



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF GNOSTIC STUDIES

Correspondence Course in Gnosis

Level 1 - Unit 1

INTRODUCTION TO GNOSIS



Introduction

Dear reader, the aim of this first Unit is to inform you about the foundations and objectives of Gnostic Knowledge.

In this Unit you will find an explanation of the meaning of the terms *gnosis*, *gnosticism*, *gnostic*, etc., and their implications in Art, Philosophy, Science and Religion, all of it within a particularly anthropological framework.

You will share with us an objective study of the prototypes and archetypes that are common to all peoples, races and cultures, thus reaching the original fountain of Universal Knowledge.

Gnosis is that original fountain of Knowledge. *Gnosis* is the Synthesis-Wisdom that enlightened the great *Serpentine Civilizations* of ancient times.

You will discover that *Gnosis* was the essence of all religions and spiritual traditions of the past.

It is necessary to distinguish between *religious essence* and *religious forms*. All religious forms decline and disappear with time. The essence always remains; only it changes its 'clothes' with the passing of time.

Gnosis is a perennial and universal philosophy. It is the Religion-Wisdom of the early times of humanity. It is the metaphysical and occult system of religions, which is only visible to Initiates.

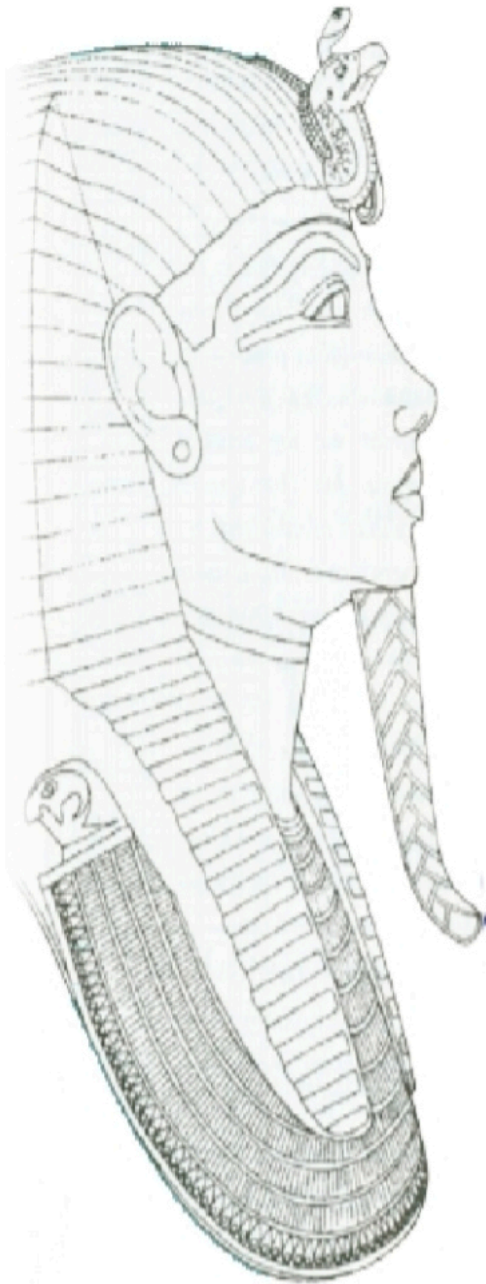
Dear reader, we invite you to enter the Sancta Sanctorum of the Temple of Pure Science, where you will know the postulates that were taught and practised in the ancient Initiatory Schools; the self-same postulates that were practised by the Egyptian Hierophants, the Pythagorean Sages, as well as by the ancient medieval Rosicrucians and the early Freemasons.

Gnosis is the secret doctrine of the Templar Knights and their quest for the Holy Grail. It is the alchemical wisdom of the Philosopher's Stone, didactically and dialectically explained. It is the self-same Secret Doctrine of Anahuac.

Gnosis is the Initiatory Wisdom of those who inhabited the Earth at the beginning of our present race, preserving the ancient forms of the genuine heliocentric and luminous tradition of Solar Consciousness.

INTRODUCTION TO GNOSIS

In view of the fact that the Gnostic studies have recently progressed extraordinarily, no researcher would today, as it was the case in the past, make the simplistic mistake of thinking that the *Gnostic currents* have sprung from some specific spiritual latitude.



Although it is true that in any Gnostic system we must take into account its Eastern Hellenistic elements, including Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, India, Palestine, Egypt, etc., we should never ignore the Gnostic principles that can be perceived in the sublime cults of the Nahuas, Toltecs, Aztecs, Zapotecs, Mayas, Chibchas, Incas, Quechuas, etc. of Indo-America.

Speaking very frankly and in plain language, we will say that **Gnosis is a very natural functioning of the Consciousness. It is a perennial and universal philosophy.**

Unquestionably, *Gnosis* is the enlightened knowledge of the *Initiatory Mysteries* reserved for an elite, because the 'many' reject it; they do not understand it or accept it.

The word *Gnosticism* contains, in its grammatical structure, the idea of systems or currents devoted to the *study of Gnosis*. Hermetic Gnosticism involves a coherent, clear and precise series of fundamental elements that can be verified through direct mystical experience.

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Therefore, it is a mistake to believe that *Gnosis* is a simple metaphysical current that has been introduced into the bosom of Christianity. Quite the opposite, *Gnosis* constitutes an **existential attitude** with characteristics of its own, which is deeply rooted in the oldest, highest and most refined esoteric aspiration of all peoples, the history of which, regrettably, is not well known to modern anthropologists.

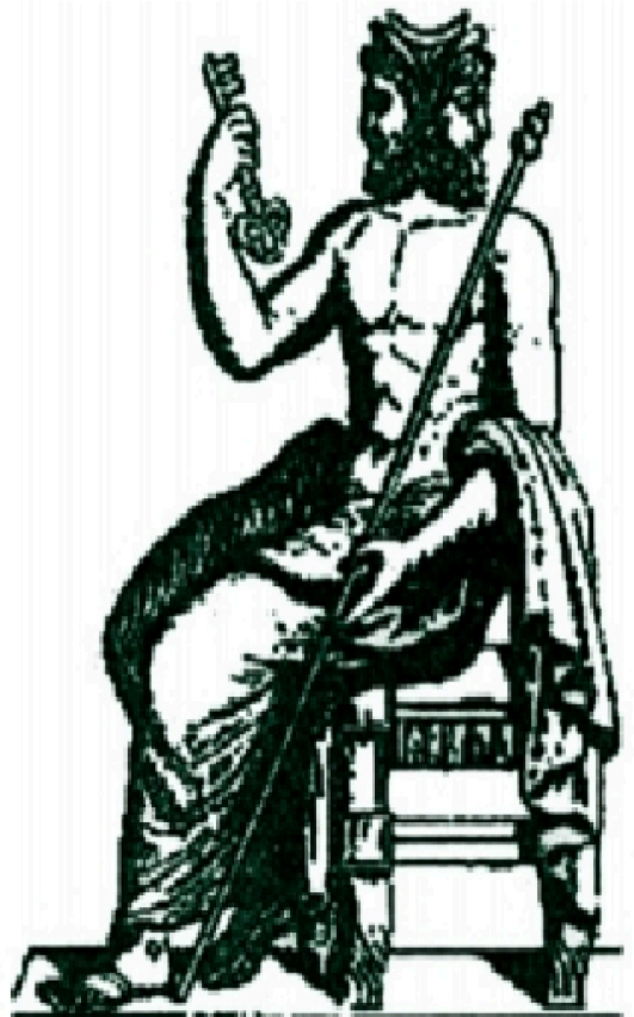
Gnosis is a **synthesis-doctrine**, humanity's early one, its origin being therefore as old as the world.

The word *jina*, from which the term *Gnosis* derives, originally comes from Parsee and Arabic. It is not *jina* but *djinn* or *djinn*, and this is how many authors use it. *Jana*, *Gnana*, *Yana* or *Gnosis* is the *Science of Janus*, the *Science of Initiatory Knowledge*, and the variants of its name are many, existing one in every language.

The fundamental *objective* of *Gnosis* is *to form Men*. This postulate, which many may find surprising, rests on the fact that in the present conditions the human being is just an *intellectual animal*, full of infinite psychological contradictions. The result of such an unfortunate psychological condition can easily be deduced: pain, mechanical and useless sufferings, illnesses, premature old age and death.

The *British Institute of Gnostic Studies* provides its students with special methods and systems so that every person can *be freed* from all those scourges that afflict humanity.

In this respect, *Gnosis* invites us to understand that there is '*something*' in us that is beyond the physical sphere of reality. We have a body of flesh and blood. This is obvious and anyone accepts this reality, but very few understand that we have also a personal *psychology* that can be changed.



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People generally believe that they are only in connection with the external world, but *Universal Gnosticism* teaches that the human being is in connection with an *internal world*, or *psychological space*, which is invisible to the physical senses, but which is visible to what eastern people call the 'third eye' or clairvoyance.

This internal world is far vaster and contains more interesting things than our physical surroundings, into which we are always looking out through the 'windows' of the five senses. Our thoughts, as well as our emotions, deep desires, hopes, fear, jealousy, frustrations, etc., are all *internal*; they are *psychological*. They are not visible to our ordinary senses, and yet to us they are more real than the dining-room table, for example, or than the living-room armchairs.

Certainly, we live in our internal world more than we do in the external one. And yet we attach a greater importance to what is external, to what is superficial, to what in reality has no transcendental importance. On the other hand, we do not really know the physical world in which we live. In this world, every one of us is conditioned by his own subjective and selfish interests, by his passions, desires, worries, etc., suffering mechanically without knowing why or for what purpose.



Now, there are more internal senses than external ones, and different schools have methods for developing them. But all of this could lead us to confusion and failure unless we begin by developing the sense of **psychological self-observation**. The development of the sense of *inner observation* gradually leads us to *self-knowledge*, since it allows us to make a psychological inventory

of what is superfluous in us and of what we lack, of what we know and of what we do not know. When this stage of *self-knowledge* is achieved, the other internal senses will have also extraordinarily developed.

Therefore, by self-discovering what we *are* internally and eliminating 'that' which is within us, and which keeps us in ignorance and makes our existence unhappy, we will resolve the *enigma* of our own life and will develop all our latent possibilities. That is why we have been told: '*Man know yourself and you will know the Universe and the Gods*'.

To find an answer to the following questions: WHO ARE WE? WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM? WHERE ARE WE GOING? WHAT IS THE REASON FOR OUR EXISTENCE?, etc., has always been the aspiration of the human being. To obtain an integral knowledge of oneself and of the Universe, of its material and spiritual destiny, **is the true objective of the Gnostic studies**. It is clear, nevertheless, that we cannot reach that knowledge by using ordinary intellectual means or by simply believing or theorizing. Unquestionably, **Gnostic knowledge** always escapes the normal analyses of subjective rationalism.

The *Intellect*, as an instrument of cognition, is inadequate; it is terribly poor. We need to distinguish between *Intellect* and *Consciousness*. The Intellect is educated intellectually. Consciousness is educated with the *Dialectics of Consciousness*. We must never confuse



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the *Intellect* or *memory* with *Consciousness*, since they are as different from each other as the light from the headlamps of a car is in relation to the road in which it travels.

Gnostic knowledge is related to the *infinite inwardness* of every one of us, to *that* which is not yet incarnated in us: to our INNER MASTER, to our BEING. Real Wisdom belongs to the BEING. The *self-knowledge of the Being* is a supra-rational movement that depends on Him, that has nothing to do with intellectualism. Only our Consciousness can know *that* which is The Real, *that* which is Truth. Only our Consciousness can penetrate into the legitimate essence of the Being.

We must point out that the human being is a trio of *body, Soul* and *Spirit*. The body is an instrument of manifestation in this three-dimensional world of Euclid (the physical world). The Soul is the *psyche*, and has *power of consciousness*. In addition, the Soul is immortal and returns to the physical world life after life. The Spirit is our BEING, and is far beyond the body and the Soul. (This trio will be studied in depth in coming Units).

Gnosis is fundamentally an *attitude* to life. Because of the Ego, our position or attitude to life is usually wrong. The Ego in man is an *aggregated* psychological element, which is not of his own, and which leads him to err in life. Gnosis aspires to restore in every one of us the ability to learn to live consciously and intelligently. This is not possible if we do not work on ourselves, if something does not die in us. In any real transformation there are at the same time *death* and *birth*.

Every one of us has a wrong creation (the *Ego*) within. It is imperative to destroy *what is false* so that a new creation can really emerge in us. *If the grain does not die, the plant cannot be born*. When the death of the Ego is absolute, that which is to be born is also absolute. We must, therefore, destroy the causes of ignorance so that Real Wisdom can be born in us.

We need to create the Man in every one of us, here and now. The true Man is not a product of the evolutionary mechanics, nor does he emerge from some belief or theorization. The *Real Man* is born in us when we have annihilated, through conscious labours and right efforts, all the psychological factors that turn us into simple *intellectual animals*.

Any sincere Gnostic longs for a radical, total and permanent change. He or she feels within the secret impulses of the BEING. Hence his or her struggle and rejection of the different 'inhuman elements' that constitute the Ego. The *egoical consciousness* (that is, the consciousness that is cooped up in the Ego)

painfully acts in accordance with its own conditioning. This means that the different forms of knowledge: Art, Science, Philosophy and Religion, are distorted when they pass through the psychic apparatus of the intellectual animal mistakenly called 'Man'.

Gnosis is Art, Science, Philosophy and Religion. Certainly, these four branches of knowledge are nowadays divorced from each other, and that is regrettable. For instance, in ancient times, art was deeply religious and extraordinarily scientific and philosophic. Today, these four aspects of the human psyche are separated from each other, and as a result they have brought about a certain degree of involution.

In order to capture or apprehend the deep meaning of those four pillars of knowledge, on which Gnosis rests, we need to activate our Consciousness. By dissolving the 'I', the Ego, the Oneself, our Consciousness is set free, awakens, is enlightened, and then, as a consequence or corollary, self-knowledge, **self-gnosis**, comes to us.

A legitimate revelation has its irrefutable and incontestable foundations in *self-gnosis*. Gnostic revelation is always immediate, direct and intuitive. It radically excludes any type of subjective intellectual operations. It has nothing to do with the experience and assemblage of sensory data.



GNOSIS AND THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE



Phenomenon is what we can, in some way, perceive with our physical senses, or through mechanical devices.

Noumenon is what neither senses nor devices can perceive. By the word *Appearance* we will mean the part of *phenomenon* that we can perceive, and by *Essence* we will mean the part of the *phenomenon* which we cannot perceive.

To reach the *essence* of the *phenomenon* should be the object of knowledge.

There are several theories intending to explain the *problem of knowledge*, but what is fundamental is that every human being, as a *cognizant subject*, should reach Truth, that is to say, what is fundamental is to get to know what a *phenomenon* is in itself, not only as *appearance* but also as *essence*.

In this regard, Gnosis points out that as long as the Consciousness remains cooped up in the 'I', in the 'Myself', in my own concepts, in my own theories, etc., it is impossible to directly know the harsh reality of natural phenomena, as they *are* in themselves.

Unfortunately, people want to see and discover their own prejudices, preconceptions, opinions and theories in every natural phenomenon. No one knows how to be receptive. No one knows how to see *the new* with a clean and spontaneous mind.

The best thing would be that phenomena speak to the scientist. Modern scientists, however, do not know how to see phenomena. They only want to see in them the confirmation of all their preconceptions.

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When we only see our own concepts in the phenomena of Nature, we are not seeing the phenomena, but our concepts.

Natural phenomena do not exactly coincide, in any way, with the concepts formulated by the mind. Life unfolds from instant to instant, and when we capture it to analyse it, we kill it.

To put it in another way. When, in observing some natural phenomenon or other, we try to infer concepts, we in fact cease to perceive the reality of the phenomenon, and we only see in it the reflection of our stale theories and concepts, which have nothing to do at all with the observed fact.

We need to distinguish between *concept* and *reality*. One thing is a concept and another, very different thing is the reality of life, itself free in its own movement. On the other hand, it is also good to know that all the laws of Nature are in ourselves, and *if we do not discover them within us*, we will not discover them anywhere else. Unquestionably, man is contained in the Universe and the Universe is contained in man.

The *Real* is what one experiences in oneself. Only the Consciousness can experience Reality. The language of the Consciousness is symbolic, intimate, deeply meaningful, and only *awakened men* can understand it.



GNOSIS AS SCIENCE



Those who *awaken* Consciousness have access to the universal and pure, Objective Science. That is why we should not let ourselves be fascinated by modern, subjective Science.

What Universal Gnosticism calls *Pure Science* is only possible for the men of awakened Consciousness, and it has nothing to do with the theories existing nowadays in the different schools, colleges and universities of the Earth.

Therefore, when we speak of *Gnostic Science*, or *Objective Science of the Being*, we think of the science that is expressed, for example, in the Aztec Calendar or 'Solar Stone'; we think of the Pure Science of the medieval Alchemists, the Science of Transmutation, the Science of the Mutants, the Science of Meditation, etc.

Science is the *certain knowledge* of all things by their principles and causes, and its highest degree is the **experimentation of our own**. Therefore, we have in ourselves the vehicle of experimentation; we have our own laboratory, which is our own body. In it we have all that is needed so that this becomes a reality.

The Gnostic Sages know the Eastern and Western systems of investigation. The Gnostics investigate the Higher Dimensions of Space and also the Infradimensions with the systems and methods of the Indian Yogis, and they also study the physical world with the Western methods of investigation. Both systems complement and harmonize each other, to give us a highly mystical and formidably technical and scientific culture and civilization.

GNOSIS AS PHILOSOPHY



Through the course of history, great philosophers have transmitted their most profound teachings. As great men and women who were inspired by the Universal Work concerning the world of nature, man and God, they were able to give us the notes, the deepest vibrations in which the human being has moved in the past, present and future. As great Masters, they did not create a temporary and passing philosophy, but they were able to create a philosophy in which man, the world and the gods are summed up, thus giving us a universal and timeless philosophy, which is valid both for their time and ours.

To sum up, they were able to *integrally abstract* man. They made Gnosis. They elaborated a synthetic doctrine. We find all of this in the great Initiates who have come to the Earth, like Krishna, Moses, Jesus, Quetzalcoatl, Pythagoras, Plato, Paracelsus...

Actually, as a Philosophy, Gnosis is a *functioning of the Consciousness* and springs from different latitudes. Those who think that it only originated either in Persia or in Iraq or in Palestine or in Medieval Europe, are mistaken. Gnostic Philosophy is found in any Hindu work, in any archaeological stone, etc. What we are now stating can be verified with the help of Gnostic Anthropology.

Of course, it would be altogether impossible to make a rigorous study of the different anthropological pieces of the Aztec, Toltec,

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Mayan, Egyptian, Inca, etc. serpentine cultures without having some previous information about Gnostic Anthropology.

The Mexican codices, Egyptian papyruses, Assyrian bricks, the Dead Sea scrolls, strange parchments, as well as certain very ancient temples, sacred monoliths, old hieroglyphics, pyramids, ancient tombs, etc., all offer, in their symbolic depth, a Gnostic sense which definitely escapes any literal interpretation, since they cannot be explained in any way from a solely intellectual point of view.

The speculative rationalism of modern anthropologists and historians, instead of enriching the Gnostic language, regrettably impoverishes it, since the Gnostic accounts or stories that have been written or allegorized in any artistic form are always geared towards the Being. And it is in this semi-philosophical and semi-mythological, very interesting language of Gnosis where we can find a series of extraordinary *invariants*, symbols with an esoteric meaning, which silently speak to the Consciousness. Gods and men know all too well that *silence is the eloquence of Wisdom*.

GNOSTIC ART OR NATURE'S REGAL ART

Gnostic Art can be found in all archaic pieces, in all ancient pieces, in all the pyramids and old obelisks of the Egypt of the Pharaohs, in ancient Mexico, among the Mayas, in the archaeological relics of the Aztecs, Zapotecs, Toltecs, etc., in the hieroglyphics and bas-reliefs of ancient Egypt, in China, in the old parchments of the Middle Ages, among the Phoenicians, Assyrians, etc., in the great Gothic constructions, and also in the paintings and sculptures of Michelangelo, in La Gioconda of Leonardo da Vinci, in the music of Beethoven, Mozart, Litz, Wagner...

We can also find Gnostic Art in the works of Universal Literature: in the Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer, in Dante's Divine Comedy and in a great many other works that contain the same *principles* of Universal Wisdom, only with different terms, and which are hidden in the veil of philosophical symbolism.

The Spirit manifests itself through Art. The *deep longings* of the Being are expressed and materialized on the canvas, on paper, in stone... They manifest themselves through bodily, verbal, musical, etc expression. Art is to try to seek the Being in his different expressions.

There are two types of Art: First, *Subjective Art*, which leads nowhere. Second, the Regal Art of Nature, the *Transcendental Art*, which is based on the Law of Seven. Obviously, this type of Art contains, in itself, precious cosmic truths.

Humanity's true artistic forms have all been always connected to Religion, to Science and to Philosophy. In every work of true Art there are evident messages to the Consciousness.



TRANSCENDENTAL MYSTICISM (RELIGION)

With regard to Religion, we study *religiosity* in its deepest form. Gnosis studies the *Science of Religions*. All religions are precious stones strung together in the golden thread of the Divinity. Religions preserve the *eternal values*. There are no false religions; they all fulfil their mission in life. The eternal values are always the same because they are universal. Religious principles never die. Religious forms may die, but the eternal values never die. They continue; they take on new forms.

If we study the religions of this world, if we make a comparative study of them, we can see in amazement that the sacred personages on whom they centre are children of immaculate conceptions. They are all born by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit. They are all born of Virgins who are immaculate before childbirth, at childbirth and after childbirth.

The poor and unknown Hebrew woman, Mary, the mother of the adorable Saviour Jesus the Christ, received the same attributes and cosmic powers as the Goddesses Isis, Juno, Demeter, Ceres, Vesta, Maia, Adonia, Rhea, Cybele, Tonantzin, etc. Every female deity always represents the Divine Mother, the Cosmic *Eternal Feminine*.

All religions speak about the soul, heaven, hell, etc. It is necessary to establish a clear distinction between religious *forms* and religious *principles*. Religious principles are living, scientific, artistic and philosophic formulas, whereas religious forms are the different systems or ways to teach those principles.



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It is also important to differentiate religious *consciousness* from religious *ideology*. The latter is based on belief, blind faith and dogma, whereas *religious consciousness* is based on direct mystical experience and on conscious faith, the latter arising from study and practice.

If the Gods were formerly worshipped, now they are also worshipped, only with other names. Religious forms *change* according to historical periods and cultures. Every culture needs its special religious form. All peoples need a religion. A people without a religion is in fact a completely barbarous, cruel and ruthless people.

Gnosis is concerned with the *religious essence*. Gnosis seeks *religare*, that is to say, to link again the Soul with the Inner Real Being, with the Divine that dwells deep within us. This involves great super-efforts, because one must eliminate the 'I' of experimental psychology. Only in that way is it possible to accomplish *religare*, about which the ancient sages spoke.

The type of religiosity that we possess is completely scientific, highly philosophic and deeply artistic. We seek the *Seity*, the *divine* in ourselves. We know that if we do not discover *that* which we call God in ourselves, we will not discover him anywhere else.

We are then concerned about *knowing ourselves*. We are concerned about *Self-Gnosis*. When one reaches Self-Gnosis, one *knows oneself*, one knows one's Inner Real Being, and this process of self-knowledge, of knowing one's own Inner Being, is precisely *Self-Gnosis*.

Therefore, Science, Art, Philosophy and Religion are the four fundamental pillars of Gnostic Knowledge.

In coming Units we will continue looking into different subjects of the Gnostic Teaching in depth.

The British Institute of Gnostic Studies

The British Institute of Gnostic Studies (B.I.G.S.) is an institution made up of men and women whose common interest is the study and practice of Gnostic Knowledge in the diverse fields of human activity: Science, Art, Philosophy, Mysticism, Psychology, Metaphysics...

The British Institute of Gnostic Studies is the body responsible for disseminating the Gnostic Teachings as given by V. M. Samael Aun Weor.

The British Institute of Gnostic Studies is a non-profit-making organization; its only purpose being that every human being, irrespective of their social or cultural level, age, sex, race or faith, can benefit from these teachings.

Its aims are:

- To promote the study of the Gnostic Teachings, in order to help all human beings who are interested in their own physical, intellectual, cultural, moral and spiritual development, through the implementation of psychological, philosophical and scientific practices.

- To carry out anthropological and cultural research, in order to objectively know the principles that are common to all peoples, cultures and religions of the world.

- To look after the preservation of the Gnostic values in their true essence.

- To publish and preserve the entire, written and spoken Gnostic work of V. M. Samael Aun Weor.

- To work for the benefit of humanity, encouraging the solidarity, brotherhood and union of all human beings without distinction.

V.M. Samael Aun Weor

President-Founder of the International Gnostic Movement. In our time, he is the promoter of the Gnosis of the past, the present and of all time. In this respect, we must say that Master Samael Aun Weor is the continuator of the work begun by the enlightened minds of Higher Knowledge, by those who, since time immemorial, crystallized the divine Gnosis or Eternal Wisdom in themselves and worked for the Awakening of Consciousness in human beings.

During more than thirty years he worked tirelessly, leaving an extensive legacy of psychological, philosophical, anthropological and scientific works of an incalculable value for humanity. The works written by this great Master exceed fifty Gnostic books, to which can be added hundreds of lectures, manifestos, recorded talks with his disciples, etc.

Samael Aun Weor left his physical body on 24th December 1977, in the city of Mexico. His wife, V. M. Litelantes, received the transmission from him to succeed him in leading the Gnostic Institutions, a task which she carried out admirably up to her passing on 5th February 1998. At present, the work of Samael Aun Weor has thousands of students and sympathizers all over the world.

The Gnosticism propounded by Master Samael Aun Weor is that of the Revolution of Consciousness, which can lead us to the Inner Self-Realization of the Being, through three absolutely defined Factors, which are: To Die, To Be Born and Sacrifice for Humanity.



V.M. Litelantes

To define the spiritual level of Mistress Litelantes, there is nothing better than the words which her husband wrote about her in the Christmas Message of the year 1954. The text transcribed below was written by Master Samael in the third person. In it he uses the esoteric name by which he was known at that time: Aun Weor.

'This Lady-Adept enjoys continuous consciousness, and through countless reincarnations she managed to educe and strengthen certain occult faculties which, among other things, allowed her to remember her past lives and the history of the planet and its races.

'She has been the esoteric collaborator of Venerable Master Aun Weor. She discovered the Jinas states, mentioned by Mario Roso de Luna and Arnaldo Krumm-Heller, and collaborated with Master Aun Weor in the scientific research into the Elementals of Plants which appear in the Treatise on Occult Medicine.

'This Lady-Adept is one of the forty-two Judges of Karma. She is absolutely silent and never displays her powers or her knowledge. Guru Litelantes works anonymously and silently in the Palace of the Lords of Karma.

'This Lady-Adept is the twin soul of Venerable Master Aun Weor, and through countless reincarnations she has always been the faithful companion of the Master.

'This powerful seer has in her mind all the wisdom of the ages, and with her clairvoyant faculties she has collaborated with Master Aun Weor, studying the different Elemental Departments of Nature'.



The Work of Samael Aun Weor

Samael Aun Weor was a prolific writer who, in a direct and revealing language, wrote more than fifty works of esoteric content, in which the teachings of the ancient Initiatory Mysteries are condensed.

Endowed with extraordinary psychic faculties for extrasensory investigation, his books are the result of deep esoteric studies... Their ideas belong to a type of logic that has been long lost: the Higher Logic, or Transcendental Logic of Objective Consciousness.

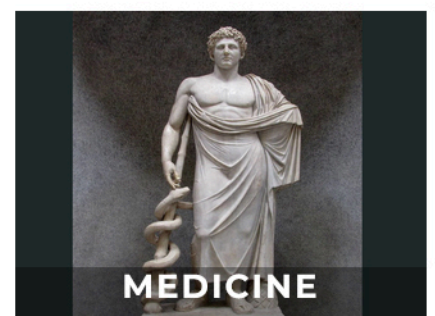
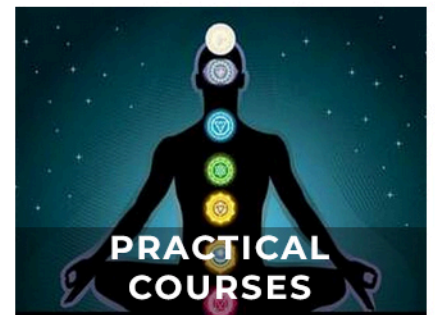
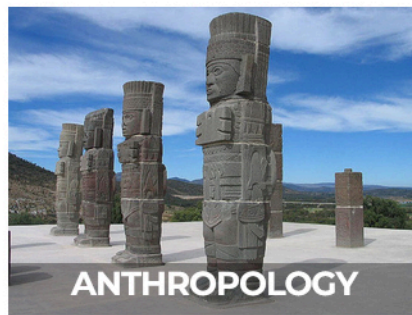
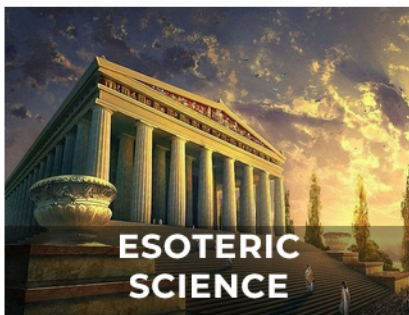
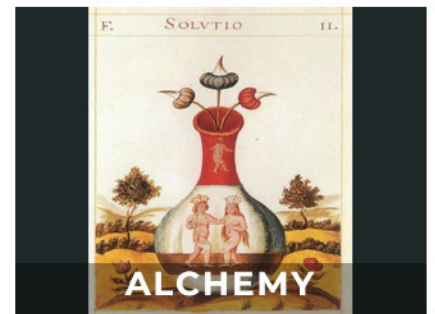
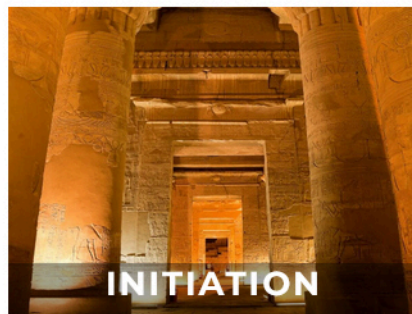
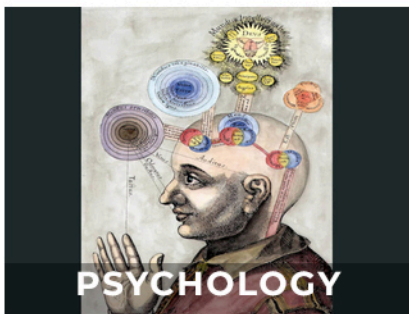
Gnostic Editions is immersed in the task of publishing the complete Work of Master Samael Aun Weor. If you wish to obtain information on the books and how to purchase them, wherever you are, you can go to the following website:

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