sup> See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life*, Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 11: ‘The body of Adam Kadmon’.

<sup>3</sup> See above, chap. 8: ‘When God drew a circle on the face of the deep’.

## **Chapter Six**

### **The fall and redemption of humankind**

The fact that there was a serpent in the garden of Eden implies that other creatures already existed before Adam and Eve were created. These creatures belonged to the angelic hierarchies that had been sent to earth with a particular mission. Once they had completed the work they had been sent to do, some of them refused to return to God. They had done their work and they thought they could get along very well without him. They were free to choose to stay or to return to where they had come from, and they chose to stay. This was the sin of those we speak of as the rebellious angels: their refusal to return to the divine Source, their decision to cut themselves off from God. And, because of this separation, this estrangement from God, they became demons. They retained all their science, all their knowledge, but they lost contact with divine love and became creatures of evil. A snake has neither hands nor feet, and, according to universal symbolism, the feet represent kindness and the hands justice.

The rebellious angels, therefore, formed an egregor,<sup>1</sup> the symbol of which is the serpent coiled round the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The tree itself is also a symbol, a symbol of the two currents of light and darkness, the one flowing from 'above', the other rising from 'below', and the 'above' has always been taken to represent the sun or heaven, whilst the 'below' represents the centre of the earth or hell.

Adam's task in the garden of Eden was to look after the animals. These were not animals as we know them today, however, for they belonged to the same region as humans, and their bodies were luminous like those of humans. The Lord gave Adam the task not only of caring for the animals but also of naming them, and this shows us that Adam's knowledge must have been great indeed, for names belong to the realm of the Cabbalah. A name is composed of letters, each of which corresponds to a number, and each letter and each number has a particular affinity with the forces of the cosmos, with universal principles. Knowing the vibrations of every creature and its correspondences with the stars, planets and cosmic currents, therefore, Adam was able to give the animals names which exactly suited each one.

Eve, on the other hand, was entrusted with the care of vegetation and was constantly engaged in studying the specific properties of plants. Her explorations of the plants in the garden led her to discover this unknown tree,

and, as she was naturally curious, she spent a lot of time looking at it and studying it, trying to know and understand the forces that rose from below, from its deepest roots. It was this quest that led her to turn away from the delight, inspiration and light of paradise and delve deeper and deeper into the depths of matter, where she became acquainted with the inhabitants of those subterranean currents, the fallen creatures that had cut themselves off from God.

To know, to become acquainted, means to establish a reciprocal relationship of giving and receiving, a relationship of exchange. Instead of continuing to exchange with heaven, with the Tree of Life, which represents the currents from heaven, Eve began to exchange with the serpent, Samael, the leader of the fallen angels. This contact with the other side of life constituted a tremendous shock to Eve's body of light, but that does not mean she was immediately possessed by the corrosive forces that would gradually solidify her body and separate it from the land of light in which she still dwelt. On the contrary, she was enchanted with what she had discovered and hastened to tell Adam about her adventures. When Adam approached the tree, he made the acquaintance of the female spirits that the Cabbalah calls the Lilith and began to exchange with them.

This is how Adam and Eve committed what is called 'original sin', although, if truth were told, the question of whether it was actually a sin is very much open to discussion.<sup>2</sup>

As everything in sacred scripture is symbolic, the sephirotic Tree of Life can also be seen to illustrate the story of Adam and Eve as recounted by Moses. Adam is the masculine principle and Eve the feminine principle, and Eve's dwelling is in *Yesod*, the Moon, whereas Adam dwells in *Tiphareth*, the Sun. This means that Eve is closer to *Malkuth*, the region of Earth and, therefore, to the subterranean regions of chaos, for below *Malkuth* lies the region of the *kliphoth*, the unbalanced, chaotic forces symbolized in the Bible story by the serpent. The *kliphoth* are the dark side of the sephiroth, the Tree of Life in reverse. It was from this subterranean region that the serpent climbed up into the tree and succeeded in seducing the woman, Eve, on whom the balance and stability of the whole edifice depended. As I have said, *Yesod* is the foundation, the base, and if Eve had remained attached to Adam, the masculine principle, she could have maintained the edifice in equilibrium, because Adam was anchored to *Kether*, that is to say, to God. In allowing herself to be seduced by the serpent, she turned her attention downwards and

ceased to support the edifice, and, when she succeeded in drawing Adam's attention in the same direction, the whole edifice crumbled, and both of them lost their balance and were cast down into the dark subterranean region of the *kliphoth*.

The story of Adam and Eve is re-enacted in every man and every woman who severs their link with God. The secret of true life is this link with God; this is what holds the edifice together. In order to become truly constructive, the positive and negative principles within each one of us must be dedicated to the divine Cause.

The only goal of initiation is to give humans the capacity to rebuild their spiritual body, thanks to which they can return to that etheric earth we call paradise. This is a very important question, therefore. Perhaps you will say, 'Why do we have to keep learning things and exerting ourselves? Why do we always have to make sacrifices? We can live perfectly well on earth without all that!' True, you can always live on earth without exerting yourself, but the question is: on what earth? That is what matters. If we want to return to the etheric earth from which we were expelled, we are going to have to rebuild our spiritual body. In the past, when humans still lived in their spiritual body, the whole of nature obeyed them, and the animals neither feared nor harmed them. All creatures held them in respect because of the light that shone from them, from their face and their whole body. But, in losing that light, they also lost their power over nature. All religions, even the most primitive, have this tradition of the fall of humankind followed by their redemption and return to the bosom of the Father.

The fall of humankind brought humans much closer to the region inhabited by the spirits that had rebelled against divine authority. This is why it is so easy for us, today, to make contact with them and for them to plague us. It is much more difficult to get in touch with our friends in the heavenly spheres, because they are so much further away. Not in physical distance, of course. The distance is in our consciousness. This does not mean it is no use praying or asking the spirits of light to help us; quite the reverse, it may require a little more time and effort, but the results can be very real and tangible. These things will continue to be difficult until the earth has been swept clean and purified, thanks to an ever increasing number of God's children who are conscious of these truths and whose hearts and souls are aflame with the divine ideal of doing the will of their heavenly Father. Such power will emanate from these children of God that all evil, all the poison

that floats in the air and saturates the waters, the rocks, mountains and the whole planet will be swallowed up and absorbed into the centre of the earth.

Once the earth belongs to a majority of God's children everything will be different. Those with evil designs will meet with such a climate of opposition that their schemes will necessarily fail. It will be as though they tried to blow something up with damp gunpowder; the dampness prevents it from exploding. Evil intentions, in other words, will not have the conditions necessary for success, whereas anyone who attempts to do something divine will instantly succeed.

Of course, if we want to contribute to bringing about this glorious future we are going to need a certain amount of knowledge. But light will be given to us. All creatures will be taught what they need to know, and each one will have to make a choice between collaborating with the currents that come from the sun or with those that come from the centre of the earth. Everyone will have the free choice. When the Gospel says, '*Two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left*', we have to understand that whether they are taken or left depends on the individual choice they have already made. Heaven takes no arbitrary, unfair decisions. If such and such a person is 'chosen' by heaven it is because they have already set themselves on that path by trying to work for good. Those who have never made any attempt to work for good cannot follow the same luminous path or receive the same blessings.

People's inner life is constantly being tried and tested. How many are working to create favourable conditions for God's children? When there are enough of them, the forces of darkness which, at the moment, are at liberty to do as they please because of people's ambitions, will be bound and flung into the abyss to be swallowed up in the centre of the earth. This idea is represented in the book of *Revelation* by the image of the Archangel Michael conquering the dragon.<sup>3</sup> The Archangel Michael is a real being; it is he who will be at the head of the egregor formed by initiates and the disciples of the Universal White Brotherhood. And, when I speak of the disciples of the Universal White Brotherhood, I mean all those who work for light, whatever their religious or spiritual affiliation. All those who work for good are members of the Universal White Brotherhood, and it is they who will purify the earth.

We can be quite sure, then, that the forces of darkness symbolized by the dragon will be swallowed up; we can be sure that the earth will be freed from

evil and that it will, one day, enjoy the conditions necessary for the manifestation of the children of God. But St John goes even further; he speaks of another symbol, the symbol of the heavenly Jerusalem. Once the dragon has been bound, the heavenly Jerusalem will come down from heaven. This city of pure gold described by St John in *Revelation*, with its twelve gates of pearl and its foundations of precious stones and which is lit, not by the light of sun or moon, but by the glory of God, is the perfect symbol of Christ's teaching.<sup>4</sup>

It is said that Christ will come, riding on the clouds. This is also a symbol. It means that the spirit of Christ will enter into the minds of men and women, for clouds are simply a form of air, and air is a symbol of the mental plane.

Jesus has not left this earth. He is still living in the luminous region in which the first humans lived, and from this region, which is close to us and in every part of the world, he is at work, influencing the minds of men and women and imbuing them with his light.<sup>5</sup> For it is there, in people's minds, that so much evil has accumulated because of all the false ideas and diabolical philosophies propagated throughout the world. Evil has insinuated itself into the human mind, and it is the mind that people give priority to, nowadays, rather than to the heart. The mind serves their interests; it provides them with some very efficient means to become rich and powerful and evict their rivals. The mind is an extremely powerful tool in the hands of those who are motivated neither by kindness nor generosity.

And this was precisely the case with those inferior spirits that tempted the first human beings: they were highly intelligent but utterly without love. In making themselves attractive to humans they imbued them with the same attitude, encouraging them to develop their intellect and inoculating them with their own spirit of pride and independence from God. It is they that introduced this element, which is rampant today, especially amongst those who are highly developed intellectually. Those who give priority to the intellect are mainly interested in succeeding on the material level; their goal is to acquire money, great possessions, power and glory in this world. They are not interested in being united with heaven or in working to build their spiritual body. In other words, their attitude is exactly that of the rebellious angels, who came to work on earth and in the depths of the earth, and who, then, chose to stay where they were and refused to return to God.

Some of you may ask, 'But how could that have happened? After all, they were intelligent beings; how could they have forgotten their pristine state and

lost the desire to return to God?’ Such a question shows that you don’t realize to what extent it is a limitation and a servitude to be plunged into matter. Once they have incarnated on earth, a great many very advanced spirits forget all about their origins until they meet a Master or read something in a book and their conscious mind suddenly perceives the truth of their divine origin. Most human beings are like ragged urchins playing in the gutter: they are in ignorance of the fact that they are heirs to a throne until a messenger comes to fetch them and reveals to them the truth about their royal parentage. In the meantime, what a lot of trials and tribulations have to be endured!

Every time a spirit enters into a human body, the mystery of Christ’s death on the cross is re-enacted in the universe. Matter is the cross on which the spirit unceasingly sacrifices itself. Matter is the cross that the spirit has to bear. When the spirit enters a human body it takes up this cross, the cross of matter, the synthesis of the four elements. For an alchemist, the cross is represented by the crucible, in which he carries out all his operations.<sup>6</sup> The spirit works within humans – the crucible – in order to transform their matter into gold. Alchemists are freed when they discover the true nature of metals and possess the formulae for their different permutations and combinations; then they can escape from their prison and move freely in space. In order to be free, we have to know our cross, that is to say, we have to know ourselves and the different elements of our own matter. ‘Humanity, know yourself’, is simply another way of saying, ‘Take up your cross’.

We have to study and become familiar with all the elements contained in our cross, that is to say, in our own being. Just as God created the universe through the living Cross, his divine Word, so must we work with all these elements, combining them, like the letters of the alphabet, to form words, phrases and poems. We, too, must work with the living Cross. There is not much point in wearing crosses round our necks or putting up crosses in churches and cemeteries if we fail to understand that it is we ourselves who are the cross. Humanity is the cross, and it is this cross that we must work with.<sup>7</sup>

We always associate the cross in our minds with death and negation, and that is a mistake, for when the spirit enters into the cross it becomes the beginning of life. When initiates pray they face towards the four cardinal points of the universe in turn, thus marking the sign of the cross to show that their spirit is about to work on matter. Each of the cardinal points is ruled by an archangel: in the east is Michael; in the west, Gabriel; in the north, Uriel

and in the south, Raphael. This rite of turning to face the four cardinal points before praying has been perpetuated in the Christian religion in the form of the sign of the cross. When Christians touch their forehead, their solar plexus, their left and then their right shoulder with the fingers of their right hand, saying 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen', they are communicating with the four dimensions of space, the matter on which their thought and love are about to work.

The Rosicrucian symbol consists of a red rose in the centre of a cross. The rose represents the heart, the full flowering of the heart chakra in a human being, seen as the sublimation of the cross. This chakra can only be made to blossom by love, the colour and fragrance of which are those of the rose. This is why the rose cross is the symbol of an initiate who has worked so diligently at their own nature that Christ's love, the divine love that transforms and gives life to matter, has flowered within them. To be an adept of the rose cross is to know all the secrets, not only of the cross, but also of the rose that blooms at its centre. The rose at the heart of the cross is the perfected man or woman, who not only possesses the knowledge of all the elements of their being and of their relations with the whole universe, but who is also a fountain flowing with the love of Christ. Those who walk in the way of Christ become Rosicrucians, even if their name never appears in the membership records of the society.

The rose at the centre of the cross, therefore, is the perfect man or woman, whose heart chakra is in full blossom. You will, perhaps, object that your heart is not in the centre. That is true, but symbols take no notice of distortions. A very long time ago, our heart was in the centre; it was only later that it moved to the left, and this displacement is connected with the inclination of the earth's axis.

One can also draw a parallel between the symbol of the rose cross and that of the grail, the emerald cup that held Christ's blood. Humanity is the cup that is waiting to be filled with that divine quintessence, the blood of Christ. Men and women become the cup of the grail thanks to their work of purification, which allows the blood of Christ to pour into them. But humanity is also the cross – the cross and the cup are always like humans in form – and it is on that cross that the rose, that is to say, the life and love of Christ, must bloom.

Sèvres, 16 April 1960

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‘Two will be in the field’ – *Matt. 24: 40*

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The heavenly Jerusalem – *Revelation 21-22: 5*

Christ will come, riding on the clouds – *Matt. 24: 30*

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Egregor: a psychic collective being, formed by the thoughts and fluidic emanations of all the individual members of a collectivity working together towards the same goal.’

<sup>2</sup> See ‘*Et il me montra un fleuve d’eau de la vie*’, Synopsis Coll., Part V, chap. 5: ‘Le mythe d’Adam et Ève’.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Book of Revelations: A Commentary*, Izvor Coll. n° 230, chap. 11: ‘The Archangel Mikhaël casts out the dragon’.

<sup>4</sup> See *A New Dawn: Society and Politics in the Light of Initiatic Science*, Complete Works, vol. 26, chap. 6: ‘The new Jerusalem’, and *Love and Sexuality*, Complete Works, vol. 14, chap. 8: ‘The twelve doors of man and woman’.

<sup>5</sup> See ‘*Cherchez le Royaume de Dieu et sa Justice*’, Synopsis Coll, Part VII, chap. 5: ‘Et je suis avec vous, tous les jours, jusqu’à la fin du monde’.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Philosopher’s Stone – in the Gospels and in Alchemy*, Izvor Coll. n° 241, chap. 11: ‘The regeneration of matter: the cross and the crucible’.

<sup>7</sup> See ‘*Cherchez le Royaume de Dieu et sa Justice*’, Synopsis Coll., Part VI, chap. 2-IV: ‘La croix’.

# **Chapter Seven**

## **The four elements**

### **I**

When the ancients spoke of the four elements – earth, water, air and fire – their understanding of the word ‘element’ was, of course, not that of a chemist today. The elements of the ancients had nothing to do with those enumerated by Mendeleyev in his periodic table; they were simply the basic substances of which every physical body was composed. Alchemists defined the four elements in relation to the four states of matter: solid, liquid, gaseous and igneous. All that is solid is called earth; all liquids are water; all that is in a gaseous state is air, and all that is igneous, that is to say heat and light, is classed as fire. For the ancients, therefore, matter is composed of variable proportions of fire, air, water and earth. Also, an essential aspect of their system is that the elements are not stable; each one can be transformed into another. Earth is transformed into water, water into air and air into fire, or vice versa: fire becomes air, air becomes water and water becomes earth.

The four elements influence our nature and constitution. The dominant element determines a person’s temperament. The four temperaments defined by Hippocrates – sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic and melancholic – are, in reality, determined by the four elements, and, today, a certain number of doctors are coming back to this ancient classification, because, they say, no one has ever found a better one.

The four elements are in relation, also, to the complex structure of human beings: earth corresponds to their physical body, water to their astral body, air to their mental body and fire to the soul and spirit – for the nature of fire is twofold: it manifests itself as both heat and light. Heat can be felt and light can be seen. Heat is the manifestation of the soul, and light is the manifestation of the spirit.

The four elements are the principal subject of study for all magi, alchemists and cabbalists, and are often represented in symbolic forms, which would be incomprehensible if they were not seen in relation to the four elements. The cross, the sphinx and the zodiac are all symbols that can be interpreted only by reference to the four elements.<sup>1</sup> The four elements that we know in the material dimension, however, are simply the most condensed aspect of the four divine elements, whose roots are in Kether and which the

Cabbalah calls the hayoth ha-kadosh (holy living creatures) and which Christians know as the seraphim. The four holy creatures have the form of a lion, a calf, an eagle and a human – a human being just one animal amongst others. Obviously, this does not mean the seraphim have the jaws of a lion, the muffle of a calf, etc. It is simply a symbolic manner of speaking which indicates the subtle relations between them and the different states of matter that they represent.

The four holy creatures are also found in the zodiac, represented by Leo, Taurus, Aquarius, which is a human figure, and Scorpio, which is another expression of the eagle. Why do we speak, today, of Scorpio as a scorpion rather than an eagle? Because, when humankind fell, the eagle, which symbolized humans' sublimated sexual energies, was changed into a scorpion, symbol of his uncurbed sexuality.

Although the holy living creatures frequently appear in Christian art in drawings, paintings or frescos, in illuminated manuscripts or in stone carvings round the doors of churches, they have hardly ever been properly explained. Very few people have any notion of the wealth of meaning in these four figures.

The words of Solomon's prayer, '*Aralim*, act; *ophanim*, turn and shine. *Hayoth ha-kadosh*, shout, speak, roar, bellow!' are addressed to the four holy living animals. The *aralim* are the thrones, the twenty-four elders who rule the earth by decree; the *ophanim* are the cherubim, the fiery wheels that spin unceasingly, and the *hayoth ha-kadosh*, the four sacred animals, are the seraphim, and it is to them that Solomon addresses his prayer, exhorting them to 'shout, speak, roar and bellow'. The one that shouts is the eagle, the one that speaks is the man, the one that roars is the lion, and the one that bellows is the calf. The meaning of this invocation is very profound. It means, 'Speak, that I may know; shout, that I may will; roar, that I may dare, and bellow, that I may hold my tongue'. Daring belongs to the lion, silent toil belongs to the calf, the will to soar to great heights belongs to the eagle, and knowledge belongs to humans. As you see, the precept to 'know, will, dare and keep silent', which is so frequently on the lips of initiates, is very, very ancient; it stems from an understanding of the virtues of the four holy living creatures.

The holy living creatures are the angels of the four elements, the very highest expression of the matter we find condensed and solidified in the tenth sephirah, *Malkuth*. The source, the roots, of matter are in the world above, very close to God, for matter is of divine origin, and on that level of purity

and subtlety we can have no knowledge or conception of it, for it is one with the spirit. The discoveries of contemporary physical sciences lead to a perception of ever subtler degrees of matter, and it is more than likely that physicists will soon find instruments that will enable them to observe the structure and movement of etheric matter. Of course, it will never be possible to observe astral and mental matter. Although we can work with the astral and mental dimensions of matter, we cannot see them, and no instrument can ever observe them. As a matter of fact, we all work with astral and mental matter. You may not realize it, but your thoughts and feelings, your states of consciousness, are material processes, but so subtle that the movement of the matter you project or displace remains imperceptible to the senses.

The angels of the four elements are God's servants, and we should ask the Lord to send them to us so that they may help us in our spiritual work. Within each of us are seeds of evil, and these seeds always manage to find the conditions they need to grow and expand and put obstacles in our way. This is why, when disciples reach a certain phase in their evolution, they are given the task of penetrating into the deepest recesses of their subconscious and, with the help of the angels of the four elements – the angels of earth, water, air and fire – of burying, drowning, scattering and burning any seeds of evil that still remain within him.

Absolute purity cannot be achieved unless we do this work with the four elements. Each element has its own special properties; air can do things that neither water nor fire can do. So we must ask the Lord to grant us the help of his angels: 'Lord God almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, I beg you to send me your servants, the four angels: the angel of earth, that he may absorb all the wastes of my physical body, so that it may be capable of expressing you and that your will may be made manifest through it; the angel of water, that he may wash all stains from my heart and fill it with selfless love, so that I may work for your kingdom and your righteousness; the angel of air, that he may purify my mind with an influx of wisdom and light, so that I may work for your kingdom and your righteousness. Send me, Lord, the angel of fire, that he may sanctify my soul and my spirit, that your truth may dwell within them and that I may work for your kingdom and your righteousness. Amen. Amen. Amen. So be it.'

In everything we do, whatever it may be, there is always at least a trace of one or more of the elements, and it is thanks to their presence that we continue to be alive and active. The principal occasion for contact with all

four elements is at meals, for the four states of matter – solid, liquid, gaseous and igneous – are present in food. This is why meals are an excellent occasion to strengthen our bonds with the angels of the four elements and to ask them to communicate their virtues to us. Ask the angel of earth to give you firmness and stability, for it is he who provides the base; without him nothing can survive. Ask the angel of water for life and purity, the angel of air for intelligence, subtlety, rapidity, and the angel of fire for the light and fire of divine love.

God has placed the four elements at our disposal, and we must learn to make the best possible use of them, for they are very powerful factors which are inhabited by living beings. The creatures that dwell in fire are salamanders, those that dwell in the air are sylphs, the spirits of water are nymphs or undines, and those that dwell in the earth are gnomes or brownies. Magicians often call on these spirits to assist them in their work, and in Goethe's Faust, for instance, there is an example of a conjuration that exploits the power of the four elements. However, I advise you not to use the power of the four elements in this way. It is too dangerous. It is enough that you be aware of these things and practise the methods I give you, for the four elements are present in our daily lives.

You must realize that even now, as we are talking, our words are a vehicle for certain material particles which make them effective. In nature, one or other of the four elements is always present, waiting for the opportunity to clothe what we say and express. Our words do not always reach the target we aimed for or accomplish what we expected; sometimes we see no sign of the results we had hoped for. Thanks to the action of the elements, however, our words always accomplish something, sometimes very far away from us – sometimes, even, on another planet. This is true both for good and for evil. Some people believe they have never done anything but good in their lives, but, one day, they will be shown the whirlwinds sown by their words and thoughts, and then they will see they have done a great deal of damage in places they had never dreamed of.

Knowing the four elements are always present and always active and effective in one area or another, initiates are extremely careful about the words they say or the thoughts they entertain. For words and thoughts are seeds that are picked up and blown by the wind to germinate in soil far, far away from the garden in which they ripened. Initiates are concerned with producing good seed; where the winds of the divine spirit may choose to

blow them is not their concern. Their only concern is the quality of the seed they produce.

By our constant use of the four elements, we incur a debt towards them, and this debt is written down in our record. Don't forget this. When you breathe, for instance, you absorb air, but have you ever wondered about the quality of the elements with which you have impregnated it by the time you breathe out? Inevitably, the air you breathe out will be polluted, but it will be less so if you have learned to manifest yourself as a kind, generous, truly loving being. The air that comes from the lungs of a vicious being contaminates everything it touches. You are responsible for the manner in which you impregnate the elements that pass through your body, whether it be air, water or food. You give these elements back to nature, to be transformed and recycled, and if you want to participate consciously in the work of nature, you must take care to give them back unpolluted by any noisome psychic elements.

Tradition recounts that when certain saints and mystics were in ecstasy, a fragrance of flowers emanated from them. This is absolutely true: purity of thoughts and feelings actually produces delicious perfumes.<sup>2</sup>

This is the point I want to make: nature provides us with all the elements we need for life, and it is by the quality of our life that we show our appreciation – or our lack of appreciation – of her gifts. A disciple whose life is very pure can change the quality and even the odour of their bodily secretions and excretions. They can become like the bee that works to gather nectar from the flowers in summer and then transforms it and gives it back in the form of the pure, sweet-scented honey that is of such benefit to us! The bee is a model to be imitated by a disciple.<sup>3</sup>

Sevres, 29 December 1963

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## **II**

Have you ever noticed that, of all the four elements, earth is the only one that is characterized by immobility? The others, water, air and fire, are all mobile. Only earth remains immobile; in fact, you could say that it is earth that constitutes the matter which is relentlessly kneaded and moulded by the

other elements, particularly fire.

When I say the earth is fashioned and moulded by fire, however, I am not speaking of the fire we are familiar with, but of the fire of the sun; this is the fire from which all movement takes its origin. Every movement, every change that occurs on earth is the result of the action of the sun. If there were no sun the air would not stir, water would be stagnant and the earth formless. It is the element fire that triggers all movement.

Drawing an analogy from this, we can say that all movement in matter is caused by the action of the spirit. Of itself, matter is inert and formless; life and movement are bestowed on it by the spirit. This was expressed by Moses, at the beginning of *Genesis*, when he said: *'The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while the spirit of God swept over the face of the waters.'* Once this is understood, we can also understand that the world, society and individuals are always governed and fashioned by ideas. Consequently, anyone who wishes to have power over their own being must give their spirit greater freedom to express itself and act on their own matter. What is above must dominate and control what is below. Everything comes from above and is reflected below,<sup>4</sup> and the image that most accurately illustrates this is the action of the sun on the earth. Life and death on earth are both produced simply by the effect of the heat and light of the sun. Similarly, our physical body and the whole of our physical life are determined by the movement of our spirit.

But this brings us to another essential point, and that is that, as you must certainly have noticed, the sun does not act directly on the earth. It always acts through air and water, which are its intermediaries. In the same way, the spirit needs intermediaries in order to act upon the physical body. Depending on which system one uses to explain the human structure, this can be expressed in different ways. If you use the system which defines three planes of being, you can say that the spirit acts on the physical body through the intermediary of the soul, that is to say, through the mind and heart. If you use the system that refers to six bodies, you can say that the action of the atmic body (the spirit) passes through the buddhic, causal, mental and astral bodies before reaching the physical body.<sup>5</sup>

There is yet another way of envisaging the same reality and of defining yet another intermediary between the spirit and the physical body: that of the sympathetic nervous system and, in particular, the solar plexus. To the extent to which the brain is in contact with the sympathetic nervous system, if we

succeed in establishing communication between our consciousness and our subconscious, through the intermediary of our solar plexus, we can act directly on our physical body.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps you will ask, ‘How can we act on our solar plexus?’ The answer is, ‘Through the intermediary of your astral body, in other words, by your feelings.’ Thought (air) influences our feelings (water), and it is our feelings that influence our solar plexus, that great reservoir of vital energies.

It is important to understand the hierarchical order between the elements, from fire, at the top, to earth, at the bottom. Those who fail to respect this hierarchy will never achieve self-control or establish order within themselves. They will always be at the mercy of events and material circumstances. If they are unaware that there are other factors available to them that are far more powerful than those of the physical plane, they will remain tied to the earth. They will never be able to rise to a higher plane and make use of those factors in order to take control of the situation. Only those who have understood the meaning of the four elements and their hierarchical order are on the road to victory and the fulfilment of a sublime ideal. Only they can achieve mastery of themselves and of their own passions.

You will say, ‘But I understood that a long time ago!’ No, you have never really understood it. If you had, you would already be a sculptor, a painter, a magician. You would have realized that, since the sun is the first cause, you should give all your attention to the sun, that is to say, to your spirit. It is your spirit that makes the winds and the air currents (your thoughts) blow in this direction or that. The winds blow over regions where there is water – lakes, ponds, rivers and seas (your feelings and emotions) – and stir them into motion. And your feelings sculpt your body and the features of your face. Just as water has the power to work great changes on the earth, feelings have the power to fashion and form the physical body.

What I am talking about, here, is psychic sculpture. If you want to sculpt yourself, to give your body the form or the health it needs, to give it the stability, the resistance to disease or the capacity of expression it needs, you must understand the law of the pre-eminence of the spirit. Without that, it is not possible to fashion or mould yourself; you can only deform and destroy yourself. The sad thing is that you see this every day, people who are destroying themselves, who are becoming more and more distorted and deformed, simply because they have not attended the divine school to learn the true science of the spirit.

Peace and war, wealth and poverty, health and sickness are all caused by ideas, by thoughts. In spite of all the profound scientific explanations given by Karl Marx in *Das Kapital*, he is wrong when he says that it is economics that produce and govern the conditions of life in human societies. Behind economics are ideas, and it is ideas – or rather, opinions – good or bad, that rule the world and determine the distribution of resources and capital. But ideas cannot be seen, and so people come to all kinds of erroneous conclusions, proving only one thing: that they have never understood the secret mechanisms of nature.

How can this science of the four elements be applied to our daily lives, to our own thoughts and feelings? Only an initiatic teaching can give you the answer. This is what I have been explaining to you for years: how to carry out cabbalistic, alchemical and astrological operations in your daily lives by the way you eat, behave, speak and love, etc.

Suppose you have to talk to someone in order to settle a very delicate problem. Before meeting him or her, concentrate on the spirit and put it in charge of your thoughts. Your thoughts, in turn, will control your feelings and emotions and, when your feelings and emotions follow the guidance of the spirit, then all your gestures, your voice and your words will also obey, and you will make the right decisions. Yes, but you will only make the right decisions if you give priority to the spirit. It is as though you had to start by throwing the switch that puts the spirit in charge. Once that is done, everything else slips into place and your work succeeds, because it is done in a balanced, harmonious manner. If you don't put the spirit in charge of your thoughts and feelings it will be the body that takes charge, and everything will be ruined by clumsy words and gestures.

This is an example of how you can apply the science of the four elements in your daily life, and it applies to every single thing you do, whether it be eating or talking or anything else: before you begin, be sure to call on the spirit to take charge, and all the rest will follow of itself.

A great many people complain to me about the attitude of other people towards them. Their wife and children, their brothers and sisters, parents and parents-in-law, neighbours, co-workers or employers – everyone, it seems, is against them. Nobody loves, respects or obeys them, and the reasons they find for this state of affairs are sometimes very peculiar. What are the real reasons? I will tell you: when somebody very important, a monarch or other high dignitary, goes to visit a city, what do we see? Elaborate preparations

and security precautions are taken, banners and posters are put up, the streets are cleaned and decorated, and the worthiest, most intelligent and most respectable citizens are chosen to receive them. By the time the monarch arrives, the place is so transformed it is barely recognizable. This means that if you continue to work on yourself so as to become nobler and more fully master of yourself, wherever you go, the people and things you meet on your way will have been transformed in your honour. If you are nothing out of the ordinary, however, no one will improve things for your sake. On the contrary, you will always be exposed to unpleasantness from others. It all depends on you. If you grow continually in light and love, all your friends and acquaintances, your wife and children and neighbours, will change. You will ask, 'How can they change?' Of course, I am talking about their inner attitude: very advanced entities that wish you well will come and settle in your household and in your friends and neighbours. 'And will my wife and children actually be changed?' you will ask. Outwardly, no; they will continue to look the same, but they will be inhabited by new entities that will love you and help you. The entities that were hostile to you will be evicted and replaced by others.

Once you have learned to give priority to the spirit, to light, love and wisdom, you will have a beneficial effect on everyone you meet, so, naturally, their attitude towards you will change.

Of course, it won't change overnight, but none of your efforts will be wasted; they will all, always, bear fruit, for no aspect of human activity escapes this law of intermediaries, not even your inner, spiritual, mystical life.

It is striking to see how some religious believers will very often refuse to accept it if you tell them their prayers have to go through intermediaries, through the channel of the great angelic hierarchy. They want to speak directly to God. In fact, they firmly believe they do so and that God answers them. (Sometimes, it is the reverse: God speaks to them and they answer him!) They may be Christians, but it seems that they have never heard of Jacob's ladder, the ladder that represents the hierarchy of created beings that runs all the way from the great Masters to the seraphim. God's creatures go up and down the length of this ladder, and it is impossible to reach the Creator by any other way.<sup>7</sup> Everything in life points to the necessity of a ladder. You even need a ladder to get onto the roof of your house! You will say that there are other ways. That is true, but they are all the equivalent of a

ladder.

Take another example: you want to send a letter directly to the king or queen. Well, even if you take it to the palace and deliver it yourself instead of posting it, it will still have to go through the hands of intermediaries – secretaries or ministers – before it reaches them. That is hierarchy. And everywhere, in heaven as well as on earth, hierarchy exists. Stones, plants, the human body, stars and worlds show us that a hierarchy exists – and then some poor little Christian comes along and imagines they can go straight up to God and shake him by the hand!

That reminds me of the old lady who used to tell me, years ago, about her conversations with Jesus. She firmly believed she was a medium, and every time I met her she had some new tale to tell me. One day she said, ‘This morning I talked to God the Father.’ ‘Ah? To God the Father?’ ‘Yes, Jesus was busy, so God the Father came and talked to me instead.’ ‘And what did he say?’ ‘I asked him what I should buy at the market today, and he told me.’ So there you are, you see; that is what keeps God the Father busy: telling good people like that what vegetables or brooms or soap powders they should buy! Apparently he is very kind; you only have to ask for his advice, and he will give it to you!

There is no getting away from it: we shall always have to come back to this notion of the hierarchy that exists amongst the elements of fire, air, water and earth. You can see it in the structure of the planet: the seas and oceans (water) take up more space than the continents (earth); the atmosphere (air) takes up more space than water, and, beyond the atmosphere, the ether (fire) takes up even more space. Look at a tree; you can see the same thing: a tree consists of a small amount of earth, slightly more water than earth and slightly more air than water, but its most important ingredient is light and fire. You only have to burn a tree to see the truth of this, for it produces huge amounts of flame, a little less gas, even less water vapour and hardly more than a handful of ash.<sup>8</sup>

We shall never exhaust the question of the hierarchical relations that exist between earth, water, air and fire or of the concrete applications of this law.

Water sustains and nourishes the earth. Air sustains and nourishes fire. Although water is above the earth, it is the servant and foster-mother of earth. Air and fire are both masculine. Earth and water are both feminine. The action of fire on air produces a new quintessence, that of sulphur; the action of air on water produces a different element, mercury, and the action of water

on earth produces salt. Only when alchemists learn to work with sulphur, mercury and salt can they find the philosopher's stone.<sup>2</sup>

The Bonfin, 18 August 1960

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<sup>2</sup> See '*In Spirit and in Truth*', Izvor Coll. n° 235, chap. 10: 'The perfume of eden'.

<sup>3</sup> See *La Pédagogie initiatique*, Complete Works, vol. 28, chap. 7: 'La chenille et le papillon'.

<sup>4</sup> See *Vie et travail à l'École divine*, Complete Works, vol. 31, chap. 9: 'Hiérarchie et liberté'.

<sup>5</sup> See '*Cherchez le Royaume de Dieu et sa Justice*', Synopsis Coll., Part II, chap. 4: 'Du soleil à la terre: comment la pensée se réalise dans la matière'.

<sup>6</sup> See *Harmony*, Complete Works, vol. 6, chap. 9: 'The solar plexus and the brain'.

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<sup>8</sup> See *The Mysteries of Fire and Water*, Izvor Coll. n° 232, chap. 17: 'Trees of light'.

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# **Chapter Eight**

## **Evening vigils round the fire**

### **I**

#### **The power of fire**

We are in the presence, this evening, of the greatest mystery of life, the mystery of fire. We can see fire; we can use fire, but we do not really know what it is. The only thing we can say about it is that, without fire no true creation, no true transformation, can take place.

The most tremendous powers are concealed in fire: it has the power to melt, liquefy, burn and transform. It is all-powerful; nothing can stand against it. The other elements – earth, water and air – also have great powers, but they cannot really change matter. Earthquakes have the power to disturb the earth's crust, to split open mountains, swallow up towns and villages, but earth cannot change the underlying nature of things. Water has the power to sweep things away or to dilute them; air has the power to disperse; only fire has the power truly to transform. In the wake of fire, only ashes – or a totally transformed body – remain.

Fire is the most powerful of the four elements and the most effective factor of transformation, and it is for this reason, because nothing can stand up against fire, that the initiatic tradition teaches that human beings must necessarily pass through fire in order to be transformed. Two kinds of fire dwell in humans – the fire of their passions and the fire of divine love, the fire of sacrifice.

The fire of the passions is a raging furnace that inflicts great suffering on those it consumes. Unfortunately, most human beings prefer to suffer and be consumed by this fire rather than give up their desires. Very few understand the advantages of working with the sacred fire of divine love so as to possess the secret of the transformation of matter, in themselves first of all and subsequently in their surroundings.

Those who become so hardened and calloused that only suffering is capable of improving them are obliged to pass through fire. If you wish to avoid the fires of suffering, you must work with the fire of disinterested love, for only this can transform you and make you luminous and radiant; only the fire of love can wrap you in its flames without burning you. Perhaps, on the other hand, you still have to suffer – for, after all, you are still on earth – but if you work with the fire of divine love, you will at least know how to endure

your suffering and benefit from it. The fire of the passions constrains and enslaves men and women; the fire of divine love sets them free.<sup>1</sup>

And now, you must no longer come to this ceremony of fire as though it were no more than a beautiful spectacle; try to participate in it with your whole being. Try to look at the fire as though you were doing so for the first time. Some very beautiful and very powerful creatures live in fire: not only salamanders, the fire spirits, but many human beings, who have been freed from their physical bodies, delight in steeping themselves in fire in order to continue to purify themselves.

Look at those impetuous strands of flame streaming from the fire with such force. What a glorious sight! Perhaps water is condensed fire soaking into the depths of the earth, and fire is blazing water leaping towards the heights. Look at those swarms of sparks; they are like the millions of sperm that a man discharges into a woman to fertilize her. Fire projects a multitude of sparks into space in order to fertilize certain beings and bring others to birth. Fire is a prolific tree that produces an abundance of seeds, and each seed, in turn, produces other trees.

You should always look at fire as though you were seeing it for the first time. This will help you to understand all the greatest mysteries of life. Have you looked at those burning branches? Some people see the shape of a bird in them, or a fierce beast, a face or a flower. Each one of you should learn to look and try to understand the meaning that these forms have for you, for fire speaks to each one of us differently. It can bring you revelations or a message or foretell the future.

The entities that dwell in fire watch you as you gaze into it, and, as they are extremely receptive to the interest and love of human beings, they may approach you to guide and help you. The fact that you cannot hear or understand them makes no difference; what they tell you will be recorded in your subconscious, and, one day, when conditions are favourable, you will suddenly be enlightened or have an intuitive insight into something. This is why it is useful to spend such moments round the fire.

This was how the ancients learned the secrets of nature. They would pause by a spring, for instance, and stay there for hours, listening to its gentle murmur and watching the cool, crystal-clear water sparkling in the light. In this way, little by little, they entered into a state of communion with the soul of water, the soul of the spring. And you can do the same with fire; even if you think that you understand nothing, it does not matter. What does matter is

that you open yourself to this communion, for, in this way, you will be opening your subtle centres, which will put you in touch with the life of nature.

What matters, therefore, is to be present with all your attention and concentration. It is thanks to this attention and concentration that your inner instruments are made ready and begin to function. All you have to do is get them ready and then wait. You all know how those who study the behaviour of wild animals in their natural habitat go about it: they set up their equipment and then they wait, and when an animal approaches, their cameras or tape-recorders take photographs or record sounds. Humans have all the necessary instruments already set up within them, and this means that, even when they are unconscious of having seen or heard anything, their instruments automatically record the words murmured by the stream or whispered by the fire. The only thing is that these recordings are far from the level of consciousness.

Put yourself in touch with the fire, therefore, and receive what it is saying to you. It will all be recorded within you, and later on when you are going through these records and films, you may be able to develop some of the pictures or hear some music and words. This is how you learn and evolve. One day you will feel you have become a new person, and it is only then that you will be in a position to help and convince others by your example. People always think they can convince others by words. Talk to them, by all means, but they will often be better at words than you are! Of course, whatever means you choose, you can never be sure that people are going to let themselves be convinced, but one thing is certain: people will be far more easily convinced by your attitude, your example and what emanates from you than by your words.

Human beings are fascinated by fire; they don't know why, but they are fascinated. Especially old people, in winter. What pleasure they get from sitting by an open fire all day long and looking into it, dozing a little and stretching their hands to its warmth. What is the meaning of this gesture? You will say it is instinctive, that nature urges them to do it. Yes, but why? I'll tell you why: it is because nature has given us extremely sensitive spots at the tips of our fingers. In fact, one of the signs of a person's sensitivity is the slight swelling at the tips of his or her fingers, for there are many highly sensitive cells at that spot. When we stretch out our hands to the fire, therefore, the sensitive centres at the fingertips begin to function and receive

and transmit to the rest of our body not only the warmth but other subtle elements as well. Thus the whole body is warmed and the solar plexus is beneficially affected.

Nowadays, all the different types of heaters we use may be very useful and very efficient, but the heat they give off does not possess the virtues of the living heat from a fire. I remember when I was young, in Bulgaria, if I caught a chill and began to feel feverish, I would light a fire in the stove and settle down close to it and go to sleep with a feeling of great gratitude and love for the warmth. When I woke up I was cured. It was then that I understood the healing properties of fire, for it is not only the warmth that heals; fire contains other healing elements. You will object that fire cannot heal all illnesses. That is quite true; the other elements also possess certain therapeutic properties that we need to know. But fire is the very basis of life.

How long can one live without food? Prisoners who have gone on hunger strikes have sometimes been able to go without food for sixty days. And how long can one go without drinking? Not nearly so long; only a few days, in fact. Our bodies need a great deal of liquid, and one can die of thirst far more quickly than it takes to die of hunger. How long can one go without breathing? Two or three minutes, at most; you have all experienced that. So, you see, the solid element (earth) is less important than the liquid element (water), and the liquid element is less important than the gaseous element (air). But what about the igneous element (fire)? How long can a human being survive without fire, without heat? Some people will say, 'For years. I never suffer from the cold.' Ah, but the heat I'm talking about is the heat within, the warmth of the heart; people die the instant their heart loses its warmth.

And now, since heat is the most important element for life, why does everybody waste and defile it in the scalding eruptions of anger and sensuality? They may not realize it, but this is how they lose their warmth, the warmth of the sacred fire the Creator gave them so they might learn to live the true life. A human being is like a space rocket with several stages; when the fuel in the first stage is almost exhausted, the second stage is ignited, and, when the fuel in the second stage is exhausted, the third stage is ignited, and so on. Like a space rocket, a human being has immense reserves of fuel. The secret is to learn how to keep the fire alight.

In the temples of ancient Rome there were priestesses, the vestal virgins, whose task was to keep the sacred flame alive. Obviously, this was a purely

symbolic function,<sup>2</sup> for what was the point of keeping a physical flame alight? It was not necessary. They were no longer in prehistoric times: it could always be lit again if it went out. But there is one fire that must never be allowed to go out and that is the inner fire. The vestal virgins represented the purest aspect of the divine Mother, for purity is a necessary condition of fire and light.<sup>3</sup> The presence of the divine Mother is indispensable if the flame of the sacred fire of love is to be kept alive. In their soul, every human being must become a virgin in order to draw this fire into themselves so that the masculine principle within them – the will, the spirit – may use it to create, for all creation has its origin in fire. Look at the evidence: from something as simple as the preparation of a meal to something as complex as the launching of a spaceship, fire is necessary.

Visible fire is the material representation of invisible fire. Every time we light a fire we should think of this and renew the bonds between our soul and spirit and the heavenly fire of love, intelligence and power. If we don't do this it is useless to light a fire. The only meaning in lighting a fire is to be set alight by the sacred fire and inflamed by its love. Only in this way will we become capable of radiating and emanating that love, so that it may create new life wherever we go.

In the Orthodox Church, each member of the congregation takes a candle with them to church on Easter Sunday and, when everyone has taken their place, the celebrant lights his or her candle; the assistant lights their own from that of the celebrant; a member of the congregation lights his or her candle from that of the assistant and so on, each member of the congregation lighting their candle from that of their neighbour. It is a beautiful sight to see all the tiny flames springing into life, one after another; it is as though fire were on the march through the church until the whole building is filled with hundreds of little flames lighting up the faces of the faithful at prayer. And we can do this symbolically: those who have lit their candle – his mind – and their sanctuary lamp – their heart – at the heavenly flame, can pass on that flame to other minds and hearts, and they, in turn, can pass it on to yet others. In this way, one day, the whole world will be lit up. And now, all of you who have already lit your candles must try to pass on the flame to your relations and friends and children. Why keep the light to yourselves? That is no way to bring about the kingdom of God on earth! Your candle is lit for you, here, but not only for you; it is lit so that you may light other candles, and in order to do that you have to learn to keep the flame alive.

A candle flame is so small and fragile the merest breath can blow it out. But if you feed it and build it up, the same breath, instead of blowing it out, will strengthen it, to such an extent that nothing can put it out. How is it that the same cause, a breath of wind, can have such contrary effects? Why is a weak flame extinguished and a strong one stimulated and strengthened? This is exactly what happens in life. A flame is a symbol of the spirit.

If you don't nourish your spirit, if you neglect it because you are too concerned about your physical body, your heart or your mind, the flame of the spirit becomes so feeble the slightest little difficulty can snuff it out. There are a lot of people in the world today whose spirit is dead: they drag themselves through life, they eat and drink and go through the motions, but their spirit has been extinguished. Others, on the contrary, continue to nourish their spirit by prayer, meditation and contemplation, and it becomes so strong the storms of life only fan the flame and cause it to burn ever more brightly. The very same difficulties and obstacles that are stumbling blocks to the weak serve to strengthen the sons and daughters of the spirit. But you must not rely only on the spirit as though it were so strong and powerful it would always come to your assistance when you are in trouble. The spirit is not strong and powerful, or rather it is extremely powerful but only on condition that you nourish it.

When we are gathered round the fire, like this, we represent the symbol of the circle with the dot in the centre.<sup>4</sup> The central dot is the fire and we are the periphery. When we gaze at the fire we should do so with the desire to move from the periphery of life back to the center, where the divine fire burns, the fire that is love, the fire that is the spirit. When we are filled with this desire, the fire takes our thoughts and feelings and lifts them up. This is why it is profitable to gather round the fire and contemplate it and speak to it. And the fire brings us together; our souls and thoughts unite in the fire. Everything converges towards the fire, on condition, of course, that we are conscious of what we are doing and that we understand the importance of such a gathering, of such a ceremony. As we contemplate the flames, the thought that we can actually come together in the fire creates true unity amongst us.

All that remains, now, is to learn how to concentrate, all together, on the same idea. I will talk about this in our next meetings, and you will understand, then, how important it is for a collectivity to learn to concentrate on the same luminous idea, so that all their vibrations unite harmoniously and produce the same beneficial waves.<sup>5</sup> Only when these conditions are present

can a ceremony of fire be effective.

When you know how to look at fire you will become more lucid and find peace and freedom, for lucidity, peace and freedom are the virtues of the centre. The centre, as we have often said, is analogous with the summit (you must have noticed that the flames rising from the fire form a cone and call to mind the notion of a summit). Someone standing on the top of a mountain can see much more clearly and much farther than someone in the valleys and canyons below. Fire always rises towards the top of the mountain in order to have a clearer view to the horizon all around. This is why, when fire visits an initiate, it opens his or her intelligence to vaster horizons. This is what we call illumination. Without fire, the fire of the Holy Spirit, there can be no illumination. The first thing we acquire from the centre, therefore, is lucidity, a true vision of reality. Also, the inner movement of those who turn back to the centre speeds up, and the faster it goes the more intense it becomes. Harmony and peace take root firmly within them, and they escape from the chaotic forces seething at the periphery. In order to be safe, we have to enter that 'high place' of which the Psalms speak, and that 'high place' is the centre of the circle, where we find fire, the eternal fire. And, finally, those who reach the centre are much freer to act; they stand at the intersection of forces and become extremely powerful.

Today, I have called your attention to the symbolic importance of fire. Without this understanding, you would continue to come and gaze at the fire while thinking of all kinds of other things and then go away without having learned or understood or accomplished anything at all. This evening, I want you to be conscious of unity. We have to have at least one rallying point, and that point is the fire, the fire that is here before our eyes.<sup>6</sup>

The Bonfin, 28 August 1961

## **II**

### **Fire and the sun**

Once again, this evening, we find ourselves in the presence of the greatest mystery of life: fire. I say the greatest mystery of life, for fire is at the origin of life; fire holds the secret of eternal life, and we must try to make friends with it, get to know it, draw it to us and vibrate in harmony with it. The fire we have kindled here, tonight, contains a certain degree of life, but to find the fire that is a far greater source of life we must turn to the sun. This is why it is so important to learn to gaze at the sun, to seek to unite yourself with the sun:

because of its fire. Fire produces heat and light, but fire itself is neither heat nor light, neither hot nor luminous. It is a mistake to think that fire is hot and luminous. Humans still do not know fire; the fire we know is only a dim reflection of true fire. We still know nothing about true fire; we can see and feel the light and heat it produces, but we have no perception of fire itself.

There are two kinds of fire, one that consumes and one that gives life. The fire that consumes is the one that burns in our fireplaces and furnaces, but the fire that does not burn is invisible, and it is present in trees, in stones, in the sun and in every part of the universe.

Look at those branches blazing so brightly: once the flames have burned themselves out and the gases and water vapour have dissipated into the air, nothing will be left but a handful of earth in the form of ashes. What was the function of that little bit of earth that has not been consumed? Its function was to weld together the other elements to form a tree. A tree could not store up the sun's rays and all the energies bombarding it day and night, if its composition didn't include a material element capable of absorbing them, and that element is earth.

Human beings are built along the same lines as a tree; if you burn their body, it leaves nothing but a handful of ash, and, as in a tree, this ash is all that remains of the matter that served to fix the fire, the sun's rays. Humans are made of fire, and this fire comes from the sun. They possess the same quintessence as the fire of the sun. Why do people mislead others by telling them they are made of matter and need only material nourishment? The initiates, on the contrary, tell us we are made of fire, of light.

I repeat: humans are exactly like a tree, and, if they learned to apply the laws that nature uses in her work, they too could absorb and store up that cosmic force, that energy from the heavenly fire, that is to say, the intelligence, light and love which are different forms of the spirit.

There is a tradition that when Zoroaster asked the supreme god, Ahura Mazda, what the first man ate, he was told: 'He ate fire and drank light'. Human beings still eat fire and drink light, but they are not conscious of doing so. People attach importance only to what is visible and tangible, so they say they eat, drink and breathe, in other words, that they nourish themselves with solid, liquid and gaseous matter. That is true, but it is not the whole truth. If we were nourished only with this material food, we would always be undernourished, because our true nourishment is fire and light.

You only have to ask human beings what they think they need. Some

clamour for money, others for glory, others again for pleasure. There are so many different things we could ask for, including justice, happiness and love – and, of course, everybody wants them. But have you ever heard anyone say, ‘I need light; I must have light!’? No, because most people don’t think that light is particularly important, and they cannot foresee the consequences of not having it. That is just the trouble: when light is absent, the consequences are very grave. All the difficulties and tribulations of humankind are caused by a lack of light. Those who are without light are exposed to the worst kinds of privations.<sup>7</sup>

You will ask, ‘But how can light possibly substitute for everything else?’ Of course, how it can do so is a mystery, but let me assure you that light can really and truly take the place of everything else, as though it were genuine matter, and, when you possess an abundance of this matter, you can give it any form, colour or dimension you please.<sup>8</sup> Light is God’s first creature. On the first day of creation, God said, *‘Let there be light!’*. The Creator needed matter with which to form the universe, and that matter is light, the subtle essence he drew from himself and condensed and, through his Word, gave form to. *‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.’* The divine Word is the force that gave shape to that prime matter, light.<sup>9</sup>

And now, since human beings are made in the image of God, they too can create as God created, with and by the power of light. This is why esoteric science tells us that if you possess light you can possess everything else. You must seek light, fill yourself with light, with this pure, brilliant, radiant matter, matter so subtle it cannot be weighed or measured or even touched and yet, thanks to which, we can create. Of course, light dwells at a great height, close to God, and we can only reach it if we think about it constantly, meditate on it, wish for it, inhale it with the air we breathe. Those who succeed in filling themselves with light can set to work to fashion and mould it and create what they need. Someone who is truly capable of working with light should be able to rebuild an organ of their body that has been destroyed by illness. If this strikes you as totally impossible, even mad, it is because human beings have lost the secret of how to work with light.

Initiates, for whom the only true reality is light, work with it constantly and use it to establish communications with each other and with the divine world. It is essential to understand this: human beings can communicate with

the divine world only if they themselves weave ‘cables’ of light linking them to heaven. Once they have created this communication network between the two worlds, they can exchange and unite in a kind of osmosis.

This is absolutely real. I realize, of course, it is very difficult to understand and, above all, to accomplish. Each one has to wait for the moment when he or she feels the need for this communication, this fusion with the divine world. A few very rare beings, who have already learned to establish this link with heaven in a previous incarnation, are now able to communicate effortlessly; they do it quite naturally. They can feel and touch the reality of the divine world, and little by little they come to realize it is, indeed, the only reality.

Those who cut their ties with light, with the sun, condemn themselves to spiritual death. To eat and drink and breathe is, perhaps, sufficient for physical life, but in order to live spiritually we have to nourish ourselves with the spiritual food of warmth and light, with the fire of the sun. Fortunately, God has organized things in such a way that, even without knowing it, human beings do nourish themselves with the light and heat of the sun. The joy we get simply from seeing the sun and exposing ourselves to its rays is, in itself, a form of nourishment. If humankind has not already disappeared from the face of the earth, it is thanks to this unconscious form of nourishment. The important thing, now, is to learn to nourish yourself consciously, to expose yourself to heavenly forces and absorb them consciously with the desire to be transformed by them. In this way you will be working on your etheric body, your body of glory, by means of light and fire. This is our true food and drink, the fire of divine love and the light of divine wisdom. Those who understand this will enjoy true life.

The sun is the only being capable of revealing the mystery of fire to us. For my part, I work constantly with the sun and value it above all others. The sun is the beginning and the end of all my thoughts and all my feelings. It is both banker and teacher to me. Banker, because, every day, I go to it for the gold dust I need in order to buy all kinds of spiritual treasures; teacher, because it possesses the secret of eternal life. I am always questioning the sun, and it gives me the most wonderful, the most extraordinary answers – even if they do seem a little unrealistic, sometimes! Every day, the sun tells me, ‘The secret of eternal life is very simple: work until you become as luminous, warm and life-giving as I am. If you do this you will never die!’ Yes, but although this secret is very easy to understand, it is very difficult to

do. It takes a very long time, several thousand, perhaps several million, years. But the philosophy of fire, the philosophy of the sun, is so marvellous it is worth building one's whole life on it.<sup>10</sup>

When fire is close to an object, it causes it either to expand and amplify, to liquefy or to evaporate. Similarly, when people expose themselves to the rays of the spiritual sun, they are warmed, and that warmth, that love, is communicated to all the cells of their body, which begin to expand and become more spiritual. In this way, little by little, they begin to vibrate in harmony with the spirit, and when the spirit sees a human being who understands it and sings in harmony with it, it is attracted to them. This is why the spirit has often been portrayed as a fiancé, a bridegroom going in to his beloved. It is an image that is common to many different religions. The ideal of the human soul, whether one is a man or a woman, is to become the 'bride of Christ', that is to say, to be in an inner state of receptivity towards the divine principle.

Fire is associated with the sun, with light, warmth and love. When you think about fire, you must think about these ideas, walk round them, examine them from all directions, explore them, dig down into them until you uncover the mystery of fire. If you do not want your heart to grow cold you must never stop loving.

If you agree, we can start to do what we used to do in Bulgaria, with the Master Peter Deunov. Every evening, in our camp near the seven lakes of Rila, we would gather round the fire. Those were moments of unsurpassed peace and joy. Later, we would go to sleep beneath the starlit sky until it was time to get up, very early in the morning, to communicate with another fire, the fire of the sun. We went to sleep by the fire, we woke to fire, the whole day was a feast of fire, and our lives were illuminated.

Now it is time to stand and say our prayer together, and then you can go quietly to your rooms to get ready for tomorrow morning and the contemplation of another fire, the true fire, the fire of the sun. To be sure, our fire this evening also came from the sun; sunlight was trapped and condensed in the branches we burned, and now that sunlight has been set free and gone back home. You all heard the wood snapping and crackling; that was the sound of prison doors being thrown open, of chains rattling and shattering as the divine energy broke free. And now this energy has returned to its native land where it will wait until it is time for it to come back to earth and be condensed again somewhere else.

Are we all agreed, then? Shall we learn to nourish ourselves and communicate with fire, morning and evening? In this way we will become as we were when God created us at the beginning of the world. What could be more beautiful or more meaningful than to nourish ourselves, every morning, with the sun's rays and, every evening, with that same heat and light that our brothers, the trees, have stored up for years and years?

Le Bonfin, 18 August 1962

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'Let there be light' – *Gen. 1: 3*

'In the beginning was the Word' – *John 1: 1*

### **III**

#### **The fire of sacrifice**

All bodies, of whatever kind, exist thanks to a concentration of energies. When a body disintegrates, therefore, the energies that held it together are liberated. This is true, also, of the human body: when someone dies, the energies still remaining in his or her body are set free. Knowing this, magicians and sorcerers have learned how to take possession of these energies and use them in their magic rites. Paracelsus tells of some very extraordinary phenomena in this respect. He lived at a time when criminals were hanged from a public gallows, and their bodies were often left there for several days. Paracelsus had witnessed these things, and he wrote that it could be greatly to the advantage of a magician if he was close to the gallows when a healthy young man was hanged. Why? Because the energies released at the moment of death from the body of a young, healthy individual, are still fresh and abundant and, therefore, very effective in working magic. Of course, this is one way of looking at things – but I must say it is not a method that I recommend!

What is true for the human body is also true in the case of animals. The Bible and the holy scriptures of all religions speak of animals being sacrificed as a holocaust. The ancients knew about the liberation of energies and how they could be used to support magic rites, and the practice of animal sacrifice developed as a result of that knowledge. When the Old Testament says that the odour of the victims sacrificed as burnt offerings was agreeable to God, it was a way of saying that the energies released from the bodies of the animals sacrificed by the priests made their invocation effective. As a matter of fact, this is the age-old symbolism of burning incense.

But then Jesus came and attempted to lead men and women to a more exalted notion of sacrifice. Instead of immolating some poor animals, which had done nobody any harm, he taught people to immolate their own inner animals, their lusts and passions, etc., for the sacrifice of these animals releases energies which are far more precious and which can be used for spiritual work. Those who have understood this are on the road to perfection; those who don't understand it are still locked into stables or cages – symbolically speaking – with their own animals.<sup>11</sup>

No manifestation is possible in the universe without energy, and energy can only be produced by the combustion of matter. We ourselves cannot live, act, think or feel without burning some of our inner fuel to feed the process. This is why we must be so careful about how we use our energies and how we replenish them. The trouble is that human beings don't realize that the disorderly lives they live burn up their most precious quintessences. They think they replenish themselves automatically, but that is not so. Certain materials can be replenished, to be sure, for Cosmic Intelligence has built the human body in such a way that it can make up for certain losses as it goes along. But if people refuse to act in accordance with the laws of wisdom, their losses can be immense and irreparable.

Those who live solely by the dictates of their instincts and passions, who never allow themselves to be guided by their soul or spirit, waste all those precious quintessences. No higher thoughts, no disinterested feelings, come to counteract this waste or improve the life they lead; their only energies are those that stem from the physical plane, and these are not enough. Spiritual energies are needed to nourish the psychic and spiritual planes, and people can only release these energies if they consent to give up certain lower satisfactions; in other words, if they make some sacrifices.

There are always things within us that need to be burned in order to sustain life. The question is: 'What things?' and the answer is: 'Your instincts and passions.' Instead of burning up our spiritual quintessences by giving in to our instincts and passions, we must learn to burn those instincts and passions by renouncing them. Jealousy, anger, sensuality, etc., must all go to feed the flames and, like the dead, blackened branches we burn in a furnace, be used to produce light and heat. This is the secret: how to burn all these impurities in order to produce fire, the fire of life.

In the passage I read to you yesterday, the Master Peter Deunov told us, 'All those things you have been dragging behind you for centuries are useless

to you today. Make them produce something by using them as manure on your fields. Bring out all your old ideas, all your antiquated beliefs and attitudes, and scatter them on the fields to be burned by the divine sun.'

But instead of following the Master's advice, you hug your 'antiques' and your 'scrap iron' to your breast and refuse to give them up. You tremble if someone tries to demolish anything that your great-grandfathers and grandmothers planted in you thousands of years ago! You are afraid to crack the shell of the old ideas and false conceptions in which you have taken refuge. You cling to everything that ties you to the past without realizing that what emanates from all these relics holds you down to the astral plane and prevents you from seeing things clearly. Throw all these things onto the fire, as the Master tells you; fertilize your fields with them, expose them to the rays of the divine sun so they can begin to yield fruit.

You cannot feed your own fire with other people's belongings; you cannot burn your neighbour's dead branches or inner animals in your fire. Everything you use as fuel must come from yourself, so start to get rid of your old ways of understanding things, of all those archaic notions you cling to so desperately. Stop hoarding, even on the physical plane; get rid of all the useless clutter in your cupboards and drawers, all those old photos and letters, all the little things you have been treasuring as though they were relics. They only burden you, tie you down and make prisoners of you. Make up your mind to start sorting it all out. Give away anything that might be useful to someone else and burn all the rest; this will help you to free yourself inwardly. Are you indignant because I dare to attack your precious relics? Well, I can't help it if you are. You must do what you like about it.

When you are all vibrating in harmony with the divine truths, the Brotherhood will be a tremendous focal point of energy. At the moment, you are still holding a screen between yourself and these truths; you seem to think you have to protect yourself from them as though you were working in a laboratory and had to shield yourself from harmful radiations with a lead apron. But there is no need to be so afraid; I'm not asking you to get rid of your old conceptions and beliefs and remain in a vacuum. I'm asking you to replace them with something better, to replace an activity with one that is more effective, a thought with one that is more elevated, a love with one that is more all-embracing. The thing that matters is to make the right choices when deciding to replace one thing with another.<sup>12</sup>

As I have already said, there are two kinds of fire. The first is the celestial

fire of the sun, the divine fire that frees us from imperfections and weaknesses and causes all that is purest and best in us – our qualities, our vitality, our beauty, strength and intelligence – to shine. The other is the fire of earth, the fire of our base desires, which devours and reduces to ashes whatever it touches. It is advisable to ask for the help of a spiritual Master in seeking the divine fire, for it is extremely difficult to light this fire by oneself. Very few men and women come into this world already prepared and knowing how to light this fire in themselves, how to set themselves free. Human beings are like baby chicks, too weak and helpless to get out of the egg by themselves. On the twenty-first day the mother hen breaks the egg with its beak, and the little chick struggles out. If the hen did not help, the chick would stay in its egg and rot.

Our brother fire who is here, with us, this evening, shows us that he is the most dynamic, the most impetuous of the four elements. But he is also the only one that prolongs life through sacrifice. If the tree refused to sacrifice itself to the angel of fire and be consumed for his nourishment, it would always be dark and without the warmth of life, but when it sacrifices itself it actually becomes light and heat. Sacrifice is the secret of every transformation. All true initiates understand this, which is why they offer themselves as willing victims to be consummated and consumed by the angel of fire, that is to say, by divine love. And this fire transforms them, too, into light and heat.

Even our physical bodies must be purified and illuminated by divine fire, for this work of transformation is not restricted to our thoughts and feelings. If we are to be totally transfigured, this transformation must also operate on the physical plane. This is what the apostles witnessed on Mount Thabor when Jesus was transfigured before them: *‘Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him.’* Jesus chose this way of showing his disciples that the physical body can become luminous through the power of love. It was the greatest revelation he could make to his chosen disciples, and the presence of Moses and Elijah on this exceptionally solemn occasion was very significant. Moses represented the law, the Jewish tradition that Jesus had come to perfect and accomplish, and Elijah was the prophet who had foretold the coming of the Messiah and who had reincarnated in the person of

St John the Baptist to prepare the way.

The creation of the world began with fire, with light. God created light, fire, before anything else. Part of this fire condensed and became air; part of the air condensed and produced water, and part of the water condensed and produced earth. Fire was at the beginning of all things; fire is at the heart of all things. The elixir of everlasting life is nothing but a condensation of fire. This is why someone who sipped a drop of that elixir would feel themselves burning, as though they had swallowed fire, and were rendered unconscious. But, when they came round a few seconds later, their whole organism had been freed of its impurities and, from that time on, they triumphed over sickness and death.

If we want to burn away the impurities that prevent both the physical and spiritual currents from flowing freely within us, we have to invoke fire, the fire of divine love, the fire that sets us free. But this fire will come to us only if we make sacrifices, if we dedicate ourselves to working, not only for ourselves, but also for the divine Principle. This is the whole secret. This is what you must try to understand and feel. I know it is a long and difficult task; for my part, I try to understand it a little better every day.

This evening we made a fire in order to purify both ourselves and the psychic atmosphere of the world, in order to burn up all impurities. As I told you, this evening, this fire is God's servant; it is intelligent and it is going to set to work to carry out his commands. The time has come for fire to work for the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Thank you, angel of fire; we thank and bless you, beloved friend. Thank you for the light and heat you have given us, for the lesson you have taught us. Enter into the hearts of our brothers and sisters, and make them as ardent as yourself. Beloved brother, carry before the throne of God all our wishes and prayers, our ardent desire for perfection.

And now you had better go to bed. God's blessing on you all. Remember to express your gratitude to the angel of fire and to the stars overhead, which send us messages of light.

The Bonfin, 29 August 1960

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<sup>2</sup> See *Love and Sexuality*, Complete Works, vol. 15, chap. 7: ‘The vestal virgins; the new Eve’.

<sup>3</sup> See *Life and Work in an Initiatic School – Training for the Divine*, Complete Works, vol. 30, chap. 7: ‘Purity and light’.

<sup>4</sup> See *Langage symbolique, langage de la nature*, Complete Works, vol. 8, chap 3: ‘Le cercle (centre et périphérie)’.

<sup>5</sup> See *Vie et travail à l’École divine*, Complete Works, vol. 31, chap. 10: ‘La toute-puissance de la lumière’.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Splendour of Tiphareth – The Yoga of the Sun*, Complete Works, vol. 10, chap. 19: ‘The sun teaches unity’.

<sup>7</sup> See *A New Dawn: Society and Politics in the Light of Initiatic Science*, Complete Works, vol. 25, chap. 6: ‘Gold, or the light?’.

<sup>8</sup> See *Life and Work in an Initiatic School – Training for the Divine*, Complete Works, vol. 30, chap. 6: ‘Matter and light’.

<sup>9</sup> See ‘*Au commencement était le Verbe*’, Complete Works, vol. 9, chap. 1: ‘Au commencement était le Verbe’.

<sup>10</sup> See *The Splendour of Tiphareth – The Yoga of the Sun*, Complete Works, vol. 10.

<sup>11</sup> See *The Key to the Problems of Existence*, Complete Works, vol. 11, chap. 12: ‘The true meaning of sacrifice’.

<sup>12</sup> See *Love and Sexuality*, vol. 14, chap. 25: ‘The Meaning of renunciation’.

## Chapter Nine

### Water and fire

Water, as you know, is composed of two gases – oxygen and hydrogen – and in order to get the two gases to combine and produce water the intervention of fire is necessary. Without fire, nothing happens, but as soon as a spark is added to the mixture, the two gases are inflamed with an eternal love for each other and are welded together to form water. The striking thing is that, instead of forming another kind of gas, they combine to form a liquid; from a gaseous state, they change to the liquid state. But the fusion of the two gases and the change in their appearance cannot occur unless a new element is introduced. Oxygen and hydrogen are invisible, intangible and volatile, whereas water can be seen, touched and handled and even kept in a container. If you heat water, it becomes steam and disappears, whereas if you chill it sufficiently, it solidifies and becomes ice.

All these facts about water give us considerable food for thought and lead us to wonder why what is true for water should not also be true for other substances – for metals, for instance. Metals are solids, but surely it is possible to change them into liquids and even gases. And, since we see that physical bodies can exist in three different states – solid, liquid and gaseous – which correspond to the elements earth, water and air, they must certainly exist, also, in a form that corresponds to the element fire, that is to say, in an etheric form.

Water is the expression of life. The chemical formula ( $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) indicates that it is made up of two atoms of hydrogen for every atom of oxygen. Hydrogen is traditionally associated with the feminine principle (water), and oxygen with the masculine principle (fire). If the combination of the two gases (with a preponderance of hydrogen) produces water, it seems reasonable to think that fire must also be a combination of the masculine and feminine principles but, in this instance, with a preponderance of the masculine principle. Fire is an active principle and water is passive, but the mystery of it is that the passive principle represented by water is, itself, a combination of the two principles, active and passive.

Water, therefore,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , is composed of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen. The feminine principle corresponds to the number two and the masculine principle to the number one. Esotericists often express the duality of woman by depicting her as an open book. The closed book is 1, whereas

the open book is 2, the polarization of 1. Oxygen (1) and hydrogen (2) combine to produce 3, which is water. But there is a fourth element that enters into the composition of water, the element fire or life, for life is fire. Life comes from fire; of itself, water does not possess life; it needs fire to infuse life into it, and it is the sun, fire, that looks on water and impregnates it with life. For an alchemist, fire vivifies the whole of creation: although dormant, it is present in metals and rocks as well as in water, even in the depths of the oceans.

*‘The spirit of God swept over the face of the waters’*. ‘The waters’ represent chaos, formless matter, and ‘the spirit’, fire, is the principle that sets everything in motion. Life emerged from water thanks to the intervention of fire. Without the power of fire there can be no manifestation of life.<sup>1</sup> Evidence of this is seen in the fact that, in winter, all the seeds and grains and germs of life are already there, in the soil, but nothing grows until fire has given the word, until there is enough warmth, enough sunlight. Water is the matrix of life, but without fire life remains dormant and stagnant. It must have the stimulus of fire to set it in motion.

Water, therefore, is the symbol of matter on which the spirit works to give it form, for the principal property of water is its adaptability: it takes whatever form one chooses to give it. Its second characteristic is that it can be impregnated. The sun impregnates water with its rays; the earth impregnates it with various substances; animals and humans, too, through their contacts with water, impregnate it with numerous elements. In this way, water gives birth to a multitude of different creations. Similarly, pristine cosmic matter takes whatever form the Spirit chooses to give it and is impregnated and made fruitful by the seed of the Spirit. This is why those who know how to work have the power to create by means of this matter.

As you have certainly observed, water tends to spread horizontally, whereas fire tends to rise vertically. The combination of these two lines produces the cross. To Christians, the cross is, first and foremost, a reminder of the death of Jesus, but in reality it is a symbol of far greater significance. To be sure, it does remind us of the death of Jesus, but that is only one aspect; it is very far from exhausting the question. The crucifixion of Jesus was one moment in history, but the cross itself is a symbol of something greater. It is a cosmic reality, and its meaning, therefore, extends far beyond that one event. The most profound and fullest significance of the cross is the union of the two principles, the masculine and feminine principles, and their work in the

universe.

The cross is the simplest possible representation of the two principles, and from it has grown another figure with the same significance, the hexagram or seal of Solomon, consisting of two interlaced triangles. We have, here, the same idea, the same law of the two principles, but enriched by other notions. From the astrological, zodiacal point of view, for instance, we can say that the triangle that represents the feminine principle corresponds to the three water signs, Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces and that the triangle of the masculine principle corresponds to the three fire signs, Aries, Leo and Sagittarius.

The next thing we have to see is that, just as fire and water tend to flow in opposite directions (fire moving vertically and water horizontally but, also, fire rising and water falling), they are also of opposite natures. If you try to unite fire and water they destroy each other. Outwardly, therefore, they seem to be enemies; water produces life but extinguishes fire, and fire, which also produces life, makes water disappear by evaporation. In order to get them to work together, some form of adjustment must be found analogous to putting water into a saucepan before putting it onto the fire to boil. Thanks to the screen provided by the wall of the saucepan, which keeps them slightly apart, instead of destroying each other they achieve something constructive.

Jesus certainly possessed the science of fire and water, for he said, *'No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and spirit.'* The meaning of these words has remained hidden to most Christians for the last two thousand years. What does it mean to be born of water and the spirit in order to enter into a new state known as the kingdom of God? Water and the spirit, that is to say, water and fire, the two great principles, the masculine and feminine principles, are symbolized on the spiritual plane by love and wisdom. It is the union within us of love and wisdom that gives us access to that higher state of consciousness known as the kingdom of God, a higher world of order, beauty, harmony and light.

This is what Jesus meant when he spoke of *'being born of water and spirit'*. Thanks to love and wisdom, we are born into the divine world, the perfect world of truth, for only love and wisdom produce truth, perfect life.<sup>2</sup>

Even alchemists' philosopher's stone is simply a work with the two principles. Alchemists spoke of a substance they defined as 'water which does not wet the hands', mercurial water, and of a fire that was used to cook that substance. Many people have interpreted this fire to be the fire of the sun and the substance to be the matter of the moon. This is why Hermes

Trismegistus said, 'Its father is the sun, its mother the moon'. That is to say, fire, the spirit, is its father and water, matter, is its mother, for, just as the sun rules fire and man, the moon rules water and woman.

Gold being the symbol of the sun and silver of the moon, the alchemists put gold and silver into the crucible to be heated together. They said, too, that the most auspicious moment for this work was when the sun was just entering Aries and the moon was in Taurus, for the sun is exalted in Aries and the moon in Taurus. Here, again, not only do we have a transposition of the masculine and feminine principles signified by the Sun and Moon, but we also have Mars, domiciled in Aries, and Venus, which is at home in Taurus. Mars in Aries, Venus in Taurus: Venus follows Mars.

When we work according to the same rules, we, too, are alchemists. The only difference is that we transpose Sun and Moon, fire and matter, gold and silver onto the psychic, spiritual plane. The two principles, fire and water, are wisdom and love; when we work with these two principles we form the philosopher's stone, that is to say, we find the strength to act.<sup>3</sup> Believe me, you can have complete confidence in this philosophy. It is not necessary to wait for the stamp of approval of orthodox science; start to work with it at once, today.

Sevres, 29 December 1962

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<sup>2</sup> See *The Second Birth – Love, Wisdom, Truth*, Complete Works, vol. 1, chap. 1: 'The second birth'.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Philosopher's Stone - in the Gospels and in Alchemy*, Izvor Coll. n° 241, chap. 10: 'The philosopher's stone, fruit of a mystic union'.

## **Chapter Ten**

### **A bowl of water**

Every day, at the end of the meal, you see me dip my fingers into a bowl of water. You probably think I am washing my hands, and that is true: I need to soak my hands in water for a moment before talking to you. But that is not the only thing I am doing; I take the opportunity of these few seconds to do some work with water. For me, the water in this bowl represents all the water on earth. Indeed, a single drop of water is enough to put us in touch with all the waters, all the oceans and rivers of the world. It is not the quantity of water that gives it its value: it is the reality that it represents, the life and purity of which it is the symbol. How can one fail to marvel in the presence of this tiny pool of water that symbolizes the life of all the oceans, lakes and rivers of the world? How can one fail to gaze at it with love and be receptive to the messages it bears?<sup>1</sup>

I invite you to participate in this work by uniting yourselves with me while I am doing it. The first thing a disciple has to do if they want to take part in the work their Master does is to be very attentive. They will certainly not understand everything, but every time they unite themselves with their Master, they receive a few particles of the quintessences their Master has attracted, of the forces he has received, until, one day, they are capable of doing the same work. This is something you can easily practise at home; why not begin to do so without delay?

Before actually touching the water, you must speak to it, greet it so that it may be even more alive and vibrant; then you dip your hands into it and conjure up a picture in your mind. You can picture yourself bathing in a lake, for instance, the purest lake imaginable, high up in the mountains, and feel yourself in communion with its coolness and purity, with all the treasures contained in that lake. If you do this with a sense of doing something sacred, you will feel your body quivering and vibrating in harmony with the whole of nature; you will feel yourself completely purified and refreshed; even your brain will function more smoothly. Tremendous changes can be wrought by an exercise of this kind – on condition, of course, that the most powerful factor, thought, takes a hand in it. Thought gives you the power to use everything that God has created to become better and purer, stronger and more intelligent.

Just seeing the transparency and translucency of water is enough to have a

beneficial effect on you, and if, while looking at it, you unite yourself to the purity and absolute transparency of the soul and spirit, you will be in a position to do wonderful work with the sephirah *Yesod*, the region of the Moon. If you invoke the name of *Chadai-el-Hai* (which is the name of God in the sephirah *Yesod* and which means, literally, ‘all-powerful, living God’) and of the Archangel Gabriel who rules the *kerubim*, the angels, little by little you will become inwardly transparent. Of course, it is very difficult to make the physical body transparent, but inwardly, in your thoughts and feelings, you can be truly transparent.

At the root of everything is purity. This is why all initiations of all ages – whether in our own day, in antiquity or in the future – always have and always will include a rite of purification, of which water is simply the symbol. All ablutions, immersions, sprinkling with holy water and even baptism are rites that stem from a profound understanding of the virtues of the four elements and particularly, in this instance, of the virtues of water.<sup>2</sup>

When you want to build a house, the first thing you need are the foundations. You cannot begin with the walls or the roof, nor can you build on foundations that are unsteady. Everyone knows this. Foundations have to be solid and durable, so they must be built of reliable materials and be set sufficiently deep in the ground. This is why purity is so indispensable; it is the only thing that can guarantee the solidity of materials and the underlying quality of a being. So, get into the habit of doing this exercise; it is no small, insignificant gesture to gaze at some transparent water in a crystal bowl and to touch it with love, feel its coolness and contemplate its translucency.

The water in this bowl is a reflection of higher waters, of the cosmic ocean in which all creatures are immersed. *Genesis* spoke of these waters, saying, ‘*God made the firmament and separated the waters that were under the firmament from the waters that were above the firmament*’. In those waters that are above the firmament are the archives known as the akasha chronica, in which are stored a record of every event and every creature since the beginning of the universe. This explains how certain clairvoyants, gazing into a bowl of water, make contact, consciously or unconsciously, with the waters above the firmament in which float images of what they are looking for. Others make magic mirrors by putting specially prepared water into a crystal ball; by looking into that water, they make contact with the etheric substance properly known as the universal Soul.<sup>3</sup>

The water that we see here, therefore, is a reflection and a representative

of the universal Soul, in which all creatures are immersed. And this water has a special link with the soul and the heart; this is why those who are capable of rising to the region of heavenly water receive its marvellous elements in their soul and heart. The blood pumped by our hearts is another aspect of that water: it flows through our veins and arteries to nourish us, just as the waters of the earth flow through its veins and arteries to nourish it.

Water is white and blood is red, because red and white are the two colours of the one divine energy manifested in the two principles: white for woman and red for man, on the spiritual plane; red for woman and white for man, on the physical plane. When alchemists wanted to express the two principles, they spoke of the sun, which is red, and the moon, which is white. In point of fact, red blood and white water are not two different principles, but the two poles of the one, feminine principle. The other, the masculine principle, is fire, and its opposite pole is light. Fire is red and light is white, but they are of the same nature. You could say they are brother and sister but, also, that one is born of the other. Light comes from fire: it is fire that gives birth to light, whereas blood comes from water: water gives birth to blood. White gives birth to red below, and red gives birth to white above.

But I don't want to go any further with this; it is all a bit complicated for you. My aim is to give you some clear, exact notions to work with. What good would it do you if I explained all kinds of abstract theories, which can be of no real use for your spiritual advancement? My one concern in all my talks is to give you some clear, simple exercises to do, some new methods to apply. This is why I want to add just one thing more.

Suppose you are standing by a spring: you look at it and at the pure, transparent, living water flowing from it. Then you look at the grasses and flowers crowding round the edge of the spring, at all the shrubs and tall trees growing nearby. The grass is full of countless insects, and birds are singing in the trees. Then, one day, people come that way and see that there is life in that place, so they decide to settle there. In this way, little by little, a whole civilization is born thanks to this water. This is the lesson of the spring. But how many have ever understood it? Wherever we look, we see thousands of human beings who have not understood the lesson of the spring; they refuse to let their water flow, and little by little life recedes from them. The vegetation, symbolically speaking, withers and dies; insects and birds come no more, and even human beings steer clear of them, for it is not particularly agreeable to frequent a desert.

But what is this water that must be allowed to flow? It is love. Human beings don't want to love; they don't know how to love. They are distrustful and unreceptive. If they have once had some little disappointment or been let down by someone, they think it is sufficient reason to close their hearts to love and generosity for ever after. The result is that their spring gradually dries up, the water stops flowing and they become a swamp. The only solution is to allow the water to start flowing again. 'That's all very well', you might say, 'but I'm sure to be cheated and disappointed again!' Well, it is far better to be cheated and disappointed than to let your spring dry up. Why? Let me explain.

When shopkeepers receive a load of apples, they usually find one or two rotten ones in each box. Suppose they were to say, 'If that's how it is, I'm not going to buy any more fruit!' Immediately, all commerce, all exchange, would cease, and they would soon be poor. Well, that is how men and women impoverish themselves; they don't reason properly. Just because they meet a 'bad apple' from time to time, they decide to shut up shop, that is to say, to stop manifesting love. But, in suppressing love they are suppressing everything, and they are the ones who suffer. That is why it is far better to be disappointed or swindled than to stop the spring from flowing. Losses and injuries can always be made good, but if your spring dries up that is the end of you.

Do you understand? And do you believe me? If so, you must never again stop your springs from flowing. Of course, it is preferable to learn to channel the water, not to let it flow in all directions, into all kinds of gardens. You must not let your spring dry up, but there is no law that forbids you to protect it and save it to nourish and quench the thirst just of God's children. And what about all the others? What should we do for them? Don't worry; the Lord will take care of them. Your job is to keep the water flowing from your spring.

The Bonfin, 3 September 1962

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'God made the firmament and separated the waters' – Gen. 1: 6-7

<sup>1</sup> See *The Mysteries of Fire and Water*, Izvor Coll. n° 232, chap. 3: 'Water, the matrix of life'.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Mysteries of Yesod – Foundations of the Spiritual Life*, Complete Works, vol. 7, Part IV: 'Washing', 'The real baptism'.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Mysteries of Fire and Water*, Izvor Coll. n° 232, chap. 8: 'Physical and spiritual water', chap. 15: 'Water, the universal medium', chap. 16: 'The magic mirror'.

# Chapter Eleven

## The living Logos

### I

#### **The alphabet and the twenty-two elements of the Logos**

By dividing Revelation into twenty-two chapters – the same number as the letters of the Hebrew alphabet – St John showed that it was dedicated, as it were, to the Logos, the divine Word which, he says in his Gospel, is at the origin of all things: *‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’*. What can we understand of the Word, its nature and its powers<sup>1</sup>?

In the last chapter of *Revelation*, Christ says, *‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.’* Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, the language in which the New Testament was written. In Hebrew, the language spoken by Jesus, the first and last letters of the alphabet are aleph and tav. *‘I am the Alpha and the Omega’* means exactly the same, therefore, as, ‘I am aleph and tav’.

Alpha and omega or aleph and tav – these two letters represent the whole alphabet, for the beginning cannot be separated from the end. An alphabet is a whole consisting of a series of elements, the letters. The order in which these letters follow each other is not the result of chance; they are the analogical representation of the ‘letters’ of creation. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet represent the elements, forces, virtues, qualities, spirits and powers, which God combined in order to create the universe. By means of these living letters, God composed words and phrases, and he continues to do so today. This was how the world was created, and this is how it is continually being created. When initiates study the cabbalistic meaning of the Hebrew letters, they do so in order to read and understand the living language of nature.

The Hebrew alphabet contains twenty-two letters. When Christ said, *‘I am the Alpha and the Omega’*, he was saying, ‘I am the Logos, the twenty-two elements by means of which the world was created’. Humans also use the letters of the alphabet to help them to think, speak and write and, in doing this, they are doing what God did. The word (the physical expression of the Logos), whether in thought, spoken or written is always one and the same thing.

We possess all the elements within us: colours, forces, projections, rays

and vibrations all serve to form and express our thought. Thinking, speaking or writing, therefore, are three ways of expressing the Logos. Some people think the Logos, others speak it, others write it. The initiates of old knew these three expressions of the Logos and, from earliest antiquity, marked certain religious buildings with written, graphic expressions of the Logos in the form of figures and geometrical or hieroglyphic signs. Knowing that these figures would survive the centuries, they did this in order to put men and women of future generations in touch with the divine Logos.

All the letters of the cabbalistic alphabet are linked to each other in a network that embraces the universe, and anyone who knows how to combine them into phrases and poems is a true scribe. A scribe, in the initiatic sense of the word, is someone who has learned to transpose the elements of language, the letters of the alphabet, into every area of their life and, particularly, into their own inner being where they endeavour to combine them into a beautiful, harmonious 'word'. And it is precisely this that is so difficult: when our inner life is disordered, it means our 'words' are in disorder, that we have jumbled them all up without order, science or wisdom.

It is also important to know that each letter corresponds to a geometrical form in nature and that behind every geometrical form specific forces are at work. Nature knows how to link her own forms with the letters that represent them, so that anyone who knows the invisible powers that correspond to each letter is capable of setting cosmic currents in motion. When we create or draw certain forms, therefore, we are putting ourselves in touch with corresponding entities of the invisible world. When an initiate seeks to learn the correspondences between forces, forms and letters and how to handle them, it is in order to create a bond with heaven.

Let's pause for a moment to study the letter aleph a. The first thing to notice is that it resembles a person with one arm raised heavenwards and the other pointing down towards the earth. This attitude depicts an intermediary, a medium between heaven and earth. With one hand they reach up to receive light from heaven and, with the other, they pour it out on humanity. Alternatively, they take up all that is human, transform it within themselves and send it back to heaven in the form of light. Aleph is a being who knows and who is able.

The letter aleph marks the beginning of an activity. When someone raises their arm they are signalling the beginning of something; it is an expression of the will to act. When their arms are stretched out horizontally, like the

wings of a gliding bird, so that arms and body form a cross, they express balance. But if their arms are at different angles, it means the two arms of their scales are at different levels, and they are no longer in a state of equilibrium; in other words, they are ready for action.




*The Magician*



And now, look at the first card of the tarot – the magician. What do you see? A man standing by a table, with one arm raised and the other lowered; in other words he is not immobile, he is doing something. What is he doing? With the arm that is raised, he is making contact with heaven, and with the other he is in contact with the earth and with human beings. The forces he receives from heaven pass through him and are handed on to the earth: he is Aleph. But to be Aleph also means to be capable of taking the forces of earth and projecting them heavenwards; in other words, to be an intermediary. This is what Jesus was expressing when he said, *'No one comes to the Father except through me'*. For a cabbalist Aleph is the perfect human being, in close touch with heaven and, at the same time, working actively for humankind. Aleph also holds the secret of the two operations, solve and coagula: it teaches the adept how to work on matter in order to dilute or condense it.

Another interesting point is that the letter aleph is made up of the letter yod four times over. The yod is shaped like a bent thumb, y, and this means it is related to the will. Aleph is a very powerful, creative letter; its form shows it possesses a will that is a combination of four wills, four activities and four

directions. Aleph is the letter of space with its four directions – north, south, east and west – the letter of the four elements. And in the tarot card we see the magician standing in front of a table, symbol of the element earth; on the table is a cup, which symbolizes the element water, and in his hand is a wand that is pointing upwards, which means he is linking the elements below – water and earth – to those above – air and fire. In addition, the hat he is wearing has a very distinctive shape: the brim describes a horizontal figure eight, the symbol of infinity. The letter aleph, therefore, symbolizes an initiate who has the power to command the forces of nature, the four elements.

And now you are going to see how the numbers follow on each other: those who subject the 4 to the power of the 1 (spirit and will) become the 5, perfect human beings, who possess the five virtues: love, wisdom, truth, kindness and justice. But they can only be said to have attained perfect equilibrium when they have become the 6, the 6 that is twice 3, the two triangles of matter and spirit, the seal of Solomon. They become the seal of Solomon when they achieve an inner state of perfect equilibrium between the two triangles.<sup>2</sup>

St John, who said *'In the beginning was the Word'*, certainly had full knowledge of the letter aleph, the 'first-born of God', the beginning of all things. The Logos is the Christ, the cosmic magus who works with the four elements by means of which all things were created. When Jesus said, *'My Father is still working, and I also am working'*, it was the Christ who was speaking through him and wanting to emphasize the idea that his activity never ceases. You will understand, now, that the cross, the symbol of Christ, is also related to this idea of God's ceaseless activity in the universe. When the horizontal bar of the cross is tilted, it shows that it is in action, and its form is very similar to that of the letter aleph. This is also the meaning of the swastika,  a symbol which is found in many religions both in India and in Greece.

Aleph is the cross with the horizontal bar at an angle, the cross which has lost its perfect equilibrium in order to move into action. The cross with four equal branches  at right angles to each other, on the other hand, symbolizes the absolute equilibrium of the masculine and feminine principles. But there are other ways of drawing the cross. This one,  for instance, indicates that the cross is a key, the key that enables us to open all the doors of the universe. And the key is also an image of the human being, but as long as we

still do not know anything about being human, we shall never be able to open the doors of the universe, for the universe is simply the human being stretched to the dimensions of infinity.

The letter aleph can be seen in many other symbolic forms: that of a lamb holding a cross, for instance, or of a serpent pierced by an arrow. Both are representations of aleph and, at the same time, representations of the human being. The spine and skull of a human skeleton have some resemblance to a snake, and the arrow which pierces it and which indicates movement and the direction of its work is represented by the arms, the lateral branches of aleph. Christ, the Logos, is the living cross.

But what is this figure of a lamb holding a cross? What does it signify? The lamb is the victim of sacrifice, love. In the beginning, before the world was created, the lamb sacrificed himself so that the world might come into being. A cohesive force was necessary to hold atoms and molecules together, and that force is love. This is why it is said that Christ is the lamb who was immolated at the beginning of the world. And this same force that holds the world together is to be found in all aspects of life. It is thanks to this force that molecules and all chemical bodies exist and survive, and it is also thanks to this force that all human communities, families, societies and nations exist and endure. Without sacrifice nothing can exist. A whole can only exist thanks to the sacrifice of each one of its parts. Do away with all the numerous forms of sacrifice – looks and words, mutual care and assistance and all forms of renunciation – and everything will disintegrate and fade into nothingness. If you want something to last a long time, be sure that it is founded on Christ, on love.<sup>3</sup>

The practical conclusion to be drawn from what I have just been saying about the letter aleph, the first letter, is that one must never undertake an action of any kind without knowing the forces that one is going to set in motion. It is the beginning that is essential. It is always very easy to trigger forces and events, but it is very difficult to remain in command of them and steer them in the right direction. If the men and women involved in the political arena were more conscious of this law, they would give themselves more time for reflection before deciding to make certain changes. A great many of those who have started revolutionary movements, believing they were going to be able to keep control of things, have ended by being mown down by their own creation! The term ‘sorcerer’s apprentice’ exactly suits the person who imprudently sets in motion currents they then find themselves

unable to control or orientate.

Whether on the physical, astral or mental plane, your power is not in the middle or at the end of an action but at the beginning. Picture yourself standing on a mountain peak; beside you, balanced on the brink of the precipice, is a huge rock. You know you only have to stretch out your hand and give it a push and it will obey you. The choice is yours, to leave it where it is or to send it hurtling down the mountainside. If you tip it over the edge, it will, of course, obey you, but that is as far as your authority goes: from then on you will have no control over it; it will cause untold damage that you will be powerless to avoid. Similarly, if you decide to keep a tight rein on your anger as soon as you feel it rising within you, it will not burst out, but once you let it go you will lose control of it. The same is true of certain ideas that you may cling to; you will end by being unable to uproot them. Be very vigilant, therefore. Never forget that tav depends on aleph, that the end depends on the beginning. Be like a magus, who performs a magical rite knowing exactly how to begin it in order to achieve the intended goal.

When Christ said *'I am Aleph and Tav'*, he showed us how to begin an action. The beginning is heaven, the divine world, and we have to begin with heaven and move gradually down into matter. If you begin with matter and try to work up towards heaven, you are bound to meet with failure and suffering. Two people who are in love must begin by loving each other spiritually before loving physically. Men and women usually do just the opposite; they begin with tav and relegate aleph to the end. But, when everything has fallen apart, will they be able to love spiritually? In everything you do you must begin with the beginning, with the head.

Cabbalists, who study the Hebrew alphabet, distinguish, first of all, three mother letters – aleph, mem and shin – which created, respectively, air, water and fire; secondly, seven doubles – beth, gimel, dalet, khaph, pe, resh and tav – which created the seven planets, and, finally, twelve singles – he, vav, zayin, het, tet, yod, lamed, nun, sameck, ayin, tsade and qoph – which created the twelve constellations of the zodiac. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, therefore, embrace the whole of creation.

Of course, you realize that these letters are simply the material expression of abstract principles. When you speak or write, you do what God did: you combine letters and words, using them as the means by which you create. In this way you can create joy, trust, love and light in others, or you can create sorrow, darkness, illness and despair. In the second instance you are

producing neither true writing nor true speech – nothing but scribbles and gibberish. True evolution consists in learning to use speech, writing, forms and images to attain a divine result, that is to say, to bring elements of the Logos into play so as to create only what is good, beautiful and right. Those who work consciously to do this participate in God's own work and, one day, will be hired as labourers in God's vineyard.

The work of creation is not finished. The Creator is continuously at work, and he needs labourers to carry a little sand or a little plaster for him. 'Is that all?' you will say. Yes, and there is no need to feel insulted. God is certainly not going to choose us for the most important tasks, but it is a glorious privilege to be allowed to participate in this divine work, however humbly.

Examine the life God has given you. Contemplate all its manifestations as though you were looking at the Lord himself, and say, 'From now on, I shall speak and act only with a view to vivifying, soothing, enlightening, warming, encouraging and strengthening other creatures'. Immediately, simply because you make this decision, the Logos starts to find its niche within you, and you begin to perceive, more and more clearly, that you possess a multitude of God-given elements. You don't yet know how to use them, but little by little you will find they begin to obey you and you become very powerful. The only thing is, you must not be content just to say good and beautiful words. You must follow through with them, carry them out to their full accomplishment. Provided you do that, the words you say will be 'truly truthful truths'.

In conclusion, I would like to tell you a story about myself. I was seventeen at the time, and I felt the need to find a form, a geometrical figure that would fill me with harmony and peace when I looked at it. After thinking about it for quite a long time, I decided to draw a circle, then, using the same radius, I marked off six points at equal distances on the circumference. With these points as the centre, I drew six circles, which gave me a rosette, then I painted the six circles with the six colours of the spectrum, violet, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. The contemplation of this figure lifted me to a state of ecstasy. To me, it was the symbol of perfection. After a little while, however, I felt that something was lacking and, while I was trying to think what it could be, a mysterious impulse drove me to write the first lines of the *Gospel of St John* under the rosette: *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing*

*came into being.*’ Why these words? Did I have some special relationship with them? I have no doubt that that is what it was; in any case, I have thought about them all my life. Today I know why I completed my drawing in this way.

St John revealed the mysteries of the Logos, which gives the power to influence the forces of nature. That is its Teaching. If Christians turn their backs on that Teaching and are content to be on the same wavelength as the priest or sacristan, that is their affair, but they have forgotten the mysteries of the Logos, which contain all the secrets of the universe. Do you remember the promises in the letters that St John was told to write to the churches? *‘To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it’*; *‘To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God’*; *‘If you conquer, you will be clothed... in white robes’*; *‘If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God’*; *‘To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne’*.<sup>4</sup> All these promises are an initiation into the mysteries of the Word.

Sevres, 2 March 1958

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‘In the beginning was the Word’ – *John 1: 1*

‘I am the Alpha and the Omega’ – *Revelation 1: 8*

‘No one comes to the Father except through me’ – *John 14: 6*

‘My Father is still working, and I also am working’ – *John 5: 17*

The promises made to the seven churches – *Revelation 2 and 3*

## **II**

### **The universal language of the Logos**

I can see you are beginning to be aware of the value of the periods of silence we observe when we are together. But we must go further than that; we must bring these periods of silence to life by impregnating them with light and love. There is more than one kind of silence – there is such a thing as a sinister silence – and you must learn to sense the difference.<sup>5</sup>

If, every time you come to these gatherings, you are full of love and the joy of having the possibility, at last, to do some spiritual work, you will see, one day, that the climate we have created has attracted angels. I assure you: angels will come and go amongst us and pour out on us their perfume, music

and colour. When that day comes, you will not be so impatient for me to break the silence and start to talk, for what are words compared to such silence?

Speech is very limited; the vast majority of our words were forged by ordinary human beings for the ordinary purposes of everyday life. Oh, I know there are a few words, a few expressions, fit for philosophers and mystics, but they are so few! That is why, when we want to express heavenly realities or sensations we often prefer to keep silence. We can best express ourselves by a glance or a gesture or even by silence.

Perhaps you will ask, 'Does that mean that speech is ineffective?' By no means! If it coincides with the Logos, by which I mean, if our words are alive, impregnated with the life of the spirit, they can be as powerful as silence. The Logos belongs to the world of the spirit. The Logos is thought. Simply by thinking, we create, we release creative forces. This is how the divine Word, the Logos, created and fashioned the universe.

The Logos is a word that has not yet reached the physical plane; it exists, it is a living reality, but it has not yet been expressed. When you think, it is as though you were speaking; that silent word is the Logos and it is magically effective. When it is brought down to the physical plane, however, and becomes speech, the Logos loses its efficacy, for goodness only knows how accurately you express yourself and whether you are correctly understood.

Before speaking you formulate a thought and that is the Logos. Then you choose words to express your thought, and that is speech. When you speak, you will not be understood by everybody, only by those who speak the same language as you, whereas, on the level of thought, the whole of nature understands you, because you use the universal language that is common to all creatures. Even if they do not speak the same tongue as you, sensitive, receptive human beings will understand what you are thinking; they will be able to feel it. Some highly evolved and extremely sensitive beings exist who are capable of perceiving a thought as soon as it is formulated. Besides, the spirits of light, the angels, do not actually use words to speak to each other or to us; they think, and their thought is perceived by us as a word.

The Logos is a direct emanation of your inner life, and it manifests itself in the invisible world as colours, forms and resonances that are intelligible to all. Speech, on the other hand, expresses itself on the physical plane in the words of a particular language and can only be understood by your compatriots. What problems that creates! But if you speak inwardly, with all

your heart and soul, even plants and birds, animals and insects, even the stars, will understand you, for the language of the heart and soul are universally understood in nature.

The universal language, therefore, is the Logos, whereas speech always gives rise to misunderstandings. People have difficulty in finding the right words to express themselves; in fact, as they often have no very clear idea of what they really mean, they don't know what they should say. The truth is that speech can become as vital and as potent as the Logos provided that it allows itself to be impregnated by the Logos and that it expresses exactly what the soul and spirit are experiencing. This is why the day will come when human beings no longer speak to each other with words but with the light, colours and sounds that emanate from them, and they will understand each other instantly. When you are close to someone who is in pain, you can feel their pain without their telling you about it. And when they are bursting with joy, you can feel that, too. Suffering and joy are languages that can be understood without words; they are a language that cannot deceive.

The Logos is a synthesis of all the expressions of a person's inner life, of all that emanates from his or her thoughts and feelings. In this sense it would be true to say that the Logos is often in direct contradiction to a person's speech. Suppose, for instance, that someone detests their neighbour and is planning to ruin them; they may set out to allay their victim's misgivings and take them in completely by a great show of friendship. Then, too, speech, instead of being a truthful reflection of reality, is often used for no other purpose than to arouse reactions of distrust, hatred or revolt or any other sentiment it is in the interest of the speaker to arouse.

One day, a woman went to see a psychiatrist. 'Doctor', she said 'I'm afraid I can't be quite normal. For some time now I have found myself telling my friends the truth about my age and how much I weigh!' To tell the truth is often considered abnormal. The normal way to behave is to fabricate, to make oneself out to be better than one really is... and others to be worse than they really are! So, beware of words. Of course, you might say that, even in these cases, speech still has the magic power of transforming reality. True, but this is not the way it should transform reality!

Now, don't take what I have said to mean that speech is not effective: it is. Thought creates things on a higher level, but speech materializes them by causing particles of matter to adhere to certain lines of force. This is why speech is necessary in order to realize your thoughts and desires on the

physical plane. However, before you can achieve this, there is a law you must know. Let's use an image: the words you use are the barrel of a gun, and your thought or desire is the gun-powder. If you don't put any gunpowder in the barrel, you can take aim and pull the trigger as much as you like, but nothing will happen. On the other hand, if your gun has no barrel, you cannot aim your bullets. The barrel gives your projectile direction and the gunpowder gives it power, impetus. First, therefore, you must have potent, ardent thoughts and feelings; secondly, you must aim them in the desired direction by means of words. A great many people, hearing talk of the power of speech, think it is enough to mutter a few words when they are half asleep and incapable of putting any feeling into them, that in that way they will achieve wonders. Never! It can't be done that way!

The spirit must always be present and wide awake. When it is, you will have a livelier understanding of things, you will express them better and others will feel that what you say is alive. A great many people, even spiritual people, speak as though they were reciting a text learned by heart; they put no real thought or feeling into what they say. And yet they imagine they are the interpreters and messengers of the Lord. The Lord told them this... the Lord told them that... and they hold forth in interminable discourses. As though the Lord imitated the endless babbling of human beings! On the contrary, when the Lord speaks to us, he does so with extreme brevity. His word is so condensed, such a brief flash of refulgence, that a whole lifetime would not be enough to exhaust its content.

You can speak or pray as much as you like, but if your words are not accompanied by love and conviction they will fall to the ground and go no further. Psychic energy and words must be combined; both are necessary. But, be careful: if you collect too much gunpowder, it is liable to explode and burn you. Do you understand what I am saying? Simply this: when you pray and meditate, you generate energy on the astral and mental planes, and it is necessary to give this energy an outlet. Failure to do so can result in an 'explosion', that is to say in problems due to an excessive buildup of forces and tensions. Words can give these forces the wherewithal to clothe themselves, as it were, to manifest themselves and operate on the physical plane. If you fail to give your accumulated psychic energy an outlet, it will explode and destroy you. It is very important to project the energy that builds up inside you and give it a goal; and you can do this with words.

Disciples must practise communicating through thought with all the

luminous entities of the invisible world, and invite and attract them to themselves. And then, so that nothing may be lacking in their prayer, they should conclude with some brief formula, such as, 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'.

A knowledge of these laws can be extraordinarily helpful to you, and not only for your spiritual life. For, although very few people are aware of it, these same laws apply to the relations between men and women. They kiss and sleep together with no element of poetry, no element of the sublime in their desires or their thoughts; no wonder the results are not all they might be! They should start by getting their gunpowder ready, that is to say, by cultivating and enhancing true love, tenderness and poetry, by bringing heaven down to earth; only when they have done this can they experience it on the physical plane. The trouble is, they are in too much of a hurry.

When initiates meditate in silence, they recharge their batteries and build up the forces within themselves so that, when they speak, their words are pregnant and alive.<sup>6</sup> Before speaking we must fill our words with love and divine power, for the origin and source of all things, the only true power, is the Logos. Speech comes after. First of all, you think and feel; that is the Logos. Secondly, you find a form in which to clothe your thought, and this form is speech, the words you use in a given language, and your skill with words, with language, may or may not allow you to express yourself adequately. The Logos, however, always and instantly finds appropriate expression, and all creatures, even the angels and archangels, can understand it.

As for the communication between us, I tell you frankly that if you relied only on what I say to you on the physical plane, it would be very meagre and even ineffectual, especially as I am sometimes away and there are long periods when I cannot talk to you. On the level of the Logos, however, I talk to you constantly.<sup>7</sup> When I am at home, alone, in the mountains or travelling, I speak to you ceaselessly. If you fail to receive anything, it is because you think that only physical speech is important. This is why I tell you that you must begin to practise here, when we are together: instead of giving way to impatience when the silence lasts a little longer than usual, learn to develop your antennae, to sense that your Master is thinking of you and of your future; try to divine what he is preparing for you, the future he is trying to lead you to. There are things he cannot express on the physical plane, things, even, that he has no right to put into words, because there are people who

would profane his words. This is why he says these things only in the invisible world where those who have the sensitivity to do so can receive them.

It is quite possible, in fact, that I sometimes sing to you as well. I have not been given much of a voice on the physical plane, but I know I am capable of singing on the invisible plane. When I was still very young, in Bulgaria, I used to go camping with other young brothers, up in the Rila Mountains and, at night, we would sleep all together in the shelters. Sometimes, in the morning, these brothers would tell me I had sung in my sleep. Apparently they could not understand the words I sang and the songs seemed to be very ancient. Also, the voice I sang with was not my own; it was a very powerful, very resonant voice which impressed them enormously. I never found out what those songs were, because I never remembered having sung anything in my sleep. Perhaps I still do so, but nowadays there is no one near to hear me.

It is said, *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and without him not one thing came into being.'* God created all things through the Word, that is to say, through the Logos, not through speech, for there can be no speech without air, and, in the beginning of the world, air did not exist; God had not yet created it.

St John wrote his Gospel in Greek, and the Greek word Logos means both 'word' and 'intelligence'. The Logos, therefore, is not the same as speech. Speech stems from the Logos, for it is the expression, the manifestation of thought. The Logos is the cause of which speech is the consequence. And the consequence can sometimes be less than perfect!

Speech is the manifestation of the physical plane of the Logos. The Logos is a plan, a proposal awaiting execution. It could be defined as a scheme or intention destined to express itself in the form of words, gestures or looks, for there is a language of gestures and looks as well as a language of words.

On the physical plane speech is indispensable and, as it is a reflection of the Logos, speech too is active. There is no area of life in which actions do not wait on words. A word is withheld and action is suspended; the word is given and action is set in motion: a man is executed or pardoned, an army is sent into battle or a cease-fire is proclaimed, a position of trust is given to or withdrawn from a colleague, and so on. Speech has great power both for good and for evil, because it is an expression of the Logos. You can kill someone simply by telling them some bad news. Who can deny the power of speech? The only problem is that speech can lie, whereas the Logos, of

course, can never lie.

One day, a neighbour asked mullah Nashrudin<sup>8</sup> to lend him his donkey. ‘I can’t’, said the mullah, ‘I’ve already lent him to So-and-so.’ At that moment, from the stable, came the braying of the donkey. ‘Oh! Oh!’, said the neighbour. ‘You’re lying. You haven’t lent it to anyone. It’s there, in the stable.’ ‘What?’ retorted mullah Nashrudin furiously. ‘Will you doubt my word and believe my donkey?’

In the future human beings will become conscious of the power of the Logos and will do their best to acquire that power by developing the possibilities of the larynx. In what way? It is basically a question of gaining control over one’s sexual energies. Instead of wasting them and allowing them to flow only to the lower levels, people will learn to channel them and turn the flow upwards to animate the larynx. In this way – after practising for a very long time, of course – human beings will be able to act by speaking. Human speech will become one with the Logos, the creative Word.

In a foetus, the growth of the larynx is associated with the development of the sexual organs, and this is not purely coincidental. When we speak, we use the two principles, masculine and feminine, both of which are present in our mouth in the form of the tongue and lips. Our reproductive organs, however, are either male or female; on this level, each human being possesses only one principle and has to find the complementary principle in a member of the opposite sex. This is why human beings are not all-powerful: their creative power is split in two.<sup>9</sup> In the future, however, this power will move up to the larynx, and, as the larynx expresses itself through the organ that combines the two principles, it will, once again, be all-powerful. At the moment, human speech is still fumbling and feeling its way, trying to adjust itself and coincide with the Logos, and until this adjustment is complete the results it obtains will necessarily be incomplete. The power of speech is already considerable where human beings are concerned – you can convict or acquit them, comfort them or drive them to despair, lead or mislead them – but it has its limits. And when it comes to rocks and plants and animals, or to the forces and spirits of nature, it has no influence at all. But, in the future, when humans have succeeded in developing the omnipotence of the two principles in their larynx, they will be able to command the forces of nature and be truly creative, like God.

There was a time, in the distant past, when humans possessed true creative power. The Hyperboreans and Lemurians were hermaphrodites and this gave

them great power. In the Banquet, Plato recounts how these races, who rebelled against the authority of Zeus, were punished for their pride by being divided into the two sexes. The Atlanteans were no longer hermaphrodites, but they retained some of the powers of their forebears and were punished for misusing those powers.

Before ever using its eyes, ears or nose, a new-born baby uses its mouth to cry and to suckle; old men whose sight and hearing have already abandoned them continue to use their mouths to eat and murmur words. We all eat and drink, speak and sing, but no one has ever really understood the importance of the mouth. The activity of the mouth never ceases, and this activity can take those who choose to work in that direction to the peak of evolution.

The best and most beautiful manifestation of the union of the masculine and feminine principles is song, when man and woman sing together. The fact that a woman's voice tends to rise whereas a man's descends, symbolizes the movement of the spirit, which descends to unite with matter and that of matter, which rises to become one with the spirit. There is no more marvellous, profound exchange than that effected by the mingling in song of the voices of a man and woman, for true union takes place not on the lower but on the higher level.<sup>10</sup>

If men and women have this need of a relationship of exchange with the opposite sex, it is in order to recapture the unity of the Logos. And these relationships of exchange must never cease, for exchange is the very basis of life. The only thing that must change is the quality of this relationship and the region in which exchange is effected. And this is where singing comes in: it is an ideal form of union. The eyes are also a means of exchange and can weld two beings into one, as can thought and feelings on an even subtler level.

In conclusion, let me tell you that, according to Initiatic Science, the human reproductive organs are destined to degenerate and, in the long run, to disappear altogether – men's first and then women's. The female organs were the first to appear in nature but will disappear last. When men and women no longer create children by means of their sexual organs, they will do so by means of the larynx. To be sure, this is still a long, long way ahead, but, when this day comes, a couple who want to have a child will create it in the higher region from which it is destined to come and then, by the power of the Logos, will clothe it in matter, and this matter will be truly physical: it will be in no danger of being reabsorbed like the ectoplasm produced by a medium in a

spiritualistic seance. The spirits called up in a seance need a material body in order to communicate with those who evoke them, and the matter for this body is, as a rule, borrowed from the medium. However, a body formed in this way cannot last long; it gradually disintegrates as the borrowed particles are reabsorbed by the medium.

This whole question of the Logos, the vocal cords and the larynx is extremely vast and rich... indeed, essential. A great deal of preparation is necessary, however, before it can be grasped fully, and the great thing to understand is that human beings must first acquire complete control and mastery of themselves before they can hope to make the larynx the seat of their creative powers.

Sevres, 24 January 1971

### III

#### **The power of the Logos**

Human beings always mean well! They are always eager to help their fellow men and women, and very often, in order to do so, they talk to them. But words are a two-edged sword; they can be used with equal effectiveness to enlighten, help, liberate and edify others or to deceive, injure, enslave or destroy them. In the book of Revelation, St John tells of his vision of that great being, Melchizedek, and says that a sharp, two-edged sword issued from his mouth, signifying by this that Melchizedek possessed the omnipotence of the Logos, which releases the spirits of good and binds the spirits of evil. And when Jesus said to his disciples, *'Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven'*,<sup>11</sup> he was giving them this same power of the Logos, the magic 'Word' that has the power to bind and to loose. Human beings no longer possess this power because they are no longer masters of their own thoughts and feelings. They talk and talk but without really knowing what they are saying or why.

Many people, when they have finally succeeded in demolishing someone with their criticism and recriminations, declare, 'I only said it for their own good. I was only being sincere.' It would be more truthful to say they felt compelled to express their own irritation and anger; only afterwards do they try to justify their behaviour by saying they were being sincere! I wonder why it is they find it necessary to be sincere only when they are angry. Well, however many good reasons human beings may think of to justify what they

say, as long as their motives are not truly spiritual and disinterested their words will never have a beneficial effect on others.

From earliest antiquity, initiates have been aware of the power of words. This is why blessings still have a prominent role to play in religious rites. Several times, during the course of the mass, the priest blesses the faithful. And you have probably seen the pope on television blessing the people crowding round him, on his visits to various parts of the world or gathered in St Peter's Square in Rome. On specially solemn occasions, he gives the blessing *Urbi et orbi*, that is to say, 'to the city (Rome) and to the world'.

Does a blessing actually do any good? That depends both on who says it and on who receives it. To 'bless' is to 'say good', in the sense of saying words that effect good, that confer well-being. A true blessing, therefore, is an act of white magic. Of course, for this to be true, the person who utters the blessing must be pure and disinterested and master of themselves, while the person to whom the blessing is addressed must, at the very least, be open to it and eager to improve themselves and work in the cause of good. If these conditions are not met, the blessing will have no effect. And yet, in spite of everything, it is good to continue to bless with words and gestures, in the hope that, one day, when human beings come to realize what they mean, your blessings will once more be efficacious.

When I was in India I was very struck to see to what extent people still believed in the power of a blessing. I was entirely unknown in that country, and yet I was frequently stopped in the street by men and women who asked me to bless them. You can imagine how surprised I was – and even a little embarrassed – when the owners of big hotels knelt down before me and asked for my blessing. In Europe we are not accustomed to such manifestations of respect and trust. In the Gospels, we read of several occasions on which men and women begged Jesus to say just one word in the hope that that word would restore them to health, deliver them from evil spirits or raise someone from the dead. What confidence they had in the power of speech! But, I repeat: in order to have power our words must be under our control.

Too many people throw words carelessly to right and left, like lighted matches, setting off fires in their families, amongst their friends or their colleagues at work. How many broken friendships and domestic tragedies are caused by a few spiteful words spoken out of season. With a word you can build a friendship, and with a word you can destroy it and make a lifelong

enemy. Is it really so difficult to hold one's tongue?

Those who know the power of speech take care never to say any negative words, for they know that malicious spirits take hold of them and, sooner or later, use them as the material support they need for carrying out their evil designs. Be careful of what you say, therefore, for, even if you don't really mean any harm, evil entities can use the matter supplied by your negative words to make them a reality. You cannot blame them for that; it is up to you not to supply them with the means to do evil.

There are a lot of countries in which people are in the habit of cursing others: on the slightest pretext they call down curses on their parents, their children, their neighbours and friends. This is a very bad habit, for such words create the perfect conditions for disaster. Take care never to do this. Also, never end a conversation by saying something negative about someone, for there is a law which ensures that what you say will continue to have negative repercussions. If you are obliged to criticize people, do not conclude by dwelling on their faults, for, by virtue of this law, the evil effects of your words will wreak havoc in yourself even before they affect them. Be sure to end on a positive note; say, for instance, 'Of course, they do have some good points', mention them, and then stop talking!

People are ignorant of these subtle details, but they are extremely important; they are all part of the great laws of life. If you fail to respect them on the pretext that you have other, more important things to do, anything you gain from those other things will turn to dust, and the precious things you already possess – health, peace and beauty – will abandon you.

A lot of people have the bad habit of speaking at random; they think if they say something untrue or overstep the mark, all they have to do is apologize. How wrong they are! I have already told you the story of the young man who went to ask Muhammad how he could make reparation for the wrong he had done by speaking ill of his neighbour. Muhammad said, 'Go and get some feathers, and put one in front of every house in the street.' The young man went off to do his bidding and came back the next day saying, 'I did what you told me to do.' Then Muhammad said, 'Now you must go back and pick up all those feathers and bring them to me.' Once again he went away, but this time he came back looking very dejected. 'I looked everywhere', he told Muhammad, 'but there was not a single feather to be found. They had all blown away.' 'Yes', said Muhammad, 'That is what happens to your words, too. Once they have blown away you cannot get them

back.’

Nobody knows exactly where a word will go, the regions it will travel through or the damage it will do on the way. And, even if you want to undo the damage, it is extremely difficult to do so, because, in the meantime, your words have been buried under other layers, and it is difficult to dig down and find the spot where the damage was done. Don’t delude yourself that you can discharge all your responsibility for the distress or destruction your words may have caused by an apology or by paying damages. Human beings may be satisfied with that, but it will not be sufficient to acquit you in the eyes of astral and cosmic law.

Let me add, too, that if you make a promise, you must keep it. We hear a lot of nice speeches in which people make all kind of promises. It does not cost much to make a promise. Naturally, it is much easier to say something than to do it, so people take the path of least resistance. Once they have promised something they can feel easy about it; why worry about actually doing it! Well, let me tell you that, according to Initiatic Science, a promise is a signature, a commitment, a contract. Your words are put on record on the etheric plane and are just as binding as if they were written. No one can release you from a promise except the person to whom you made it. If that person is disinterested, understanding and full of love, they might release you but, if not, you are just going to have to keep your word. You will say, ‘No, no. I can go over their head. I’ll ask God to release me.’ But even God cannot release you from a promise made to another, because he cannot go against the laws he himself has made. He would not dare to transgress them. You will say, ‘How can you say he wouldn’t dare? Isn’t he all-powerful?’ He is indeed, but that does not mean what religion has so often represented it to mean. The Lord is not capricious. He doesn’t suddenly take it into his head to act in direct contradiction to what he has already created and ordained. Having created the world, he accepts he will live in it and abide by its laws – which are his own laws. And this is precisely where the greatness of God lies, in the fact that he does not turn the laws of the universe upside down for a whim. Where his creation is not concerned he does as he pleases, but when he acts within his creation he obeys the laws he himself has decreed.<sup>12</sup>

This is why even the Lord cannot release you from a promise. It is up to you, before you promise anything, to make sure you will be capable of keeping your word. You must never say to yourself, ‘What’s the difference? I might as well promise. I’m not putting myself under any obligation!’ On the

contrary: that is exactly what you are doing. Possibly, on the physical plane, if you have not signed a written promise, no one will be able to prove anything against you. But your words continue to exist on the subtle plane, not on paper but on film: a film with a sound-track has been made of you and your words.

Divine Justice does not need a paper to prove what human beings say or do. It is all recorded on film and magnetic tape. How do you think humans could ever have invented photographs, films and sound recordings if the principles involved did not already exist in nature?

A good frame of reference that can help you to know yourself and judge your degree of evolution is the use you make of the gift of speech. Analyse yourself, and ask yourself whether you speak thoughtlessly, whether what you say is disjointed, exaggerated, self-seeking or malicious. And, having analysed yourself, guard your tongue. Before saying something, ask yourself why you want to say it: is it in order to do good, to enlighten, liberate or heal someone? Or is it in order to settle a grudge or to mislead or humiliate someone and, in this way, satisfy the inclinations of your lower nature? In this case it would be better to say nothing. In fact, generally speaking, it would be better if people talked less. It is very often what people say that holds them back on the lower rungs of the ladder of evolution. Here, in the Brotherhood, we devote a great deal of time to prayer, meditation and lectures. All these things are designed to give you a glimpse of the most profound truths and to fill your hearts with love and your minds with light and help you to see the meaning of life more clearly. But you have no sooner left this room than you start chattering about all kinds of trivial, unimportant things, and, within a few minutes, all that you had gained is lost.

Try to be more careful about this, in future, and when you are with other brothers and sisters talk about constructive, edifying subjects so that, when you go your separate ways, each of you has cause to think of the others with gratitude: 'Bless them for all their good words, for the things they said that have given me a little more courage and a more positive view of life, for their words that have given me the determination never to abandon the ways of light.' Words are seeds, and seeds sprout and become either flowers and fruit or thorns and poisonous plants that infect all those who receive them.

Only human beings possess the power of speech, and it is thanks to this faculty that civilizations and cultures have flourished. And, when people felt the need to conserve their words, the art of writing developed. Thanks to

speech, humans are all-powerful, for true magic is intelligent, luminous, sensible, harmonious, musical speech, the speech that flows from God, from the Fountainhead. Christ is the Logos, the Word of God. In the sephirothic Tree of Life, the Logos is the second sephirah, *Chokmah*, the wisdom that comes from *Kether*. *Chokmah* contains all the elements, numbers and letters with which God created the universe. *Chokmah* is the region of Christ, the region of eternal glory, for Christ is the glory, the Word of God. This is why Jesus said, '*I am the light of the world*'. Christ, the Logos, is the universal key, which unlocks the fifty gates of life.

Those who work to make their speech powerful, harmonious and alive are already beginning to possess this key, which can open all doors to them and enable them to accomplish marvels, in themselves, first of all, but also in others and in the whole of nature. This is the glory, the extraordinary future that awaits human beings: the power to act on matter by means of the Word.

If mothers knew the power of the Word, they would take care to use that power by applying certain methods designed to develop exceptional qualities and virtues in their children. Even at an age when her baby is far too young to understand words, a mother can speak to it and tell it of all her dearest wishes for it. While the child is sleeping, she can hold it in her arms and, with all her love and conviction, talk of her dreams for it. The baby, naturally, will neither hear nor understand a word of it, but – and this is what people don't realize – speech creates forms; it fashions, condenses and projects itself into reality. In the baby's subconscious are forces that will hear and record the mother's words, and these forces will continue to influence it for the rest of its life. They will trigger all kinds of inherent possibilities in its brain and heart, in every organ and every cell of its body, so that, one day, the virtues its mother dreamed of for it will manifest themselves.<sup>13</sup>

Why shouldn't this be possible? At the Bonfin there are some young olive and almond trees, and when they were planted I began to talk to them and ask them to produce an abundance of succulent fruit. And, I can assure you, those trees heard me. You only have to go and look at them to see what exceptional trees they have become. The olives and almonds they produce are enormous! And, the other day, I saw a television programme about certain peasant communities in Mexico in which the peasants talk to their vegetables as they plant them, with the result that they are not only very tasty but also (we actually could see this on the screen) exceptionally big and beautiful. Those peasants are not initiates, but they have obviously preserved some of the

ancient traditions taught by their wise people of past centuries, who knew that a human being could accomplish a great deal by the power of speech. Even with plants! Plants have no brains and no nervous system; they don't understand words, they can't read, they have never been to school and yet we can do some extraordinary things with them. So why not with a child?

It is not only Christ that is the Logos. You, too, are the Logos. If this were not so, if you were not of the same nature, the same quintessence, as the Christ, how could you do the things he does? It was he himself who said, *'Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these'*. This is why the ideal of a disciple is to resemble the divine Logos more and more closely. In order to accomplish this, they have to learn to purify the Logos that is in them, to make it stronger, more alive and more harmonious, and the very first rule, in doing this, is to resolve to become fully conscious and to control yourself; to say to yourself, 'I must not let all kinds of words slip from me; I must stay in control so that the Logos within me becomes effective, constructive and divine.'

In this way, one day, you will be capable of speaking to the spirits of nature. When they see you are cultivating the art of guarding your words and that you realize speech is a divine energy, they will begin to listen to your prayers and to give you what you ask for.

You must know that, without the knowledge you receive here, you will not get very far. When it is time for you to come before the judges of souls in the invisible world, you will hear them say to you, 'Speak'. Then you will try to choose just the right words and to speak with great eloquence, but the judges will pay no attention to your words; they know that words can lie. What they will listen to are the vibrations and the resonance of your voice; it is the truth of your voice that will tell them whether what you say is true or false. You will be judged by the authenticity of your voice. I repeat, when a man or woman comes before their supreme judges, the judges say to them, 'Speak'. Then, stepping forward, they must say, 'Forms of eternity, behold, I am here', and nothing more is needed to judge them. The power of speech is not only in words but in the vibrations of the voice. In the mysteries, no one was taught words of magic if they had not earned the right to that knowledge or were incapable of saying them correctly.

The Bonfin, 1 September 1962

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‘Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven’ – *Matt. 18: 18*

‘I am the light of the world’ – *John 8: 12*

‘Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me’ – *John 14: 12*

<sup>1</sup> The dictionary tells us that the Greek term *Logos*, used by St John in speaking of Christ, means ‘word’, ‘speech’, ‘discourse’ or ‘reason’. The standard English rendering in New Testament translations is ‘Word’. However, speaking in French, the Master was able to make a distinction between the French rendering of *Logos*, *Verbe*, and *mot* (word) and *parole* (word or speech). In passages quoted directly from the Bible, we have retained the familiar term, ‘the Word’. However, in order to give as faithful a rendering as possible of the Master’s argument in the three lectures included in this chapter, we have used *Logos* or, sometimes, ‘the divine Word’ where the Master uses *Verbe* and the English Bible uses ‘Word’. Where the Master uses the word *parole* to express the manifestation of the *Logos* in the physical world, we have used the word ‘speech’ or, occasionally, ‘word’ (Translator’s note).

<sup>2</sup> See *Langage symbolique, langage de la nature*, Complete Works, vol. 8, chap. 12: ‘Le langage symbolique’.

<sup>3</sup> See *Life Force*, Complete Works, vol. 5, chap. 9: ‘Sacrifice’.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Book of Revelations: A Commentary*, Izvor Coll. n° 230, chap. 4: ‘Letters to the Church in Ephesus and Smyrna’, chap. 5: ‘Letter to the Church in Pergamos’, chap. 6: ‘Letter to the Church in Laodicea’.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Path of Silence*, Izvor Coll. n° 229, chap. 2: ‘Achieving inner silence’ and chap. 6: ‘The inhabitants of silence’.

<sup>6</sup> See above, chap. 5: ‘Silence, a reservoir of energies’.

<sup>7</sup> See above, chap. 11: ‘A Master speaks in silence’.

<sup>8</sup> Mullah Nashrudin, a popular figure of fun in Turkish folklore

<sup>9</sup> See *Langage symbolique, langage de la nature*, Complete Works, vol. 8, chap. 10: ‘Comment les deux principes sont contenus dans la bouche’.

<sup>10</sup> See *Love and Sexuality*, Complete Works, vol. 14, chap. 1: ‘The masculine and feminine principles’.

<sup>11</sup> See *Love and Sexuality*, Complete Works, vol. 15, chap. 24: ‘Whatever you bind on earth’.

<sup>12</sup> See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life*, Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 8: ‘When God drew a circle on the face of the deep’.

<sup>13</sup> See *La pédagogie initiatique*, Complete Works, vol. 27, chap. 2:

‘L’éducation subconsciente des enfants’.

## Chapter Twelve

### The esoteric Church of St John

Jesus was familiar with the Cabbalah; this science was an integral part of the Judaic tradition in which he was brought up, and it was he who revealed it to St John. This is why we find so many cabbalistic elements in St John's Revelation. In all spiritual traditions there is an exoteric teaching, which is given to all the faithful, and an esoteric teaching, which is revealed to a small minority of initiates. The exoteric aspect of Christianity is represented by St Peter and the esoteric aspect by St John. In the Gospels, St John is called 'the disciple whom Jesus loved', and his closeness to Jesus sometimes aroused some jealousy on the part of the other disciples, particularly St Peter. After the resurrection St Peter questioned Jesus about St John, and Jesus replied, *'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?'* And the Gospel adds, *'So the rumour spread in the community that this disciple would not die.'* This is the source of that long-lived tradition according to which St John is still alive and living with other initiates in Agharta, waiting until the time is right to manifest himself. It is quite possible, also, that the old legends about the mysterious kingdom of Prester John originated in Jesus' words, as well as the fact that the early Christians took them to mean that St John would not die.

Jesus, therefore, prepared St John and St Peter for two different missions. Why did he divide his work in two in this way? Those who are familiar with the history of initiations in the past know that all great Masters did the same thing. Moses, himself, gave one body of teaching and rules for the masses, but to the seventy elders chosen from amongst the wisest and most faithful of his followers, he entrusted the keys of his five books, the Pentateuch, and it was thanks to these keys that they were able to decipher the hidden meaning of those books. Certain truths were kept secret, either because they were beyond the comprehension of the weak or because they would have put power into the hands of the wicked. This is why Jesus said, *'Do not throw your pearls before swine.'* And, when his disciples asked him why he spoke to the multitude in parables, he replied, *'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.'* All the established churches, whether Orthodox, Catholic or Protestant, are exoteric churches; they teach certain truths but their primary concern is with rules and regulations for the masses. They are unable to

reveal the deepest and most mysterious truths, for only those whose minds have been tempered and made ready can accept and digest these secret aspects of reality.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus gave his exoteric teaching to St Peter, therefore, and his esoteric, initiatic teaching to St John. This is how St John received the keys to the Old Testament and, in particular, to the deeply mysterious book of Genesis. You are all familiar with the opening words of *St John's Gospel*, '*In the beginning was the Word*' which seem to echo the first words of *Genesis*, '*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*'.

I know that a great many people have difficulty in accepting the idea that Jesus was familiar with the Cabbalah, but we find at least one proof that this was so in the Gospels. Do you remember the episode of the woman taken in adultery? Some scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery before Jesus. The Law of the Jews decreed that such a woman should be stoned to death, and they wanted to get Jesus to tell them what they should do about it, in the hope of getting him to lay himself open to charges of breaking the Law. The Gospel says, '*Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."* And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground.'

Nobody has ever explained what it was that Jesus wrote on the ground. Was he making idle marks in the dust like someone doodling on a scrap of paper when they are bored? Was he pretending to be thinking of something else so as to avoid their questions? Neither of these, of course. Although no one has ever revealed this before, I will tell you what he was doing: he was tracing certain cabbalistic signs and symbols with which the scribes and Pharisees were as familiar as he was, having been schooled in the same tradition. Jesus took this way of telling them, 'If you are pure and blameless, you are free to apply the law and punish this woman. But if you, yourselves, are guilty of the same sin, be careful what you do, for by virtue of these cabbalistic signs you will be condemned and struck down'. Seeing these – and because they understood perfectly well what they meant – they withdrew and left him alone with the woman. How can you explain that the scribes and Pharisees, who had every justification in law for putting this adulterous woman to death, gave up their intention so readily if not because Jesus threatened them in some way?

Yes, there is no doubt about it: Jesus was familiar with the Cabbalah, and

St John's Revelation cannot be interpreted without some of that same knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Take, for instance, the passage about the scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns, on which sat the harlot, holding the golden cup full of abominations and filth: this is obviously a reference to the evil, adverse sephiroth known in the Cabbalah as the *kliphoth*. But how can anyone who does not possess the key to the secret meaning of Revelation hope to interpret it correctly? St John wrote, for instance, that the number of the beast was 666, and a great many people, failing to grasp the symbolism involved, have tried to decide who he was referring to. Every imaginable interpretation has been given to this wretched number; it has been attributed to all the most hated tyrants of history: Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, etc. But that is plainly ridiculous.

Christianity did not suddenly appear out of nowhere. It is the outcome of several different traditions, the most important of which is the Judaic tradition contained in the Cabbalah. This is why it is so important to have some knowledge of the Cabbalah in order to understand the Bible. Christianity possesses a vast philosophy, a science of tremendous richness, but, unfortunately, for several centuries the Church has been content to transmit only scraps of incomplete, superficial information to the faithful. Is it any wonder they are flocking for inspiration to Japanese, Tibetan, Hindu and Sufi philosophies? The answers they receive from Christianity seem so poor and inadequate, whereas others have such a wealth of knowledge. The clergy should be ashamed of their inability to communicate the deep truths of Christianity to the faithful. They have been content to preach at them without teaching them anything, and it is only now that they see the results! It is high time that Christians began to reflect about these things, otherwise Christianity will finally disappear altogether. For my part, I am not opposed to Christianity, quite the contrary. I wish that Christians would return to Christianity; they have no idea what it really is at all. If priests and pastors understood my attitude, they should be the first to come and embrace me. But it is just the opposite: they think I am working against Christ and against their interests. There is a great deal of misunderstanding here.

The Bonfin, 26 July 1970

#### **BIBLICAL REFERENCES**

'If it is my will that he remain until I come' – *John 21: 22*

'Do not throw your pearls before swine' – *Matt. 7: 6*

'Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven' – *Matt. 13: 10*

'In the beginning was the Word' – *John 1: 1*

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' – *Gen. 1: 1*

The woman taken in adultery – *John 8: 1-11*

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Philosopher's Stone – in the Gospels and in Alchemy*, Izvor Coll. n° 241, chap. 1: 'On the interpretation of the Scriptures'.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Book of Revelations: A Commentary*, Izvor Coll. n° 230, chap. 10: 'The woman and the dragon', chap. 11: 'The Archangel Mikhaël casts out the dragon', chap. 12: 'The dragon spews water at the woman', chap. 13: 'The beast from the sea and the beast from the land'.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

### **Binah, the realm of stability**

The sephirah *Binah* is the realm of the twenty-four elders, symbols of stability, and it is because of their characteristic stability that they are known as ‘thrones’, for a throne is a stable, immovable seat.

The twenty-four elders manifest the stability, the immutability, of God. God is immutable, unchangeable, in his light, love, kindness and wisdom, and the thrones express this immutability, just as the other angelic hierarchies express other qualities or attributes of God. This is why, if we want the twenty-four elders to look on us with favour, if we want them to intervene in our destiny, we have to show we are stable and unchangeable.

What does it mean to be stable? Someone is stable if, once they have understood a truth and accepted it in their heart, soul and spirit, they make sure not only that it never fades from their sight, but also that it becomes their rule and programme for life.

All disciples who take the trouble to analyse themselves will know that, at certain times in their life, they are tempted to neglect their spiritual interests and activities. It is almost inevitable that there should be periods like that. However, if, in spite of everything, they do their best to cling to their decisions and to the ideal to which they have dedicated themselves; if, in spite of all temptations, they continue to follow the straight and narrow way, they will end by winning the friendship of the twenty-four elders. And, as it is they who rule over our destiny, they are ready to decree certain changes in the circumstances of those who, in spite of all temptations, have remained faithful and true. The twenty-four elders can be moved only by stability. Other virtues such as love, courage and purity, etc., are the concern of other entities, other angelic hierarchies.

You could say that each of the angelic hierarchies specializes in its own particular virtue,<sup>1</sup> and you can be sure that they will not give the stamp of approval to someone who has not already worked very hard, learned a great deal and travelled the long road of the virtues. Stability is one of the most difficult qualities to acquire, because it demands a lifetime of proof – proof of fidelity and strength of character. We cannot show courage one day and cowardice the next, and we must not show kindness only to our friends; we also have to be kind to our enemies. We can say, therefore, that *Binah*, the eighth sephirah, is a synthesis and summary of all the other sephiroth.

*Chokmah* and *Kether* are above *Binah*, but they are, as it were, in a different key; it is *Binah* that sums up all the other sephiroth. You cannot be stable if you are not intelligent; you cannot be stable if you are not full of love; you cannot be stable if you are not strong-willed, generous and pure. Stability necessarily implies all the qualities and virtues of the other sephiroth.

You will, no doubt, think I am contradicting myself, because I began by telling you that the twenty-four elders were not interested in your wisdom or love, etc., only in your stability. But can you be stable without love? Can you be stable if you are not strong and pure? In their great wisdom, the twenty-four elders say to themselves, 'The fact that they are capable of satisfying our requirements and have acquired stability shows that the other sephiroth have allowed them to get as far as us.' You can see they have no need to go into details about all your other virtues. They know that if you did not possess them you would not have been allowed to get as far as *Binah*; all they are interested in is finding out whether or not you are stable.

If a human being really and truly makes up their mind to follow the path of God and remains unflinchingly faithful to that decision; if they refuse to go off at a tangent in pursuit of their own whims and fancies, then the twenty-four elders recognize them as someone who speaks their language, who identifies with their nature, and they change the circumstances of this person's destiny. But they are in no hurry; they wait for a long time before doing this; they measure all things with their own measure, the measure of eternity. This is why the sephirah *Binah* represents eternal life.

The twenty-four elders, as I say, are not in a hurry; they say, 'Let's wait and see how long his good intentions last'. Only when they see that a disciple continues unswervingly on the path of righteousness, that, without a tremor, he or she can declare solemnly and in all truth, 'I am stable, son/daughter of the stable one, conceived and engendered in the realm of stability', only then are they virtually obliged to write a new page in this person's destiny, to bring providence into it. And when providence, that is to say, grace, takes charge, it changes everything. Grace is the sephirah *Chokmah*, the one immediately above *Binah*. The twenty-four elders get in touch with *Chokmah* and send on the disciple's file with a favourable recommendation!

The reign of providence, therefore, begins with *Chokmah*. All the other sephiroth are under the rule of justice and karma, but, once we enter the realm of *Chokmah*, the realm of Christ, we come under the rule of grace.<sup>2</sup> And, as *Chokmah* is in close contact with the following sephirah, *Kether*, those who

obtain the grace of being ruled by God's providence, by Christ, enter into the dazzling light of *Kether*, the summit, the crown, and all their works are truly crowned, crowned with immortal glory.

The Bonfin, 25 July 1969

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The twenty-four elders seated on thrones – Revelation 4: 4

<sup>1</sup> See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life*, Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 3: 'The angelic hierarchies'.

<sup>2</sup> See *Le grain de sénévé*, Complete Works, vol. 4, chap. 3: 'Que celui qui est sur le toit...'

## **Chapter Fourteen**

### **The human spirit is above fate**

The best way to avoid making your karma worse is to accept your destiny and let it work itself out without trying to wriggle out of it. In this way you will pay all your debts and be free. This is exactly what happens in everyday life: someone who has incurred a debt is obliged to pay it back. If they pay back all they owe, they can go their way in peace, but if they refuse to do so they will be sued; by trying to cheat they can only make matters worse for themselves. Also, when the police catch up with escaped prisoners, not only do the prisoners have to complete their term but they are given an even stiffer sentence. It is important to realize that the laws of karma follow the same pattern.<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, there is one method by which we are able not only to avoid incurring even heavier karmic debts, but also to free ourselves more rapidly from those we already have. The only thing is, you have to be very enlightened to apply this method, to do as the saints, prophets and mystics have always done and make up your mind to work for the whole world, to help your fellow humans and sacrifice yourself for them. The saints wanted to pay everyone, even those to whom they owed nothing, and in this way, by love, sacrifice and self-denial they freed themselves from the ordinary laws of destiny. They suffered, true, but thanks to their sufferings they attained total liberation more rapidly. There is only one way to avoid your karma, and that is the way of love, kindness, generosity, selflessness and sacrifice.

You must understand that this attitude is not at all the same thing as fatalism. Fatalists shrug their shoulders and accept whatever comes, saying, 'That's fate', 'Que sera sera!'. For them, everything is pre-ordained and nothing they can do will change it. The result is that, instead of trying to make things better by dint of their own efforts, their own activities, they let fate lead them by the nose like animals.

A true disciple is not a fatalist; they make up their mind to take their own destiny in hand. They say, 'I know I have done bad things in the past and I have many debts to pay, but my mistakes of the past are no reason to stagnate and suffer now, without lifting a finger to help myself. On the contrary, I intend to do something much better; in that way, I'll not only pay off the debts of the past but I shall be well on the way to complete liberation.' What is the point of suffering to pay your karma if you don't advance your

evolution at the same time? We have to pay our karmic debts – that goes without saying – but karma is not all-powerful. The human spirit is above karma.

This is something I have always insisted on: you must not envisage your birth chart as a sign of predestination in an absolute sense, especially if there are a lot of bad aspects in it. The human spirit is above a birth chart, above the stars and planets and their influence, above karma, above all else. The spirit is free and all-powerful. Whatever the destiny traced for you by the stars, you must always remember one thing: your spirit reigns above, in a higher, sublime, inaccessible region, beyond the reach of destiny. Destiny cannot touch your spirit.

The only way to escape from the grip of destiny in this life is, of course, to pay your debts, but while doing so, you must continue to work and create and evolve. Being born under an ‘unlucky star’ does not mean having to be permanently stupid and lazy and do nothing to help yourself. You cannot get away from the fact that you have a debt to pay, but that debt is only a fleeting episode in your existence.

Thanks to their spirit, humans are immortal; the debt they have to pay lasts only a second, whereas their whole existence lasts forever. You must not let one brief moment cast its shadow over all that spiritual light. This, my dear brothers and sisters, is sound reasoning. Didn’t you know that already? Well, whether you did or not, from now on, remember it, for it will give you much greater freedom of action; without it you will be limited and hamstrung for the rest of your days. When you are discouraged and worn out, remember it is only for a moment. Your spirit is capable of setting things right, of renewing your strength. You must cling to this conviction. Don’t extinguish the light of the spirit by dwelling on temporary, momentary difficulties. This is the purest truth. Whatever happens to you, you must be absolutely convinced that a spark burns within you and that nothing and nobody can put it out or even overshadow it.

We all have debts to pay, but we must not let that be an obstacle. The fact that we are paying our debts does not mean we are deprived of the means to evolve; on the contrary, we must have the courage to advance. Don’t let yourselves be hypnotized into immobility. In demonstrations of hypnotism, the hypnotist draws a line on the floor and tells their subject, ‘There, that’s a barrier that you are incapable of crossing. Try to walk across it.’ And the hypnotized person tries and, sure enough, finds themselves unable to move.

Well, that is exactly what happens to fatalists: they are paralysed by their ideas. Fatalism is incompatible with progress and evolution. That is why you must not be fatalistic.

Don't think I don't realize how difficult your circumstances are, sometimes. What I want to emphasize is that, even if you cannot change the outer conditions of life, somewhere within you there is still a point where you are absolutely free. Even your karma cannot prevent you from working and advancing at this point of your being. This is what I wanted to tell you: in the realm of pure spirit there is no such thing as karma. If you manage to reach the summit of your being and work there, you will feel free, and you will succeed in turning the situation around. Sooner or later, even your karma will be obliged to bow to the will of the spirit.<sup>2</sup>

Suppose you study your birth chart and find that, a few years from now, you are going to be seriously ill. That is a big debt to have to pay. It is as though a judge had sentenced you to pay a very heavy fine in the near future. If you were not warned, you would not prepare for it in advance, and, when the bailiff came to collect payment, not having put any money aside you would lose everything you possessed, and you would be turned out of your house and find yourself with no money and no roof over your head (all this is symbolic, of course). But if you have wisdom and foresight, you will work hard and save up enough money to pay your fine on the day of reckoning.

You must keep working and working, keep earning money – or gold, rather – so that, when the bailiffs come to demand a large sum from you, you will be in a position to give them as much as need be. Then they will go away with your money and leave you in peace. Think about this image and you will see the meaning behind it. The bailiff often turns up in the shape of illness or misfortune of some kind, and, if you have saved enough, if you have enough physical and psychic resources, you will be able to face up to these trials and overcome them. But if you have squandered your savings by an irresponsible, disorderly way of life, it is you who will be overcome.

This is why it is so important to live sensibly; it is the only way to amass a lot of gold. It is to the advantage of every one of us to collect a lot of gold. In fact, do you know what the Brotherhood is? It is a company of gold prospectors! It's true; we collect gold dust and nuggets. At sunrise every morning, in spring and summer, that is what we are doing: collecting the gold that comes from the sun. We fill bags and bags with it. Of course, some people think we are wasting our time, but in the long run we'll see who was

right. We continue to collect all this gold, and, often enough, it allows us to pay debts we have incurred in the past, when we were not so enlightened as we are today. This is why you must keep working; never stop working.

Sevres, 25 November 1966

<sup>1</sup> See *'Know Thyself': Jnana Yoga*, Complete Works, vol. 17, chap. 10: 'Freedom'.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Seeds of Happiness*, Izvor Coll. n° 231, chap. 12: 'The spirit is above the laws of fate'.

# **Chapter Fifteen**

## **Death and the life beyond**

### **I**

Initiatic Science teaches that human beings are a reflection, a replica, of the universe and that, like the universe, they are composed of different regions or 'bodies'. The established sciences still refuse to admit any such thing, and many of their errors, particularly in medicine and psychology, stem from this negation.

The Hindu tradition (which has been adopted by the majority of spiritual movements) divides the human being into seven different bodies.<sup>1</sup> The most densely material of these, and the only one visible to us, is the physical body, but there are six others: the etheric, astral, mental, causal, buddhic and atmic bodies, each of which is composed of progressively subtler matter. Actually, the etheric body should really be considered as belonging to the physical body. It exists in four states known as 'chemical ether', 'vital ether', 'light ether' and 'reflective ether'; thus we can say that the physical body itself can be divided into seven: the three physical states of solid, liquid and gaseous, plus the four etheric states. The same is true of the astral body, which, like each of the other bodies, can also be divided into seven: three lower regions and the four higher regions in which dwell the angels. But then the question arises: what is an angel? An angel is an immortal being made of such pure, subtle matter that nothing evil or obscure can affect it. Angels dwell in absolute joy and light and know everything except suffering, for suffering is the result of a disturbance caused by a movement of the lower nature, and an angel cannot be affected by this, because it is absolutely pure. Angels do not exist on the physical level. They exist only in the higher reaches of the astral plane.

At the limit between the higher and lower regions of the astral plane is an intermediate zone inhabited by those who are in the process of perfecting themselves, of severing the bonds that tie them to the lower world, but who can still suffer the torments of these lower astral and physical regions. Thus the astral body is a world both of suffering and of joy: of joy when humans, at last, manage to refine and purify their desires; of suffering when they are still on too low a level, when their appetites and passions still have too strong a hold on them.

At the moment of death humans detach themselves from their physical body, but this separation does not mean that they are instantly set free. To begin with, in fact, they will be even more susceptible to torment than when they were on earth. This is because, when we are on earth, our physical body serves as a shell or armour and prevents us from feeling the reality of the psychic world. But when we die and find ourselves on the astral plane, released from our physical body and the protection it once afforded us, we are liable to experience terrible suffering and unhappiness. Hell is simply the experience of a very intense state of consciousness on the astral plane, and we can escape from it only when we have been purified by suffering. When death comes to those who have lived in debauchery, injustice, viciousness and cruelty and who have managed to escape punishment at the hands of human justice, they find themselves on the astral plane, face to face with all the evil they have ever committed. There is no escape and no protection; they no longer have their physical body to protect them and make them less sensitive, so they experience all the torments and sufferings they imposed on others during their life on earth.

You have all had nightmares, I imagine, and you know that they usually end abruptly when you wake up and suddenly feel enormously relieved to find yourself safely at home in your physical body: 'Oh, thank God! It was only a dream!' Why do you wake up so suddenly? Because you know, subconsciously, that you must get back into your physical body in order to defend yourself against hostile beings or forces of the astral plane: your physical body is a fortress, in which you are safe from attack. If you stayed on the astral plane you would continue to be at the mercy of your enemies, so you escape from them by going back into the thick, solid protection of your physical body. It is exactly as though you were being pursued by armed men, on the physical level, and you dived into the safety of a solid building where their knives and guns could not reach you.

The same law holds good on every level: it can happen, for instance, that somebody leaves their physical body while they are meditating and are drawn into dangerous areas of the astral plane, where they find themselves threatened and pursued. The first thing to do, in a case like this, is to flee to the protection of one's physical body.

The physical body is a good, solid fortress, but when one leaves it at the time of death, every transgression of the laws of love, wisdom and truth has to be paid for on the astral plane. I assure you, I am not inventing anything:

all the great Masters of humankind have told us this; the greatest artists, painters and poets have portrayed this world in their works of art, and people who have been clinically dead for three or four days have returned to tell us what they had seen in the astral world. Heaven allows a few people to have experiences of this kind from time to time in order to remind human beings of certain truths and persuade them to mend their ways.

After death, therefore, people have to suffer, on the astral plane, all the evil they have inflicted on others and pay the penalty for all their transgressions. It is not that Cosmic Intelligence needs to revenge itself or punish them; all it wants is for them to be fully conscious of what they did on earth, because very often they have inflicted suffering on others without even realizing it, and it is this ignorance that is unacceptable, for it prevents them from evolving. Cosmic Intelligence makes us experience all the evil we have done to others so that we may learn just what our actions have meant and begin to improve. The time spent on this level depends on the gravity of our faults. Some, who have never committed any serious crimes, pass through this stage very rapidly; others have to suffer for years and years.

Once a person has paid every penny of their debt, they rise to the first level of the higher astral plane, where they experience an extraordinary state of joy and wonderment because of the happiness they have given to others on earth. At this point it is time for them to experience all they have ever done to help and encourage others, to restore their hope and awaken their faith and love. They experience all this, amplified to an infinite degree, on the astral plane. And it is only then that they fully realize what they did on earth. Certain highly evolved beings do good to others without knowing how many people receive joy, happiness and life through their actions: they do it instinctively, without conscious thought. But Cosmic Intelligence wants every human to be fully conscious, so, after death, these unconscious benefactors are astounded to see, feel and understand all the good they have done. Their next step is to rise to the causal plane, and there they receive the secret treasures of wisdom; all the mysteries of the universe are revealed to them; they are allowed to see and contemplate all the beauty of the heavenly regions. Later, they rise to the buddhic plane, where they become one with the universal Soul and dwell in bliss beyond description. As for the atmic plane, words cannot express what they experience on this plane as they fuse into one with their Creator.

When humans reincarnate<sup>2</sup> they pass through all the same regions,

beginning with the atmic, buddhic, causal, and so on, and in each region they collect the materials they need to weave a new garment, a new body, which becomes progressively denser and more opaque as they descend to the lower levels of matter. When they are finally born again, as human babies, they remember nothing of all this: neither their sufferings nor their joys nor even what they learned. But it is all there, inside them, and it will all come back to them one day if they accept certain disciplines and rules of life under the guidance of a spiritual Master. Those who succeed in bringing to the surface the memory of their experiences in the other world evolve much more rapidly.

Unfortunately, most people are so attached to the pleasures and passions of the earth, it will be a very long time before they take advantage of all this knowledge, all these treasures buried deep within them. Blessed are those who know and believe these truths, for they will be incapable of being satisfied with a mediocre way of life. They will continually want to grow and advance in intelligence, love and self-dominance, so as to become useful to the whole of humanity.

But let me get back to what is most important: whether or not we believe in the life of the soul after death, without our knowing it everything we do is recorded.<sup>3</sup> Nature does much more wonderful things than even the most skilled electronic engineer: at the apex of our heart, it places a tiny spool of magnetic tape, no bigger than an atom, which records everything we do all our life long. When we leave this world, we leave our physical body behind, but we take this tiny reel of tape with us, and our judges invite us to watch it with them, so that we can see every detail of the life we have just lived.

Yes, no one can escape from this law: everything in life is recorded; we have to pay on the astral plane for every transgression committed here below, and we feel everything with far greater intensity, because we are no longer protected by our physical body. There is nothing worse than to be naked and vulnerable on the astral plane, for we feel the thoughts and feelings of the living as a direct attack, as though they were biting, piercing and burning us. There is no escape from them. Even the mourning and tears of those left behind on earth are a torment for the dead. It is only when they reach the causal plane that they become invulnerable and nothing can affect them any more; they are at the centre of a magic circle of light, and nothing can enter this circle if they do not want it to.

The things that concern the soul and the spirit are truly extraordinary, and

you who are in an initiatic school will learn a great deal if you are sufficiently patient and persevering. But I must warn you to be careful: if you allow yourselves to be beguiled by frivolous trivialities and abandon the treasures of the spiritual dimension for the sake of the petty pleasures of everyday life, when the time comes for you to move on to the next world you will go through terrifying states of consciousness, because you will have failed to appreciate what was pure, sacred and divine.

You will object, 'But I haven't killed anyone. I've never done anything really serious!' That is where you are wrong; it is serious to be negligent! The fact that you have failed to appreciate the divine dimension is an argument against you. It means you have lived such a shameful life in the past that your mental and astral bodies became deformed and distorted. In this way you put so many obstacles in the way of your own evolution that you now lack the elements that would make you sensitive to the divine world, and you are going to have to suffer in order to acquire them.

The Bonfin, 26 September 1975

## II

We all know that when people die their soul leaves their physical body, but even while they are alive this can happen too: their soul can withdraw from their body and travel through space in order to study the universe, or even go and visit friends in distant places to help and comfort them and reveal certain truths to them. However, although it is possible to leave one's physical body, very few people are capable of doing so. Even while they are asleep at night, their soul remains close to their body, learning nothing and doing nothing useful, so it is no wonder they are incapable of going out of their body consciously, in broad daylight, and travelling through space before coming back again to take up their everyday activities.

You will probably say you are in a hurry to learn how to withdraw your soul consciously from your physical body. Well, let me warn you that you must not be in too much of a hurry! If you are not fully prepared beforehand, you can put yourself in great psychic danger (obsessions, possession or madness) and, even, in mortal danger on the physical level. If you do not begin by purifying yourself and gaining full control of yourself and all your thoughts, feelings and inclinations, it is extremely dangerous to go out of your body and leave it without protection, at the mercy of whatever entity

comes along: the results can be truly horrifying. This is why I have never talked much to you about astral projection; this will come later, when you are ready for it. Those who want to go and study the question in occult literature are, of course, at liberty to do so, but I warn them they are running a great risk.

If you prepare yourself for years, in particular by paying great attention to the question of purity – the purity of what you eat, for instance, as well as of your thoughts and feelings – and if you persevere in the practice of all the different exercises that can help you to achieve self-mastery, one day your soul will be able to leave your body at will without the slightest risk. This is how genuine initiates are able to travel to the outermost regions of space, where they see and learn so much, and a very important element is that when they reunite with their physical bodies they remember all that they have seen and done. For there are people who, under certain conditions, withdraw involuntarily from their physical body – the phenomenon may manifest itself as a sudden falling asleep in the middle of the day – but when they return to their normal state they remember nothing of what they saw, heard or did, and that is a pity. So it is a matter of being able to withdraw from one's body in full awareness. But don't be impatient; you must begin by purifying yourself, and one way to do this is to use the prayer to the angels of the four elements which I gave you a long time ago.<sup>4</sup>

It is extremely difficult for your soul to leave your body if you have not learned detachment – up to and including the ultimate detachment of death. So many people are incapable of leaving their physical body even at the moment of death: the bonds which bind them to it are too strong because they have never learned detachment! While they lived on earth they were only interested in material questions, money and pleasure; is it surprising, then, that they are unwilling to give up all that? For a long time they suffer dreadfully, prowling round their own lifeless body and clinging to the people and places they knew in their lifetime, until a servant of God comes to help them to free themselves. Others, on the contrary, leave their physical body instantly, with the greatest of ease and intense joy, as though they were simply taking off a garment. This is why schools of initiation have always taught their disciples how to be detached.

Perhaps you will say, 'I suppose if you want to be detached you have to withdraw from the world and not spend time with other people?' Not at all! There have been hermits and ascetics who understood detachment in that way

and hid themselves away in caves or mountain grottoes. They were convinced they were very detached, but their detachment was often only external. In the midst of their solitude they were plagued by all kinds of desires and lusts, because the devil took advantage of that solitude to pay them a visit! The literature is full of stories of the temptations of saints and hermits! No, it is not a question of abandoning everything but of understanding that true detachment is an inner attitude and that purity is the only way to achieve it.

Sevres, 13 April 1969

### III

The souls that incarnate on this earth are not always the same. It can happen, of course, that the same ones come back time after time in the course of the centuries, but it is not necessarily so. The earth, you see, is not the only place where creatures can go to train and develop. There are other 'earths' all over the universe where they can go for instruction. Just as creatures from other planets come to earth, with a particular mission to accomplish, and leave again once their work is done, so creatures from earth can be sent to other planets. It is the twenty-four elders who are in charge of organizing all this coming and going.

When someone dies, the doors of the earth close behind them; they are caught up in other currents and are not entitled to turn back. This is why it is not good to call up the dead: it hinders them in their evolution. We must pray for them and send them light to help them to evolve, but we must not cling to them and try to hold on to them; above all, we must not try to bring them back once they have left the earth.

There are countless tales in ancient literature about the practice of summoning up the dead. The custom was to slit the throats of animals and use their blood to evoke the souls of the dead. The Odyssey tells of how Ulysses called up the spirit of the prophet Tiresias from Hades to foretell his future. And in the Old Testament we read that Saul commanded the medium of En Dor to bring up the shade of the great prophet Samuel, because he wanted to consult him about the war against the Philistines. This is what is known as 'necromancy', meaning to foretell the future (manteia, 'divination') by means of the dead (nekros). But you will notice that Samuel said to Saul, *'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?'* Great spirits who have

already finished their life on earth do not want to be disturbed after death simply in order to satisfy the curiosity of the living: they are so far removed from such narrow, petty interests! Of course, this does not mean they have forgotten the living: they are willing to help them, but in other ways.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, most human beings are not immediately freed from their earthly attachments at the moment of death: they remain attached to their family and friends (and enemies!), as well as to places and possessions. If they are not highly evolved, if their heart and soul have never had any great desire to discover other regions and advance towards God, they will go on clinging to these people and things. They become unhappy, wandering souls, unable to free themselves, even though luminous spirits try to help them. Those who have cultivated the virtues, on the other hand, and lived in love and light on earth, free themselves very rapidly from their bodies and rise to sublime spheres, where they are immersed in happiness and joy. From these heights they help and protect those they have left behind by sending them beneficial currents, but, in spite of what many people think, they never actually return to earth. Once dead they are very, very far from the earth and they don't come back.

You will ask, 'But then why do spiritualistic mediums believe they can communicate with famous people from the past?' Well, the truth is, they do not actually communicate with the people they evoke; let me explain what happens. When human beings depart this world, they leave some of their 'clothes' behind; not, of course, their physical clothes, but their etheric and astral clothes. These clothes float in the atmosphere and are impregnated with their life-experience; they are like empty shells or husks and can be animated and vivified by the fluids of those who take part in a spiritualistic seance in the hope of communicating with the dead. As those who take part in these seances are not, generally speaking, very highly evolved, the fluids that emanate from them are very inferior and bear the mark of their passions, covetousness and sensuality, and because of this they attract all kinds of shadowy beings which have not yet been absorbed by the centre of the earth and are still floating on the etheric and astral planes.

Ordinarily, the psychic atmosphere surrounding the earth is continually cleansed and the debris floating in it is sent to the centre of the earth. But it still contains a certain number of entities, which we call larvae or elementals, and it is they that manifest themselves at seances to deceive and mislead human beings. And not only do they deceive and mislead them, they also

drain them of their energies by absorbing every drop of their vitality in order to stay alive as long as possible.

Even the lowest kinds of spirit are capable of entering the mind of a medium and speaking in the name of Moses, Jesus, Joan of Arc, or whoever else you choose to call up. But this does not prove that you are in touch with a very advanced being. Besides, very advanced spirits are certainly not going to be attracted to frivolous, inquisitive, sensual people such as one often finds at spiritualistic seances. The only entities that people like this can call up are the larvae, husks and shades of the lower astral regions. On the other hand, if pure, luminous, disinterested beings gather to pray together and radiate light into the world, some truly luminous entities may manifest themselves in their midst, but not at all in the same way as in a seance.

There are even some inhabitants of the psychic world who have been created by humans. Some of the well known characters of literature, for instance, or even saints who never actually existed, have become so famous and have been so vividly present in people's minds they have acquired, not physical, but fluidic reality. And this is how an 'egregor' comes into existence.

An egregor is a psychic collective entity formed by the thoughts, wishes and fluidic emanations of all the individual members of a collectivity, a nation or a religion, for instance. The thoughts and desires of so many human beings working together towards the same goal form an egregor, which is shaped, impregnated and nourished by that collectivity. We in the Universal White Brotherhood have our own egregor, just as all religions and spiritual movements – and even political movements – have theirs. Sometimes these egregors combat each other on high, each one wanting to be the strongest, and each one helps the community that has brought it into being, for it is a reservoir of tremendous forces. Each has its own symbolic form, which is often that of an animal: bear, tiger, cock, eagle, dove, and so on. But the really vital thing to understand is how to form a powerful egregor capable of working in every region of the world and of helping and enlightening human beings. You must also be careful, though, for if you betray the ideal that an egregor represents it can punish you and reduce you to dust. This may astonish you, but an egregor may wreak vengeance on those who betray it.

Human beings really have no idea of how many different kinds of creatures inhabit the astral world. But whether they know them or not, they attract those to which they are bound by the law of affinity. And this is how,

in spiritualistic seances, the participants attract beings from the astral ocean, rarely the spirits of the dead they were hoping for. You will say, 'Yes, but how can these creatures know the dead person so well that they manage to pass themselves off as his or her spirit?' That is not difficult: it is all there, in the akashic records, the etheric archives of the universe, and these entities can easily find out all they need to know. The only problem is that they often misread things and then they pass on false information.

Actually, this greatly depends on the person who seeks information from the invisible world: someone who is very pure and luminous will receive correct answers, not because higher spirits descend to the person's level, but because he or she is able to rise and communicate with them on their own level.<sup>6</sup> There are instances, as I have already mentioned, in which spirits have been forced down to earth, because they have been called by very powerful magicians who knew how to say certain magic formulas. But this is not a normal, natural situation; it is up to human beings to rise, by means of thought, to the level of the spirits: the spirits should not be obliged to return to earth.

There are two kinds of magic in this area: one which calls on higher beings in order to obtain blessings and favours from them, which is called invocation, and the other which attempts to get the souls of the dead to appear in visible form, which is known as evocation. But generally speaking, as I have already said, it is not possible to get the particular spirits one wants to appear, whether by invocation or evocation: other creatures assume their appearance or their voice in order to make mischief and mislead human beings.

So you must be very careful about all this. Personally, I have never recommended spiritualistic seances ever; on the contrary! I attended a few when I was young, but I very soon realized that the people who take part in them are slaves to their own sensuality, avarice and ambition. While claiming to communicate with their deceased friends and relations, they attract creatures from the astral world, which cling to them in order to satisfy their own base appetites through them and which can never be shaken off again. This is why many spiritualist mediums have come to a bad end.

In conclusion, therefore, let the dead go their way in peace. Don't cling to your dying relations and friends, don't let your sorrow at their departure hold them down, and, above all, don't try to communicate with them by calling them back. This only troubles them and prevents them from breaking free.

Pray for them, send them your love, think of them becoming freer and freer and rising higher and higher towards the light. If you really love them, be sure that you will be with them again one day. That is the truth. How many times have I already told you this: where your heart is you will one day be.

Sevres, 6 March 1966

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Saul consults the medium of En Dor – *I Samuel 28: 4-19*

<sup>1</sup> See *‘Et il me montra un fleuve d’eau de la vie’*, Synopsis Coll., Part III, chap. 1: ‘Le système des six corps’ and Part IV, chap. 4: ‘L’édification du corps glorieux’, pp. 125-127.

<sup>2</sup> See *Man, Master of his Destiny*, Izvor Coll. n° 202, chap. 8: ‘Reincarnation’.

<sup>3</sup> See *‘You Are Gods’*, Synopsis Coll., Part IV, chap. 1-II: ‘The law of recording’.

<sup>4</sup> See *‘Et il me montra un fleuve d’eau de la vie’*, Part XI, chap. 3-II: ‘Les exercices de respiration en relation avec les Anges des quatre éléments’.

<sup>5</sup> On another occasion Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov said: ‘And then again, when Jesus appeared to his disciples at the transfiguration, the light of his body was so dazzlingly bright and radiant they could not bear to look at it, and fell on their faces in fear. The transfiguration was a manifestation in the physical dimension of his spiritual body, his body of glory. The time had not yet come for Jesus to detach his body of glory from his physical body and to live only on that level, but it could already manifest itself in all its radiance. There are people who have seen the body of glory of an initiate in a moment of spiritual ecstasy and rapture: the initiate’s face shone and light radiated from their whole being. By means of their body of glory initiates are able to travel freely through space, cross mountain ranges and even journey to the centre of the earth, for no material obstacle can hinder its movement; they can even use it to influence and help others from a distance. Even if the physical body of an initiate is ill, they can still send help to others, for the physical body and the body of glory are two quite different things. Their physical body can be dying, but their body of glory is still untarnished, alive and radiant, and with it they can reach out to other creatures at a great distance and instruct, advise and console them and give them their blessing.’

<sup>6</sup> See *Looking into the Invisible – Intuition, Clairvoyance, Dreams*, Izvor Coll. n° 228, chap. 3: ‘The entrance to the invisible world: from Yesod to

Tiphareth', chap. 4: 'Clairvoyance: activity and receptivity', chap. 7: 'Messages from heaven'.

# Chapter Sixteen

## Human and cosmic respiration

### I

The book of *Genesis* says that God formed the first human being from the dust of the earth. Although the true meaning of the Hebrew word *aphar* is ‘ashes’, it has commonly been translated as ‘dust’. But dust and ashes are not the same thing: if God formed man from ashes it implies that something had previously been burned: humankind, therefore, was formed from matter that had been burned.

Genesis continues the account of human creation with the words: *‘Then the Lord God... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being’*. Human life began, therefore, with a breath: the breath of God. For every human being, life begins with a breath. When a baby is born, the very first thing it must do in order to become a citizen of the earth is to breathe: it opens its little mouth and screams and those who hear it rejoice because the baby is alive! Thanks to this first inhalation, the infant’s lungs are filled with air and begin to do their work: life is set in motion. And many years later, when we hear that this person has ‘breathed their last’, we understand this to mean that they have died. Yes, breath is the beginning and the end: life begins and ends with a breath.

Life is the greatest of all mysteries. Just think of how many countless thousands of thinkers and scholars have sought to elucidate it! Esoteric tradition even recounts the case of certain magicians who succeeded in producing tiny living creatures in their laboratories and in putting them to work! How much truth there is in these stories is another matter, but one thing we do know, and that is that the mystery of life has never ceased to intrigue and absorb the human mind.

The truth is that the mystery of life is to be found in respiration, breathing. Life is not in the air we breathe, nor in the act of breathing, but in an element that is superior to air and which is nourished by air: the element fire. Yes, life is contained in fire, in heat, and the function of air is to sustain and nourish fire. Life resides in the heart; the heart is the hearth in which burns the fire of life, and the lungs are the bellows that continually feed the flames. The origin and first cause of life is fire, and the role of air, which is brother to fire, is to assist fire by bringing it to life. When we breathe our last the fire goes out;

life is extinguished.

It is worth taking the time to reflect on the function of respiration, which is at the root of life, in order both to understand it better and to practise it more effectively. In most human beings, the respiratory function suffers from various impediments or is, in some way, restricted or contaminated; they need to learn to work with air so as to revive, purify and intensify the life within them.

One way of reaching a better understanding of the phenomenon of breathing and of the laws that govern it is to compare it with nutrition.

What do you do when you eat? Before sending the food down to the stomach to be digested, you chew it. The mouth is like a little kitchen in which the food is prepared, cut up, cooked and seasoned with a little oil (that is, with saliva) by glands especially prepared for this work. This is why it is recommended you chew your food for a long time, until it is almost liquid. If you swallow it without chewing it sufficiently beforehand, it is not really ready to be digested; your organism cannot assimilate it completely, and the result is an excessive amount of waste. Also, if your food is insufficiently chewed when it reaches your stomach, you have to use up much more energy to assimilate it, and this is very often the cause of tiredness.

You must not think that tiredness is always caused by too much work; it is very often due to the fact that you waste your energy. And this is exactly what you are doing when you swallow your food without chewing it properly and without having impregnated it with your thoughts and feelings: it is more indigestible and much more difficult to assimilate.<sup>1</sup>

Disciples who are alert to these things know that, in order to undertake spiritual work of any kind in good conditions, they must first take care to eat and breathe harmoniously. The two processes are governed by the same laws. Just as it is bad to swallow your food without chewing it, it is bad, also, to breathe so rapidly that the air does not have time to expand your lungs and fill them right down to the bottom. You must draw deep, slow breaths and even, from time to time, hold the air in your lungs for a few seconds before breathing out again. Why? In order to ‘chew’ it. Yes, your lungs are capable of ‘chewing’ air, just as your mouth chews food.

The air we breathe in is like a mouthful of food, a mouthful of extraordinary forces and energies. If you let it out again too quickly, the lungs don’t have time to ‘cook’, ‘digest’ and assimilate it for the benefit of the whole body. This is why so many people are tense, tired and irritable: they

don't know how to nourish themselves with the air they breathe; they don't 'chew' it; they let it out immediately. Also, most people breathe only with the upper part of their lungs, and the result is that there is always a residue of stale air in the bottom of the lungs, which is never driven out and replaced by pure air.

Deep breathing is a magnificent exercise, which you should practise regularly, for it revives one's energies. You all know how the engine of a car or motorcycle works: you feed it with petrol, which is simply food in liquid form; a spark ignites the petrol vapour and transforms it into gas (the element air), and this transformation produces the energy which makes your car or motorcycle move. Well, the same thing happens when we eat: at each successive phase of disintegration in the mouth, stomach and so on, the food releases a certain amount of energy.

The air we breathe follows the same process: in order to get the greatest possible benefit from it, it has to be compressed and held in the lungs. While the air is under compression in your lungs, your organism is doing a work which is the equivalent of the phases of ignition and explosion in an internal combustion engine; as the air cannot escape through the windpipe, it is forced to circulate through the tiny channels that nature opens for it. If you breathe out again and let it escape at once, all its energy is lost. When you hold it in, on the other hand, nature directs the energy it contains through these minute paths in your organism in such a way that it touches and sets in motion various centres along its path.

Similarly, when you are watching the morning sunrise, if you don't capture and hold on to its rays, if you let them slip past you without using them, they will do nothing for you and will be completely ineffective. But by catching and holding on to them consciously, by collecting and condensing them within you, you will open a path for them into your spirit. Then they will move through you with tremendous force, setting in motion powerful centres, and you will feel yourself becoming a whirlwind of fire.<sup>2</sup>

The great secret, you see, is to transform each element into one of greater subtlety: to liquefy what is solid, to transform liquids into gases, to transform gaseous elements into ether. Those who are capable of doing this possess the secret of how to draw permanently on the inexhaustible Source. All living beings do this to a certain extent, unconsciously – this is what makes it possible for them to remain alive – but they don't do it fully; they do it mechanically without thinking about what they are doing, and when it is done

unconsciously, the results are not the same as when it is done consciously. To make matter subtler is to release the energy it contains. All that is dense, compact and heavy represents unorganized matter in which energy is held prisoner. And the more energy you imprison within yourself (like those who overeat), the more harm you do to yourself. You must, on the contrary, liberate energy. Perhaps you will say, 'But if we liberate too much energy there will be nothing left of us!' Don't worry, several thousand years would not suffice to use up all the energy God has compressed into your brain alone: there is enough there to keep you going indefinitely!

Our role is not to condense or materialize energy; it is already sufficiently condensed. Our role is, rather, to set it free, to release it. The great initiates, who know this law of the disintegration of matter, are capable of disintegrating a few thousandths of a milligram of the matter of their brain and, with the resulting energy, of working miracles. They effect this disintegration by means of thought; the secret of how to do this has been in their possession for thousands of years. They apply the principles of nuclear fission to their own brain, a type of matter that contains inexhaustible wealth.

Perhaps someone will say, 'Well, I'm capable of disintegrating matter, too. The other day I had a temperature of over forty degrees, and I lost ten pounds!' That is not the same thing: a true release of energy makes you stronger, not weaker! A fever debilitates you and leaves you weaker because it destroys a great many cells: you lose matter without getting stronger. Whereas when you concentrate or meditate you disintegrate some minute particles of matter and, in doing so, release energy. And this is all the more beneficial and salutary in that other, purer, more luminous particles come to take the place of those that are destroyed. This is not the case when you are ill or when there is a loss of energy from some other cause. You must distinguish between an expenditure of energy that enriches you and one that impoverishes you.

As I have said, you have to 'chew' the air in order to release the etheric elements it contains. The lungs are composed of several different zones, which can be compared to the mouth and the stomach, except that their position in relation to each other is reversed. As a matter of fact, look at a pair of lungs: don't they look like a tree standing on its head, with a trunk, branches and leaves? The leaves of a tree are at the top, whereas the 'leaves' of the lungs (the alveoli) are at the bottom. A tree relates to the external gaseous atmosphere through its leaves, whereas air penetrates into the lungs

through the ‘trunk and branches’.

If you pursue the comparison with the digestive system, you will see that the lower part of the lungs has the same function as a mouth, whereas the upper part functions like a stomach. When we eat, we put food into the upper part of the digestive tract, the mouth, where it is chewed before being sent down to the stomach. When we take a deep breath we do just the opposite: the air goes all the way down to the bottom of the lungs, to the alveoli, and the alveoli ‘chew’ it as though they were a mouth. If we don’t do this, our breathing is shallow, and the air remains in the upper part of the lungs (the ‘stomach’) without being chewed. You must learn to breathe deeply, from the abdomen; if the air does not get down to the bottom of your lungs, you will only extract the coarsest, least subtle particles from it. But if you send it all the way down to the bottom – so far down that it presses lightly on the diaphragm – and keep it there for a few seconds, the ‘mouth’ of the lungs has a chance to function and to draw the subtlest elements from the air and distribute them throughout the body.

But to obtain the very subtlest elements from the air, you must not only hold it in your lungs, you must also bring it up very slowly from the lower to the upper lobes. In this way it also exerts pressure on these lobes whose function is quite different from that of the lower lobes. Science will discover these realities in the future; every cell of an organism, even the different cells within the same organ, are differentiated and specialized and have their own place according to their own particular function in that organ. The cells in the lower parts of the lungs absorb air differently from those in the upper parts. It is just as bad for your health, therefore, to breathe superficially as it is to swallow your food without chewing it. Those who breathe deeply nourish themselves properly, whereas those who breathe only superficially may manage to stay alive but they don’t nourish themselves properly.

One day, in order to help us to understand the importance of breathing properly, the Master Peter Deunov reminded us of the biblical story of Jacob and the angel. The angel, having defeated Jacob, said, *‘Let me go, for the day is breaking.’* But Jacob refused, saying, *‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’* And the Master explained, ‘This is what you must do with air: you must welcome it and fill your lungs with it, and not let it go until it has given you all the blessings it contains.’ Perhaps you thought that Jacob was simply doing violence to his adversary? No, he was acting out of zeal, out of spiritual fervour, and we should do the same. As long as the air has not given

up all its blessings, we must not let it go. This is the secret of all plenitude.

Similarly, when we go to watch the sun rising in the morning, we do so in order to absorb its light into ourselves, just as we absorb food, water and air. We focus our attention on the sun's rays; we can even talk to them: 'Oh, luminous rays, enter us and drive away the clouds that only your light can banish'. We absorb the light through a network of minute channels in our bodies and our whole being vibrates with greater intensity. Of course, light can effect some work in us without our conscious collaboration, but if we are attentive to the work it is doing and eager to take part in it, the results will be greatly enhanced. When you are watching the sunrise, try to steep yourselves consciously in its light and warmth, and be sure that it is already causing something to grow and flourish and that you will soon feel new forces vibrating within you.

But to get back to the subject of respiration: regular breathing exercises will improve your health<sup>3</sup>. Each individual has their own method and their own rhythm, which they must find by listening to their inner doctor. Yes, for each one of us has an inner doctor, and those who refuse to listen to it will be obliged to listen, one day, to an external doctor! Listen to your inner doctor; you will be shown how to breathe and how often and at what time of day to do these exercises, for you are all different and you must all find your own particular rhythm.

Breathe slowly and rhythmically, focusing your attention on the air being drawn into your lungs. Think of all the elements that it is bringing you for the benefit of your health. Perhaps some of you will object that you have been doing breathing exercises every day for years and that they have never done you any good. Well, in the first place, how can you be sure they have not done you any good? Your health may not be perfect, but what would it have been like if you had not done these exercises? And secondly, are you sure you were really concentrating on the healing you wanted from them while you were doing them? Didn't your thoughts often wander to the shopping expedition you were planning for that afternoon or to your latest argument with your wife or your boss? If that is the case, then, naturally, you cannot expect much in the way of results.

All the cares and worries of your daily life must be put to one side during your breathing exercises; nothing must be allowed to distract you: all your thoughts and all your faith must be centred on the work you are doing. Faith is a divine feeling, which awakens unsuspected powers of thought and action;

this is why it is at the root of all healing. Even if faith does not actually cure you, it is still an essential condition for a cure to take place.

You should also synchronize your breathing with the movements of the gymnastics we do every day. Breathe in when you raise your arms, hold your breath for a moment, and breathe out only when you bend down: inhale on the upward movement and exhale on the downward movement. The proper coordination of your breathing with the movements of the gymnastics will help you to understand their significance and to get much more out of them.<sup>4</sup>

It would be a good thing if doctors took care of people before they fell ill, if only to teach them how to breathe correctly. As a matter of fact, the doctors of the future will not look after the sick. Does that astonish you? They will not look after the sick, because their task will be to teach people who are fit and whole how to stay whole, whereas, today, most of their work consists in trying to glue the pieces back together again – and they don't always succeed! Deep breathing is a very potent remedy, both as prevention and as cure, and if you do have to take medication, it will be all the more effective if you also breathe deeply and consciously.

When you draw air into the bottom of your lungs, you must do so in the conscious conviction that you are receiving divine blessings with every breath you take in. For many of you, all this is too new: you have difficulty in believing that God has put all the elements necessary to your health into the air you breathe. And yet that is so, and you must be convinced of it. The only creatures on earth capable of breathing consciously – for the moment, at any rate – are human beings: this is why they are said to be living souls. So, try to be conscious that, when you breathe, you are absorbing divine life.

Breathing is also very important for the functioning of the brain. It is excellent to read and study and meditate, but you must also realize that the functioning of the brain depends on the rest of the body and, in particular, on the lungs. To be sure, the lungs do not act directly on the brain, but they have a very important role to play in purifying the blood, and when the blood is pure it irrigates the brain and supplies it with elements which facilitate its work of understanding or of meditation.

You should get into the habit of taking a few deep breaths, several times a day, while placing your left hand flat on your solar plexus, with the right hand over it. As you do this you should be able to feel your diaphragm expanding and contracting. The way in which you breathe affects your circulation, and it is vitally important for all the organs of your body to give

your circulation the conditions it needs to function correctly.

And while we are on the subject of the diaphragm, you should know that it, too, has an important role to play in our breathing. As you breathe in, the lungs expand and the diaphragm is pushed downwards, and as you breathe out the lungs contract and the diaphragm moves up again. Certain illnesses of the digestive system or the lungs are due to a displacement or contraction of the diaphragm, which is a very powerful muscle and which should always be relaxed and supple.

When you are doing breathing exercises, you should also be careful about the position of the spine: it must be as straight as possible. The spine is of paramount importance for health: everything depends on it. Innumerable disorders of all kinds, both physical and psychic, can result from a deformed spinal column!

You can also alleviate certain uncomfortable situations by deep breathing. Suppose, for instance, that my room is cold and I have no means of heating it: I take a deep breath and hold it for as long as possible; in this way I send the warm blood from the centre of my body out to the periphery. Its warmth combats and protects me from the cold outside.

When you get into the habit of doing breathing exercises you will find that your health, your emotional balance, the clarity of your thought and even your will-power are enhanced. Try it for yourself: when you have to lift something heavy, it is far easier if you start by taking a deep breath.

And if you are upset, why not ask your lungs to help you? That is what they are there for! Breathe deeply for two or three minutes, and you will find that you are quite calm again. It is normal to need help from time to time, but why do you always have to look for it on the outside when it is there inside you?

Sevres, 27 March 1966

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‘Then the Lord God... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life’ – *Gen. 2: 7*  
Jacob struggles with the angel – *Gen. 32: 24-32*

## **II**

*Solve et coagula*, ‘dissolve and coagulate’, ‘dilute and condense’. This twofold precept taught by the alchemists is a transposition into the field of alchemy of the two fundamental processes of creation. All accumulation, concentration or amalgamation is an application of the precept *coagula*. And

when we disperse, dissolve or dilute, we are applying the precept *solve*. In every realm of nature, in the lives of all creatures and, notably, in the respiratory function of human beings, we find these two great processes of concentration and expansion. We breathe in and breathe out, in and out, in and out. We inhale, and our lungs expand as we draw air into them; we exhale, and they contract as they are emptied of air. This ceaseless alternation of expansion and contraction reflects the majestic rhythm of the cosmos.

Inhalation and exhalation, the ebb and flow of the two movements by which we alternately fill and empty our lungs: this is what keeps us alive. And we are not alone in this; it is a universal law. Everything in nature breathes: animals, plants and even the earth itself. Yes, for the earth is alive; it too needs to inhale and exhale. Of course, it does not breathe exactly as we do, eighteen times a minute. The rhythm of the earth's breathing stretches over so many years it is imperceptible to us. But it too contracts and expands; its dimensions are not absolutely stable. In fact, volcanic eruptions, ruptures of the earth's crust and many other phenomena of the kind may well be due to this expansion and contraction. The earth is alive and it breathes; the stars, too, breathe in and out, and the influence of their respiration is even felt by us, here, on earth.

I repeat: everything breathes – trees, the oceans, even stones. You will say, 'But you can't talk of breathing unless it involves lungs.' Why not? Life does not necessarily need to use the same organs to accomplish the same functions. Take a tree, for instance: it has neither lungs, stomach, liver nor intestines, and yet it breathes, nourishes itself, assimilates and reproduces. And it often lives a great deal longer than human beings! It can survive extreme weather conditions and produce sweet-scented flowers and fruits, whereas humans, for all their intelligence, are so fragile that the slightest thing can destroy them.

Many people have very false ideas about nature. According to them, you cannot consider something is alive if it does not have a heart, lungs and a stomach like ours. But nature has no use for their opinions and systems. It has created such a multitude of different forms of life that, one day, we will be struck dumb with amazement at the sight of them. There are so many things still to be discovered! There are seeds buried in the earth that have been waiting for millions of years for the right moment to make their appearance.

Breathing can reveal great mysteries to you, but only if you accompany it with some mental work. As you breathe out, think that you are expanding to

the very outer limits of the universe, and then, as you breathe in again, picture yourself contracting and withdrawing into yourself, into your ego, into that imperceptible point at the centre of an infinite circle. Again you expand, and again you contract... As you do this, you will begin to discover the movement of ebb and flow, which is the key to all the rhythms of the universe, and, when you become conscious of this movement within your own being, you begin to enter into the harmony of the cosmos and establish a relationship of exchange between yourself and the universe. As you breathe in, you inhale elements from space and, as you breathe out, you project into space something of your own heart and soul.

Nature has placed keys to these mysteries in all kinds of places, and if philosophers practised respiration consciously they would certainly find answers to many of the problems which still puzzle them. They argue and write books about so many questions but without really understanding them. Our capacity for thought, in fact, is linked to our breathing: if you breathe incorrectly your thinking will inevitably be confused.

When someone understands the profound significance of respiration they gradually begin to sense their own breathing blending into that of God. For God also breathes: he exhales and the world appears; he inhales and the world disappears. Of course, God's inhalations and exhalations take billions upon billions of years. This is what the Hindu sacred scriptures tell us: one day God will breathe in, and this universe will be swallowed up and dissolve into non-being. And then, once more, God will breathe out, and a new creation will appear, to last in its turn for billions of years. The rhythm of God's breathing, as it manifests itself through human beings, is very rapid, but as it manifests itself in the cosmos, it is very, very slow. The slower our breathing, therefore, the nearer we come to the rhythm of God's breathing.

Respiration has been a highly sophisticated science in India for centuries, and the techniques used are often very complex. There is so much to this science, in fact, that it would take years, even centuries, to study it all. Thanks to their very extensive research, the ancient yogis and ascetics came to understand the importance of respiration, not only in relation to physical vitality, but also in relation to the function of thought, for they came to see that all the rhythms of our body were based on the rhythm of the cosmos.

In studying human respiration and how it relates to the rhythms of the universe, initiates discovered that, in order to communicate with a particular region of the spiritual world, they had to find the appropriate rhythm, make it

their own and use it as a key to establish contact, just as you can tune a radio to a particular station establish contact, just as you can tune a radio to a particular station if you know the right wavelength. The wavelength is an essential factor if you want to tune in to a particular radio station, and the same is true of breathing: you have to know what rhythm to adjust to in order to make contact with a particular region of the universe.

But don't misunderstand me: I am not advising you to launch into complicated breathing exercises; on the contrary. You are not Indian yogis, and if you are not very sensible and careful you could become unbalanced and injure your health, as so many have done before you.

The breathing exercises we practise here in our school are very simple:

1. Begin by closing your left nostril and breathing in deeply through the right nostril, while you count to four.
2. Hold your breath to the count of sixteen.
3. Close your right nostril and breathe out through the left nostril to the count of eight.

Then begin again, starting with the right nostril closed:

4. Breathe in through the left nostril to the count of four.
5. Hold your breath to the count of sixteen.
6. Breathe out through the right nostril to the count of eight. Do this six times for each nostril.

Once the exercise has become easy for you, you can double the time of each movement, counting eight, thirty-two and sixteen, but I don't advise you to go any further than that.

Respiration is of paramount importance to anyone who aspires to an active spiritual life, so you should make sure that your day's activities allow you to do your breathing exercises in the morning, on an empty stomach. It is not the same thing at all if you do them after breakfast when the movement of the lungs is hampered by a full stomach. In fact, you can actually injure your health by doing deep breathing too soon after a meal. Breathing exercises should always be done on an empty stomach or at least four or five hours after eating.

I should add that, when you take a deep breath with both nostrils, you must not inhale too rapidly; always inhale slowly and steadily. When you breathe out, on the other hand, you can expel the air rapidly and forcefully.

Through respiration we are able to absorb a very precious quintessence from the air around us, a quintessence known to Indian yogis as prana. Prana

is at the root of all the energies of the cosmos, and it is in the air in greatest abundance at sunrise. When we consciously draw in air through our nostrils, we set in motion the factories in our bodies whose work is to extract this quintessence, and once it has been extracted from the air it travels throughout our nervous system. In their studies of the human nervous system, the yogis and sages of India found that this subtle quintessence, prana, travelled like fire through the nerves that run down either side of the spine. Just as blood circulates through the arteries, veins and capillaries, this extremely subtle fluid, prana, circulates through the nervous system.

A very long time ago – I can't have been more than seventeen, for I had not yet met the Master Peter Deunov – I practised endless breathing exercises, and, as I was very young and had no one to guide me, I did not know where to draw the line; in fact I ended by falling ill – very ill! But I remember one day in particular, for while I was doing my breathing exercises I felt as though I had inhaled fire deep into my lungs. For a few moments I experienced a sensation of unimaginable joy, happiness and illumination. Of course, at the time, I had no idea what had happened; it was only years later that I understood that this drop of fire was perhaps the holy Spirit, the divine fire that is given to humans through the medium of air.<sup>5</sup>

Respiration is an extremely powerful factor: if we really work at it, it can even enable us to leave our physical body and journey through space to see for ourselves the realities that initiates speak of. It is also possible to awaken our chakras into activity and develop certain spiritual powers by breathing in a certain way.

You must learn to breathe consciously. By this I mean you must learn to associate thought and breathing; in this way you will awaken forces that are lying dormant in your subconscious. Deep, conscious breathing brings untold blessings for your intellectual, emotional and physical life; its beneficial effects should make themselves felt in your brain as well as in your soul and in all your faculties. You must never neglect the question of respiration; it is an important factor in every aspect of life.

In all the circumstances of everyday life, in all your relations with others, remember to breathe consciously: it will help you to remain in control of yourself. Before a meeting, for example, if you want to ensure that a discussion will not degenerate into a quarrel, or before scolding or punishing a child, remember to expel everything that is disturbing you with a deep breath: your thoughts will not weigh on you so heavily; they will become

more luminous.

Study and observe yourself; see how, when you are in pain or feeling the urge to give way to anger or sensuality, you begin to pant, your breathing becomes shallow and irregular. Irregular breathing arouses negative forces. You only have to breathe like that for five minutes, and you will trigger negative forces from within... and vice versa.

Have you noticed how people's breathing becomes slower when they are asleep? The reason is that, when you are asleep, you are inactive, so you burn up very little fuel and need very little air to stimulate combustion. When you are awake, on the other hand, particularly when you are very active, your breathing accelerates because you are burning more fuel. It is thanks to our lungs that we can expend a great deal of energy without endangering our life. If we did not breathe, we would not get the air we need from the atmosphere to revive our energies and would melt away like a lighted candle. This is why I keep telling you that those who insist they are capable of indulging in every kind of sexual excitement without exhausting their reserves are blind and ignorant. The rhythm of their breathing during these moments of ferment proves, on the contrary, that they involve a formidable expenditure of energy.

The centres concerned with love are located in the rear of the brain: above is the centre of friendship and love of family and the capacity to exchange and communicate with other human beings; below, in the cerebellum, is the centre of sexual love. If this lower centre receives too great an influx of blood you feel a strong impulse to give free rein to your sensuality, but you can resist the temptation by breathing deeply; after only a few minutes you will find you can behave in a happier, more beneficial way.

Good breathing habits can make our exchanges with others more harmonious. Take a practical example: when you meet someone you shake hands with them; in some people, this gesture is warm and firm and shows that they appreciate you, in others it is flabby; some shake your hand carelessly, showing that the gesture does not mean much to them, others crush your fingers to a pulp! But the important thing is that, when you shake hands with someone, a current should pass between you, otherwise there is no point in it. If you don't breathe deeply as you should, you will be incapable of shaking someone's hand properly. Before shaking hands with your friends or before going in to their house, take a deep breath (discreetly, of course); in this way your encounter with them will be harmonious.

When you come here, you are given all kinds of exercises to do and it is

important that you put them into practice, for they will make you stronger and help you to contend with your problems. What counts is the intensity of attention and concentration you bring to them; I have so often seen proof of this! The Master Peter Deunov used to say, ‘When you pray, focus your thoughts exclusively on the object of your prayer and take a deep, slow breath’. Prayer has greater efficacy when it is accompanied by peaceful, rhythmic breathing. God says to us, ‘Take a deep breath and listen, and you will hear my voice’; when we breathe deeply and consciously we can more easily be in touch with God.

Let me explain one very simple exercise where you can associate a prayer with your breathing. You take a deep breath and at the same time mentally say a prayer; you hold your breath while saying another prayer; then you breathe out to the accompaniment of another prayer. For example, you can take the first three supplications of the *Lord’s Prayer*:

As you breathe in, say to yourself, ‘*Hallowed be your name*’;

As you hold your breath, say, ‘*Your kingdom come*’;

As you breathe out, say, ‘*Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*’.

But one of the very best exercises you can do – and I advise you to get into the habit of doing it every day, several times a day – is to inhale light. Pick a quiet spot where no one will disturb you, sit comfortably and breathe: imagine you are breathing in cosmic light, the light that is even subtler, infinitely subtler than sunlight, that intangible, invisible, quintessential light that permeates all creation. Let this light penetrate deep inside you and circulate through all your cells, all the organs of your body. Then, as you breathe out, draw it from yourself and project it outwards to enlighten, illuminate and help every single creature in the world. This is a truly extraordinary exercise for, in cabbalistic terms, you become the letter aleph. Aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, symbolizes one who receives light from heaven with one hand and distributes it with the other hand, to the whole of humanity. You cannot become aleph if you think only of yourself, if you keep all the light for yourself. Aleph is those whose only concern is to give, to warm, enlighten and vivify others, without a thought for themselves. They are creators, saviours of humanity, sons and daughters of God.<sup>6</sup>

Someone who learns to breathe consciously develops a clearer mind, a warmer heart and a stronger will. Also, because of their conscious participation in the work their body is doing, they become attuned to highly advanced, very luminous entities and, in this way, ensure favourable

conditions for their future incarnations. For these entities are attracted to them, a bond of friendship is created, and they help them and work in them. One day, when they leave this earth, they will come face to face with these friends with whom they have already learned to work.

Never forget that your body is a society whose members make a constant effort to maintain unity. At the moment, you still do not know all the associates living inside you, but when you go to the next world you will meet them and find out that they are your friends and that you have been living in the same house together. You will learn, also, that you are going to be associates again in your next incarnation. This is a very important question, and anyone who wants to manifest themselves fully and accomplish the divine mission for which they have been sent to earth must be aware of it.

Lyon, 27 March 1966

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The Lord's Prayer – *Matt. 6: 10*

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<sup>1</sup> See *Hrani Yoga – The alchemical and magical meaning of nutrition*, Complete Works, vol. 16.

<sup>2</sup> See *La pédagogie initiatique*, Complete Works, vol. 28, chap. 10: 'Le modèle solaire'.

<sup>3</sup> See part II of this chapter.

<sup>4</sup> See *A New Earth – Methods, exercises, formulas, prayers*, Complete Works, vol. 13, Appendix: 'The gymnastic exercises'.

<sup>5</sup> See *The Mysteries of Fire and Water*, Izvor Coll. n° 232, chap. 18: 'The coming of the holy spirit' and '*Il me montra un fleuve d'eau de la vie*', Synopsis Coll., Part VI, chap. 3: 'Le Moi supérieur. La descente du Saint-Esprit'.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Key to the Problems of Existence*, Complete Works, vol. 11, chap. 3: 'Giving and taking', *The Seeds of Happiness*, Izvor Coll. n° 231, chap. 16: 'Give without expecting anything in return' and chap. 17: 'Love without asking to be loved in return'.

## **Chapter Seventeen**

### **The cardinal feasts**

In the course of a year, as the sun moves round the circle of the zodiac, it travels through the four points known as the equinoxes and the solstices. The equinoxes correspond to the two days of the year when the sun crosses the equator and day and night are of equal length. These two days are March 21 and September 21. The solstices, on the other hand, correspond to the two days on which the angle between the sun and the equator is at its maximum. These are December 21, the winter solstice and the shortest day of the year, and June 21, the summer solstice and the longest day of the year.

To these four points in time, the solstices and the equinoxes, correspond four so-called cardinal feasts: Christmas, Easter, St John's and Michaelmas. These feast-days were instituted by the initiates as a reminder to human beings that, on those days, the sun sets particularly powerful currents in motion in the universe and that, if they are aware of them, human beings can draw on these currents and use them to advance their evolution. The passage from one season to the next occurs at these four points, each of which is a nexus of extraordinary forces proper to each season. The seasonal forces are organized and regulated by very powerful spirits, under the command of which are many lesser spirits whose task is to distribute these energies and forces to every part of the planet.

You must not think that everything happens automatically in nature; on the contrary, a whole host of spirits are actively involved. Some of them have been specially entrusted with the care of rocks, plants, animals and humans, and all the seasonal changes that occur are the result of their activity.

Let's begin by talking about the spring equinox, which falls on March 21 and is under the influence of Archangel Raphael. It is Raphael who gives orders to the entities under his command to work with the world's vegetation and to distribute the forces of growth and regeneration.

Archangel Raphael dwells in the sphere of Mercury, and his name means 'God the healer' or 'divine physician'. The mission of this archangel and of the angels under his command is to work on the divine power and give it the virtue of healing. Each of the archangels that govern the other seasons works with this same divine power and communicates to it other wavelengths and other virtues. The ancients knew exactly when and how to communicate with Raphael by the use of appropriate formulas, and in this way his science of the

healing properties of plants was revealed to them. The Greek god of medicine, Asclepios (the Roman Aesculapias), was in contact with the forces of Hermes (or, as the Romans called him, Mercury); it is not surprising, therefore, that for thousands of years the caduceus of Hermes has been the symbol of medicine. Think of these things when spring comes, and remember to unite yourself to Archangel Raphael; ask him to reveal to you the secret powers of plants, seeds and flowers so that you may benefit from the virtues that emanate from them.

When nature comes back to life in the spring, it reminds human beings that they, too, must come back to life, not physically, perhaps – that is hardly possible – but spiritually. Just as trees and plants receive a new influx of life with the rising sap, humans must work to cause the new spiritual sap to rise within them and bring new life to their subtle bodies.<sup>1</sup>

The great Christian feast of this season is Easter, the feast that commemorates Christ's resurrection. In this feast, the life of nature and the life of the soul coincide. If you are familiar with the science of symbols, you know that the life of an initiate corresponds to the life of nature: an initiate's life is a succession of symbolic episodes which follow each other in a certain order in view of a well-defined goal. The life of Jesus was patterned on the development of the earth and of the cosmos: it is a symbol that has universal significance. Like Jesus, the universe was born; like him, it will be crucified and, like him, it will rise from the dead.<sup>2</sup>

The traditional literature of all countries contains innumerable legends and accounts of mythological battles between the forces of light and darkness. On about June 21, with the summer solstice, we enter the period in which light triumphs over darkness, and a few days later, on June 24, we celebrate the feast of St John. On that date it is customary to light fires that burn all night. The summer solstice is ruled by Archangel Uriel. The Church never mentions this archangel, and you might well wonder why. Archangels Gabriel, Raphael and Michael, who preside over the three great feasts of the winter solstice and the spring and autumn equinoxes, are all familiar to Christians, but Uriel is almost unknown. Uriel is an archangel of light; his name means 'God is my light'. The feast of St John coincides with the moment when the sun enters Cancer – the sign in which Venus is in exaltation – and this is no chance coincidence, for the feast of St John is the feast of fire, the feast of the summer heat, which ripens fruit and all other things in nature. In summer, nature is on fire. But this fire is also the fire of physical, sensual love, and it

is well known that, in some countries, the night of St John was the occasion for all kinds of sexual excesses. This, no doubt, is why the Church has always preferred not to give prominence to Archangel Uriel and the celebration of the summer solstice.

In the sephirothic Tree of Life, Uriel is the archangel of the sephirah *Malkuth*, the earth. As such, he is in communication with the inner fire of the planet, and some of the angels under his command work with the metals and precious stones of the earth. This is the work the Greeks attributed to their god Hephaestus (the Roman Vulcan). Hephaestus, or Vulcan, used fire as he worked with stone and metal, for fire is the only force capable of melting stone and metal and making them malleable.

You must not confuse the subterranean regions of mineral and metallic fire with the regions of satanic fire. In spite of their proximity, the satanic world is completely separate from the world in which fire works on metals and minerals. The spirits that work in these subterranean forges of nature are divine; those that dwell in hell are fallen souls.

If we are conscious and attentive during this period of the summer solstice, when light is at its most powerful and the forces of night and of darkness are retreating, we will receive the power to launch an attack on our own inner darkness – and we will have a good chance of being victorious. When the nights are growing longer and light is fading, when the vital currents in the world are beginning to contract and slacken under pressure from contrary forces gaining in vigour, it is not the time to undertake this type of work. Conditions, both within and without, no longer lend themselves to a direct attack on hostile forces. In a period in which light is triumphant, however, men and women who are truly desirous of doing some important work for the world can do so in good conditions; if they have already settled their own, personal problems, they have the right and, even, the duty to go further.

Since Uriel is the archangel of fire, he has ties not only with physical, terrestrial fire but also with the fire of that tremendous sexual energy constantly simmering in man. It is precisely for this reason that it is essential to learn to work with Archangel Uriel: because it is essential to learn to work with fire in order to sublimate all these energies. What exactly is sublimation? It is the passage from one state to another, and it is heat that effects this passage. When the temperature is below 0°C, water freezes and becomes solid; if you heat it slightly to 1°C, it melts and becomes liquid

again. Heat it even more, to 100°C, and it changes into steam. And if you want to separate the oxygen from the hydrogen contained in steam, you will need even more heat. The only problem for engineers who use very high temperatures in transforming certain gases or liquids is that of finding containers and tubing made of suitable heat-resistant materials.

But all these modern techniques that science is learning to apply in dealing with matter have been known to esoteric science from earliest antiquity. The initiates, who have an intimate knowledge of human nature, have known for a long time that the human body is equipped with a network of circuits, ducts and ramifications that permit the circulation and transmutation of very potent elements. I am not talking about the circulatory system, although the capillaries are extremely fine blood vessels, nor about the even finer fibres of the nervous system. I am talking about another, even subtler network, which enables humans to transmute and sublimate matter and raise it to the etheric state. This process is constantly taking place in our bodies, thanks to the extremely complex and subtle networks with which our lungs, heart and brain and, above all, our spinal column have been equipped by Cosmic Intelligence.

These transformations take place in all human beings, but to a greater or lesser degree and, very often, without their knowledge. An unconscious work of spiritual alchemy is constantly going on in our souls and bodies; the important thing, now, is to become conscious of it, knowing that we are all equipped with the network of channels we need to sublimate raw matter and transport it to ever subtler regions. How can we best prepare ourselves for this work of sublimation? By living a life of purity and harmony and by consciously opening ourselves to the powerful currents of light from heaven.<sup>3</sup>

Archangel Michael presides over the autumn equinox, which occurs on September 22. On this day, the sun inaugurates a new cycle as it enters Libra. Fruit and nuts fall from the trees and decompose, leaving their empty husks on the ground; grains are sorted and consumed or stored in granaries before being sown to ensure a new cycle of growth. But this process of decomposition and sorting is not something that concerns only the world of plants; it also concerns human beings. Just as the fruit is separated from the tree and the seed from the fruit, so is the soul separated from the body, spiritually if not physically. The body is the envelope, the wrapping, and the soul is the seed that is planted above, in the soil of heaven. Man is a fruit, and when he is ripe, he must not fall to the ground like the fruits and seeds of the

earth, but soar away to heaven. Autumn is the season for that separation of which Hermes Trismegistus speaks: ‘You shall separate the subtle from the gross, gently and with great skill.’ To separate the subtle from the gross is to separate the spiritual from the material, and the whole of nature undergoes this process of separation in autumn, in preparation for the coming of new life. Just as Archangel Michael comes to separate the soul from the body, leaving the body to die, so an initiate allows some matter within him or her to die in order to liberate life.

Separation is a law of life. You can see this with respect to food, for instance: we have to sort and separate the good from the bad, discard the peel and the blemishes, and so on. This is so easy to do on the material level but we must also know how to do it – and be capable of doing it – on the spiritual level. Unfortunately, on that level, it is very difficult. Most people have no idea what to cut out or throw away: they swallow everything whole, like cats swallowing mice with the skin and entrails and everything! This, then, is what we have to learn from Archangel Michael: discrimination, how to choose and what to choose, how to separate the pure from the impure, the useful from the useless, the harmful from the beneficial, the dead from the living. The absence of discernment in this respect is the cause of all misfortunes.<sup>4</sup>

Archangel Michael separates the soul from the body because the soul has to travel and visit faraway places, not remain for ever on earth. An initiate, who sees how nature does things, says, ‘My soul is tied down; how can I set it free? How can I separate it from this heavy coating of matter? I must wait until it is ripe, then Archangel Michael will come and release it from its sheath of matter.’ Michaelmas is fabulously rich in meaning for those who understand that it can bring them total liberation.

Death, the separation from the physical body, is an ascension to a higher plane. The soul is carried away by St Michael and weighed in his scales. His sword severs the ties which hold it to the earth, then the soul is weighed, judged and sent to the sphere that corresponds to its degree of evolution.

Archangel Michael holds sway over the forces of balance and justice and, consequently, over the forces that enable us to distinguish between good and evil in order to free the good and transform the evil. But good and evil are so closely intertwined they cannot be separated prematurely without causing some damage. The art of separating opposites is the most difficult of all arts, and throughout the ages initiates have turned to nature for guidance. You

cannot separate a nut from its husk without damaging it, but nature knows how to do it: it allows the husk to ripen until it opens of itself and frees the nut. Similarly, a child is attached to its mother's womb, and to separate them prematurely would mean death to both mother and child. But if you wait, the fruit falls, and the cord that ties the child to its mother can be cut. This separation is the symbol of maturity.

I am sure you all remember the parable of the wheat and the weeds in the Gospel. When his servants asked the owner of the field whether they should uproot the weeds that had sprung up amongst the wheat, he replied, *'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn".'* The time of harvest comes when the fruit is ripe. We have to wait until then to separate good from evil, and that separation will be the work of Archangel Michael.<sup>5</sup>

It is Archangel Michael who has the principal role to play, also, in the purification of the earth. During the course of the centuries, a multitude of evil beings have inundated the earth with immensely destructive forces. These forces have accumulated in a vast reservoir and have taken the form of a monster known as the dragon or serpent. This is the dragon which is said to seduce the nations and mislead the children of God and to be the cause of all the sufferings of humanity. It is a prodigiously powerful egregor.<sup>4</sup> There have been men and women of great self-abnegation and courage who have thrown themselves into a struggle to the death against this monster, but, to this day, none have vanquished it. When the time is ripe, however, St Michael will rise and defeat it. Archangel Michael is the only one capable of defeating this egregor.<sup>6</sup> He and his heavenly hosts will answer the prayer that multitudes have addressed to the Lord for centuries. His victory has been foretold in Revelation and other books of sacred scripture. For this reason we should link ourselves to St Michael and ask him to protect us and to allow us to unite our efforts to his in order to strengthen his victory. Light will triumph over darkness: this has been foretold and it will be so. Why not have a share in that triumph? The children of God who take part in the combat led by this sun spirit, the mighty and most luminous power of God, Archangel Michael, will receive the kiss of the angel of fire. And this kiss, instead of burning them, will illuminate them.

Finally, on December 21, comes the winter solstice, presided over by

Archangel Gabriel, and a few days later it is Christmas. Christmas is the celebration of a birth, that is to say, of a descent into matter, a condensation, a crystallization reflecting the characteristic of winter, the season in which nature freezes and becomes immobile.

Archangel Gabriel commands the forces that have the property of condensing matter. If the influence of the moon had not been counterbalanced by other influences, it would have materialized and petrified everything that exists: plants and animals as well as people. Archangel Gabriel, therefore, is responsible for all materialization. When initiates want to materialize an idea, a plan, even if that materialization does not correspond to a particular birth, they use the favourable conditions offered to them by the occurrence of this feast. The winter solstice is a period for birth, a propitious period for something to be born on earth. The other feasts correspond to separation, resurrection and the kindling of fire; only the feast of Christmas is associated with material realization on earth.<sup>7</sup>

The equinoxes and solstices or, as I have called them, the four cardinal feasts, are the four most vital days in the year, and they are governed by Mercury (spring equinox), Venus (summer solstice), the Sun (autumn equinox) and the Moon (winter solstice). These are days of celebration for nature; the angels and archangels, all the forces of nature, even the divine Mother herself, all take part in the festivities. Only those who understand the importance of these high days and of the prodigious forces that flood the universe at these times can truly take part in the celebrations.

We all know how most people celebrate these occasions, particularly Christmas. Christmas has become simply an occasion for gluttony and licentiousness, for every kind of madness. And all these excesses leave people exhausted and drained. A feast day such as this, which should bring them regeneration and light, brings them only a further darkening of their consciousness.

The other day, I watched a debate on television about the notion of celebration. The panel included writers, film producers, sociologists and journalists, and they all agreed that holidays and feast days were good for people because they broke the monotony of the daily grind and provided a healthy occasion to relax and have fun. Every single one of those panelists talked only about pleasure, relaxation, recreation. Not one of them thought of saying that people could use these occasions of joy to advance their evolution and become more beautiful, noble and radiant. I was staggered. They all

seemed to think that it was important to ‘have fun’ and to ‘kill time’. No one seemed to realize that high days and holidays could also contribute to improving and ennobling human beings.

You will have to forgive me. Perhaps I am different from everybody else; perhaps I am a monster; but, for me, all our activities, whether work or celebration, must converge towards one single goal, one spiritual ideal, that of becoming better and more useful. To be sure, you are free to do what everybody else does; you are free to feast and amuse yourself like everybody else, but then you will never be anything but the weak, stunted, unstable being you are today – a slave, a victim! All the recreation and amusements in the world will not change that. Why not? Because you lack an ideal. I know: I always come back to this! I ask someone, ‘What is your ideal?’ ‘Oh, I don’t really know...’ ‘In that case’, I tell them, ‘you’re doomed!’ Believe me; nobody understands the tremendous advantage of having a sublime ideal, an ideal of perfection. That is the only thing that gives meaning to life.

Sevres, 29 September 1958

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<sup>1</sup> See *Vie et travail à l'École divine*, Complete Works, vol. 31, chap. 1: ‘La nouvelle vie’, part III.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Philosopher’s Stone – in the Gospels and in Alchemy*, Izvor Coll. n° 241, chap. 11: ‘The regeneration of matter: the cross and the crucible’; *La Fête de Pâques. ‘Je suis la résurrection et la vie’*, Brochure n° 308.

<sup>3</sup> See *Sexual Force or the Winged Dragon*, Izvor Coll. n° 205, chap. 9: ‘A high ideal transforms sexual energy’ and chap. 10: ‘Open your love to a higher path’.

<sup>4</sup> See *Cosmic Moral Law*, Complete Works, vol. 12, chap. 2: ‘The importance of choice’.

<sup>5</sup> See ‘*Et il me montra un fleuve d’eau de la vie*’, Synopsis Coll., Part IX, chap. 2: ‘La parabole de l’ivraie et du froment’.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Book of Revelations: A Commentary*, Izvor Coll. n° 230, chap. 11: ‘The Archangel Mikhaël casts out the dragon’.

<sup>7</sup> See *Noël et le mystère de la naissance du Christ*, Brochure n° 321.

## **Chapter Eighteen**

### **The moon and its influence on humans**

According to esoteric tradition, the moon came from outer space and was drawn into orbit round the earth by the forces of gravitation. Since then, it has never ceased to circle the earth, and although it is much smaller it is much older and also much more highly evolved than our planet. From the moon came instructors, beings of extraordinary, unimaginable intelligence, to share their knowledge with human beings, who were still, at the time, only slightly more advanced than the animals. And now, after millions of years of being vampirized by the earth, the moon is dying and becoming a cemetery.

Tradition tells us that the moon exerts a very special influence on the earth – not only the magnetic influence on tides, plants and the female cycle that we are all familiar with, but also a magic influence. The moon always has the same face turned towards the earth, and what no one knows is that the hidden face of the moon is a veritable hell, a dumping-ground for all the evil done by humankind, and that all this evil could, one day, be unleashed on the earth.

Sorcerers and black magicians, having managed to get hold of a smattering of the knowledge revealed by initiates of old, use the moon to work black magic. By the use of conjurations adapted to its various phases, they call on malevolent forces from the moon and use them to satisfy their lower appetites and win power, money and fame.<sup>1</sup>

In the days of ancient Greece, the region of Thessalonika was famous for its magicians, especially its female magicians, and it is well known that these sorceresses had extraordinary powers and that the moon played a prominent role in their magic rites. In view of the active role it has had in the practice of black magic and the fact that it is a receptacle for negative force, it seems reasonable to wonder whether it is not dangerous for human beings to walk on the surface of the moon, as the astronauts have done, and to bring back to earth samples of its soil for chemical analysis. This is a valid question.

Apparently, of course, there is no life on the moon, but even dead bodies release certain forces as they decompose, and we still do not know why the moon, which is dead, seems to vitalize the earth and stimulate the growth of vegetation, etc. Even if the atmosphere of the moon makes it impossible for human beings to live on its surface, that does not exclude the possibility of other forms of life, adapted to other conditions and subject to other laws. Who can be sure there are no living beings concealed under the surface of the

moon, inside some of those craters that have never been explored? There have been men and women, in the past, who lived underground and thrived in a troglodytic existence; it was only much later that they began to build houses in the open air – and, now, once again, people are building underground nuclear bomb shelters! It is quite possible that humans will, one day, go back to living inside the earth. Scientists would do well not to be in too much of a hurry to make any dogmatic statements about these things.

Generally speaking, it is not so much in their observations of the phenomena that scientists go wrong, but in their conclusions. On the basis of just one point, they often make assertions about every other phenomenon in life. But, although their conclusions may be correct in some cases, they are not necessarily so in all cases. There are still a great many scientists who maintain that there is no form of life on the moon or in other regions of space, simply because water and certain other elements which make life possible on earth are not present. How ridiculous to suppose that we know all the forms of life that nature could possibly create. Nature is a great deal more intelligent than all our scholars, chemists, biologists and astrophysicists combined. Above all, it has far more imagination than they have. It has created life in places and under conditions which, in their view, make it impossible – as on the moon, for instance!

I have not studied this question of the moon samples closely, but I do know that many scientists had a certain instinctive distrust of them, fearing that they might bring harmful bacteria to earth with them. There is no doubt that they have brought with them other harmful elements, harmful fluidic influences, and we may well discover, one day, that their arrival on earth corresponded with an unleashing of human passions and natural disasters. Not so many years hence, people will learn many things about the moon that coincide with traditional science.

But let's look at an aspect of the moon which has great importance in our daily lives. We say that the moon waxes and wanes. In reality, of course, this is simply a manner of speaking, just as we say that the sun rises and sets. The moon itself is always the same, but we on earth see it waxing or waning depending on its relative position to the sun and the earth. It waxes for fourteen days, and then for another fourteen days it wanes. These phases of the moon produce changes not only in the oceans and in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, but also in the biological, intellectual and psychic life of human beings and even of societies.

The successive phases of the moon can be compared to the sequence of seasons. The conditions in winter are not conducive to growth; trees that were once decked in a lovely mass of leaves, flowers and fruit, are bare, dark and barren. Are they dead? No, but their activity is all concentrated underground in the roots. In winter, the work of a tree takes place in the roots as it stores up the energies it needs to produce all that beauty, that abundance of flowers and fruit, once again in the coming spring and summer. And, when spring comes and the sun enters Aries, it not only gives the signal for all creatures to wake up and set to work again, it also gives them the conditions they need to manifest themselves. Everything in nature begins to stir: seeds, plants, trees, animals and even human beings. For, in human beings, as in nature itself, we distinguish two kinds of activity: one that is visible and corresponds to the spring and summer, and another that takes place underground in the subconscious and corresponds to autumn and winter.

In humans, the seasons complete their cycle not only once a year, but also once every twenty-eight days. For the first fourteen days, while the moon is waxing, human beings are full of energy and activity, and then for the next fourteen days, while the moon is on the wane, they are inclined to be more passive, sleepy and introverted. The lunar cycle takes just twenty-eight days, whereas the solar cycle takes twelve months: twelve times longer. The other planets also have a cycle in which winter and spring alternate; Jupiter's cycle, for instance, lasts twelve years.

But let's get back to the question of how the moon affects human beings: what goes on in human beings in the fortnight between the new moon and the full moon? All the forces and energies they had stored in their subconscious during the fourteen days of the waning moon rise to the level of consciousness, and they become more active and more expressive, lucid and dynamic. Then, after the full moon, when it begins to wane, they feel the need to rest and sleep more; it takes a greater effort to concentrate and be wakeful and resilient. The demands of their subconscious life have a stronger hold on them; the desire for food and sleep and sensual satisfaction become more acute, and they can more easily be discouraged or persuaded to abandon certain good intentions and backslide on the path of evolution.

When the moon is on the wane our activity takes place on a lower level, in our roots. We react like trees, storing up energies that are destined to manifest themselves later in our 'trunks' and 'branches'. There is no need to worry if a certain numbness creeps over you at these times; remind yourself you are

preparing for next spring (two weeks hence!) and that, when it comes, it will bring new forces and new activities; music and song will once again come into their own. You must do as farmers do, and learn to rest: a farmer waits patiently all through the winter for nature to awake from sleep.

If people do not know these natural rhythms exist, they can be deeply troubled by the variations they feel in themselves, and then these normal psychic processes can be perturbed. But if they understand what is going on, they can be easy in their mind. They will realize that they must not squander their energies and exhaust their reserves, in 'winter'; they can tell themselves, 'Don't worry, spring will come round again, and your dry river bed will once more be filled with torrents of water'.

If you are careful, you can perfectly well continue to work even when the moon is on the wane, but your clarity, intensity and productiveness will be less than during the period of the waxing moon. When the moon is on the wane, particularly in the last few days, it is much more difficult to meditate or fix your mind on luminous ideas and images; you have difficulty in raising your thoughts, you feel somnolent and dull, and all kinds of ideas that have nothing to do with your meditation keep interfering. You may try to overcome these problems, but it is not easy, for the wild animals within you have greater freedom at these times. The important thing is to keep an eye on your children, that is to say, on your divine aspirations, on all that is most precious within you, and keep them out of the reach of those wild animals until it is time for them to go back into their lairs.

One practical conclusion to be drawn from this is that you would do better to wait until the moon is waxing before undertaking any important work or committing yourself to any new activity, because conditions are more favourable then than during the period of the waning moon, when your reserves of energy are in danger of running out. You may wonder why human beings need to be outwardly active and to pour out their energies just when the moon is replenishing its own. They need this outward activity because they need to release the energies that have been accumulating while the moon was waning and emptying itself. You must try to understand this play of the balance of forces.

The moon's phases affect all creatures. As long as we are on earth and have a physical body, we are necessarily subject to the influence of the sun, the moon and the other planets. Even initiates are subject to these influences, the only difference being that, for them, their effect is not negative. When I

was young I was extremely sensitive to the influence of the moon; today, it still affects me, but not in the same way. If you observe your own reactions you will notice that, when the moon is on the wane, your hair is stiffer and your secretions are different. But people never really observe what is going on inside them. For my part, I never need to consult an almanac to know whether the moon is waxing or waning; my own body tells me.

During the waning moon, therefore, observe what goes on inside you; keep an eye on yourself, and don't embark upon any important new venture, for you may not have enough energy to carry it through to the end. You must realize, also, that the only really pure energies we can draw on are those from above. Human beings are like plants in reverse: their roots are above, in heaven; their brain does the work of the roots by drawing strength from the causal plane. The brains of plants, on the other hand, are their roots, which are buried in the soil; their leaves are their lungs, and their flowers are their reproductive organs. A plant whose roots have not done their work properly cannot produce fruit. Very often, in fact, if a tree has no fruit, it is because its roots are inhibited in some way. Similarly, a human being will be unproductive and incapable of manifesting themselves on the physical plane if their brain does not draw strength and vitality from heaven.

To conclude, let me remind you that the different phases of the moon can always be used for spiritual work. Suppose, for instance, you want to improve your will-power or your health, or to possess greater wisdom, love or light: wait until the moon is waxing, then at night you look at it, raise your right hand and say, 'Just as the moon grows full in the heavens, so may my whole being be filled with health and vigour – or with love, light, etc. – so that I may become a true servant of God.' You should repeat the formula three times. If you do this exercise frequently and regularly, you will see results, because it is a magic rite, and magic is always effective, always powerful. And when the moon is on the wane, you can use the opposite formula: 'Just as the moon is waning and fading in the heavens, so may such and such a vice or weakness diminish and disappear, for the glory of God.' Here, too, you should repeat the formula three times, with your right hand raised. Initiatic Science teaches us to use absolutely everything for our own advancement and perfection.

The Bonfin, 16 August 1966

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Book of Divine Magic*, Izvor Coll. n° 226, chap. 7: 'The Moon', and '*Au commencement était le Verbe*', Complete Works, vol. 9, chap. 10:

‘Le péché contre le Saint-Esprit est le péché contre l’amour’.

## Chapter Nineteen

### The glorified souls

The ‘glorified souls’ are the most highly evolved beings of the sephirah *Malkuth*. In Hebrew, they are called *ischim*, that is to say, humans. The *ischim* are the saints, patriarchs and prophets, the great Masters of humankind, the founders of religions, such as Hermes Trismegistus, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses and Jesus. They are the elect, and they form, as it were, a connecting link between the common run of men and women and the angelic hierarchies, from the angels to the seraphim.

What has become of these beings? Where are they? They are still with us; they have not abandoned humankind. They are still here, as a brotherhood of luminous beings on the invisible plane.<sup>1</sup> Above them, in the other sephiroth, there are other, more advanced beings with other names, united in an even vaster brotherhood. But here, in *Malkuth*, the *ischim* form a brotherhood whose role is to watch over humanity and channel cosmic forces to men and women to help them to grow spiritually. These beings exist and have always existed.

You have probably heard of the communion of saints, as it is called by Catholics, or of the community of Israel, as it is called in Judaism. These expressions both refer to the *ischim*. Every mystical movement has a different name for it, but they all refer to this assembly of glorified souls that exists in the invisible world, in the etheric layers of the earth. It is this assembly that sends its sons and daughters, its messengers, throughout the world, to carry out the programme ordained by the Creator for the future of humankind. It is this assembly that has introduced into the world the knowledge we now find scattered and fragmented in the different symbols and rites of the world’s religions. This is the true Universal White Brotherhood. We, on earth, in our own little Brotherhood, are simply preparing ourselves to be judged worthy, one day, to take part in the work of these beings, to live in communion with them.<sup>2</sup>

The *ischim* are beings who have completed their evolution; they are no longer subject to destiny; they are invulnerable and immortal and possess all knowledge and all powers. The question for us is how to communicate with them. First and foremost, we have to prepare ourselves: no one can gain access to their community unless they submit to certain rules and have already developed certain qualities and virtues. No one can force their way

into this holy assembly. Only those who understand where the true path lies and whose lives are pure and dedicated to the service of a high ideal will be accepted. The *ischim* gather to examine each case and decide whether a candidate will be admitted, and if the verdict is favourable they take them into their care and send them all the light and protection they need to become more and more like them, more and more a faithful reflection of the Godhead.

All the help we receive from the invisible world comes from the *ischim*, but they are not the supreme authority; the orders they relay to human beings here, on earth, come from far more exalted beings. The ultimate responsibility, therefore, is not theirs. They have to know the laws and be in constant communication with the angels, archangels, dominations and all the other sublime hierarchies. They contemplate the plans and designs of God, and when they are fully impregnated with them they seek out beings on earth who have prepared themselves and are fit to put these unfathomable plans into effect and accomplish the will of God.

But, as I have said, the *ischim* are not the highest authority; they are the bond, the link between humankind and the heavenly hierarchies; we cannot avoid going through them. In this sense, they are divinities on the physical plane: they can provoke or prevent certain events; they even have the power to inflict terrible punishment on humanity by unleashing the forces of nature. But they don't use this power, for they are the servants of love, wisdom and truth; they watch over us with almost as much patience and mercy as God himself. If they had wished to give free rein to their anger and indignation at the deplorable attitude of human beings, they could have done so a long time ago, and that would have meant the end of the world. You have no idea of the extent of their power.

As I have said, the Universal White Brotherhood here on earth is no more than a *pied-à-terre*, a foothold that we put at the disposal of these glorious, luminous beings for their work amongst humans. By means of our thoughts and feelings and our good will, we give them the favourable conditions they need in order to influence those who are still impervious to the divine currents.

When disciples realize that the Universal White Brotherhood on earth is a rallying point, a shelter for these luminous spirits, they feel they can hold their head high and take courage; they see that their own life, which had seemed so dull, insignificant and mediocre, is really very important. It

matters. It is useful! They become one with that immense body of the communion of saints, they work hard and consciously, sparing no pains in their endeavour to vibrate in unison with that glorious Brotherhood. Eventually, the time will come when they can really and truly be in touch with them, meet them and see them and even receive faculties, gifts and powers from them.

For me, there is nothing more important in life than to know that beings who have reached the very peak of human evolution really do exist and that they can help us to tread the same path. Why waste time filling your head with useless trivialities when you could be doing something useful and productive by thinking about such beings, every day? You will never have to regret any time spent in thinking of the communion of saints, of this confraternity of beings who no longer bear the slightest trace of human weaknesses. True, they have known something of human frailty while they were on earth, but they have freed themselves from it a long time ago.

Let me tell you just one more thing: when a woman is in labour, giving birth to a child, the very best work she can possibly do is to think of these beings and to place her child under their protection. What better guardians could her baby have than the freest and most praiseworthy, beautiful and powerful beings that have ever lived on this earth? If she offers her infant to heaven to be a servant of God, heaven will be always with it to lead it to the light.

Sevres, 14 April 1965

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<sup>1</sup> See *‘Cherchez le Royaume de Dieu et sa Justice’*, Synopsis Coll., Part VII, chap. 5: ‘Et je suis avec vous, tous les jours, jusqu’à la fin du monde’.

<sup>2</sup> See *On the Art of Teaching – from the Initiatic Point of View*, Complete Works, vol. 29, chap. 7: ‘On participating in the work of the Universal White Brotherhood’.

## Chapter Twenty

### The land of the living

*The Master reads the meditation for the day:*

‘The psalmist says, *‘I walk before the Lord in the land of the living.’* The land of the living can be understood to mean the earth, but the subtle, etheric reaches of the earth. For the earth is not only the world we see around us, the ground under our feet; it is also a subtle world inhabited by luminous spirits, angels and divinities, and Jesus still walks on that earth. Jesus has not left the world. Did he not promise, *‘Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age’*? Of course, he has left the physical world, but not the etheric, living, luminous, divine world. And the same is true for every being who purifies themselves and reaches great spiritual heights; they begin to dwell in this land of the living, which is a state of consciousness, a state of consciousness which enables us to be in communication with the great Masters, with angels and divinities, with the spirit of Christ.’

The cabbalistic tradition teaches that there are seven worlds, and it has a name for each of them. In reality, the ‘seven earths’ should be understood to mean the seven states of earth, ranging from the subtlest to the coarsest. The earth as we know it, with its mountains, rivers and volcanoes, is not the whole reality; it is only the densest, least subtle state of matter, where human beings found themselves after being banished from paradise for committing the first sin. It is paradise, that land from which they were banished, that is the true earth, the land of the living.

The truth is that the earth has the same structure as the human being. Humans are composed of seven ‘earths’, seven bodies, and this means that if you consider only someone’s physical body you will be very far from knowing the whole human being. If you want to know human beings, you also have to know them as they are on the etheric, astral, mental, causal, buddhic and atmic planes.

You are familiar with the axiom, ‘Humanity, know yourself, and you will know the universe and all the gods.’ The universe and humankind were created on the same pattern; it is a sign of the utmost ignorance, therefore, to consider only the physical, visible aspect of a human being as though that were the whole entity. What a narrow, inadequate view of humans! If human beings evolve so slowly it is because they restrict themselves to the things they can perceive with their five senses. Initiates go far beyond these limits;

they have explored all the dimensions of humankind and of the universe, and they have some notion of the wealth and splendour, the immensity, the infinity of creation.

The earth on which we walk, therefore, is analogous to our physical body and, like our body, has its own subtle bodies – etheric, astral, mental, etc. – by means of which it is in contact with the sun and the other planets. To all appearances, the earth is separated from the other planets; all the planets are separated from each other by great distances. But this separation is only apparent: by means of their subtle bodies, they are actually in close contact, and there is a constant giving and receiving between them. Entities travel from earth to the other planets and return loaded with new riches, whilst entities from other planets visit the earth. The exchanges that take place are unimaginable! All the planets taken as a whole represent a body, and the sun is the heart that gives life to this body. The solar system represents a living being with different organs, and, in the same way as in our own bodies, these organs are not isolated; they live and work together in a permanent state of communication and collaboration.<sup>1</sup> As astrology tells us, it is this close relationship that explains the influence of the planets on the creatures of earth.

The earth, therefore, is one of the organs of that great body formed by the solar system, and the entities that toil in its factories and workshops are influenced by the other planets, so that the metals, minerals and vegetables they manufacture also come under their influence. Many people think the earth is an inert body without life or intelligence. If this were so, how could it harvest the energies of the sun, as it does, and use them to nourish every living creature on its surface, both on dry land and in the depths of the oceans? Every form of life on earth is the work of the spirit of earth, this divine spirit that works in ceaseless collaboration with the spirits of the other planets and of the sun.

By means of its subtle bodies, as we have said, the earth is in touch with the sun and the other planets. Also, the earth is a living being; it thinks, feels, breathes and evolves, and it has an influence on human beings. Astrologers never mention the earth when they draw up a horoscope; they ignore it completely. And yet we are more powerfully influenced by the earth than by any of the other planets, for the element of proximity is very important in this respect. Why do you suppose the moon influences us more strongly than the sun? Because it is closer to us. And, since the earth is even closer, we are

naturally much more easily influenced by its different states. At times the earth is awake, at other times it is asleep; there are times when it is pensive, times when it is happy and times when it is sad. Nobody pays any attention to these things, and it is a great mistake, for we live in continual contact with the earth and are continually exposed to the influence of its fluctuating currents. Each one of us is influenced by the state of the earth at the moment of our birth – I don't know why this is barely mentioned in astrology.

The land of eternal life, the land of the living, is the home of very exalted spirits, the saints, prophets and great Masters. The fact that Jesus said, *'Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age'*, is proof that he never left this earth. Christ, both as divine principle and as the physical expression of this principle in the human person of Jesus, has not left the earth; he is still here, still at work. True, he has left the physical earth that we know best, but he still lives in the land of the living; it is there that he is at work, protecting, enlightening and guiding all those who have chosen to walk in the light.

We are told that, after his death, Jesus ascended into heaven, and it is true: his whole being is in heaven. And yet he is still at work on earth. It is important to understand this correctly. In our own case, we are on earth and our antennae are in heaven; in the case of Jesus, however, his whole being is in heaven, whilst his activity, his 'headquarters', are still on earth, on the etheric plane of earth. It is this etheric plane of earth that is the land of the living, and Jesus dwells there in the company of all his servants.

As for our earth, it is the land of the dead, a vale of tears and suffering. It is a hospital, a cemetery – and what a cemetery it is, indeed! Think of all the bones that have accumulated on the face of the earth during the course of millions of years! All those billions of men and women who have discarded their bones, their skin, their fat – and this is what we grow trees and flowers, fruit and vegetables on; this is what we build our houses on. There is not one corner of the earth that is not a graveyard. In other words, we all walk about and eat and drink and sleep in a graveyard! It is only on the etheric planes of the earth that this is not so; there are no graveyards on that level, and that is where the saints, prophets and great Masters have chosen to dwell.

It is on the etheric plane of earth that we must seek Jesus. Perhaps you will ask, 'Can't we find him in Palestine, in the Holy Land, where he actually lived? Isn't that the best place to find traces of his footsteps?' Don't be too disappointed if I tell you that traces of his presence have almost entirely

disappeared from those lands. Too many people have lived there since his time, and their thoughts and feelings have not always been very pure or luminous; they have sullied and polluted everything. The earth is no longer the same, and traces of his presence there have all disappeared. You must look for them, now, on the etheric planes of the earth.

Jesus lived and was crucified in Palestine. For centuries Christians made pilgrimages to his tomb and even waged endless wars against the Muhammadans in order to protect that tomb. It is better not to look too closely to see whether they were really interested only in Jesus' tomb – or, indeed, whether Jesus actually lay in that tomb – but even if he did, it was only his body that lay there, not his spirit. His spirit was elsewhere, in the most luminous regions of the universe, but also, and most importantly, his spirit was in his Teaching.

After the Master Peter Deunov died, some of the brothers and sisters of the Brotherhood in Bulgaria wrote to tell me they often went to pray by his grave. At the same time, in those very same letters, they told me of all the problems and quarrels that had arisen amongst them. These things made me very sad; I said to myself, 'They think they are close to the Master when they visit his grave, but they spend their time quarrelling with each other; what better proof that they have not been close to the Master?' Believe me, to go and visit the tomb of a saint or great Master is no guarantee that you will actually be in communion with their spirit.<sup>2</sup> If you are not ready to make the slightest effort to improve, it would be better not to go. It would be more honest to stay at home.

I am not saying it is pointless to go to the Holy Land and, even, to bring back a few pebbles or a handful of soil from the places where Jesus lived. What really matters is what is in your head. If you revere and love these things and try to be united with Jesus, of course, they can really help you, but of themselves they can give you nothing, because they have lost the vibrations that once impregnated them. Too many things that were not at all holy have taken place in the Holy Land in the last two thousand years, and they have erased most of the traces left by Jesus. This law is known to all initiates: something that is pure cannot survive for ever if too much impurity is heaped on it. This is why tradition has always required that in all sanctuaries and temples there should be a sacred place set apart and closed to the masses. However sacred a place may be, however pure and luminous the traces left on a building or the objects in it, if it is exposed to the comings and

goings of people who, because of the nature of their thoughts and feelings, bring with them spirits of darkness, all traces of purity and light will be destroyed. The entities of darkness drive out the entities of light. The work of purification has to be done all over again, every time.

The imprints of purity that remain on the physical plane are so subtle they cannot last for ever if other, antagonistic imprints are laid over them. Take the example of a butterfly's wings: the lovely, shimmering effect we find so enchanting comes from the very fine powder that covers them, but the slightest touch of a finger rubs off the powder, and then all that beauty disappears. Initiates have always protected sanctuaries and sacred objects so that the currents and forces of the divine world present in them should not be opposed by other forces, but once the initiates are no longer there and these holy places are taken over by others, their sacredness is gradually eroded.

This is why there are many places in Greece, Thrace, Egypt and India that have lost their divine forces; they no longer have the radiant influence they once had. For centuries, people have profaned them, and the invisible entities that were once there helping human beings have gone where conditions make it possible for them to manifest themselves. The traces of their presence no longer exist on the physical plane; you must look for them elsewhere, on subtler planes, on the etheric and causal planes, in those luminous spheres that the psalmist so aptly calls the '*land of the living*'.

Sevres, 4 January 1964

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'I walk before the Lord in the land of the living' – *Ps. 116: 9*

'Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age' – *Matt. 28: 20*

<sup>1</sup> See '*Et il me montra un fleuve d'eau de la vie*', Synopsis Coll., Part IX, chap. 1-II: 'Le grand cycle de la vie cosmique'.

<sup>2</sup> See '*In Spirit and in Truth*', Izvor Coll. n° 235, chap. 13: 'The spirit is not held captive in relics', and chap. 14: 'Speak to the spirit of those you love'.

## Chapter Twenty-One

### A magic wand

*The Master reads the meditation for the day:*

‘We have constantly to restore the connection between what is below and what is above, between the higher and the lower worlds, and this is what a magic wand does: a magic wand is a rod that links the two worlds. If a magus does not possess this wand within himself, he cannot set in motion the forces of nature or accomplish the smallest act of magic. If he does not understand that a true magic wand is an inner, living link, even with a physical wand in his hand, if that wand is purely external, he cannot be truly powerful.

The function of a magic wand is to connect the two worlds so that the current can flow freely between them. The central powerhouse in the world above produces an abundant supply of current, but if we want our lights to burn on earth they have to be connected to that powerhouse. And a magic wand is the connecting link. When a magus possesses this wand in himself, therefore, in his head and heart, in his soul and spirit, and when, in addition, he holds the material representation of this connection in his hand, in the form of a physical wand, he has the power to trigger a flow of energy from the divine world to the physical world. This is the symbolism of a magic wand.’

A magic wand is usually a twig of an almond tree or a hazel bush and is a cubit in length (the distance from the tips of your fingers to the elbow). When a magus wishes to make a magic wand, he prepares himself beforehand and then, before sunrise, cuts the wand from the tree while saying certain formulas. Then he consecrates it and fits a little cap on each end, one of silver and the other of gold, both engraved with certain words or symbols. The wand is then ready to be used to accomplish great good deeds.

A magic wand, therefore, is a connecting rod which brings the two poles of heaven and earth, the inner, psychic world and the outer, physical world, into contact, in order to give physical expression, concrete existence, to an idea, a thought, a mental image. In the light of this, we see how the formula *solve et coagula* can be said to sum up all work of magic. Thanks to these two operations, *solve* and *coagula*, a magus dissolves evil and condenses good.

When Jesus prayed with the words, ‘*Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*’,<sup>1</sup> he was creating this link, this connection between the higher and the lower worlds, of which the magic wand is the symbol. He was saying that

every human being has a magic role to play, that of bringing into this world the purity, light and harmony from above, so that the earth becomes a reflection of heaven, a tabernacle of the Almighty. The only way to achieve this ideal is to establish a link with heaven, to ensure that every fibre of one's being is perpetually in contact with heaven, so that the current may continue to flow. The powerhouse is in the sublime regions of the higher world; if we want our lamps and other inner appliances to light up and function, we must plug them into the power line from above.

A magic wand, therefore, is like an electrical connection that has to be plugged in, first and foremost, to heaven. But we must realize we all possess several wands, one on each plane of being. The wand of the atmic plane links our spirit to the Spirit of God; that of the buddhic plane links our soul to the Soul of the Universe; on the mental plane, our mind is linked to Cosmic Intelligence; on the astral plane our heart is linked to disinterested Love, and finally, on the physical plane, we have this little stick which we call a magic wand. But we also have our hands: the hand is a magic wand. If you have not got a wand, you can raise your arm – that is your wand – and say a few words, and if you are pure and luminous, if your vibrations are in harmony with heaven, the forces of nature will understand you and listen to you; they will hear and grant your request. Otherwise, you can keep your hand raised for years and get nothing... apart from a slap in the face from the heavenly entities for making a nuisance of yourself!

But wait; that's not all. Who can deny that the wand is a connecting rod? Don't all men have a wand with which they can connect two worlds? And when the connection is established, the current of life flows and produces the most marvellous results in the form of a child. Ignorant people continually use this wand; there is no denying they know how to make a connection but to what purpose? To produce a monster? Or simply to their own detriment? Nature created this rod on the physical level as a sacred symbol designed to show human beings, by analogy, that there are other connections to be made with other, sublime regions.<sup>2</sup>

I am sure you have all seen pictures or reproductions of paintings depicting a monarch seated on a throne holding an orb in the left hand and a baton or sceptre in the right hand. This is a symbolic representation of the masculine and feminine principles. The masculine principle is always represented as a straight line: a sceptre, a caduceus, a pillar, a tree, a mountain or a summit. The feminine principle, on the other hand, is

represented as a hollow or rounded object: a vase or chalice, a cave or grotto, an empty form of some kind. The monarch, who is represented in these paintings as being in possession of the two principles, is not an earthly king or queen, for the monarchs of the earth have no veritable knowledge or power. It is a spiritual monarch, an initiate who knows how to use the masculine and feminine principles, how to connect and combine them to produce something marvellous. This is the meaning of the royal sceptre and orb.<sup>3</sup> It is striking that men always feel more drawn to working with a magic wand, whereas women are more attracted by a crystal ball. A crystal ball is receptive and passive, it can capture images that float in space, and women, who are more mediumistic than men, are attracted by clairvoyance. A magic wand, on the other hand, is emissive and, consequently, more attractive to men, for men are active and dynamic, always ready to exercise their will and manifest their strength.

In fact, every man and every woman must develop both principles in themselves. It is not good to be too feminine, too easily influenced and vulnerable, at the mercy of every passing current; you must learn to defend yourself and to control situations instead of simply suffering and weeping and making yourself ill. But you must not be too masculine either; you must not copy those who are always trying to dominate and impose their will, by violence if necessary, and who end up destroying everything. You must learn to balance the masculine principle with a gentler, more measured, more merciful and compassionate element. Perfection is not possible if you develop only one aspect, only the masculine or only the feminine side of your being. Only when you have established perfect balance, perfect harmony between the two, can you be sure of always being inspired to do what should be done.

The Bonfin, 16 August 1975

#### **BIBLICAL REFERENCES**

‘Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven’ – Matt. 6:10

<sup>1</sup> See ‘*Cherchez le Royaume de Dieu et sa Justice*’, Synopsis Coll., Part II, chap. 3: ‘Sur la terre comme au Ciel’.

<sup>2</sup> See *Love and Sexuality*, Complete Works, vol. 15, chap. 24: ‘Whatever you bind on earth’.

<sup>3</sup> See *Cosmic Balance – The Secret of Polarity*, Izvor Coll. n° 237, chap. 11-I: ‘Sceptre and orb’.

## Chapter Twenty-Two

### Nature spirits

The very least you can do, if you want to communicate with nature, is to accept the idea that it is alive and intelligent. Most human beings behave as though nature were dead, and the result is that their own inner life vibrates less powerfully and with less intensity, and their God-given faculties of perception and sensation are gradually paralysed.<sup>1</sup> ‘What is the point’, they ask, ‘of trying to communicate with rocks, plants or the sun? They’re not alive.’ With this attitude they dull the edge of their own faculties and put themselves into a strait-jacket of their own making. Those who believe that nature is alive and intelligent, on the other hand, make an effort not only to understand its language but, also, to find new means of expression that allow them to communicate with it.

The Creator has given us all kinds of means for expressing our thoughts and desires, and even if we don’t receive any very striking response our words do have an effect on objects, on trees, on the light, on every living species. Everything that lives on earth has its own particular way of expressing itself; everything in the universe, and the universe itself, expresses itself. But not everybody understands what is expressed, and it is up to disciples to cultivate their faculties of perception so they can understand these different manifestations and forms of language. Some people – mediums, for instance – already have this gift. In fact, I once knew a boy who could understand what an animal was saying. He could communicate with animals. He would tell us, for example, ‘He’s got a thorn in his paw’, and when we looked it was always true; this boy often proved that he could understand the language of animals.

Sometimes, too, this understanding can be given to someone just once. I remember the case of a friend of mine, in Bulgaria; he was a very sensitive young man, and one day when he was sitting under a tree meditating he heard the tree moaning and asking him to help it: some wire had got into its foot and was hurting it. There was some tall grass growing round the foot of the tree and my friend had not seen the wire when he sat down, but now he looked more closely, and, sure enough, there it was, embedded in the wood. He managed to get it out, and the extraordinary thing is that he heard the tree thanking him. The story is unbelievable, isn’t it? Well, I for one believe it! I am no child; you cannot make me swallow just anything, but there are certain

things I have proved to my own satisfaction and I know are true.

Of course, I am not saying that such gifts are not extremely rare; it is not everybody that can interpret the language of flowers, trees or birds. But everybody can express themselves to them; everybody can do as I do and speak to rocks, lakes, rivers and mountains. I constantly talk to everything in nature without worrying about whether I have been heard or not, because Initiatic Science tells us that the only reality is what we ourselves create by our thoughts and feelings, our desires, our words and gestures. This is what is recorded, inscribed, in the akasha chronica, the archives of the universe, and one day it must have its effect. You must continually act, continually create; the only thing that need concern you is that you create only what is beneficial, harmonious and luminous. In this case, the whole of nature will open up to you, and then you will really understand that it is intensely alive.

If you want nature to speak to you, therefore, if you want it to reveal its secrets to you, there is only one way, and that is to change your attitude. Change your attitude towards the sun, the stars, mountains and flowers, and, above all, realize that nature is intelligent, that men and women have no monopoly on intelligence. If you turn to nature as to a living, intelligent reality and address it with respect, it will begin to reveal itself to you, and it will also reveal to you the entities that inhabit the four elements of fire, air, water and earth.

The traditional lore of every country in the world testifies to the existence of creatures other than humans that inhabit the different kingdoms of nature. There is great variety in the names given to these creatures, but those we are most familiar with in the West are the elves or pixies, fairies, gnomes, salamanders, sylphs, nymphs or undines and sirens. Do these creatures really exist? Most people, nowadays, think they were invented by our distant forebears who still had the mentality of children. And yet, the very fact that people in every part of the world believe in their existence is a sure sign that there is an element of truth in that belief. Wherever you go in India, Japan or China, in the Scandinavian countries, in Africa or America, you will meet people who claim to have seen and talked to nature spirits.

The imagination of nature is inexhaustibly inventive, and before creating human beings it must surely have made a great many experiments and produced creatures very different from humans. Esotericists generally agree that there are four major categories of these beings, each category having a particular relationship with one of the four elements: gnomes correspond to

earth, nymphs or undines correspond to water, sylphs correspond to air, and salamanders to fire. I shall not say more than a few words about these four categories today; if you want to learn more, you can consult some of the many books on the subject.

Gnomes are tiny beings, quite similar in general appearance to humans: they have arms and legs, a nose, eyes and ears, etc. But their aspect is often unlovely and even ridiculous, for there is a lack of symmetry in their faces and bodies. According to clairvoyants who have seen them, they dress in peculiar clothes and wear little pointed hats, exactly like the hats of the dwarfs in the pictures of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. They can go in and out of the ground, even rocks, without the slightest difficulty, for the matter of their bodies is not the same as ours, and the earth offers them no resistance. The element earth predominates in their make-up, combined with very little water, even less air and almost no fire. From time to time, they condense their bodies in order to make themselves visible to men. Their work is with the riches of the earth; they are the guardians of metals and precious stones, and, in fact, if someone makes friends with them, they sometimes give that person a gift of gold or a precious stone. They are not very communicative, but it is possible to win their friendship. Some of them are in the habit of slipping into a farmhouse, for instance, and settling down in a nook by the fireplace. The people of the house don't know that they are there, but they benefit from their friendly presence.

Nymphs or undines also resemble human beings. They are a little bigger than gnomes but smaller than humans; most of them are female and extremely beautiful. Their favourite haunts are watery environments: rivers, waterfalls, ponds, lakes, seas and oceans. It seems they are inclined to be more gracious and friendly than gnomes, and indeed they often fall in love with human beings. In fact, men have been known to marry nymphs, but this is a very risky thing to do because they are extremely jealous; they can easily take revenge on an unfaithful husband by strangling or stabbing him.

Sylphs, on the other hand, live mainly in forests and up in the mountains. They are much bigger than humans, their appearance is extremely majestic and they are gifted with great intelligence. Sylphs are the friends of philosophers and thinkers and sometimes become their instructors. They can move about as they please and have the power suddenly to change their face or their size. They work on clouds, fashioning them into all kinds of forms, and those who know how to read these cloud formations learn a great deal

from them and can even read the future in them.

It is much more difficult for humans to communicate with salamanders. Only mages and initiates are capable of making friends with them, and thanks to this friendship they can obtain great power and learn to produce fire and release thunderbolts. Salamanders live in fire, for the matter of which they are composed consists principally of igneous particles.

It is possible for men and women to communicate with all these creatures that dwell in trees and in rocks, lakes and rivers. Generally speaking, they live for a very long time, but they do not have an immortal soul as humans do. Some of them long to be immortal and try to have a relationship with human beings, because that is the only way they can gain immortality.

Some of these nature spirits are called 'devas', and their special task is to care for plants. Wherever there is vegetation, there you will find devas. When the warmth and humidity of spring cause the tiny seeds in the soil to divide and sprout, they produce a sound, as though they were calling for help. The devas hear this sound and hurry to succour and nourish them, just as a mother flies to the rescue when she hears her baby crying. At later stages of their growth, plants emit other sounds, and the nature spirits that take care of them are of a different category. Devas are as highly specialized as the workers in certain kinds of factories; they know how to do only one thing. Some specialize in giving flowers their colours, others give them their geometrical shapes, others give them their vitality, and so on. A stupendous amount of work is constantly going on wherever there are trees and plants, even in your own houses. When you have a vase of flowers or a bowl of fruit in your house, there are always some nature spirits that sense their presence and come to take care of them.

When you are walking out-of-doors, in the midst of nature, try to be aware of the presence of these devas. They are very advanced spirits, wholly at the service of the supreme Intelligence that governs all things in nature and by whom they were created long before we existed. It is good to get in touch with them and talk to them and praise the beauty of their work. You will make them very happy if you do this; they will be your friends and will smile on you and give you all kinds of gifts: vitality, joy, poetic inspiration, even clairvoyance.

When they see a human being who is capable of wonder, the spirits of nature whisper the secrets of their realm in his or her ear. If the gnomes see you looking at stones and crystals and admiring the beauty of their forms and

colours, for instance, they make a note of it, and one day they will lead you to a gold mine or a secret store of precious stones. Do you think that only happens in fairytales? Perhaps so! Think what you like, but the same is true of the spirits that watch over plants and animals. These beings are everywhere; your attitude is very obvious to them, and they can tell whether you are capable of wonder, and when they see that you are they are willing to be your friends. They say, 'Here is a true child of God; let's teach them the language of nature.'<sup>2</sup> Little by little, they flock round you, and wherever you go you are accompanied and inspired, nourished and helped by sylphs and sometimes, even, salamanders.

When you go for a walk in the woods, you should go up to a tree and tell it, 'You are so strong and handsome! I wish I could be as strong and sturdy as you are. Please, tell all your brother trees how much I admire you all.' Then the spirits that live in that tree murmur amongst themselves: 'Most human beings are blind and half asleep, but this one senses our presence in the forest. What a magnificent surprise!' They will be so happy they will immediately tell all their fellow spirits about you, and then they will all come out of their hiding places to look at you and dance round you.

Then, too, you should call on all the trees of the forest to join in our work. Tell them, 'You know that God, your Creator, is very great and sublime; are you doing something special to serve him apart from your ordinary work? You must help the Universal White Brotherhood; it exists in the world in order to make men and women better and more enlightened so that the kingdom of God may be established on earth. And when this happens it will be to your advantage as well. So you must unite with all the trees of the world and give us a helping hand.' In this way, every tree on earth will be on the alert and join us in our work for the light.

Sometimes, if you look among the trees with your eyes just barely open, you will see an immense, majestic figure. This is the regent of the spirits of the forest, the egregor that unites them in one soul. It will wrap you in an immense mantle of light glowing with rays of every colour, and you will go home dazzled and overflowing with joy.

I repeat, you must talk to nature spirits and encourage them to collaborate in a divine work. When you are by the sea, speak to the spirits that live in the water. Call to them and say, 'What are you doing for the good of humanity? Try to have a good influence on those who come and bathe or sail here; try to inspire them with a desire to be different, to be better. They will not be easily

convinced, they're inclined to be very obstinate, but if you insist they'll listen to you in spite of themselves and begin to do as you tell them. So, set to work without delay!'

Let me tell you of an experience I had, one day, with the sea. I had gone a good way along the coast, amongst the rocks beyond Antheor, where there was nobody about. I dived into the water, wanting to do some work on the seas and oceans of the world, but the water was so happy it tried to get hold of me and swallow me up! If I had not made a tremendous effort to keep afloat and cling to a rock, that would have been the end of me! I shall never forget that experience. The water had sensed the work I intended to do, and, in their joy and delight, the hundreds of thousands of beings in the water and above the water tried to carry me off. I tell you frankly, I was really frightened! To this day, I wonder how I managed to resist them.

Nature spirits are pleased to be given a goal, some special work to do, for most of them have no notion of working for an ideal. Their only concern is to accomplish their set tasks, urged on by the fear of a superior force; this is why so many people use them for every kind of abominable work. As they have no moral sense, they can be used both for good and for evil, so it is up to us to put them to work in the cause of good. For my part, I have been doing this for many years, and billions of these spirits are on the march now in every part of the world, working in human minds. This is why many people are beginning to change, just a little; they have no idea what is happening, but something is urging them to wake up. Now, whether you believe me or not, that is your business. I am only telling you the truth.

Why are people so miserly they cannot even put in a good word for humanity? Their miserliness is due to ignorance. If they were enlightened, they would know that every good word, every good wish or desire must become reality sooner or later. From now on, whenever you find yourself in the midst of nature, remember to speak to all those creatures that inhabit the caverns and trees, the streams and lakes and even the stars, and call on them to come and take part in building the kingdom of God on earth. If you do this, heaven will recognize you as an artisan of the new life, a spring of fresh water, a true son or daughter of God.<sup>3</sup> The heavens and the earth, the oceans and all the elements have sworn a solemn oath to the Almighty to help all those who are working to become creators of beauty, harmony and splendour.

Human beings must rediscover their ties with universal life so as to be capable of working in harmony with that life and of understanding its

language in the song of the trees, flowers and water. *'In the beginning was the Word'*, said St John. Music is the divine Word that created all things. The whole of creation vibrates and sings. Man and woman are, themselves, music. When certain chakras in a person begin to open, they emit a special kind of music, and this music is heard as a cry for help by the luminous entities assigned to this work, who hasten to the person's side to help the chakras grow and blossom.

Videlinata (Switzerland), 3 December 1966

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'In the beginning was the Word' – John 1: 1

<sup>1</sup> See *Man's Subtle Bodies and Centres – the Aura, the Solar Plexus, the Chakras...*, Coll. Izvor n° 219, chap. 1: 'Human evolution and the development of the spiritual organs'.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Faith That Moves Mountains*, Izvor Coll. n° 238, chap. 12: 'God in creation'.

<sup>3</sup> See *Sons and Daughters of God*, Izvor Coll. n° 240, chap. 1: 'I came that they should have life', and chap. 12: 'Out of his belly shall flow living waters'.

## **Chapter Twenty-Three**

### **Objects are receptacles of life**

Everything in nature is animate; everything is alive. It is extremely important that you understand and learn to use this great truth.

Let me take a very concrete comparison: that of a car in motion. You know that the car you see going down the road cannot move of its own volition, so there must be someone inside who started it up and is now driving it. Later, if you see the same car, parked at the side of the road, you know that the driver has got out and left it. Perhaps you will object that nowadays there are all kinds of machines, vehicles, planes and rockets that don't need a driver or pilot at the controls. That is quite true, but even machines of this kind need someone to program them in advance or to guide them by remote control. Without having to be inside the vehicle, the person in control remains in contact with it and makes it obey his or her commands. Now, apply this to your physical body, and you will see it's exactly the same thing: our body is the car, the vehicle we are driving. Or, if you prefer, it is a house, a house that may be empty or inhabited; the occupant is our soul, which is sometimes away on a journey and sometimes comes back and takes charge again.

But there is something else you must know, which is that all the material objects we use every day, all those so-called inanimate things such as tables and chairs, clothes, lamps or household appliances, can also be animated if we invite spiritual entities to inhabit them. It is even possible to shut up intelligent entities, either good or evil, in boxes or chests. Unfortunately, there are people who have taken advantage of this knowledge and misused it. They have captured and imprisoned infernal spirits and kept them in chains in order to use them for their own evil purposes. But you can be sure that if I tell you about these things, it is solely with a view to a positive, luminous, harmonious, divine purpose.

It is perfectly true that there are certain methods and formulas that can be used to animate and give life to objects or houses – even to cars and machines of all kinds. What reason could anyone have for doing this? To ensure that these objects exert a benign influence on their lives. Most men and women haven't the least inkling of these things; they manufacture and build all kinds of goods, they use all kinds of machines and instruments in their homes, factories and laboratories, and yet it never occurs to them that there are

certain laws, certain truths, which they could use to set in motion a multitude of harmonious, beneficial, divine forces, which would help them to advance on the path of light. One day everybody will learn this science.

You must not live in a house before blessing it and dedicating it, for instance, to one of the seventy-two spirits of nature. It is possible to learn the names, attributes and virtues of these spirits and to invoke their assistance for all kinds of good work. They are always close by, and they ask nothing better than to be useful, for God created them to help the servants of light. It can be extremely useful to know these things.

There have been any number of cases of disasters brought on by objects that no one had thought to bless or consecrate. When certain objects that had once been in the possession of evildoers and wicked people were sold and came into the hands of others, they have often been the cause of an accident or other misfortune. Sold again, they again brought misfortune on their new owners, and so on until eventually they were destroyed. There are many stories of daggers, gems or statuettes that have brought ‘bad luck’ on their owners, either because they had been in the hands of a sorcerer and carried a curse or because they had been present at some terrible event and were saturated with evil vibrations.

For, don’t forget, everything that happens, whether on this earth or in other regions of the universe, is reflected and absorbed by the objects in the vicinity. It is important to know this. I have often spoken to you about it: everything you do in every room of your house leaves an imprint, an image, a recording, an indestructible memory on the etheric plane, which remains on the walls, the furniture and all the objects in the room. A medium, someone who is sensitive to these things, could tell you exactly what had happened in that room.<sup>1</sup>

God has conceived creation in such a way that the earth – particularly mountains and rocks – bears the record of human history from the very earliest times, billions of years ago. This is something which human beings will, one day, learn to decipher; they will learn to get all their knowledge from nature, for the minerals of the world are one immense library, the greatest archives in existence, and it is they that will reveal the past history of humankind. Every word, every thought or gesture, every feeling, whether good or bad, is reflected and leaves traces of its presence on surrounding objects. And these traces are virtually indelible; they are hidden deep beneath other traces, which are constantly being laid on top of them, but they are still

there, and it is possible to retrieve them. It is these traces that constitute what is known as the akashic records, and these can be studied by those who are interested and capable of doing so. Many initiates in the past have studied the history of humanity as it is recorded in these archives: they have gone into the whole thing in great detail and have transmitted much of what they discovered to us. This is how we have learned about all the different periods through which humankind has passed, how often and by what means it has perished, the degree of technical civilization and spiritual evolution that human beings of these different periods had reached, and so on. Cabbalists say that these archives are located in the sephirah Daath: the memory of the universe.<sup>2</sup>

The essential thing to remember is this: you must be conscious of the objects you possess or use. The first thing to do when you buy or receive something is to ask the invisible world to purify and exorcise it, in case persons or events have left discordant traces on it, which could have a negative effect on you. Begin, therefore, by asking heaven to send you entities that know how to rid the object or place of all negative particles or influences. Secondly, invite some spirits or entities of light to dwell in it, if it is a house or land, or to impregnate it with good vibrations so that it will have a beneficial influence on you. If you do this for everything, absolutely everything, even the clothes you buy and wear, you will see how enormously you will be helped, encouraged and strengthened. Your life will take on new meaning, and you will bless heaven for this new light.

Much of what human beings eat and drink, much of the clothing they wear and many of the objects they use are, without their knowing, impregnated with malignant, evil vibrations. These things can hinder them in their evolution. This is an extremely important truth I have revealed to you today; a truth that all initiatic schools have taught since earliest antiquity. From now on you must give it more and more room in your life.

What you have to do is very simple: bless the objects you use and dedicate them to the service of God. Ask luminous spirits to use them to assist your evolution and that of all humankind. There! The only thing that matters is that you do this (there is no need to go into details about the gestures or formulas to use); it is very important.

Let me add that there is no room in an initiatic school for those who doubt and refuse to believe; they are wasting their time here. In this school, you are learning the essential, divine, eternal truths that will enable you to renew and

rebuild yourselves and become true sons and daughters of God. Trust me and accept these things, for I have tried and tested the truth of everything I tell you.

Tibetan adepts are taught how to work with a statuette of a divinity. By concentrating and reciting certain magic formulas, they learn to impregnate a statuette with their own vitality until, one day, the divinity itself comes and dwells in it, and the adepts benefit from close contact with this higher being and from the help and advice it gives them. I tried this method once, to see if it was effective, and I found that it really was.<sup>3</sup> But my own method is even better: instead of wasting one's energies by concentrating on a statuette and trying to infuse life into it, it is far better to concentrate on the sun. The sun is, certainly, far more alive than any statuette! And if you gaze at the sun and focus all your thoughts and all your love on it for years and years, it will not be you who instil life into the sun – it certainly does not need to receive life from you – it will be the sun that vivifies you!

It is useful and necessary, therefore, to infuse good vibrations into an object, but that is not the be-all and end-all of the spiritual work you can do in this connection. Even if an object can be really helpful, it will never be part of your being; all that vitality with which you nourish it will not be yours any longer, once it has gone out from you. When you nourish a statuette or other object with elements drawn from yourself, you make it capable of living its own life. You are nurturing something other than yourself, something that remains foreign to yourself and which you will always be in danger of losing. Isn't it infinitely preferable to be animated and vivified, yourself, by the sun, the symbol of Christ? In this way your energies will always be yours, and the sun will continue to nourish them.

Everything is possible with white magic. Instead of being content to animate objects, why not animate yourself? For the most important 'object' of all is none other than you, yourself!

The Bonfin, 16 July 1967

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Book of Divine Magic*, Izvor Coll. n° 226, chap. 18: 'Protect your dwelling place'.

<sup>2</sup> See *'Et il me montra un fleuve d'eau de la vie'*, Synopsis Coll., Part V, chap. 2: 'Les séphiroth du pilier central – La séphira Daath'.

<sup>3</sup> See *'In Spirit and in Truth'*, Izvor Coll. n° 235, chap. 12: 'An image can be a support for prayer'.

## **Chapter Tenty-Four**

### **The holy grail**

Parsifal, setting out on his quest for the holy grail, is the eternal symbol of the adept setting out on the path of initiation. Like Parsifal, who had to make his way through dark forests, battle with awe-inspiring giants and knights and avoid the many snares laid in his path, an adept is required to brave darkness, combat enemies and overcome temptations. Once Parsifal had emerged victorious from all his trials, he was welcomed with solemnity in a marvellous castle whose walls were covered in gold and precious stones. It was here that he was vouchsafed the vision of the holy grail. The vision of the grail is the supreme reward of those who guard faithfully, in their heart and mind, the ideal of obtaining the priceless gifts of the spirit.

The task of those on a spiritual path is to lay hold of the divine Spirit, by means of meditation, prayer and contemplation, and to keep it captive in their soul. The presence of the captive Spirit within them manifests itself in the form of illumination, rapture and ecstasy. Unfortunately, this state does not usually last very long: they usually drop back into the misery of everyday life and have to begin their efforts all over again. The divine Spirit can never be held captive by someone who does not possess a suitable receptacle within themselves, the receptacle that tradition calls the 'holy grail'.

Alchemists used a different language to express the same reality: they spoke of 'fixing the volatile', that is to say, of capturing what, by definition, cannot be captured: the volatile spirit. But in order for the volatile, the cosmic Spirit, to be fixed, it has to be condensed and made material, and this is possible only if the reverse process of 'volatilizing the fixed', that is to say, of making subtle what is solid, is carried out at the same time. As long as the physical body is gross, dense and impure, it cannot vibrate in unison with the spirit nor hold it captive. This is why there is always need for a great deal of purification and decantation. Once this is done, the physical body becomes capable of receiving the divine Spirit. To volatilize what is fixed, therefore, is to spiritualize the physical body.

Cabbalists, for their part, have expressed this idea in the two interlaced triangles of the seal of Solomon. The triangle pointing downwards represents the descent of the spirit into matter, whereas the triangle pointing upwards represents the tendency of matter to rise and become one with the spirit. In this symbol, the two meet in mid-course and fuse into one. When the spirit

encounters matter capable of holding it, it no longer tries to escape. In the meantime, however... Well, in the meantime, a disciple will experience many ups and downs: when they manage to hold on to the spirit for a few moments, they are raised to a state of ecstasy before slipping back into the prose of everyday life. But they must never be discouraged; they must simply start climbing again and, even if they fall again and again, never give up. It is a long and arduous task, a seemingly endless toil like that of Sisyphus, who was condemned to roll a heavy stone up a hill. Every time he reached the top, the stone slipped from his grasp and rolled down to the foot of the mountain. But that does not mean that, one day, Sisyphus will not succeed in getting the stone to the top and keeping it there!

The chalice of the holy grail is the symbol of a human being who has succeeded in capturing and fixing the spirit within themselves.<sup>1</sup> The legend says it was carved out of a single emerald and that it had been used to hold Christ's blood. An emerald is green, the colour of Venus, the feminine principle; blood is red, the colour of Mars, the masculine principle. The Grail, therefore, is the symbol of the union of the masculine and feminine principles, Mars and Venus, but in their highest aspect, on the level at which they become identical with the Sun and the Moon. Iron, which is the metal attributed to Mars, and gold, which is that of the Sun, have many aspects in common, and the same is true of copper, the metal of Venus, and silver, the metal attributed to the Moon. We can see innumerable examples in nature of how green attracts and stores up the sun's rays. Vegetation, which is green, captures and condenses the sun's rays, and the sun's rays are yellow and orange because they are fire. All this is present in this marvellous symbol of the holy grail.

A disciple's dearest ideal is to become the holy grail and contain and condense the love of Christ. But to achieve this ideal, they must work on their own matter; they must refine it, make it subtler and more precious so that it becomes capable of vibrating in harmony with the spirit. This is the harmony that exists in every region of space, thanks to the activity of the two principles. A reflection of this harmony exists in the life of human beings in the form of choral singing: when male and female voices rise together and become one in space, life bursts into flower, water gushes from springs.

The only way to prepare yourself to receive the cosmic Spirit is to practise harmonizing yourself with the cosmos. This is a simple but very effective exercise, but it must be done every day, several times a day. Let me give you

the example of a man who goes to work every morning: as soon as he leaves his house he has to pay attention to the traffic and the people all round him. If he rushes out without looking left or right, without adapting himself to his new circumstances, he may well be killed. And the same is true in the spiritual life: before you begin any new work you should look to left and right within yourself and take stock of the situation. If there is a lot of noise and commotion, you must stop before going any further and, as head of state, do what needs to be done to restore order and peace among your citizens. When you sense that things have calmed down, then you can project all your strength, all your thoughts and feelings, into the whole cosmos. This harmony, this union, releases tremendous forces, which you can use to continue your work. For, if energy can be released by the disintegration of matter – the most common method – it can also be released by fusion. Initiates work with this second method; they fuse with heaven through meditation, prayer and contemplation, and this fusion releases powerful currents of forces which they can use for their own benefit and that of others.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *Love and Sexuality*, Complete Work, vol. 15, chap. 17: ‘Emptiness and fullness: the holy Grail’.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Seeds of Happiness*, Izvor Coll. n° 231, chap. 20: ‘Fusion on the higher planes’.

## **Chapter Twenty-Five**

### **Building the inner sanctuary**

In Chapter 21 of the book of *Revelation*, St John describes his vision of the heavenly Jerusalem. This new Jerusalem which St John saw descending out of heaven is, in fact, the human being, the new, regenerated human being; the foundations of precious stones on which the city rests are the virtues, and its gates are pearls. Why pearls?<sup>1</sup> Because pearls are symbols of purity, and all the ‘gates’ of the human body – the eyes, ears, mouth, etc. – are gates that must be guarded and kept absolutely pure, so as to ensure uninterrupted communication with heaven. Those who work according to the precepts of the Gospels and the new methods of our Teaching transform their old Adam into the Christ. That is what the new Jerusalem is. We have to work as masons to build the temple, but this temple is not built of stone and mortar; it is built of the subtlest materials of love, gentleness, humility, generosity and kindness. At all the most solemn and sacred moments of a person’s existence, when they experience a powerful impetus or emotion of a spiritual nature, they emanate pure elements and particles, and it is these elements and particles that constitute the building materials they use in the construction of their inner temple.

When human beings are sad, humiliated or ill-treated, they find it quite normal to express their distress and, even, to cry. But when divine beauty is revealed to them through art, music or poetry, they think it is more dignified to show no emotion. They would be ashamed to shed a tear! Well, I’m going to tell you that you should do just the opposite: in the face of humiliation and distress you should show yourself to be strong and serene, whereas, in the face of beauty, there is no reason why you should not be weak and shed a few tears. Tears motivated by beauty are a dew, a celestial shower, a glorious tide that purifies you, waters the flowers in your garden and thrusts you onward to continue your work. Tears of disappointment and bitterness may give you a certain relief, but that is all. Tears of wonderment and admiration, on the other hand, are impregnated with such divine power (this will probably astonish you greatly) that the Master Peter Deunov used to tell us to use a clean handkerchief to dry our eyes, for when it was impregnated with tears of this nature it would have magic powers; each tear shed in wonder and admiration contains something of the Godhead. It is these spiritual emotions, therefore, that constantly renew our strength and allow us to persevere in

building our inner temple, the new Jerusalem.

Actually, all these different terms – the inner temple, the new Jerusalem, the spiritual body, the body of glory – represent the same reality, and, if we fail to build our temple, our spiritual body,<sup>2</sup> we shall be incapable of dwelling once again in paradise, that is to say, in that ‘new earth’ that God is continually creating.

This may help you to understand better the importance of the work that each one of us is doing in the Universal White Brotherhood. And what a gigantic work it is: to build one’s own temple with the indestructible, incorruptible materials – symbolically speaking – of gold and precious stones. Each one of you must build your own temple. No one can do it for you. No one is going to bring the new Jerusalem down to earth while you sit in a pub with your glass of beer, lazily smoking your pipe or eating sausages! You had better get rid of any illusions you may still cherish on that score. There is only one way you can build your temple, the new Jerusalem, and that is with light and with the purity of your thoughts, feelings and emanations.

Blessed are those who have understood that the time has now come! Blessed are those who are working at the construction of their temple, who have made up their minds to invite their creator to dwell in their inner temple! Blessed and joyful are they, for they shall see the glory of God!

And don’t expect any compliments or rewards for your work. You must simply nurture and strengthen your inner conviction that you have chosen the only true path, the way that all the great spirits of the past have trodden. That is all. When you look for congratulations and reward you are holding up the construction of your temple. Keep moving forward. Never stop; you possess all the powers you need to achieve the most glorious destiny possible.

Those who aspire to this new situation must give up their old way of life in the realization that it has nothing to offer them. And, believe me, with a little effort it is possible. God is so generous that he gives to those who ask with conviction. But you have to prepare a place for him within yourself. If you do not keep a special place for him in your heart, he cannot come. Jesus said, *‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’* And the Lord would say the same, today: ‘There is room in your heart for all kinds of wild beasts – for all kinds of vices and passions – but there is no room for me.’ And, I assure you, the day God says such a thing to someone, that man or woman is a lost being.

One of the things I saw in India that pleased me very much and gave me a good deal of food for thought was that in every house, in the poorest hovel or the richest palace, there was always a little altar with pictures and statuettes of divinities, in front of which burned little lamps and sticks of incense. The great spiritual masters of India have succeeded in making the men and women of that country feel the need to set apart a special place for the spirits of light, so that they may bring them blessings.

These places are sometimes indoors and sometimes outside. Even hotels have small sanctuaries on the verandas or in the courtyards, and you see a great many in the streets. Of course, one thing that pleased me less was that I very rarely saw altars that were well looked after. There were all kinds of other things in the rooms in which the altar was set up, and even the pictures on them were often crumpled or stained. It seems the people of India attach little importance to cleanliness or order and a great deal to the symbolic aspect.

Mystics and those who aspire to a spiritual life need somewhere to be alone and to recollect themselves. It is, obviously, better to do this in solitude, in a room where you are not likely to be disturbed. This is why I strongly recommend that, if at all possible, you set aside a small space in your home, a space that is sacred, where people cannot come and go as they please. Even if it is no bigger than a telephone booth, the important thing is for it to be set apart and consecrated so that the vibrations and subtle fluids permeating it make it easier for you to communicate with celestial entities.

I remember that, in the past, in Bulgaria, every house had an icon in its little niche. Every evening they would light a small lamp in front of the icon, and the whole family would gather for a few moments of quiet prayer to beg for protection during the night. It was a custom that existed in many other countries as well, but nowadays it has almost entirely disappeared. Human beings have lost the desire to maintain a bond between themselves and their families and these luminous powers that could guide and protect them. They no longer even believe that such invisible protection is possible; they have other kinds of protection, physical, material protections, which, they believe, give them greater safety. In some cases this is true and in others not. It is good to have some form of protection on the physical plane, and technology is continually producing new devices to ensure the security of human beings; but, at the same time, it is indispensable to be protected on the spiritual plane by heavenly currents and entities.

Now, I must make it clear that this little sanctuary I was speaking about, the space in your house that I suggest you set aside and purify as an abode for the Deity, is simply a materialization on the physical plane of that other, invisible place that Jesus spoke of when he said, *'Whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.'* This secret place is a state of consciousness, a state of self-abnegation, kindness, sacrifice and love, and when one reaches this state, one can reach the Lord who is peace, light and life. It is not enough to set aside a place in your house for the Lord. If you really and truly want him to visit you, you must consecrate a place in your heart and soul, saying, 'This place is for the Lord or for the divine Mother, for Christ, for Archangel Michael...' Believe me, if you set aside a place for these glorious entities, they will come to it.<sup>3</sup>

Many luminous spirits that have already left the earth are also eager to help human beings, but they cannot do so because there is no place fit for them to come to. Nothing has been got ready for them, so they have no right to come. You will certainly be astonished by this and say, 'But I thought they had the power to do anything!' Yes, they have every power, but they respect the law, and the law says that they have no right to enter somewhere by force. It hurts them very much to see that no one, or almost no one, on earth remembers them or has kept anything of theirs with which to call them. It hurts them, but they still cannot go somewhere if nobody wants them. Is that so surprising? Well, surprising or not, that is how it is. The entities of the invisible world cannot do whatever they want, and if they go somewhere without permission they will be punished for it.

The great mages, who know these laws, guard the places they particularly want to keep safe by means of magic formulas or symbols, which prevent malicious spirits from breaking in. This is necessary, because if no obstacle is put in the way of the inferior spirits they break in and wander about and do all kinds of damage. Unlike the spirits of light, they don't wait for a specific invitation before entering; they have no great respect for these laws. They will refrain from entering a place only if they are expressly forbidden to do so by divine powers, because they know that if they disobeyed they would be pulverized. But, if you don't actually forbid them to come in, they will not hesitate to do so. And, after all, you cannot really blame them: if you let them do what they want, why should the Lord punish them? Humans have all the powers they need to oppose the spirits of darkness and say no to them. So it is entirely up to you to keep them out and to invite luminous spirits to come in,

instead, and help you build a strong and beautiful inner sanctuary.<sup>4</sup>

Sevres, 16 April 1960

#### **BIBLICAL REFERENCES**

The heavenly Jerusalem – *Revelation 21-22: 5*

‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests’ – *Luke 9: 58*

‘Whenever you pray, go into your room...’ – *Matt. 6: 6*

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Book of Revelations: A Commentary*, Izvor Coll. n° 230, chap. 17: ‘The heavenly city’.

<sup>2</sup> See ‘*You Are Gods*’, Synopsis Coll. Part IX, chap. 4: ‘The body of glory’ and ‘*Et il me montra un fleuve d’eau de la vie*’, Synopsis Coll., Part IV, chap. 4: ‘L’édification du corps glorieux’.

<sup>3</sup> See ‘*Know Thyself*’: *Jnana Yoga*, Complete Works, vol. 18, chap. 7: ‘Prayer’.

<sup>4</sup> See *Cherchez le Royaume de Dieu et sa Justice*, Synopsis Coll., Part III: ‘Vous êtes le temple du Dieu vivant’.