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Electronic Bulletin of the Lectorium Rosicrucianum

The Lectorium Rosicrucianum

Contact Information

Public Activities

Deceived by the Straightjacket of the Mind

Courage, Over-Confidence and Humility

Dec-Jan | 2015-16



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Volume 9.10
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* The text of this issue is from
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LECTORIUM ROSICRUCIANUM

There exists a golden thread, which leads out of the labyrinth of our broken reality and towards the Truth. The Lectorium Rosicrucianum, or International School of the Golden Rosycross, aims to help seekers find and form a living connection with this shining filament, which is woven of love, wisdom, knowledge (gnosis) and action.



Most importantly, this golden thread is a Path that can actually be walked, a Path shown by all religions in their original form. No Master or Initiate can give the Truth to another. It can only be approached by our own efforts, and by persevering throughout all the obstructions and difficulties we encounter on the way. And it can only be reached through an inner process of transformation called 'soul-rebirth', or 'transfiguration'. A bonafide School points out the Path of transfiguration and teaches its pupils how to follow it.

It is not the I-central self, or personality, that profits from the process of transfiguration as meant here, but the inner, divine Self, which is awakened and enabled to become increasingly active. This has tremendous results for the personality: he or she becomes an instrument, a servant, of another Order, the Divine Order, the 'kingdom not of this world', and in that state is able to stand right in the midst of the world in the service of every human being.

The Lectorium Rosicrucianum is a modern organization in the sense that its message is adapted to the strongly individualized consciousness of twenty-first century humanity. However, it has deep roots in the past, for it is part of the long and ancient tradition of Mystery Schools, and is a development of earlier impulses of spiritual awakening such as those of the gnostics, Cathars and classical Rosicrucians of the 17th century.

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PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

USA

December 13 - 5:30 pm

Conference Call: Eight Explorations

610 16th St.

2nd Floor, Suite 201

Oakland, CA 94612

Tel: 510-761- 6172 | bayarea@goldenrosycross.org

December 19 - 12:00 pm

Gnostic Christianity

40 Exchange Place, 3rd Floor

New York, NY 10005

Tel: 212-561-7358 | newyork@goldenrosycross.org

IRELAND

November 12 - 3:00 pm

January 12 - 6:00 pm

January 23 - 3:00 pm

Title: To Be Announced

The Lantern Centre

17 Synge Street

Dublin 8

Dublin, Ireland

info@goldenrosycross.ie

December 11 - 4:00 pm

January 22 - 4:00 pm

Title: To Be Announced

The Teaching Rooms

6 Sydney Place

Wellington Road

Cork, Ireland

info@goldenrosycross.ie



DECEIVED BY THE STRAIGHTJACKET OF THE MIND

'The highest knowledge is to know nothing.' All over the world there are people who have come to this conclusion. Others regard this ancient Rosicrucian statement as an incomprehensible paradox. What then is truth?

Classifying things into categories and imposing limitations by means of the mind can be helpful to organise our daily life. Yet, as soon as such methods are going to dominate our thinking, they obstruct our further development and deceive us inwardly. The Russian philosopher Leo Shestov (1866-1938) was one of those formidable thinkers, who was first of all occupied with the development of a 'philosophy of religion', because the intellect imposed too many restrictions on him. He was good friends with the Russian philosopher Berdjajev and visited his weekly salons in Paris regularly. Lev Shestov, his civilian name was Leo Isaak Schwarzmann, was born in Kiev. He studied in Moscow, Rome and Bern and escaped from the Bolsheviks to Geneva, from where he was invited to the Sorbonne. He spent the last years of his life in Paris. In 1938 he died, leaving behind an imposing body of philosophical works.

During his search for truth, Shestov gained numerous important insights and always formulated them in a new way. Frequently he described how the human being – forced by his mentality – deviated

from the way lying before him. He asked himself over and over again in the course of his examinations, what had formed his life and why he was led from the outside to the inside, to the '*mysterious immeasurable depth*'. In particular he concentrated his research on the motivation of the intellectual human being. For all his life he was fighting the dominance of the biological brain. This is one of the reasons why he is regarded as one of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century. Shestov spoke about the '*unrestricted nature of the objective mind*', which puts itself on a pedestal and thus threatens to dam any higher human faculty. This tendency to suppress pure inner life and to put the one-sided mind on the foreground was, however, not new.

'PHILOSOPHER OF THE ABYSS'

In order to distinguish himself from the numerous movements of his time occupied with this, he called himself the 'philosopher of the abyss'. He confronted the unlimited expansion power of the intellect with his '*apotheosis of the unfathomable depth*'. Thus he wanted to show the existence of mysterious and secret depths which are inaccessible to the intellect. But this very 'abyss' gives an opportunity for the manifestation of spiritual aspects. In this context he spoke from experience, for whatever he experienced himself as mysterious and unfathomable, ultimately

offered him the key to a more profound understanding of existence. He felt and assumed an immense creative *'freedom beyond the limits of the mind'*. That is why he used all his energy and attention to detach from the *'bogged-down intellectual starting points'*.

Shestov recognised very keenly that making excessive use of our reason also entails a threat to religious life. In his publication *Schlüsselgewalt* (Power of the Keys) he indicated how boldly and high-handedly the experimenting mind behaves, as it even wants to prove God. What hasn't reason been up to in the course of history! The errant reason constructed its own criteria to prove the existence of the Divine. As if God would bow down to such criteria! God was graciously proven by the conceited mind.

A WAY OUT WHERE THERE IS NO LONGER A WAY OUT

Where did the way lead that Shestov took? He stated: *'The one and only way out begins where, according to human standards, there is no longer a way out. You must turn to the unfathomable in order to be able to approach the impossible. [...] There is God, just because the unfathomable does not fit into any category of the mind.'* In another publication he stated: *'You must submerge in God and by a leap liberate yourself from everything rational.'* In that way he placed himself in the company of the early Christian writer Tertullian who noted: *'Credo quia absurdum! I believe, just because it breaks up the limits of the mind.'* In his book *Athens and Jerusalem* (1938), Shestov described his philosophy of life: *'Jerusalem must go to Athens to receive the blessing.'* And in *The Balance of Job. About the wellspring of eternal Truth* (1929), he used the same

image: *'Everything that comes from Jerusalem must be weighed in the balance of Athens, it is said.'* What was meant by that? Shestov called Athens the capital of pure reason and Jerusalem the capital of religious feeling. He saw no compromise between the intellectuality of Athens and the expectant desire of Jerusalem. Both excluded each other. *'Knowledge can never be the highest goal of the human being!'* That is why Shestov particularly condemned *'the drive for knowledge in philosophy'*, because, according to him, due to all that 'knowledge', 'the true gift of God' would be darkened. By this 'true gift' he meant the absolute, creative freedom which is brought about by the self-perceiving faith. In that way the human being could shake off the straightjacket of the mind. *'God is only present where no laws are dominating, but where freedom can live and breathe.'* He was convinced that the first warning against the working of the mind had already been described in the myth of the fall. According to Shestov, there was only an intellectual fall, which had to end with the expulsion of the human beings from the 'mysterious unfathomable'. That 'fall' originated from the *'craving for knowledge and eating from the poisoned fruits.'*

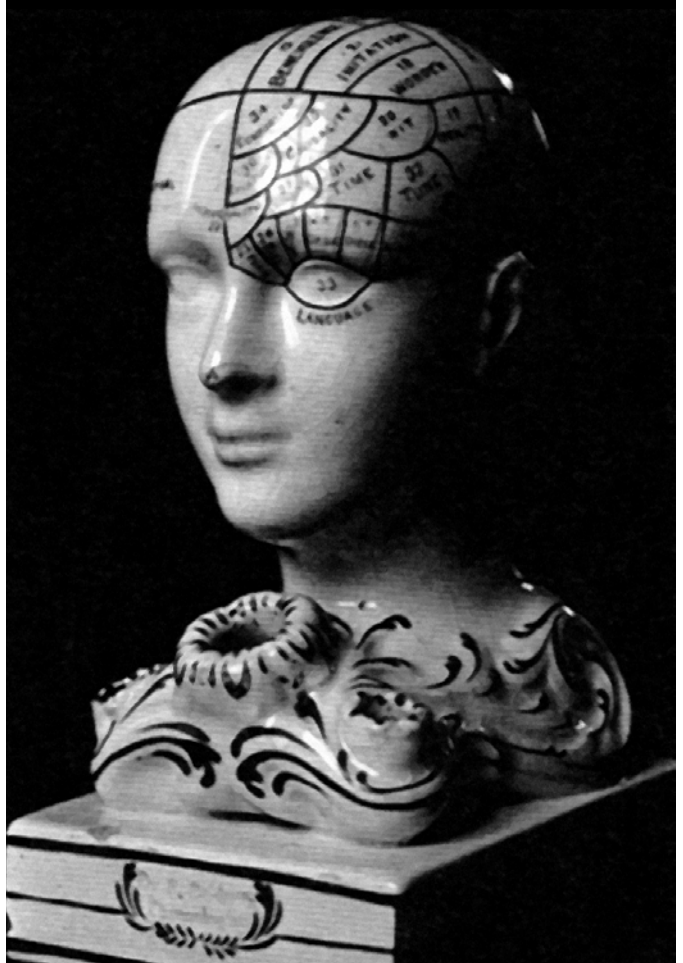
'CLOSING OFF THE PATH TO THE TRUTH'

Shestov characterised modern science as a cancer tumour. *'Science is spreading by the hour and thus is making the mists around the original mystery grow ever denser.'* As a true inhabitant of the border he experienced the unnatural dividing wall between himself and the unfathomable very intensely. Referring to this imprisonment he said: *'It is as if a power has decided to close off the way to truth already before the creation of the world.'*

Ever since the errant mind has been going dark ways. *'Either the whole construction of our world is wrong or all of us are going the wrong way to truth!'*

Shestov did not condemn thinking in general, but he turned against the addiction to thinking that causes all kinds of deviations, because the sharpened mind does not even understand itself. In vain he has sought for harmony between heart and head. He regarded the consciousness as veiled. *'People are living surrounded by an infinite number of secrets. [...] It is a mystery to what extent they have been cut off from their primordial origin and from the wellspring of life.'* Shestov was convinced that immense forces are slumbering in human souls, and that these forces could make them experience the *'unfathomable depth'* directly. In his publication *The Idea of Good* (1898), he pointed out how this can take place: *'Fraternal love is not yet God. You must rather seek after that which is higher than ordinary sympathy and compassion, higher than good. You must seek God!'* His search begins where *'the road leads beyond reason and morals.'* Since the publication of that work, Shestov has been regarded as one of the most important representatives of 'Russian religious renaissance'.

Which were the summits of his spiritual quest? Shestov experienced that the contrast between faith and science cannot be bridged. He was also able to experience how he received inner revelations through his faith. To him, inner revelation was absolutely different from knowledge. Shestov related that *'revelation can only take place on the mountain'*. He saw Moses on Mount Sinai and Jesus on the Mount of Olives and confronted his fellow human beings with these images in order to make them reflect profoundly on them. In his opinion all the strained intellectual



efforts of people took place in the lowest regions of life. That is why he called the materialised manifestations of truth merely *'embodiments of errors'*. He experienced his philosophy as *'the highest music in the sense of Plato'*.

'THE HUMAN BEING MUST STAND ON HIS INNER SCALES'

The philosopher Shestov did not live in seclusion. He exchanged ideas with well-known thinkers like Martin Buber, Albert Einstein, Marinan Zvetajeva, Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl. Boris Pasternak was influenced by his views. His old friend Sergey Bulgakov, a Russian philosopher of religion, describes him as follows: *'It was impossible not to like Shestov, even if you did not share his views. This is explained by his amazing tactfulness, his impressive goodness and benevolence. These attributes formed the general tone of his relationships with people –*

Earthenware head showing the place of the brain functions.

without any jealousy whatsoever. All of this went together with his hard struggle for spiritual achievements.'

According to him, what mattered was that the human being is going to stand on his inner scales. The potential of the soul must be manifested. That is why he chose the figure of Job from the *Old Testament* as an example. Job remained faithful to his inner consciousness. He trusted God uninterruptedly, although his suffering and distress increased daily. After it had finally become '*heavier than the sand of the sea*', he shouted in his despair and helplessness: '*Let me be weighed in a just balance, and let God know my integrity.*' Shestov was deeply impressed by Job's suffering, but above all by his steadfastness. Without grumbling he accepted and endured his fate, while he might as well have used his mind and fight God. Shestov was fascinated by this acceptance of fate. He regarded it as a distinctive mark of the genuine good that is present in a human being. Whenever that speaks, the tempters surround him, first of all his wife and his best friends who advised him 'for good reasons', in their opinion, to reject his God. Where then is divine justice, if someone is suffering like that? Yet, Job disregards such 'reasonable' advice, he is deaf to it.

'APOTHEOSIS OF THE UNFATHOMABLE'

With the theme of his *Balance of Job*, Shestov wanted to show that in a more profound sense the intellect is not important, '*because God looks on the heart.*' God hears the desperate cries from the depth, but He rejects the rational proposals of Job's friends. Only in this way the law of laws can be unveiled and recognised. That is the '*apotheosis of the unfathomable*', a higher reality, remaining concealed to the mind as we know it. Thus God is a power surpassing human reason. The

mind as far as it has developed in us, is a temporary one. Whoever holds on to it, clings to darkness.

Shestov showed that everyone '*should detach from this intellectual tutelage*' in order to be able to experience true life. Only after having left affairs of the world as defined by reason behind, he will find the way back to the spiritual fatherland. Like Job he will no longer nourish worldly expectations, but live consciously as a stranger in his everyday world. He experiences this 'being a stranger' as mercy, because he has been allowed to detach from the straightjacket of the mind. In her translation of *The Voice of the Silence*, H P Blavatsky called the mind the 'great slayer' that has to be eliminated and, Shestov wrote, be replaced by a new thinking. The philosophy of the Golden Rosycross describes in detail how that new thinking, which cannot be limited by any human restriction, can develop.

SOURCES:

Leo Shestov: *Athen und Jerusalem. Versuch einer religiösen Philosophie* (Athens and Jerusalem. Attempt at a philosophy of religion). Matthes & Seitz, Munich, 1994.

Idem, *Potestas Clavium – die Schlüsselgewalt* (Power of the Keys), Verlag Lambert Schneider, Heidelberg, 1956.

Idem, *Tolstoi und Nietzsche, die Idee des Guten in ihren Lehren* (Tolstoy and Nietzsche, the concept of Good in their teachings), Matthes & Seitz, Munich, 1994.

Idem, *Auf Hiobs Waage, Wanderungen durch das Seelenreich* (On Job's balance, Wanderings through the realm of the Soul), Verlag Herder, Vienna, 1950.

Sergey Bulgakov, quoted after Gustav A.

Conradi from: *Leo Schestow oder das paradisiacale Leben in der Schrift 'Die Idee des Guten'* (Leo Shestov or Paradisiacal life in the work 'The Idea of Good'), see 3.

Old Testament: 1 Sam.16:7; Job 6:3, 31:6.

COURAGE, OVER-CONFIDENCE AND HUMILITY

Everyone has his own associations with the word courage. Everyone will also have his own way when it comes to showing courage. It involves physical courage, social courage, moral courage, keeping courage. In this article we would like to examine if there is also such a thing as spiritual courage, and where it stands in relation to the kinds of courage we know.

A simple description of courage is: daring to do something difficult. As a small child it takes courage to shake hands with a stranger, to ride a bicycle without support, to jump into a pool during swimming lessons, to ask another child for the return of a toy that belongs to you, etc. The older people around you are there to 'encourage' you. In this way you develop the courage and stamina to take up your station in life. You look up to someone who 'dares to do anything', he is your hero. In fairytales as a child you find inspiration in the courage of the principal character. In the school paper there's a feature: Name a hero, or: Hero of the week. That also serves as an example. In the Netherlands the *Project The Hero* is run in primary schools, aimed at helping fight bullying, racism and random violence. Soccer and other 'heroes' are used to communicate the right standards and values. History lessons subsequently tell about major heroes from the past, who

physically distinguished themselves by their brave actions. In this way understanding is created for moral and physical courage. And then the challenge grows: to attack in a school debate an opinion you consider 'wrong', or to put your life on the line reacting to violence in school or in the street. To jump into a hundred metre deep shaft with a bungee cord tied around your legs, or to backpack through Australia alone.

Young persons want to explore their limits, to overcome their instincts of withdrawal, in short, to meet the challenge to overcome existential fear by force of will or to show what he or she stands for. That creates self-confidence and a feeling of power. Thus a mode of life develops in which situations are faced with courage and the beaten path is left. Sometimes this outward courage is fuelled by moral outrage and a desire develops to courageously fight injustice, for example through activism, with perhaps as its ultimate manifestation the joining of a guerrilla group that tries to stand up for the oppressed of this earth by means of violence. Then courage becomes true disregard for death. The power this produces can turn courage into haughtiness, arrogance, cruelty and other abuse of power.

Whoever has the courage to honestly look at this process can reach one conclusion only: this type of – outward – courage does not solve the injustice in this world. Lao Tzu says: *'The finest weapons are instruments of disaster. Those who pos-*

ness Tao will have nothing to do with them.’¹ But for the idealist who got bogged down, the apparent alternative – to cowardly let everything happen – has long since ceased to be an option. He has to do something. Hasn’t man been called to be his brother’s keeper? Jan van Rijckenborgh says in his comments on the text by Lao Tzu: *‘The only means to truly help humanity can be found in the application, the most radical application, of the universal power of love. That is not the love nature of the I-human being. This Divine love, the love that surpasses everything, can be released by those who possess a liberated soul.’*

What is being said here? Firstly that humanity can be helped in the absolute sense of the word, and secondly that this requires a liberated soul. Liberation of the soul could be described as: *‘in the world, but not of the world.’* Is that possible? Suppose a human being wants to choose this, wants to attain this state of being. That is certainly something that requires courage, but it is a different kind of courage. It primarily involves the courage to see the way in which the personality is bound to self-maintenance, to being ‘of the world’, by many threads. Hence it involves a merciless self-knowledge, and subsequently the radical demolition of the I-being and letting go of all selfishness. Existential fear, the fear of letting go, then becomes a looming presence. In the Bible we can read of him who overcomes this fear: *‘He who overcomes himself, is stronger than he who takes a city.’* Buddhism says: *The wise human being has no fear.*

That process means a hard inner struggle that requires incredible courage. For to gain insight into one’s own being brings much disillusionment. One can get so ‘dis-couraged’ that doubt strikes: ‘I will never be able to do that, I will never be such a liberated soul that can apply this universal love power.’ Pythagoras says in

his *Golden Verses* about this inner struggle: *‘If you have no courage, yet do take courage.’* If the courage, developed on the basis of the willpower of the I, can no longer be active because the I is being neutralised, courage can be taken from the new state of mind of the heart that is based on the soul. The point is no longer the courage of the I, but humility and meekness, that is the self-surrender of the I to the universal love power. Then the new soul grows. Then we will be able to release a constant stream of love on the basis of a truly pure mode of life.

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

The development described above can be found in the first three Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew. The first Beatitude is: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* This concerns those human beings who after their brave struggle in this world, find themselves defeated, and consciously experiencing being ‘poor in spirit’. It concerns people who, as J van Rijckenborgh says in *The Mystery of the Beatitudes*: *‘...are through experimenting with their humanistic endeavours. They have come to discover that they are dwellers of Ephesus, i.e. bound by the limitations of a form of goodness which can turn into its opposite at any moment.’*² For: *‘Humanism is that organised goodness which attempts to run evil down, without ever being able to catch it. It is the endeavour of humanism to neutralise evil, but throughout all ages it has never succeeded.’*³

This being stuck in this world leads to an intense distress of the soul, to knowing oneself to be poor in spirit. This humility, the recognition of one’s own weakness and impotence, is a prerequisite for evoking the universal love power. We may think of the eighth Song of Penitence of

the Pistis Sophia, about whom J van Rijkenborgh says: *'She gives up all self-maintenance, right into the most distant corners of her goodness. She surrenders herself and enters the period of humility. She has the courage to accept not-doing with the prayer: "Remember me according to the fullness of thy mercy, because of thy goodness, oh Lord." In this way, she has in her nature state carried out the greatest deed which she can possibly bring to the Gnosis.'*⁴

The second Beatitude reads: *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.* This concerns the mourning of the spirit-soul that is torn over the immeasurable suffering of the world and humanity. It is the bogged-down idealist who mourns, moved by inner compassion. Then the Light answers, bringing the comfort of insight. For that is the biggest comfort: to know how one can prepare for rendering true aid. It is a comfort to know that the path of soul liberation can be travelled, and that the liberated soul can use the universal love power.

The third Beatitude is: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.* When the human being has been linked with the universal love power, he will also receive the strength to use this love light, and to confirm it in nature. The only key to be employed is: meekness. Again we turn to the words Jan van Rijkenborgh spoke to his pupils: *'Meekness is the absolute courage which does not want to force and cannot force, by virtue of a person's inner state. The link with the Kingdom is the first pillar; the strength to accomplish the work is the second pillar. Now this twofold divine grace must be established in nature with meekness. It is with meekness that the victory must be gained.*

Courage, as understood in this nature, is always forcing and often the result of passion. With this kind of courage one is like a

*burglar. It is disruptive and destructive. But the courage that originates from the order of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the result of a renewed balance of the will. He who is meek is not craving for dazzling and sudden success, because he knows that the lustre of such success soon fades. He who is meek does not become disheartened when the result of his work fails to come, or when his field of work is besieged by satanic driving forces, for behind everything he sees the ultimate attainment of his aim shining as a sun which never sets. [...] Like a still flame the meek one keeps burning in the name of eternity and the consolation of Christ is the fuel that flows to him with a steady regularity.'*⁵

SOURCES:

¹ J van Rijkenborgh, *The Chinese Gnosis*, ch.31. Haarlem, 1996;

² J van Rijkenborgh, *The Mystery of the Beatitudes*, ch. 2. Haarlem, 1979;

³ J van Rijkenborgh, *The Mystery of the Beatitudes*, ch. 4. Haarlem, 1979;

⁴ J van Rijkenborgh, *The Gnostic Mysteries of the Pistis Sophia*, ch.47 (not published yet);

⁵ J van Rijkenborgh, *The Mystery of the Beatitudes*, ch. 6. Haarlem, 1979;

⁶ J van Rijkenborgh, *The Egyptian Arch-Gnosis*, part 2, ch. IX. Haarlem, 1987.

*Look, that is the secret of gnostic pupilship. It lies in being brave, in having courage to persevere in the face of impediments, against all opposition, to persevere in spite of what people may say and in spite of the situations and difficulties that may be gathering around us. If you cannot summon up this courage, if you do not possess this perseverance, if you do not desire to break through, you will never attain Wisdom, never arrive at love for humanity in the sense of the primordial law of the Gnosis. To 'love God above all' means to persevere in spite of everything, even if it sometimes does not suit you with respect to your everyday life. The Wisdom that is of God will come to you if you show this courage of conviction consistently. Then you will have passed the gate.'*⁶