



René Guénon: The theoretical knowledge

In any doctrine that is metaphysically complete, like the Oriental doctrines, the theory is always accompanied or followed by an effective realization, for which it is only the necessary base; no realization can be initiated without a theoretical preparation.

René Guénon, Introduction générale à l'étude des doctrines hindoues, Guy Trédaniel, 1987, p. 146

Cannot the books with an initiatory content, for qualified individuals and pupils with the necessary vocation, serve themselves as carriers in the transmission of a spiritual influence? Is it not enough for an initiation, in such cases, to read these books and exclude the direct contact with a traditional “chain”? [...] That would be contrary to the fact that an oral transmission is, everywhere and always, deemed as a necessary condition in genuine traditional education; therefore, putting traditional learning in writing cannot replace the oral transmission, and that is so because, to be indeed valid, it implies the existence of a “vital” element, which the books cannot carry. Some might protest that, considering various stories with respect to the Rosicrucian tradition, a number of books have been charged with influences by the very authors, which is indeed possible, as well as it is for any other object. Yet, even if admitting this fact, it could not be more than some specific copies prepared in a special way for this purpose; moreover, each of these copies should be destined exclusively to a disciple to whom it would have been handed directly; and it would not replace the initiation that the disciple had already acquired, but offer an efficient help, when during his personal efforts the disciple would use the book as support for meditation.

René Guénon, Initiation et Réalisation spirituelle, Éd. Traditionnelles, 1980, pp. 58-59